Research has revealed that the language used to describe Latinx students and other minoritized groups in STEM has focused on highlighting their “deficiencies” first rather than on challenging deficit models or the structural conditions these students constantly face. The legitimization of certain forms of knowing in STEM, particularly in engineering, has led to the perceived notion that students of color have particular “needs” that need to be “fixed” in order for them to be functional or successful in those spaces. This narrow conceptualization of what knowledge is and how it is generated fails to acknowledge these students and their communities as holders and creators of knowledge. This talk will focus on the impacts of acknowledging various forms of knowledge and knowledge construction to provide better opportunities for participation and inclusion for marginalized students, particularly Latinx students. These asset-based approaches (e.g., rasquachismo, funds of knowledge, conocimiento) seek to bring more culturally responsive engineering education, greater participation in STEM, and better initiatives to achieve equitable access to engineering.

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