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Celebrating Ten Years of Involving Undergraduates in Computational Science Research

(Source: [LSU Office of Research & Economic Development](#))

Juana Moreno, associate professor at the LSU Department of Physics & Astronomy and the LSU Center for Computation & Technology, recently received \$358,900 from the National Science Foundation towards her tenth consecutive year providing interdisciplinary research experience in computational sciences for undergraduate students:

"Ten years sounds like a lot of years, but this is a great opportunity to involve more undergraduate students at CCT. There's a clear need for training the workforce on computing and data science, and we get students from all over the U.S. It's a diverse group and a good recruitment strategy, too. Many of them enroll as LSU graduate students later on.

"We've had 115 students in total in the last nine summers, so 13 students each summer on average and we get about 100-200 applications each time. They're sometimes afraid at the beginning—but as soon as they complete their first project, they come to some kind of realization—either they love doing research, or they realize research is not for them—that is a good outcome, too, because the last thing you want is a graduate student who after a couple of semesters realizes that this is not what they want to do. Then it's better if they go work directly with companies, or do something else. It's good either way.

"We get them engaged with authentic computational science projects where they learn how to use state-of-the-art cyberinfrastructure tools, manage large amounts of data, experience activities that characterize research careers and work in interdisciplinary research teams. These skills have the potential to be transformative in both the students' education as well as their future careers.

"We get great students. From our last five cohorts, five students have received NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, and other students have received a Goldwater Scholarship, a Louis-Stokes Fellowship and a GEM Associate Fellowship and Sloan Scholarship. Sometimes there are outcomes we weren't planning for—a couple of students who met here are getting married this summer. We've been so very lucky with students, but also, they were good to start with!"

More information about the program is available on the [CCT REU website](#).

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