



My experience at the Latinas Think Big Innovation Summit was incredible. Just being at the Google headquarters was pretty amazing. The program for the entire conference was very well organized and the caliber of the speakers was excellent. The conference connected Latina innovators to potential collaborators, supporters, and mentors. I definitely gained all of the aforementioned from attending. One of them being the founder of an accelerator for mobile applications developed by Latinas – Avion Ventures. I have already started working on the application to request admission to the program for Dinnergy.

Additionally, author Graciela Tiscareno-Sato approached me to ask if she could refer me to the organizers of an event taking place in Colorado next year. She also expressed interest in including my story in the sequel to her book: “Latinovating: Green American Jobs and the Latinos Creating Them.”

Aside from having the honor of being one of only six Latinas selected to showcase their innovation, the highlight of my experience was meeting one of the keynote speakers: Frances Colón, PhD, (Acting) Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State. A Latina who is a scientist and diplomat at the same time! Dr. Colon actually approached me during the cocktail reception to tell me that my presentation had been her favorite out of the six and that she would love to stay in touch. Needless to say, I immediately invited her to Fletcher and she was excited for the opportunity because she has family in the area. I have followed up with an email but have not heard back from her. Perhaps a formal letter from the school might persuade her?

I was proud to be part of an event/initiative geared towards elevating the conversation on the current state and future of Latina innovation and was pleased to have the opportunity to discuss best practices on how to increase the representation of Latinas in STEM careers and across tech companies. I sincerely appreciate CIERP's support in helping subsidize the costs of my participation in this conference.

Follow-Up

My experiences at the Latina's Think Big event was very valuable and an overall great learning experience. What stood out the most was the sense of encouragement, motivation and inspiration from those I met and those that were speakers at Latina's Think Big. Since my participation, my confidence in public speaking and giving presentations to large crowds has increased exponentially. Being a young graduate student with high aspirations for the future, being surrounded by so much talent and role models definitely made a difference. While I was there, I was able to go up to many and spark interesting conversations and get great advice whether it was about where Dinnergy is headed or my future career aspirations but also as an innovator that thinks outside the box.

I am still in contact with some of the connections I made at Latinas Think Big. As a matter of fact, I finally did get a reply from Dr. Frances Colón, (Acting) Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State, and was able to persuade her to come to Fletcher and serve as the commencement speaker for our December graduation last year. Since then she has become a mentor and friend. Additionally, the school's administration expressed interest in not only inviting her back but in bringing similar speakers for future December graduation ceremonies.

The fact that I was able to receive CIERP funding to attend the Latinas Think Big Summit encouraged our research assistant, Marlaine Monroig, to raise funds on her own to also accompany me on the trip. Her participation in the conference led her to develop an interesting collaboration with Anna Giraldo-Kerr who is writing a book in relation to micro-aggressions and Latinas. She is assisting her with the research/analyses aspect of it.

Furthermore, the feedback and relationships made at the conference led us to apply as exhibitors at the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) at the University of Miami (where Marlaine is currently a graduate student). CGIU brought together more than 1,000 innovative student leaders to make Commitments to Action its five focus areas: Education, Environment and Climate Change, Peace and Human Rights, Poverty Alleviation, and Public Health. There we were able to make additional connections and learn the basics from learning how to design a start-up to how to make a budget that is sustainable and how to put together a team that works best.

Finally, I plan to continue to pursue opportunities to create exposure and potential funding and support for Dinnergy. Finally, I am currently pursuing an MBA at IE Business School and since the programs has a strong focus on entrepreneurship I plan on making use of the resources available to graduate students to continue developing the Dinnergy idea.

