

## Susanne Churchill Award of Excellence for Women in STEM

Hello,

I am Dr. Yadilette Rivera-Colon and I have the privilege to present this year's Susanne Churchill Award of Excellence for Women in STEM.

The Susanne Churchill Award of Excellence for Women in STEM was established in honor of Dr. Susanne Churchill in 2017. This award is graciously funded by Charlene Mazer, Trustee emerita and a close friend of Susanne's. Dr. Churchill served on the Board of Trustees for 15 years including the position of Chair for the Academic Committee.

This award is presented to a student who has achieved a GPA of 3.5 or better, has demonstrated initiative and promise through independent research and/or internship, and has actively participated in community outreach and extra-curricular activities that promote women in STEM.

This year's awardee is Priscilla Villalona. As a Stern Scholar she has been a research assistant in my lab assisting and supporting all of our research students. She is also a Peer mentor for the biology I lab course and her peers love her. They say that she is very patient with them and that she never makes them feel less smart because of their struggles to understand biology concepts. She is really passionate about biochemistry and she became our first Amgen Scholars Alumna, a highly competitive summer program in collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. Through this program she got to work at Duke University.

She has also participated in outreach activities. She was the group leader for making slime at Sullivan's school's STEM night, teaching kids and families about the properties of slime in both Spanish and English. She applied to several graduate schools and received invitations for interviews in most of them, including Yale University, UPenn and Duke university. She has accepted the offer to pursue her doctorate in biochemistry from Penn State University.

Her honors research project aims to understand the stability of different protein in the acetyltransferase family of enzymes.

She will be presenting this work at this Friday at our 2020 Science Defense-A-palooza at 1:30pm - 1:45pm

The 2020 Susanne Churchill Award of Excellence for Women in STEM goes to: Priscilla Villalona.