**2024 Diversity Lecture Award Winner**

**LatinXinBME**

**Dr. Brian Aguado**

Assistant Professor of Bioengineering and Co-Founder of LatinXinBME

UC San Diego

**Dr. Ana Maria Porras**  
Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering, Co-Founder & Senior Advisor of LatinXinBME  
Univesity of Florida

**Title**: Building a Virtual Community to Support and Celebrate the Success of Latinx Biomedical Engineers

**Abstract**: In February 2019, LatinXinBME was founded by Dr. Brian Aguado and Dr. Ana Maria Porras with the mission to build a diverse and inclusive community of Latinx researchers in biomedical engineering (BME). We leverage digital tools and community mentoring approaches to build a safe space for our members with the aim to diversify the BME workforce in academia, industry, government, communication, and other STEM careers. The LatinXinBME approach to diversifying BME centers on three prongs: (1) building a community of peers who feel connected through scholarship and friendship, (2) promoting and supporting the professional and personal development of Latinx in BME, and (3) increasing the representation of Latinx at all levels of our profession. Our virtual and in-person professional development and social events at LatinXinBME have filled a void by fostering the inclusion of Latinx biomedical engineers in our field and promoting the diversification and retention of Latinx biomedical engineers in the workforce.

**Dr. Brian Aguado Bio**: Dr. Brian Aguado is an Assistant Professor of Bioengineering at UC San Diego, where his laboratory research is focused on studying sex differences in cardiovascular disease using biomaterial technologies. Dr. Aguado completed his BS degree in Biomechanical Engineering from Stanford University and his MS and PhD in Biomedical Engineering from Northwestern University. He also obtained his certificate in Management for Scientists and Engineers from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern. He completed his postdoctoral fellowship in Chemical and Biological Engineering at the University of Colorado Boulder. Dr. Aguado is the recipient of the NIH K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award, the American Heart Association Career Development Award, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Science Diversity Leadership Award, and the NIH DP2 New Innovator Award. As co-founder of the non-profit organization LatinXinBME, he was named one of the 100 Most Inspiring Latinx Scientists in America by Cell Press, and received the Biomaterials Diversity Award for Young Investigator from the Biomaterials journal, the 2023 Teacher of the Year Award from the UCSD Jacobs School of Engineering, the GEMINI Faculty Mentor Award from the Institute for Engineering in Medicine, and the Society for Biomaterials Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award.

**Dr. Ana Maria Porras Bio:** Dr. Ana Maria Porras is an Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Florida, where she leads the Tissue-Microbe Interactions lab. Her group engineers models of disease to study human-microbe interactions mediated by the extracellular matrix. The TMI lab applies these models in the contexts of the gut microbiome, neglected tropical diseases, and cardiovascular health. She is also the co-founder and senior advisor of the “Latinx in Biomedical Engineering” community, a science artist, and an expert on inclusive multilingual science communication. She is the recipient of the NSF Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award, the AAAS Early Career Award for Public Engagement with Science, the UF BME Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, and the Society for Biomaterials Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award. Prior to arriving in Florida, Dr. Porras was a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at Cornell University. She holds a B.S. in biomedical engineering from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Masters and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she was an American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellow.