

Name: Abril Topete Castaneda
Major: Computer Science and Engineering
Third Year

“Keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down near paths” - Walt Disney



My current leadership positions are:

- Ambassador for Leadership in Engineering Advancement, Diversity and Retention (LEADR)
 - Assist with events for LEADR students.
 - I mentor two first year students.
- Academic Chair Intern for Chicax and Latinx Engineers and Scientists Society (CALESS)
 - Assist the Academic Chair with any last minute tasks.
 - Help with committee meetings and be a monitor for study jams.
- Volunteer for Center for Chicax and Latinx Academic Student Success (CCLASS)
 - Welcome students to the center as well as help with any front desk operations.

Describe your achievement(s):

These leadership positions have been great accomplishments for me since I have been able to contribute to my communities which have given me so many great opportunities. Through CALESS I was able to attend the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference (HENAAC) which allowed me connect with great companies such as Boeing by participating in the College Bowl. Building these networks is an accomplishment because it was a chance to meet incredible individuals as well for me to further my connections with those who are near and far.

What have you learned about from your achievement(s)? How do these achievements complement your studies?

Through my achievements I have been able to grow professionally as well as personally. They expanded my comfort zone as well as my perceived limit of what I could and could not do. Knowing that I am capable of more has helped me academically by inciting my motivation when I hit bumps on the road that hinder my desire to carry on.

What makes you a leader?

My desire to help others such as my Chicanx and Latinx community is what motivates me to expand my comfort zone boundaries and is why I decided to take part in my leadership roles. Partaking in the leadership roles actually allowed me to help my community as I was able to share resources that have helped me navigate college. I am thankful for the leaders in my life that inspired and pushed to expand my horizons in order for me to play a role as a leader.

What advice would you give to other students about becoming a leader?

Leadership comes from stepping up to provide one's skills and take responsibilities to help reach a goal of the collective unit one is assisting. Hence, everyone has the potential to be a leader. Testing one's comfort zone and expanding it is the best way to increase one's leaderships skills. Fear is always going to be a factor and that is okay, but you are more capable than you may think.

Future Plans:

Through my career, I want to continue helping the Chicanx and Latinx community especially to improve our statistics in STEM fields.

Fun Facts:

I was born in Mexico and moved to the U.S. when I was 10.
My favorite color is blue.