



# American Indian Science and Engineering Society recognizes Los Alamos as top employer

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## Meet the people who deliver excellence, every day

The positive experiences of people like Michael Duran help explain why Los Alamos National Laboratory repeatedly makes the list of Top 50 STEM Workplaces for Native American Professionals compiled by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES).

In the latest [AISES report](#), published in the spring 2018 issue of Winds of Change magazine, the Laboratory made the Top 50 list with Fortune 500 companies as well as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories and the U.S. Department of Energy.

## Diversity contributes to Lab success—and safety

A health physicist, Duran carries out his challenging responsibilities at the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center (LANCE), an 800-MeV accelerator where researchers from Los Alamos, other government labs, academia and industry come to run experiments.

“The Lab has provided me with a great working environment, opportunities to succeed that include student mentoring and the privilege to help support the Laboratory’s mission,” Duran said. “I help provide radiation protection support for high-power beam operations, maintenance activities and a wide variety of nuclear research activities.”

## Duran—once inspired by AISES—supports Lab mission today

Duran discovered his thirst for science through an AISES summer program at Colorado College, while growing up on the Southern Ute Reservation near Ignacio, Colorado.

What he wanted to do with science wasn’t quite clear to him, though, until he became a graduate research assistant in Los Alamos National Laboratory’s radiation protection

group. Following encouragement from his LANL mentors, Duran pursued his master's in health physics from Colorado State University.

His grandfather and two uncles had been hard-rock miners in the San Juan Mountains in the 1940s, a notoriously dangerous occupation.

And now Duran, for the past 26 years, has been using his advanced studies at Los Alamos to protect workers and the public from potential radiation hazards.

## **Lab voted strong supporter of diversity**

The mission of AISES is to substantially increase the representation of indigenous peoples of North America in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies and careers.

Los Alamos showed its strong support of diversity in the answers it provided for the Top 50 survey:

- The Laboratory recruits specifically for Native Americans
- Native employees hold management positions at the Lab
- The retention rate for Native employees is comparable to the rest of the total employee population

While Native employees hold some management positions at the Lab and the retention rate is comparable to the rest of the total employee population, Los Alamos continues to strive to recruit more Native employees.

## **Lab recruiting for diversity in STEM areas**

New Mexico has the fourth largest Native American population in the United States, but recruiting Native talent has challenges. The percentage of total LANL employees who are Native American is about 2 percent.

Los Alamos continues to strive to recruit more Native employees — and here are two of those initiatives:

- Through a one-year Department of Energy grant, the Lab has been working with its Native American employees to connect with students at colleges in New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado; meet students at Native-focused STEM conferences; and facilitate the placement of Native American students. The Lab is seeking funding to support a similar effort in FY19. The highest-demand, easiest-to-place professionals are in computer science, engineering, chemistry, physics and math/statistics, according to Scott Robbins, who heads the Native American Student Outreach Initiative.
- Another important effort is the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Sciences (GEM) program, which enables qualified students from underrepresented communities to pursue graduate education in applied science and engineering.

I believe that technology careers are limitless with lots of opportunities. At the end of the day, I always feel fulfilled since I have the ability to work on developing business solutions for LANL to become more efficient and effective.” — Povi Cruz (Enterprise Business Software group, SAE-2)

