

Thank you ASEE, for selecting me for the 2020 DuPont Minorities in Engineering Award. I am proud to be a member of this organization that promotes the impetus to excellence in engineering through education. It is a privilege for me to make it my life's work to provide an exceptional experience for students in their pursuit of this amazing field of study. I think more people should have access to the satisfaction of looking at the world through the lens of someone who feels like they can do the impossible every day.

I am humbled to be considered among those amazing individuals previously selected for this award. Particularly, I am grateful to Ray Landis and Paul Parker for showing me that this work is important and worthwhile. They left a legacy that transformed the work of supporting underrepresented minorities in engineering. Their camaraderie and wisdom are truly missed.

I am indebted to my mentor Charles Vela for offering me an internship in Washington, DC my senior year in college. That summer, I taught engineering topics to 8th and 9th graders from underprivileged metropolitan communities. I learned that young(er) people held to high standards will meet and exceed expectations when they feel encouraged, supported, and understood. Keeping in touch with these students and returning the following summer to witness their intellectual growth and curiosity taught me that I had the power and responsibility of mentorship to those who trust my guidance. The call for this form of leadership became my passion and has been my professional purpose for over 25 years.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at Illinois for nominating me. I am blessed to work with such kind and thoughtful engineers who love their work of transforming lives through engineering administration and education.

And finally, I want to thank Lucy, my bedrock and life partner, for her unconditional love, encouragement and support.