

Maria Olubunmi Ogunyankin Marquez



As a young girl from Guatemala, Maria Olubunmi Ogunyankin Marquez was encouraged by her mother to pursue a range of interests including: learning English, French, Italian, Japanese and martial arts. She holds a second degree black belt in Kenpo Karate, which she has been teaching for the past 7 years, and also enjoys playing chess and piano.

From 2000 to 2006, Maria studied chemical industrial engineering at Rafael Landivar University in Guatemala City. During this time, she was the Director of the Chemical Engineering Students' Council. In the

Association of Chemistry Students, Maria was an organizer as well a participant of national and international conventions for chemical engineers.

In 2003, Maria was elected President of the Engineering Students' Association Honors Board. She also founded the Occupational Health Club within the university's Science and Technology unit to promote better workplace health conditions.

Maria's master's thesis, "Optimization of the Processes of Compression of Ground Valerian Root in a Pharmaceutical Laboratory Situated in the Capital City," received special acknowledgment from the university. Upon graduation, she continued on at Rafael Landivar for a post-master's degree in administrative engineering, and pursued an M.B.A. at the Atlantic International University. While at Rafael Landivar University, she also taught engineering and chemistry classes and was a thesis adviser.

After her master's and M.B.A. degrees, Maria worked at a pharmaceutical laboratory for 5 years as an Operations Manager, a Quality Assurance Manager and a Quality Assurance Supervisor.

In July 2007, Maria was selected to participate in the U.S Institute for Student Leaders Program in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Washington, D.C. This program was offered to 130 student leaders from around the world. A year later, she was invited to speak at MIT's Gathering of Titans (GOT), a forum for some of the top speakers and entrepreneurial minds in the U.S.

Maria was selected as a International Fulbright Science and Technology Award winner and began her Ph.D. study in chemical engineering with an emphasis on biotechnology at the University of California, Davis in fall 2008. She is now working on a project funded by the National Institute of Health titled, "A Novel Computational Model to Study B Cell Signaling and Antibody Production."