

2024 ELECTIONS FOR MAES NATIONAL BOARD



Name: Phillip Diaz

Position: Director

Chapter Affiliation: Long Beach



MAES Experience/Awards:

- Current MAES National Board Member.
- Professional member of MAES for over 35 years.
- Past Professional President of the South Bay, Georgia, and Long Beach Professional Chapters.
- Professional Advisor to the Cal State Long Beach Student Chapter for over 35 years.
- Chair and Co-Chair of MAES National Symposiums.
- Chair of several MAES Western Region Career Fairs.

Professional Experience:

- **Northrop Grumman, Department Manager**
- Phillip Diaz works at Northrop Grumman as a department manager for the Research & Advanced Design and Common Products department. He is currently managing over 160 software engineers for the NG Aeronautics Sector. His various programs/projects he supports are for air unmanned and manned vehicles which include AI/ML, VMS, and Mission Systems management. His team also supports Aircraft Cockpit Design for various aircraft. Before working at Northrop Grumman, Phil worked at TRW and Bell Laboratories. Phil received his bachelor's degree from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, and his master's degree from New York University, both in Computer Science. He has received many awards for his achievements, including being named the Hispanic Employee of the Year by Northrop Grumman, TRW, and Bell Laboratories. Phil is active in his community, working with students ranging from elementary school to college students. He has been past president of the South Bay, Georgia, and Long Beach MAES professional chapters and professional student advisor to the MAES Cal State Long Beach and Georgia Tech student chapters, past chair, and co-chair of MAES National Symposiums, and past chair and co-chair of the MAES Western Region Career Fairs.

Outlook for MAES:

- I have been a member of MAES for several years as noted above. I was lucky enough to be mentored by Bob Von Hatten, one of the founders of MAES. I was also mentored by Oscar Cano who helped with several initiatives that have helped MAES grow in years past. I would like to see MAES grow again to one of the leading Hispanics organizations to support both professionals and student learn and prosper.

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Hugo Lira

My name is Hugo Lira; I am seeking your vote for the Board of Directors position. Hugo graduated from California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where he received his B.S. in Computer Science, and hired into The Boeing Company as a Software Engineer where he currently is employed. He has held the position on the MAES Board of Directors as the Associate Vice-President (AVP) of Information Technology (IT) and held other positions on the board through the years.



At the local level, he held the position of President of the MAES Orange County Professional Chapter. Hugo's MAES experience includes serving as the CSUF Vice-President, Historian and at the time helped out at the National level with the Website and conference registration. Hugo has received the Amigo de MAES award at the International Symposium and Career Fair (IS&CF) in San Diego in 1998, received the Medalla de Oro Award in 2002 and also received the MAES President's Award. Hugo has been active with the organization, in the past doing conference registration for the National events and been taking care of the website and IT activities. Hugo is a Lifetime Member of MAES.

2024 ELECTIONS FOR MAES NATIONAL BOARD



Name: George Gutierrez

Position: DIRECTOR

Chapter Affiliation: Long Beach Professional Chapter

Bio:

As a passionate advocate for diversity and education in STEM fields, my journey with MAES spans over a decade, marking a pivotal chapter in my personal and professional growth.

My affiliation with MAES began twelve years ago during my time at California State University, Long Beach. Graduating with a degree in Computer Science, I found a community within MAES that not only supported my academic endeavors but also ignited a sense of purpose in empowering Latino professionals in the STEM industry.

Upon completing my education, I took on the responsibility of revitalizing the local professional chapter alongside six other dedicated individuals from my graduating class. Serving on the board of the Long Beach chapter, I spearheaded numerous initiatives, from organizing workshops to fostering social connections, until the unforeseen challenges of the pandemic disrupted our plans.

Eager to continue contributing to the MAES community, I redirected my focus to the National Board, where I've proudly served for the past two years. Here, I've been committed to bridging the gap between national and regional chapters, fostering collaboration, and ensuring the organization's longevity.

Simultaneously, my professional journey led me into the software industry, where I honed my skills in quality assurance, automation, and dev-ops over seven enriching years at Akana. However, driven by an entrepreneurial spirit and a desire for new challenges, I'm currently in the process of transitioning into real estate investing, where I see immense potential for growth and impact.

Looking ahead, my vision for MAES extends beyond collaboration between national and regional chapters. I aim to implement a centralized knowledge base and resource hub to empower both professionals and students, serving as a central place to document our Standard Operating Procedures and house all artifacts so that MAES can continue with minimal disruption for years to come.

In all my endeavors, whether in the realm of academia, professional development, or entrepreneurship, I remain deeply committed to driving positive change and uplifting underrepresented voices in the STEM community. With a steadfast dedication to learning, leadership, and community building, I am excited to embark on this journey of growth, innovation, and impact.

2024 – 2026 MAES NATIONAL BOARD



Name: Esther Moreno Gonzales

Position: Board of Director

Chapter Affiliation: Houston Chapter



My name is Esther Moreno Gonzales, and I have been a member of MAES since Fall 1990. I started as a student member at Texas A&M. I served in various leadership positions, including President of the student chapter. I transferred a year later, finished my studies at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and received my Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering. I have been a MAES professional member since 1995 and became a MAES Lifetime Member in 2005. After graduation, I worked in various engineering positions for BASF in New Jersey and Hewlett-Packard in California. I am now a Program Operations Manager at Collins Aerospace in the Deep Space Mission Systems. I graduated with my Master's in Engineering Technical Management at Texas A&M University last May 2023. I was elected to the MAES Board of Directors in 2000 and served until now.

I have received several MAES honors, such as the Medalla de Oro Award in 2001 and being named MAES Board of Director of the Year for 2002 and 2003. I served in several leadership positions, which included the following:

- Vice President of Finance (Presently, plus many previous years)
- Associate Vice President of Finance 2013
- MAES National President 2004-2006
- MAES National Vice-President of Operations 2002-2004
- Chairperson for the Finance Committee 2000-2002
- Chairperson for National Leadership Conference from 2001- 2004
- Chairperson for Conference Oversight Committee 2002-2004
- Co-Chair of the MAES 2000 Symposium in San Jose, CA



Name: Irene Rico

Position: MAES National Board, President

Chapter Affiliation: Washington DC

MAES Experience:

I joined MAES as a Professional Member when the Austin Professional Chapter was formed in 1999/2000 and became very engaged in the MAES Extravaganza workshops hosted in the Central Texas Area. When my career took me to Virginia in October of 2002, I stayed engaged through the MAES National Symposiums, and volunteered in numerous outreach efforts in the Virginia and DC Area. Additionally, I currently serve in the MAES National Board as National President, and have been honored with the Medalla de Oro Award.

Professional Experience:

I currently served as the Associate Administrator for the Office of Civil Rights with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). On October 25, 2016, I was selected as FHWA's Associate Administrator for Civil Rights. In this capacity, I lead and direct a professional staff on civil rights policy, program and strategic guidance to FHWA Program Offices, division offices, other Federal agencies, and State Departments of Transportation. Prior to this position, I served for 5 years as the Division Administrator in Virginia where I oversaw the strategic management and delivery of the \$900 million Federal-aid highway program. Also held other key positions including Special Assistant to the FHWA's Executive Director, Assistant Division Administrator in Virginia, and Director of Planning and Program Development in Texas. I joined FHWA in 1985 as a Highway Engineer Trainee. Received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at El Paso, and obtained a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM.

Outlook for MAES:

For MAES to spark interest in Latino students in pursuing a degree in STEM. For MAES to provide role models in the Latino Community of Leaders that support their community. For MAES to be an organization that invests in the development of leadership skills of students and professionals. For MAES to contribute to connect our members to opportunities by way of internships, education, careers and entrepreneurship. MAES to be an organization that builds the pipeline of MAES Leaders that will carry the mission of the organization into the future. For MAES to continue to be of support to our members by providing a familia wherever they are in their journey.

Sairy Cohen was born in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and later moved to El Paso, Texas, at the age of 13. She graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science in 2019. Sairy is the first-generation immigrant and graduate in her family.

In 2016, she interned with former Congressman Beto O'Rourke, and in 2017, she secured an internship opportunity with NASA. However, this achievement did not come easily; she faced rejection 15 times before finally landing the opportunity. During her internship, she got invited to go back in 2018. Sairy worked with the cybersecurity team, gaining valuable hands-on experience in a field she was passionate about.

The following summer, Sairy continued her journey by securing a third internship—this time with Apple. Her dedication and hard work led to meaningful experiences in the tech industry, further fueling her determination.

At UTEP, Sairy received the NSF scholarship and other recognitions, including the Computer Science Department award. As graduation approached, she received a job offer to work at Google, starting in 2020. Sairy began her career as a Technical Account Manager and later transitioned to Program Management. During her time at Google, she volunteered for 2 years to create internships and full-time opportunities for students coming from underrepresented communities at NMSU Las Cruces and UT Dallas.

Currently, Sairy is working with CVS Health as a Cyber Security Remediation Manager. Her passion lies in supporting students and helping them land opportunities. As a first-generation student, she encourages fellow students never to give up on their dreams.

Sairy Cohen
sairycohen@gmail.com

Clara Neri-Mejia, Bio



Name: Clara Neri-Mejia

Chapter Affiliation: Austin

MAES Experience/Awards: *My involvement with MAES began during college. I'd been exposed to various organizations (SWE/SME/SHPE/NSBE) but never felt at "home" in any of them.*

In speaking with my college advisor, he mentioned MAES and asked if I would go to the student leadership conference in Long Beach, CA. Four of us travelled there, and I fell in love with the organization's mission, but most importantly, the people. I'd finally found my home, my fit, mi familia.



- 1994-1995, Founder, and President. University of Detroit Mercy Student Chapter
- 1996, Recipient of MAES Scholarship
- 2007-2008, Treasurer for Austin Professional Chapter
- 2008-2015, President for Austin Professional Chapter
- 2015-Present, Treasurer and POC for Austin Professional Chapter
- 2016, Professional Chapter of the Year
- 2019-2021, National Board Member - Associate VP of Marketing and Communications

Professional Experience: www.linkedin.com/in/clara-neri-mejia-pmp-716416a

Current Company and Role: *Applied Materials, Technical Project/Program Manager in Talent Development*

- ✚ *Over the past 20+ years at Applied Materials, I've held various roles including Production Supervisor, Supplier Quality Engineer, Commodity Business Manager, Materials Project Manager and Technical Program Manager. I have proven ability to work in all aspects of manufacturing including: operations, quality, procurement, supply chain, management, and talent development (training). I am an alumnus of Hispanic Austin Leadership Program, as well as Certified as a Project Management Professional, PMP.*

Outlook for MAES:

MAES has been a cornerstone to my professional and personal development in so many ways. It created a feeling of belonging which undoubtedly retained me in college. Finding other first-generation college students gave me the added boost I needed, and the scholarships did not hurt! After college graduation, it was my MAES Austin Familia that took me in and provided me with love, acceptance, and giving back to the community, my larger purpose.

I strongly believe that MAES's outreach programs are instrumental in feeding the STEM pipeline for those students who need to break the poverty cycle. I am living proof. Latino youth need to see us, meet us, share our stories. Showing up across school/college campuses consistently, year-after-year will undoubtedly keep MAES strong and growing. And I want to be part of that!

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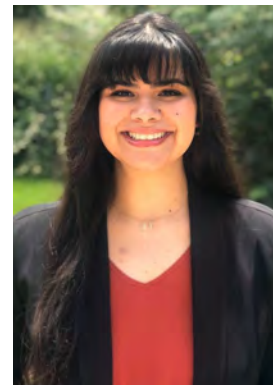
Name: Cynthia García

Position: DIRECTOR or REGIONAL VP

Chapter Affiliation: San Antonio, TX

MAES Experience/Awards:

Along with two other students and their college advisor's guidance, she helped form the first **Junior Chapter** in their region in 2015 during her sophomore year in high school. She served as the **secretary** for this chapter from 2015 to 2018. She had the life-changing opportunity to participate in two Mijos/Mijas Day programs hosted by the University of Texas at Austin student chapter that ultimately influenced her decision to attend UT Austin in the Fall of 2018.



She joined the **UT Austin student chapter** toward the tail end of her first year and became an active member in her second year of college. She was nominated as **President** going into her third year and subsequently held this position for two terms. Her first term was fully virtual during the pandemic, which taught her great resilience and perseverance skills. Her second term was hybrid, which allowed her interpersonal skills to flourish and helped her grow the chapter's student engagement.

After meeting with the board to propose an activity for MAES students, She was inducted to join the board as a **Vice NSR of Communications** in July 2021. She was subsequently re-elected for two consecutive terms to serve as **NSR** from May 2022 to May 2024. With these positions, She assisted with MAES' social media presence, student chapter communications, and student programs. It was an honor and privilege for her to be able to be the voice of these wonderful students across the country, and build treasured personal connections through this experience.

Professional Experience:

Her main job is as a Funeral Attendant at a family-owned funeral home. This job focuses on ensuring that funeral services run smoothly and families are taken care of. Through this job, She has learned to effectively communicate in particularly vulnerable times while employing her empathy, active listening, and leadership skills. Moreover, she is currently in Mortuary School pursuing a funeral director license and an embalming license. She also works as a substitute teacher for her local school district, teaching 5th grade through high school students. This gives her an opportunity to spread the MAES mission and vision to the predominantly Latino students in the district. Another job she has includes working on marketing materials for a separate, smaller veteran non-profit organization.

Outlook for MAES:

Her outlook for MAES envisions the familial aspect expanding and fostering connections among *all* members. Through engaging and innovative programs like Science Extravaganzas, in both small and large chapters, MAES will captivate Latino students' interest in pursuing *at least one* STEM degree. Furthermore, these MAES events will nurture the pipeline of Latino STEM leaders from K-12 through college, into the professional world, and beyond, thus propagating the mission and vision of MAES within our communities.

2024 ELECTIONS FOR MAES NATIONAL BOARD



Name: Karla V James

Position: Region 2 VP

Chapter Affiliation:

MAES Borderplex (El Paso) Professional Chapter



Education and Professional Experience

Born in Gomez Palacio Durango Mexico and has lived in El Paso TX. since 1993. Graduated in 2009 from UTEP receiving a BS in Mechanical Engineering and obtained a Master's Degree in System Engineering in May of 2016. I have worked for the Department of Defense since 2009, under the Army Test and Evaluation Command. Started my engineering career as a test conductor for missile programs at White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) NM and then moved to Ft Bliss TX. as the Deputy for the Program Support Division and a Contracting Officer Representative. Currently serve as a test officer at WSMR for the Air and Space Branch - Space Programs.

MAES Experience

Mexican American Society of Engineers and Scientist (MAES) has been part of my life since 2012 at El Paso Professional Chapter. With in the organization I have served as president, secretary and treasure. I am currently serving as Treasurer of the local chapter. Druing our MAES Rebot I have been involved in the CDS Reboot 2019, MAES Core Values and National Stratigic Plan conference. Served as MAES National Board on the Associate VP of Confrence Operations & Programs and Region 2 VP South Region positions since 2022.

MAES El Paso has provided me different ways to serve our community by judging science fairs, participation in community events, serving as a presenter for High Schools and Middle Schools on carrer days and performing fundraisers to award scholarships for local students. As a National Boeard member I have been able to help with the strategic plan to continue moving forward our MAES familia.

Outlook for MAES

MAES is my familia and I will love to continue support the growth of the organization and be part of making a difference for students and professionals one day at a time.



2024-2025 ELECTIONS FOR NATIONAL BOARD



Name: Hugo Lopez Avila

Position: Region 3 Vice President

Chapter Affiliation: San Jose State University

Job Position: Electrical Systems Engineer at John Deere

During my undergraduate studies at San Jose State University, I was heavily involved with the MAES/SHPE chapter, SOLES (Society of Latino Engineers and Scientists). Witnessing the incredible opportunities the chapter provides to Latino students in STEM inspired me to use my leadership skills to continue offering these invaluable experiences that I had the privilege to benefit from. I initially ran for and was elected as Treasurer, followed by being elected as Vice President, and ultimately serving as President in my final year. My tenure in SOLES allowed me to lead and organize both professional development and networking events that connected students with top engineering firms, thereby providing more meaningful events for first-generation STEM students like myself.

I have always taken my education seriously, and this work ethic is reflected through the 27 scholarships I received throughout my undergraduate studies, one of which was the MAES Presidents scholarship in 2020-2021. These scholarships allowed me to pay for my entire schooling without me or my parents worrying about it. It was through these scholarships that I was further motivated to excel in my endeavors. These recognitions not only highlight my academic and professional achievements but also reinforce my commitment to serving the Hispanic and Latino community in STEM. This makes me a strong candidate for the Vice President position, as I'll be able to help undergraduate students acquire opportunities like these!

The unique challenges of commuting, majoring in electrical engineering, and serving on the board for SOLES have taught me valuable time management skills. These experiences have equipped me to handle the demands of the MAES Vice President role effectively.

I strive to give back to my community that selflessly supported me as a first-generation DACA recipient. I have contributed over 700 hours of community service, mentor undergraduate students, and continue to volunteer for Hispanic/Latino STEM organizations at work.

I am excited to bring my professional skills to further grow and strengthen the MAES familia. I appreciate everyone's time and look forward to the opportunity to serve as the Vice President of the MAES National Board.

Thank you,

[2024] ELECTIONS FOR MAES NATIONAL BOARD



Name: Marissa Lemus

Position: REGION 4 VP EAST REGION

Chapter Affiliation:

Marissa Lemus, originally from Guatemala, is a passionate scientist deeply committed to diversity and inclusion. Her academic journey began with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, where she conducted groundbreaking research on the molecular characterization of corn to address hunger issues in her country.



Driven by her interest with biotechnology, Marissa pursued further studies at Northeastern University in Boston. There, she excelled academically, graduating summa cum laude with a Bachelor's degree in Biotechnology following a Master of Science in Molecular Bio.

Marissa's career has led her to Prime Medicine in Cambridge, MA, where she plays a pivotal role in cell therapy process development. Her work is characterized by innovation and progress, reflecting her solid commitment to making a positive impact in the field of biotechnology.

In addition to her professional endeavors, Marissa is deeply involved in supporting underrepresented students. She has provided mentorship and guidance to individuals from low-income backgrounds, first-generation students, and those with disabilities. At Northeastern University, Marissa actively contributed to fostering diversity and inclusion as a member of the CPS Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Marissa's multifaceted expertise and dedication to inclusivity position her as a driving force for positive change, both professionally and within her community.

Professional Experience:

Research Associate (Cell and Gene Therapy Process Development) at Prime Medicine.

The role involves contributing to the optimization and scaling of manufacturing processes. Collaborating closely with multidisciplinary experts, responsibilities include conducting experiments, analyzing data, and refining protocols to enhance efficiency and productivity. Ensuring adherence to regulatory standards and quality parameters is integral to the role. Through these efforts, the research associate plays a crucial part in advancing innovative therapies from laboratory research to clinical application, thereby contributing significantly to the improvement of patient outcomes and the progression of healthcare.

Outlook for MAES:

Organizations like MAES play a critical role in advancing diversity and inclusion within STEM fields, offering support, networking opportunities, and resources for Latinx professionals and students. Given the growing recognition of diversity's significance in fostering innovation and addressing complex challenges, it is anticipated that MAES will broaden its reach and influence.