

President France A. Córdoba, Purdue University



France A. Córdoba became the eleventh president of Purdue University on July 16, 2007. Prior to joining Purdue, Córdoba served as Chancellor at UC Riverside from 2002-2007. An internationally recognized astrophysicist, Córdoba has also served as professor of Physics and Vice-Chancellor for Research at UC Santa Barbara. Before joining UC Santa Barbara in 1996, she was Chief Scientist at NASA from 1993 to 1996, serving as the primary scientific advisor to the NASA administrator and the principal interface between NASA headquarters and the broader scientific community.

Córdoba headed the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics at Pennsylvania State University from 1989 to 1993. She was a member of the staff of the Space Astronomy and Astrophysics Group at the Los Alamos National Laboratory from 1979 to 1989, where she also served as Deputy Group Leader.

Córdoba's scientific career contributions have been in the areas of observational and experimental astrophysics, multi-spectral research on x-ray and gamma ray sources, and space-borne instrumentation. She has published more than 150 scientific papers, and has a current experiment flying on the European Space Agency's X-Ray Multi-Mirror Mission, she is the winner of NASA's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Medal, and was recognized as a 2000 Kilby Laureate, for "contributions to society through science, technology, innovation, invention, and education." She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the Association for Women In Science (AWIS). In September 2007, she was named to the board of directors of BioCrossroads, Indiana's initiative to grow the life sciences through a public-private collaboration that supports the region's research and corporate strengths while encouraging new business development.

The oldest of twelve children, Córdoba attended high school in La Puente, California, east of Los Angeles. She then entered Stanford University, where she graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in English, and, among other activities, conducted anthropological field work in a Zapotec Indian pueblo in Oaxaca, Mexico. She earned a PhD in Physics from the California Institute of Technology in 1979. In 1997, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. Córdoba holds the title of Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy at UC Riverside.

Córdoba is married to [Christian J. Foster](#), a science educator, and has two children in college.