

## **The Development of a Student Organization that Supports Minorities in Computing (Experience)**

### **Lance Leon Allen White (Graduate Research Assistant)**

Lance White is a Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University in the Multidisciplinary Engineering Department focusing on Engineering Education research. His areas of expertise include qualitative and quantitative research in engineering education, but a stronger focus has been in qualitative methods and analysis. He is working as a graduate research assistant at the Institute for Engineering Education and Innovation at the Texas Engineering Experiment Station at Texas A&M University under director Dr. Tracy Hammond. Dr. Karan Watson and Dr. Pavel Tsvetkov are his co-chairs. He completed his M.S. in Nuclear Engineering at Texas A&M University under Dr. Yassin Hassan working on experimental thermal hydraulics, and completed his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering at West Texas A&M University.

### **Larry Powell**

### **Karan Watson (Provost Emeritus & Sr. Professor)**

Karan L. Watson, Ph.D., P.E., is currently Provost Emeritus and a Regents Senior Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, having joined the faculty at Texas A&M University in 1983 as an Assistant Professor. She served as the Co-Director of the Institute for Engineering Education and Innovation and is currently a distinguished fellow of this Institute. She has served in numerous administrative roles at Texas A&M University, including: provost and executive vice president, vice provost, dean of faculties and associate provost, interim VP for diversity, associate dean of Engineering, and program chair for interdisciplinary engineering. Dr. Watson is a fellow of three organizations: the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), the American Society for Engineering Education, and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Her awards and recognitions include the U.S. President's Award for Mentoring Minorities and Women in Science and Technology, the American Association for the Advancement of Science mentoring award, the IEEE International Undergraduate Teaching Medal, the American Society for Engineering Education Lifetime Achievement Award, and numerous faculty awards at Texas A&M University. She has served as President of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the President of the Education Society of IEEE.

### **Tracy Anne Hammond (Professor)**

Dr. Tracy Hammond is the current Secretary of the Faculty Senate and passionate about Faculty governance. Hammond is Director of the TAMU Institute of Engineering Education & Innovation and Professor of Computer Science & Engineering. Hammond holds a Ph.D. in EECS and FTO (Finance Technology Option) from MIT, and has four degrees from Columbia University: an M.S. in Anthropology, an M.S. in Computer Science, and a B.A. in Mathematics, and a B.S. in Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics. Hammond has received over \$13.5 million in research funding from NSF, DARPA, Google, Microsoft, etc. Hammond mentored 17 UG theses, 29 M.S. theses, and 9 Ph.D. dissertations. Hammond is an ACM Distinguished Member, has received numerous best paper awards, and is the recipient of the 2022 TAMU Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching, the 2021 ASEE Chester F. Carlson Award, the 2020 TEES Faculty Fellows Award, and the 2011 Charles H. Barclay, Jr. '45 Faculty Fellow Award. Hammond has been featured on the Discovery Channel and other news sources. Hammond is dedicated to diversity and equity, reflected in her publications, research, teaching, service, and mentoring. She has also been recently appointed as the Speaker-Elect of the Faculty Senate. More at <http://srl.tamu.edu> and <http://ieei.tamu.edu>.

### **Dilma Da Silva (Professor)**

## **Santana Cruz Gonzales**

## **Sara Amani**

Sara Amani is a Graduate Research Assistant at Texas A&M University. She graduated as a chemical engineer from Texas A&M University at Qatar and is currently a PhD student of the Multidisciplinary Engineering focusing on engineering education. She also works at the Institute for Engineering Education and Innovation (IEEI) at Texas A&M. Her research interests include women in engineering, mental health / well-being of engineering students, accessibility in engineering, and humanitarian engineering.

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# **The Development of a Student Organization that Supports Minorities in Computing (Experience)**

## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the recognized need for an organization focused on serving students from underrepresented populations in the computing field at Texas A&M University, describing the formation of the *Aggie Hispanics in Computing* group.

In 2016, the combined undergraduate and graduate Hispanic enrollment in computer science and computer engineering at Texas A&M University initially sat at 17.9% and then decreased to approximately 11.76% in 2021, with undergraduate Hispanic enrollment in computing reduced from almost 22% to under 15% in that same time frame. This significant shift in Hispanic student representation spurred the development of the Aggie Hispanics In Computing (AHIC) student organization to create a computing community that provides support around the shared experiences of being part of a minority group in an even less diverse discipline. The university, overall, was recently recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, but the College of Engineering remains a predominately-white institution. This new organization is not the only Hispanic-serving organization at Texas A&M University; rather, it was designed to focus particularly on serving Hispanic students in the computer science and computer engineering disciplines at Texas A&M University.

The organization was founded during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Since then, AHIC has grown significantly in membership, financial support, and activities to increase the representation of Hispanic students within the computing disciplines at Texas A&M University. The organization has grown from 6 to over 50 members from various majors in the past year alone. AHIC has also received financial support from a multitude of companies, such as General Motors and Chevron. AHIC's overall goal is to create a supportive community for minorities in computing fields. This community has grown through hosting events that provide information and resources about professional career opportunities, technical workshops, mentoring programs, and participation in research groups. AHIC has also initiated several long-term initiatives, such as peer-teaching for introductory computer science courses. AHIC's promotion of career-guidance events (where company representatives and alumni provide advice for currently enrolled students) proved to be an effective strategy for recruiting members. The organization has also hosted seminars and workshops educating first-year students on new computing skills and the opportunities that a computer science and computer engineering degree can provide.

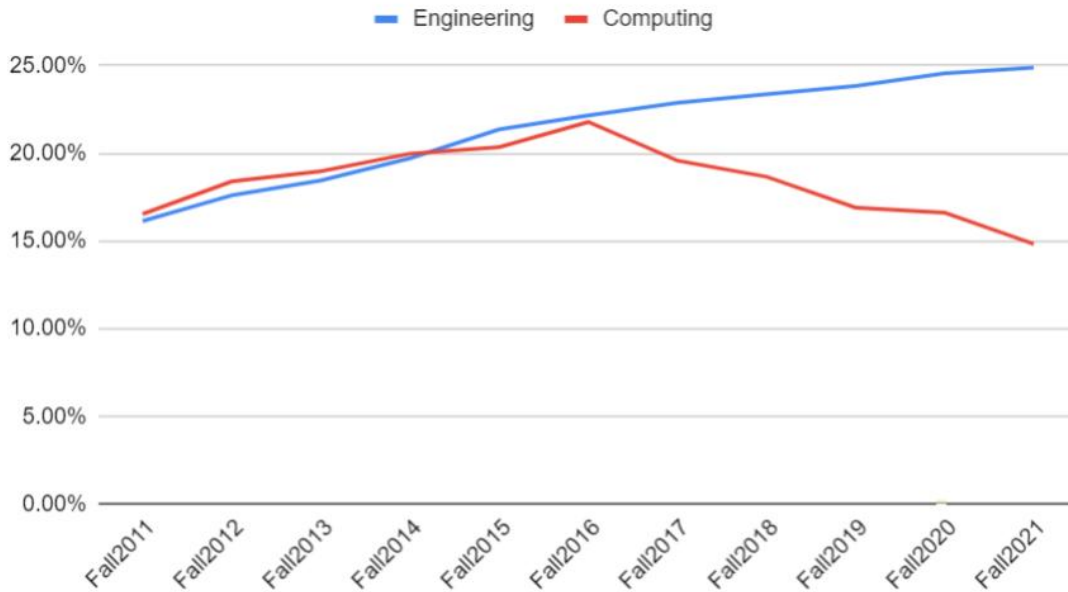


Figure 1: The percentage of Hispanic students in the department of Computer Science & Engineering has been decreasing since 2016, which continues to increase across Engineering [7].

# 1 Background

## 1.1 Quantitative Foundation

As reported by the U.S. Bureau of Statistics, Hispanic representation is 8.3% of the total computing workforce [1]. In contrast, Hispanic representation in engineering for academics and associate professorship positions overall sits at 6% based on National Center for Education statistics [2]. As of 2019, the Hispanic population in the United States is estimated at 18.4%, while in the state of Texas it is estimated at 39.7%, therefore nearing majority given that the state white (non-Hispanic) population is estimated at 41.2% [3, 4]. This disparity between national and state numbers frames the significance of the statistics showing the low representation of Hispanic people in computing careers [5]. Texas A&M University has made a concerted effort to increase the representation of Hispanic students in their engineering population as a whole. To this effect, TAMU is currently 5<sup>th</sup> in producing engineering students regardless of demographics and 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally in universities graduating Hispanic engineers collectively [6]. However, the statistics still show a disparity between Hispanics' computer science representation compared to other engineering disciplines. As of 2021, Hispanics take up 21% of the total population of students that are pursuing a degree (undergraduate or graduate) in engineering at TAMU [7]. Though within the computer science field, the Hispanic student population has decreased by 6.5% between 2016 and 2021 and only represents 15% of the total population as of 2021, according to the data in the Texas A&M Accountability web site [7].

The situation is more dire when considering only the undergraduate population. The state of Texas graduating high school class of 2018 was approximately 50% female (F), 48.8% Hispanic

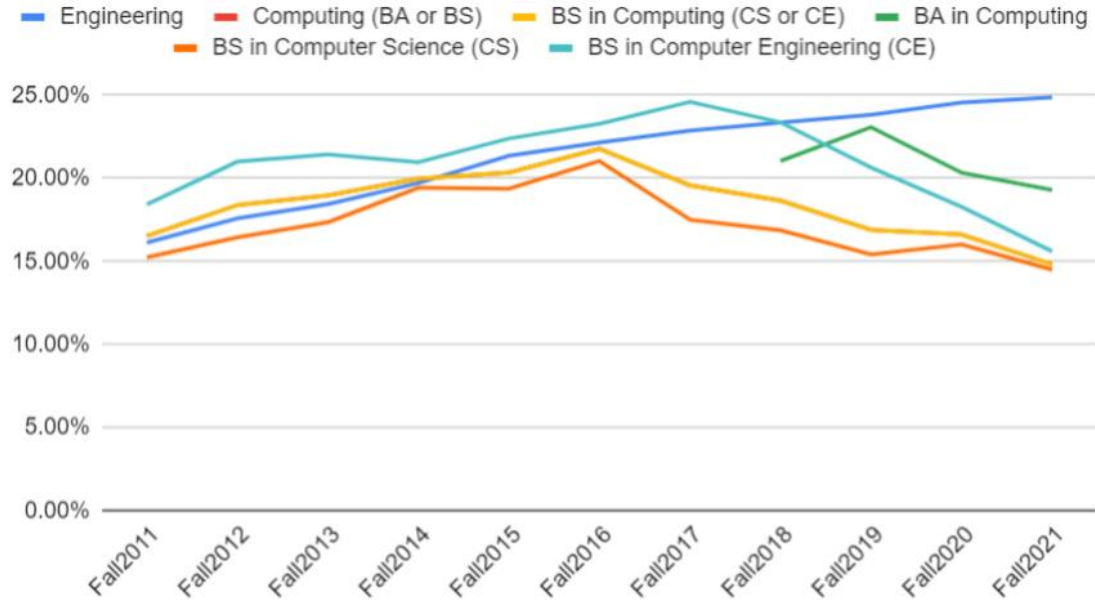


Figure 2: All computing degrees offered by the department of Computer Science & Engineering have shown a decrease in the percentage of Hispanic students [7]. Note that the department created a BA in Computing in 2016.

Table 1: A breakdown of the Black (B), Hispanic (H), and Female (F) students in undergraduate computing. [7]

	Fa'06	Fa'07	Fa'08	Fa'09	Fa'10	Fa'11	Fa'12	Fa'13
B-UG	4.28%	3.83%	3.58%	5.93%	5.27%	4.82%	4.06%	3.71%
B-MS	3.31%	1.60%	1.74%	1.42%	0.55%	0.63%	0.00%	0.00%
B-PhD	2.70%	1.69%	1.69%	2.40%	3.64%	3.13%	1.98%	2.17%
H-UG	12.85%	12.48%	13.63%	15.18%	17.32%	16.54%	18.40%	18.97%
H-MS	2.48%	5.60%	4.35%	2.84%	3.30%	3.14%	0.00%	1.72%
H-PhD	3.24%	2.26%	2.82%	2.40%	2.42%	3.75%	3.96%	4.35%
F-UG	8.90%	8.82%	10.56%	12.57%	10.69%	11.59%	11.47%	12.00%
F-MS	14.88%	13.60%	14.78%	19.15%	19.78%	20.75%	19.35%	24.71%
F-PhD	18.92%	18.08%	15.82%	14.37%	13.33%	13.13%	11.88%	11.59%
	Fa'14	Fa'15	Fa'16	Fa'17	Fa'18	Fa'19	Fa'20	Fa'21
B-UG	2.80%	2.19%	1.94%	2.46%	2.54%	2.43%	2.08%	2.10%
B-MS	0.51%	0.60%	1.22%	1.51%	0.82%	0.82%	0.46%	0.37%
B-PhD	2.44%	2.68%	2.72%	2.52%	1.82%	1.75%	1.10%	0.69%
H-UG	19.98%	20.35%	21.78%	19.58%	18.66%	16.90%	16.62%	14.83%
H-MS	2.54%	4.82%	4.27%	3.52%	2.06%	1.65%	2.78%	1.47%
H-PhD	7.32%	6.71%	7.48%	5.66%	5.45%	6.43%	4.40%	3.47%
F-UG	11.94%	12.84%	14.31%	14.57%	15.40%	16.33%	17.84%	17.60%
F-MS	24.37%	21.08%	17.68%	17.59%	16.87%	23.87%	25.00%	27.47%
F-PhD	13.01%	14.09%	16.33%	18.24%	18.79%	15.20%	16.48%	20.83

(H), 12.5% Black (B), and 30% White (W). As of Fall 2020, TAMU consists of 46.6% female and 25.2% Hispanic UG students, while the College of Engineering consists of 22% female and 21.8% Hispanic UG students. Undergraduate engineering students are admitted as first-year engineering students and apply for entry to a major (ETAM) typically at the end of their first year. ETAM began in Fall 2014 and can be correlated with a significant decline in Hispanic enrollment in computer science and computer engineering since its inception. See Figures 1, 2, and Table 1[6, 7].

## 1.2 Qualitative Foundation

A particular factor that emboldened the creation of this community was the implementation of the ETAM process at TAMU. Representation of Hispanic students in computer science at TAMU has been on the decline in recent years despite TAMU currently graduating more Hispanic engineers than most other universities. There is the possibility, backed by experiences discussed via Twitter, that the ETAM process relies too heavily on grade point averages for admittance to engineering majors and that some guidance from academic advisors could be dissuading Hispanic students from pursuing computer science and reorienting them towards other disciplines. The ETAM process places students into majors according to their preferences and the capacity available in each major following a common first-year experience for all engineering students. The intention of this common first-year experience has been to allow students to be exposed to all disciplines offered in the college of engineering, and since its inception it has significantly increased retention of undergraduate engineering and proved to be successful in mitigating student major changes. After having met a set of course requirements (usually at the end of the first-year experience), students specify the majors that they are interested in.

Grade point average (GPA) plays a significant role in the ETAM process, with some students receiving automatic admittance based on that factor while other students are subject to a more holistic examination before being admitted to a major. Due to inherent inequities that exist in higher education that stem from the K-12 education system in the United States, not all students will experience their first year at TAMU equitably. Historical work at TAMU through the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) project showed that under-represented minority students in STEM had been positively impacted and retained past their first year by combating many factors that impact the retention of underrepresented minority students that exist in first-year engineering experiences [8]. Similarly, work through the CONNECTS Communities project at TAMU focused on retaining undergraduate first-year engineering students who were from under-served populations through community building in learning communities (LCs) and Clusters of Resident Engineering Women (CREW) [9]. This work by Lee et al. focuses on the point that a sense of belonging is critical for under-served and under-represented populations of students, particularly at TAMU [9]. These works were focused on the experiences of those students in the aggregate, however, and at the time did not consider specific majors, in particular engineering majors who are focused on computing. Work by Prewitt et al. [10] stresses the importance of social capital for students of these backgrounds in engineering, and that need for social capital is interdependent with a sense of belonging and community centered around shared experiences and goals. When discussing the need for social capital, belonging, and community, it cannot be overlooked that for these things to even be a possibility, there has to be a population of

students that share those identities. However, when high demand majors such as computer science are limited in availability due to automatic admission policies that favor meritocratic metrics (GPA thresholds) over holistic procedures for admission it leaves little room for populations of under-represented and under-served students to grow. This has resulted in the computing discipline at TAMU reaching a point at which Hispanic student representation is now lower than 10 years prior, with less than 15% of computing students identifying as Hispanic. This is in juxtaposition with a state population that is nearing 40% Hispanic, a total TAMU population that is over 25% Hispanic, and a TAMU engineering population that is over 20% Hispanic. This disparity leads us to understand that the community of Hispanic students in computing is being cut down. A continuation of this crash in Hispanic student representation in computing would be inevitable if these policies and processes are left unchecked, leaving remaining Hispanic students with a minimal voice and near non-existent social capital to navigate a space in which little concern is given to what happens to these students. Understanding the state of the Hispanic student population in computing at TAMU, it was clear that those remaining Hispanic students were in need of an opportunity to find belonging in this space and the founders of this organization took action.

TAMU takes pride as a leading university in morals and how it positively supports students. However, in 2020 two Twitter hashtags were created and increased in popularity over the months following their creation, "#hateisthehiddencorevalue" and "#Racismattamufeelslike". These hashtags have brought to light what students at TAMU have faced while pursuing a degree in higher education in general, but engineering students at TAMU Tweeted about specific experiences related to their choice to pursue engineering. Table 2 shows some of the more shocking posts that students shared reporting what they were experiencing while at TAMU. These experiences include mistreatment from advisors, faculty, and other students. One post from a student describes a situation that student encountered where their ETAM advisor suggested they quit engineering and do something "more like your kind". That same student also mentions an experience with the summer bridge program where they were told that the only reason they were admitted into the university was due to their Hispanic identity. The story of this student's experiences carries a particularly significant weight due to the expectation that university professionals should be advocating for and supporting every student they interact with. A barrier such as this one, occurring within TAMU's advising in engineering, is directly opposing any effort TAMU might have at a larger scale to increase representation of Hispanic students and serves as an example of a true disservice to our Hispanic students. Several other posts are shared in Table 2 and related posts are still live on Twitter at the hashtags mentioned earlier. The discriminatory behavior of some TAMU students towards their fellow peers in any capacity, in this case regarding race or ethnicity, is abhorrent and it makes those students who are targeted by this behavior feel lonely and isolated. While these posts are just a sample of the activity under these hashtags, it shows an obvious gap in equitable support for Hispanic students at TAMU. This work reports an experience of the development of an organization that attempts to bridge that gap for Hispanic students by building a community supported by students and faculty with shared goals and ambitions that can serve as a safe space for Hispanic students feeling marginalized at TAMU.

With these issues that Hispanic students face from a multi-faceted front of adversity, there is an obvious need for students to be helped and supported in navigating this arena at TAMU. That is

Table 2: List of social media posts

- My first year at TAMU I offered to give my pen to this white girl so she could sign her name on the attendance sheet, and she looked at me with a disgusted look and said she didn't want to touch anything that a "Mexican" had touched lmao #hateisthehiddencorevalue
- I was told "I'm sorry are we in Mexico? No. So stop speaking Spanish we're in America. You're supposed to speak English," by one of the boys from Walton in the Fall of 2017 #hateisthehiddencorevalue
- During my Aggie experience, I was told that I was only accepted because the color of my skin met the quota. #hateisthehiddencorevalue
- When they found out I was a former undocumented immigrant receiving financial aid, I was told I was taking away money from people who deserved it
- that ETAM advisor who told me to drop engineering and do something "more like your kind" and that b\*\*\*\* from ESBP who told me I only got into TAMU for being hispanic b\*\*\*\* rachel #hateisthehiddencorevalue
- Getting told I was "privileged for being Hispanic and low-income based because it "granted" me scholarships #hateisthehiddencorevalue

why the organization Aggie Hispanics In Computing(AHIC) was created. The overall goal of AHIC is to build and support a community of Hispanic students and employees in the computing field. AHIC hopes to be a resource for students to access tutoring, mentorship, and job opportunities for anything involving computing. The rest of this work explains the creation and implementation of AHIC at TAMU, the development of programs and events, and what we learned along the way.

## 2 Organization Development

### 2.1 Making of the Organization

The creation of the student organization involves acquiring a letter of support from a university department. The best way to obtain that letter of support is most often through communicating with the head of that particular department with the intention of garnering their support. The approval process for the organization is significantly expedited with this support within the university. The letter of support to the university is a promise by the department to assist the organization financially and to assist in developing a proper framework to attract students to the organization. In AHIC's situation, we presented an important issue that Texas A&M is facing: the mistreatment of Hispanic students in computing. After showing the head of the computer science department the social media hashtag "#hateisthehiddencorevalue.", we secured overwhelming support from the faculty and staff of the computer science department and received a letter of support from the 2021 head of the department.

The organization's mission statement is as follows:"AHIC is a TAMU organization that is built on a community of university students who want to explore their interest in the field of technology and empower Latinx/Hispanic students to succeed in careers in computing. AHIC embraces the mission and goals of Hispanics in Computing." [11]. In order to accomplish this goal, it was



necessary to start from the bottom and build the organization, which required a collection of officers, creating a proper communication system, and finding additional financial support for the organization.

During the collection of officers it was paramount to find students that had similar passions and were interested in the growth and development of the organization. The search and recruiting of these officers was achieved by communicating with other Hispanic students in computer science and electrical engineering, presenting the Twitter posts with the mentioned hashtag #hateisthehiddencorevalue, revealing the mistreatment that current students face, and explaining to them how the organization could make a change. Overall, four undergraduate and three graduate students were brought in as officers. One officer brought to the table a rich previous experience as an officer in another organization at TAMU, which was invaluable to AHIC during these early months of development.

## **2.2 Communication Methods**

It was important to consider two types of communication methods: group chats and email. We reviewed various well-known tools (I.E. Slack, Discord, GroupMe), and our organization decided to go with Slack due to the simple user interface and the ability to create channels, along with the integration by TAMU of that platform into accepted communication methods. Two Slack channels were created, one to allow officers to talk among each other and the second for all members that will be a part of AHIC. A Google list server is used as our official email. Which is the email platform TAMU already implements for its students. AHIC could announce events, provide member support, and anything else that the officers might need to communicate to other members through these platforms. As the organization grew, student members later opted to adopt GroupMe for communication between themselves, which many students routinely use as an informal communication method for course-specific discussions at TAMU.

## **2.3 Funding**

The last consideration for the development of this organization was financial support. The support of the computer science and computer engineering department and electrical engineering department made all the difference when gathering this financial support. Underrepresentation of Hispanic people in computing has been a significant issue for both industry and academia which made bridging the gap between those very effective, resulting in several companies being interested in aiding in this effort. Within the first three weeks of creating this organization, AHIC managed to receive funding from entities such as Chevron, General Motors, Facebook, Microsoft, and Visa, among others. A significant factor that has drawn these partners has been AHIC's website which allows the organization to be showcased for potential members and further support from industry.

After a year long process of creating this organization, eight officers were assembled, and those officers have been tasked with collaborating together to drive AHIC forward. Thanks to their motivation and hard work, AHIC has recruited over 50 members. AHIC also has received over five thousand dollars in industrial support and funding that is likely to arrive regularly for years to come, helping this organization grow.

## **2.4 COVID-19 and its effect on developing our organization**

Since late 2019 and into 2022, the world has been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, Texas A&M University moved their courses and other activities remotely. In 2020, this organization's inception was underway, despite the limitations that COVID-19 put on most organizations within the university. The limitations forced us to adapt and require remote officer meetings and events. When it came to how officers interacted with each other and the work needed to host an event or create the student mentorship program, the president who had the vision was reliant on the other officers to complete their tasks. We learned that remote meeting platforms, such as Zoom, allowed everyone to meet easily, and shared file platforms like Google Drive allowed everyone to keep up with their work and still share feedback with the other officers. However, hosting events was more stressful. Students were facing what we know colloquially as Zoom fatigue from attending classes remotely and added to that AHIC was operating fully online for events during our officer's and member's free time. We also needed to coordinate with other organizations, hoping not to host events during other organizations' scheduled times. This remote organization was certainly challenging to manage and AHIC officers were concerned that people might not attend. In order to relieve some of that stress on the organization and officers, AHIC events became intertwined with industry groups by joining corporate events such as company Zoom chats or online tutoring. The benefit of hosting a joint event allowed both organizations to communicate with each other's members for a larger audience. Another significant benefit was that it reduced the back-end effort that both organizations would have otherwise needed to exert. Monitoring attendance of the remote events was relatively simple, with standard sign-in sheets that were accessible via Google Docs.

## **2.5 Student Mentorship**

Creating a mentorship program was possibly the most challenging task faced by AHIC. Many factors needed to be considered for developing the mentorship program and facilitating those student interactions. The foremost issue was gathering an audience and community to introduce the mentorship program. Initially there were 4 overall groups AHIC was interested in having participate in this mentorship program: undergraduate students, graduate students, new hire alumni (in their field under 5 years), and industrial/academic veterans (in their field over five years). We had to consider the groups individually and to whom they would most benefit. Due to the newness of AHIC, we decided to initially focus on undergraduate and graduate students participating in mentorship experiences.

Facilitation of these mentorships was accomplished through Chronos, a software that TAMU has a license to utilize. We were able to find other organizations at TAMU that already had protocols for both mentors and mentees to use Chronos. We continued to use both Slack and a Google list serve to recruit and communicate with mentors and mentees, but Chronos was used to as a way to filter mentors and mentees based on criteria input by our officers. Chronos also allows mentors and mentees to chat with each other in a safe environment, monitoring the communications to ensure appropriate and regular communication is occurring between users.

## **2.6 Online Events**

Hosting events is a central pillar of a successful organization, serving as an opportunity to present the organization's overall goal to a wide audience and act as a recruitment tool. They also allow the current members to grow and interact with each other. Events ultimately can make or break an organization. AHIC had a significant uphill battle in hosting events due to the limitations imposed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the organization to remain remote while the pandemic was in full swing. To counteract this seeming hindrance brought on by COVID-19, leaders of AHIC thought it necessary to host events that would draw large audiences of students. Even after TAMU had officially moved back to campus-based instruction, public health concerns precluded the organization of large recruiting events.

Generating a large audience is difficult without a direct incentive, such as food or prizes. Such as before the pandemic, students were motivated to come to in-person events with the expectation of free pizza. Food was not an option because the students all took remote classes, so we developed future career-centered events. AHIC found it effective to host events to help students with resumes, interviews, or interacting with companies. We decided to go with an industrial and former student panel to facilitate an opportunity for current students to ask important questions about various industrial fields. This event AHIC hosted had over 20 companies and 15 former students with a student attendance of over 50 remotely. Beyond this AHIC has also hosted several breakfast sessions with various companies like Microsoft and Facebook.

Our other focus was helping first-year students because of the current issues in the decline of Hispanic students applying to be computer scientists both at TAMU and nationally [1, 5–7]. We interacted with these students by communicating and working with the inclusion and diversity department in the College of Engineering. We learned that all first-year students must attend four workshops and two seminars each semester, so AHIC hosted both a workshop and seminar covering topics related to computer science. The workshop was an intro to java user interface development in which we taught the first-year basic programming. The seminar covered the history of computer science and its various fields. Both of these events allowed us to talk and work with a large number of Hispanic first-year engineering students to expose them to the computing field.

## **2.7 In Person Event**

During the spring of 2022 we were able to host our first in person event. This was our first opportunity to present our organization to computing students in a way that was not as two-dimensional as an online event. We wanted it to be fun and memorable for the students that stopped by. We decided to throw a Loteria Night (Loteria is a traditional Hispanic Game, similar to bingo). We had food, games, music, and prizes for students that joined and introduced ourselves as an organization. Thanks to the support of our corporate sponsors, we catered our event with a taco bar and offer prizes such as Bluetooth speakers and gift cards to students who participated in Loteria. The prizes and food undoubtedly helped attract students to our event, making for an even better night. Our Loteria Night was a great success, with many students stopping in to have tacos, play Loteria, and sign up for our mailing list and message group. We plan to continue throwing in-person events in the future and continue growing the

organization.

## **2.8 Peer Teaching and Tutoring**

AHIC as an organization wanted to support current Hispanic students going through the ETAM process and reach their goals of being admitted into the computer science program. After deliberation, AHIC members decided that the most significant way to help students was to support tutoring and peer teaching in fundamental computer science courses. We have learned from this experience that a significant population of students are in need of help in computer science courses and existing programs cannot provide these students with the support they need.

Our first tutoring session was for a python programming course that most first-year engineering students are required to complete. We reached out to the course coordinator and determined one week before their first exam was the best time for an engineering intervention. We acquired the context of the material that would be covered over this exam and hosted a Zoom meeting with ten breakout rooms, each with a graduate student or senior undergraduate student who could help in the content area. Upon opening the event we received over 200 attendees within the first 30 minutes. The event went over so favorably that AHIC created a peer teaching program where AHIC can now pay students to provide tutoring and guidance for the projects of that first-year python programming course and help students when studying for the exams in that course. By providing funding and peer teaching support, our organization has made a tangible impact on Hispanic engineering students at TAMU. Weekly help sessions were also carried out for a different computer science course where students who had not been exposed to programming during their high school career would often struggle. These weekly help sessions were publicized to all 1,000 students in this multi-section course. The fact that these sessions were sponsored by AHIC inherently attracted Hispanic students signaling to them that these events were a safe place where they did in fact belong. The popularity of these sessions resulted in the sessions continuing throughout that semester.

## **3 Drawback**

The biggest drawback to date has been the remote setting of essentially all the communication and events held by AHIC due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The remote nature posed unique challenges; events that included a lot of socializing and mingling over meals became purely technical and dense. In addition, another big drawback was the fatigue virtually everyone was experiencing related to working, learning and existing via the internet making it challenging to stay active online. This proved difficult while AHIC was concerned with recruiting a strong, active member base and a consistent audience of students to attend events. Thanks to the motivation and the hard work of our organization, AHIC hosted several remote events with a relatively large number of student participants.

Teamwork and building the organization were difficult for the new officers as the organization was brand new and quickly became a public interest for many departments along with the university. We felt we needed to move at a fast pace when it came to building up the organization and began to quickly host events. Many of the officers had never been in an organizational

leadership position and made some mistakes when trying to host their own events or workshops early on. These shortfalls did result in some events being canceled due to a lack of attendance, poor advertising, miscommunication in scheduling speakers, and many other reasons. However, as time went by and the new officers learned what was required for them to best serve the organization, AHIC began to run more smoothly. The team was determined to learn from their mistakes and continue to grow.

## **4 Lessons Learned**

Increasing the visibility of a new organization is a slow process in ideal circumstances, but it was particularly difficult without the ability to congregate interested community members through festive events that would focus less on professional development and more on community development within the targeted population that this organization was developed to serve. Events focused around significant Latinx/Hispanic holidays and culturally significant events made that component of the community building difficult with COVID-19 limiting many aspects of interpersonal connection and community building.

It is also important to recognize what it takes to actually get people interested, much less to attend a program or event. Remote events were especially difficult because of fatigue associated with remote learning and work along with the COVID-19 pandemic, this did give AHIC leadership some anxiety about how many students would attend. When we hosted an event, we did create a pre-sign-up sheet sent digitally that gave us a rough estimate of how many students would be interested and planned to attend. We learned that only about 25% of students from the pre-sign-up sheet actually attended the event.

Another lesson we learned relates to what is colloquially called the 3-week rule when hosting an event. The first week of the 3-week rule is specific to planning the event, from advertisement to speakers. That will give the officers time to create flyers, bulk emails, and schedule speakers. After the first week is done planning the event, the rest of the two weeks is related to the advertisement. The two weeks give the students time to sign up for the event, and the officers to gauge interest in case of a need to cancel. Nothing is worse than hosting an important event with a company, and having a very limited number of students show up.

## **5 Conclusion**

We set out to develop an organization to support Hispanic students and create a community around their interests in having careers in computing. It was a problematic process with COVID-19 then and now limiting how we communicate with each other and amongst students. However, this seeming limitation allowed AHIC to provide support on a scale that would have been extremely difficult face-to-face, with a peak attendance of over 200 students at some of the virtual events. That level of success for such a young organization is rarely reached by even established organizations at Texas A&M. Extremely motivated officers and our outstanding leadership managed to recruit over 50 students in the first year and membership continues to climb. Perpetuating the dream of the founders of AHIC, the team continues to create a community

that can truly make a difference for Hispanic students in computing at Texas A&M. As purely anecdotal evidence of the power of the experiences that this organization has facilitated, currently several of the officers who have played instrumental roles in this organization have obtained internships at highly respected Fortune 100 companies in the tech industry.

## 6 Next Steps

“AHIC is committed to creating a system of support that fosters the growth and development for all Hispanic students interested in the field of computing. In the future we aim to continue to provide our members with opportunities for both personal and professional growth through social, academic, and mentorship opportunities. We plan to continue to promote inclusivity on campus by carrying out socials where our members have the opportunity to connect with students from similar backgrounds. We also hope to create a professional network of students by carrying out professional development workshops, company networking events, and working towards helping our members navigate their job/internship search in the world of tech. Overall we hope to create a more inclusive environment on campus for Hispanics and minorities where they can find support in succeeding in both their academic and professional careers.”—current AHIC 2022 president

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