



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **ACAD Announces Recipient of Award for Excellence in Academic Leadership**

Washington, DC – September 24, 2019 – The American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD) Board of Directors is proud to announce the recipient of the third annual Award for Excellence in Academic Leadership: Dr. Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, Dean of the Burnett Honors College (BHC) and Professor of Public Administration at University of Central Florida (UCF). The award was established by ACAD to recognize individuals who exemplify excellence in academic leadership through shaping and supporting positive change on their campuses and in their communities.

Dr. Piñeres was nominated for “her work to diligently create a climate of equal opportunity and inclusiveness” stemming from “her commitment to fostering a climate of diversity and understanding of differences,” according to her nominator. At Austin College, her work minimized the negative impact of “invisible knowledge” and supported a culture where every student had equal access to outcomes. During her tenure at Austin College, 40% of new faculty hires were diverse and 50% were women. Overall, faculty diversity at Austin College increased from 8% to 20% and the gender-equity gap was eliminated. At UCF, she has already designed programs emphasizing equal access to opportunities across the BHC Scholars student body.

“It is an honor to be recognized by my peers for leading positive change with a steadfast focus on access, excellence, and inclusion.” says Dr. Piñeres. “Excellence in leadership is only realized with the support and resilience of many. My appreciation extends to my colleagues at UT Dallas, Austin College, and UCF for their willingness to push the boundaries and champion innovation with me.” During her career, she developed innovative and collaborative programs. One of her most successful collaborative initiatives at Austin College was the Gateways Program which has more than 20 university partners representing over 90 graduate programs. The AC/Tech Connect: Gateways Opportunities in Healthcare illustrates her ability to work not only with faculty and senior cabinet but also with Board of Trustee leadership to create an innovative strategic alliance that will have a substantive impact on the College’s future.

At UCF, Dr. Piñeres is building on the strengths of the liberal arts college with best practices from a R1 university to create a climate in the Burnett Honors College that cultivates talent and inspires excellence. As a spokesperson and champion for higher education, her message is continually focused on the transformative power of higher education and developing future leaders capable of critical and independent thought. Inside and outside the academy, Dr. Piñeres truly embodies all that the ACAD Board wishes to promote and recognize as a recipient of this award. ACAD will present Dr. Piñeres with the award during its Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The presentation will take place during the Keynote Luncheon on Friday, January 24, 2020.

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*Founded in 1945 ACAD is an individual membership organization dedicated to the professional development of academic leaders. Recognizing that provosts, deans, and other academic administrators undertake academic leadership as their “second discipline,” ACAD’s mission is to assist these leaders as they advance in careers dedicated to the ideals of liberal education.*

Information about ACAD membership, programs, and publications can be found by visiting [www.acad.org](http://www.acad.org)