



Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and Southwest Airlines 15th Anniversary Quinceañera ¡Lánzate! Premio Universitario Program

Former recipients on “How ¡Lánzate! gave me wings...”

Jessica Arzola, Harbor City, California

“Because I was able to visit family more often, I was able to concentrate on my studies, I felt more at peace, and I felt more connected with home despite being across the country. I simply cannot thank Southwest Airlines enough. I am now a professional and can afford to travel leisurely. And to this day, I always choose to fly with Southwest. Because you supported me as a student, I now support your company as a loyal and appreciative customer.

Carlos Aviles, Irvine, California

“The ¡Lánzate! Award gave me the much needed opportunity to be with my family for the holidays. Being over a nine hour drive from the complete opposite side of the state, alone in an unfamiliar area without family support can be difficult. It was being able to visit my family during the holidays that allowed me to mentally restore myself by checking in with loved ones.”

Raymundo “Alex” Cardenas, New York, New York

“Was able to see my family during college winter break, when the likelihood was that I would be unable to afford traveling to see them. This had the positive effect of allowing me to recharge.”

Michael Castano, Novi, Michigan

“These tickets allowed me to visit my ailing father while attending college since my family and I had limited financial capabilities and could not afford the expensive flights during the holidays. I am truly and forever grateful for having had this opportunity and be able to be by my father’s side given his terminal illness at the time. Thank you for continuing to provide this opportunity.”

Maria Elena Cruz, East Palo Alto, California

“The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and Southwest Airlines ¡Lánzate! Premio Universitario de Southwest Airlines helped me at a moment in my life where I thought I would not make it as a graduate student.” “I am a huge advocate of HACU and Southwest Airlines ¡Lánzate! Premio Universitario de Southwest Airlines’ program and promote this award to all my students who are here at San Jose State University.

Dianne Dimas, Alexandria, Virginia

“There is nothing like going home to your family after a grueling semester for inspiration and encouragement.” “From a psychological perspective, being able to go home to my family was probably one of the healthiest things I could have done for myself.” “I think ¡Lánzate! has taught me that everything I will ever learn will not be from living in one place my whole life. And that when one takes-off, one must relentlessly travel with intention and a goal in mind.”

Angelica Garcia, Phoenix, Arizona

“Without this award, I am not sure if I would have been able to continue at ASU but by having the opportunity to connect with my family during the year, during holidays and at a time of a medical emergency that I would have otherwise not been able to be there for, I was able to push forward through the feeling of giving up to complete my degree in Political Science with a minor in Public Service and Public Policy.”

Rigoberto Perez Hernandez, Watsonville, California

“El ¡Lánzate! Travel Award le dio alas a mi familia. The ¡Lánzate! Travel Award gave wings to my family. The travel award not only eliminated the financial burden of long-distance travel, but also allowed my family to see me cross the stage during my graduation at Cornell University.”

Selena Huapilla-Perez, East Lansing, Michigan

“Going to school 1,376 miles from home is hard and being the first in my family to navigate college I was happy to find a scholarship that catered to my needs.”

Ashley Jaramillo, Irving, Texas

“The ¡Lánzate! travel award empowered me when I needed it most. I had one specific moment where I thought, can I do this? At my weakest point, the travel award gave me the opportunity to see my family that reenergized and refocused me. They helped motivate me to keep going and I’m so glad I did.”

Elba Mandujano (Pineda), Bell Gardens, California

“Being awarded the ¡Lánzate! travel award impacted me in more ways than I can explain. Being able to come home was extremely instrumental in being able to finish my degree. This was because it gave the opportunity to recharge and reconnect. When I went back home, I felt so empowered to go back and finish my degree because my degree was not only for me, but for a community. I was and continue to be extremely grateful for the opportunity ¡Lánzate! gave me.”

Miguel Martinez, Durham, North Carolina

“I used the award to bring my parents to my graduation.” “I am eternally grateful for the ¡Lánzate! Travel Award, Southwest and HACU as a whole. You all have provided me with the ability and hope to keep pushing forward regardless of my socio-economic background.”

Sylvia Mendoza, Fort Worth, Texas

“Every year I share with my students this scholarship and other opportunities through HACU.”

Marisol Sierra, San Francisco, California

“I currently work as a counselor and advisor for first-gen, low-income students in colleges across the country. I definitely shared this scholarship with my students who qualified and made sure to explain how important the benefit was for me as a first-gen student attending college away from home.”

Leobardo Vallejo, Weslaco, Texas

“Currently I have a group of students that I mentor weekly. The students consist of about 15 Latinx freshman all with different majors and interest. As their mentor I try to expose them to cultural awareness, opportunities, ways to stay motivated, book recommendations, and many more ways to have the greatest success in college. Most of these students come from backgrounds, like mine and it is why I constantly remind them about the benefits that the ¡Lánzate! scholarship can give them.”