

Latina Scientists

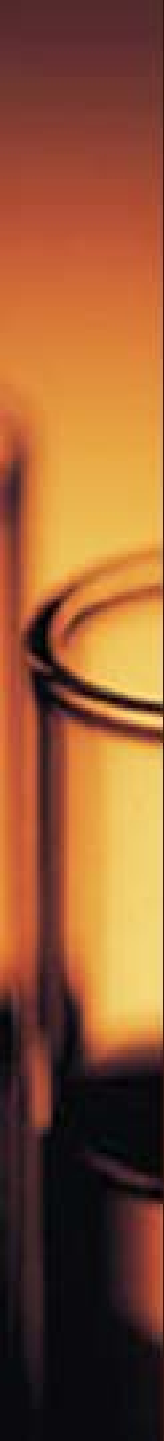


Women as scientists

- Although women have always been involved in scientific pursuits, historically, they were not welcomed or encouraged in these activities
- Documented contributions and scientific biographies are virtually all androcentric (emphasizing males or masculine interests)

Why were women excluded from science?

- It was claimed that the laws of nature could only be fully understood by men
- It was believed that the education of girls was a waste of time and money
- It was argued that too much schooling could actually harm women's reproductive health
- Women were barred from attending institutions of higher education



Historically, in what kinds of science have women been involved?

- agriculturalists
- nutritionists
- health care providers
- medical practitioners (e.g., gynecology, obstetrics, midwifery, and pediatrics)
- Inventors

Despite these contributions, these activities were often perceived as ‘women’s work’ and not “real” science.

Latina scientists

- Women in general, and Hispanics in particular, tend to leave the “scientific career pipeline” during senior high school and college
- Prior to the 1960s, higher education was out of reach for most Latinas
- Once in college, Latinas face a number of obstacles including: few role models and mentors, inadequate academic counseling, financial hardships, and lack of supportive collegial relationships
- Marriage and familial responsibilities can also take a toll.

Encouraging trends

- The percentage of Latina/o students taking basic and advanced mathematics courses has doubled
- The number of Latina/o students earning bachelor's degrees in the sciences and engineering has increased by more than 50%
- The number and proportion of women and minorities earning science and engineering degrees continues to increase yearly
- Despite these gains, Latinas comprise only five percent of all employed doctoral scientists and engineers

Latina scientists today

- Despite the work still to be done, today there are Latina scientists in biology, medicine, geology, chemistry, physics, and space exploration

Who are these pathbreaking Latina scientists?

- Web Quest Activity

Your mission:

Working with your group, research the Latina assigned to you, answer the questions on your Web Quest Assignment Sheet, and report your findings to the rest of the class