

CELEBRATE PURDUE WOMEN

XIMENA ARRIAGA



HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

Success involves those achievements or solutions that lead you to feel good – not just for yourself but also for others.

WHAT DOES MENTORSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

Mentorship is having someone who is available as needed who is a good listener and provides a good sounding board. A good mentor instills trust and provides a supportive space for talking honestly about issues, without fearing that disclosing things to someone else will cause problems down the road.

WHAT ROLE HAS COMMUNITY PLAYED IN YOUR SUCCESS?

It's hard to define things as successes when they only benefit yourself, and especially when achievement or solutions come at the expense of others. Early in my career, success was about personal achievement, but it has evolved to be about solutions that work for others too. It's hard to find successes that are truly a solo effort; they are communal in nature in that anything that has felt like a personal success almost invariably relied on things that others did. It's hard to imagine any success that is truly attributable to only one person's efforts.

WHAT ROLE HAS COLLABORATION PLAYED IN YOUR ACADEMIC JOURNEY?

Collaboration has been incredibly useful. It's useful when planning a project to think broadly and deeply; when collaborators are chosen carefully, having others involved leads to better ideas at that planning stage. After planning and once a project is underway, it helps to have collaborators who specialize on specific tasks; it's the most efficient way to cover many skill sets, rather than having to "do it all" oneself. Finally, rather than work alone, it's just more fun to have collaborators, especially when they are collegial people.

Ximena Arriaga is an Associate Head and Professor of Psychological Sciences at Purdue University. She studies how close bonds affect people, including how they can boost happiness and security but also can cause pain and distress. Dr. Arriaga recently spent two years as a Program Officer at the National Science Foundation, has held several elected positions in professional organizations, and has been an Associate Editor for Journal of Personality and Social Psychology and several other journals. Her research on attachment processes was covered recently by The Atlantic and Psychology Today.