

PRESS RELEASE

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International Technological University (ITU) Professor Dr. Tom Tafolla Wins Lemelson Fellowship And Discovers Over 10,000 Patents From American Latino Inventors

San Jose, CA – International Technological University (ITU) continues to lead in the field of industry-linked education, research and in understanding the needs of underrepresented students pursuing graduate degrees, specifically Hispanic and Latino students in STEM fields. We are proud to announce that the 2018 – 2019 Lemelson Center Fellowship for the Study of Invention & Innovation Fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. was awarded to our very own distinguished faculty member and Chair of Engineering Management, Professor Dr. Tom Tafolla.

From June 4, 2017 to August 8, 2018, Professor Tafolla carried out his research at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (NMAH) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in Alexandria, Virginia. He began his work on American Latino patent history after learning about the apparent lack of quality information regarding American Latino inventors. He also discovered that previous research simply lumped inventors together on the basis of last name. The problem here is that there was no differentiation made, between a Filipino Santos and a Latino Santos. His groundbreaking work uncovers the plethora of achievements of Latinos in aeronautics and other STEM fields. Furthermore, Dr. Tafolla is near to completing an academic-grade research project on the history of Latino inventorship in America; he's created a bibliographic record of American Latino inventors; identified female American inventors of Latin American or Spanish origin; and has created a data set for further study by historians. One notable mention uncovered by his research, is the amazing case of Belen Quezada, a Costa Rican American, who patented the design of a "Flying Machine" in San Jose, CA in 1912.

Professor Tafolla's focus on academic rigor and novel investigation encapsulates the core of ITU's entrepreneurial spirit, our emphasis on tech innovation, research and the incorporation of these ideas into the classroom. He continues to raise the proverbial academic bar by promoting these core values to his students and peers. As part of cultivating entrepreneurial endeavors here in Silicon Valley, Professor Tafolla co-founded ITU's Global Partners Accelerator (GPA), a hybrid incubator/accelerator program that nurtures technology-oriented business startups and provides sustaining support after launch. Dr. Tafolla has over three decades of industry experience in Silicon Valley and received his Juris Doctorate from the University of San Francisco and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Santa Clara University.

About International Technological University (ITU)

ITU was established in 1994 as a nonprofit graduate university located in the heart of Silicon Valley. Our locale, flexible schedules, affordable tuition and internship program allows our students to immerse themselves in the bustling tech culture. Our mission is to cultivate an educational pedagogy that inspires innovative thinking, ethical leadership and entrepreneurial spirit through practical, industry relevant curriculum that reflects Silicon Valley culture. Visit www.itu.edu.

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