

IMPACT REPORT

2025 ELITE

Leadership Academy



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Exemplifying Leadership in a Team Environment (ELITE) Leadership Academy empowers Latina high school students to lead with confidence, authenticity, and purpose. Through a week of hands-on workshops, mentorship, and career exploration at George Mason University, students strengthen their academic, professional, and personal skills needed to thrive in college and beyond.

Professionals from Google, Amazon, Salesforce, Microsoft, and other partners guided students as they identified their strengths, refined communication skills, and built their leadership presence. Pre- and post-program surveys showed strong gains across all areas of development, including public speaking, networking, storytelling, and self-advocacy. By the end of the week, over 90% of students felt more confident in their leadership abilities and career readiness.

A panel of judges evaluated each student's final Portfolio Presentation and selected the top three for scholarships. LLT awarded \$2,500 in total scholarships: \$1,000 for first place, \$750 for second, and \$500 for third.

LLT also partnered with Macy's to host a professional shopping experience for 12 students. Each student received a \$200 budget and worked with stylists to select professional attire for future academic and career opportunities, totaling a \$2,400 in-kind donation.

Since its inception, the ELITE Leadership Academy has equipped 33 young Latinas with the tools and confidence to lead with authenticity, resilience, and pride. Each year strengthens this growing network of empowered young women who advance LLT's mission and redefine what leadership looks like.



Introduction

Our Mission, Our Story

“Participating in the ELITE Leadership Academy has opened so many new doors and opportunities for me. I have seen growth in my professional side and am overly joyed that I had this opportunity to learn.” — *ELITE 2025 Participant*

Leadership begins with voice, and for many young Latinas, ELITE is where that voice finds strength.

This year, the ELITE Leadership Academy welcomed 23 high school students from across the DC metropolitan area for a transformative week of hands-on workshops, mentorship, and community-building — a 130% increase in participation from the previous year.

The ELITE program addressed leadership barriers while nurturing the strengths, voices, and aspirations of its participants. Through a week of interactive workshops, mentorship, and community-building, participants explored their strengths, learned to tell their stories with confidence, and developed professional tools such as LinkedIn profiles, resumes, and personal brands.

By week’s end, students demonstrated measurable growth in leadership confidence, communication, and self-awareness. Nearly 74% reported increased confidence in their leadership abilities, while more than 90% showed gains in career readiness. Students also reported stronger personal confidence, enhanced presentation and networking skills, and a deeper understanding of how to tell their stories with clarity and impact.

In 2025, ELITE continued to grow in reach and impact, shaping future leaders across every session, every classroom, and every community we serve. Together, we are building not just future professionals, but future leaders: Latinas who lead with authenticity, courage, and community.





Our Team

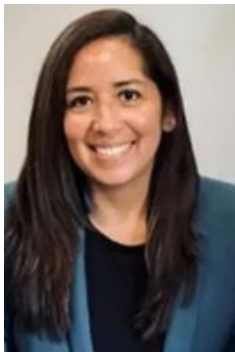
The ELITE Committee successfully led the planning and implementation of the ELITE Leadership Academy, with continued support from the Latinas Leading Tomorrow (LLT) Board of Directors.

Founder



Madeline LaSalle
Fraizer, LCSW Founder

LLT Board of Directors



Rebecca Singhavong
CPA, MBA Chair



María Sol Catana
Treasurer



Dayana Villanueva
Fundraising



Gina Callirgos
MSW, CDP
Secretary



Felicia Wilkerson
Board Member



Genesis Santiago
Community
Engagement



CDR Cristina Dar
STEMpower Camp



Celinez Núñez
Board Member





Our Team

ELITE Operations



Wilvia Espinoza
Interim Executive
Director



Cintya Flores
Executive Director



Jennifer D. Rodriguez
Program Director



Isabel Brum Cancio
Program Coordinator



Camila Sánchez
Program & Community
Engagement Intern

Program Assistants

- ★ Daniela Gonzalez Castro - ELITE Alumni
- ★ Dayana Abigail Torres - ELITE Alumni
- ★ Valeria Pina Perera - CORE Alumni
- ★ Abbi Torres - ELITE Alumni

Marketing Assistant

- ★ Gracie Gosier

Volunteers

- ★ Daniela Farajado
- ★ Sofia Guiton - ELITE Alumni
- ★ Ashly Euceda - ELITE Alumni
- ★ Sofia Avalos - ELITE Alumni





ELITE Leadership Academy

2025 Cohort

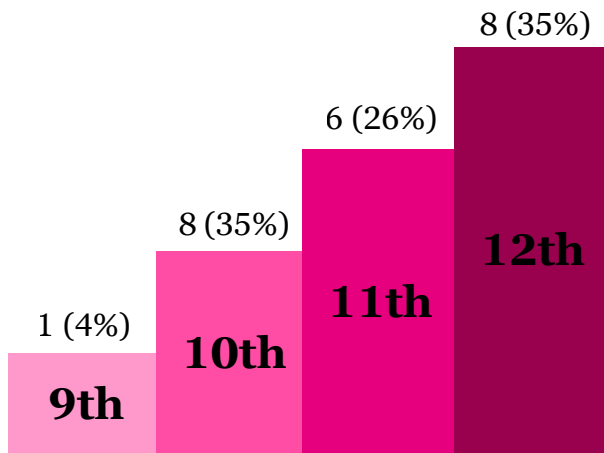


This year, 43 students applied to the ELITE Leadership Academy, and 23 were selected by a panel of three external judges based on the strength of their applications, academic records, recommendations, and community involvement.

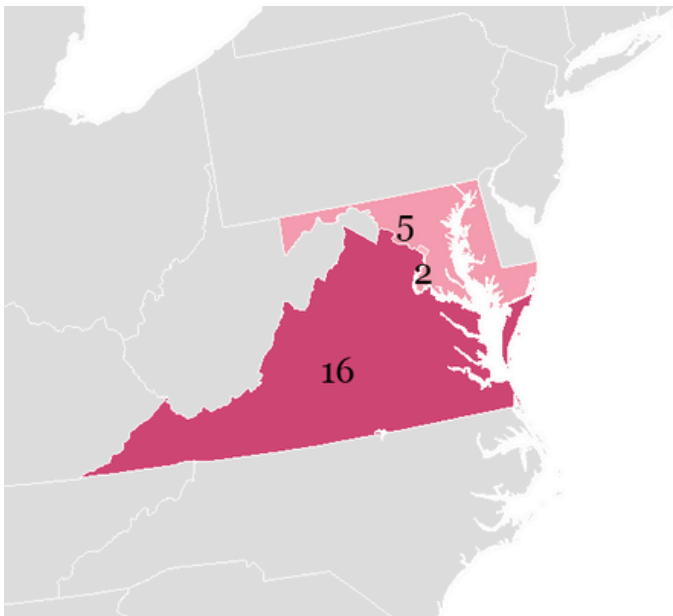
Our 2025 cohort represented the diversity and talent of the DC metropolitan area: 16 students were from Virginia (including Arlington, Herndon, Manassas, Springfield, Falls Church, Annandale, Woodbridge, and Alexandria), five from Maryland (Brandywine, Clarksburg, Silver Spring, Kensington, and Bethesda), and two from Washington, D.C.

More than half of the participants (14 students) were first-generation college-bound. Together, these students brought a wide range of experiences, goals, and perspectives to the 2025 program.

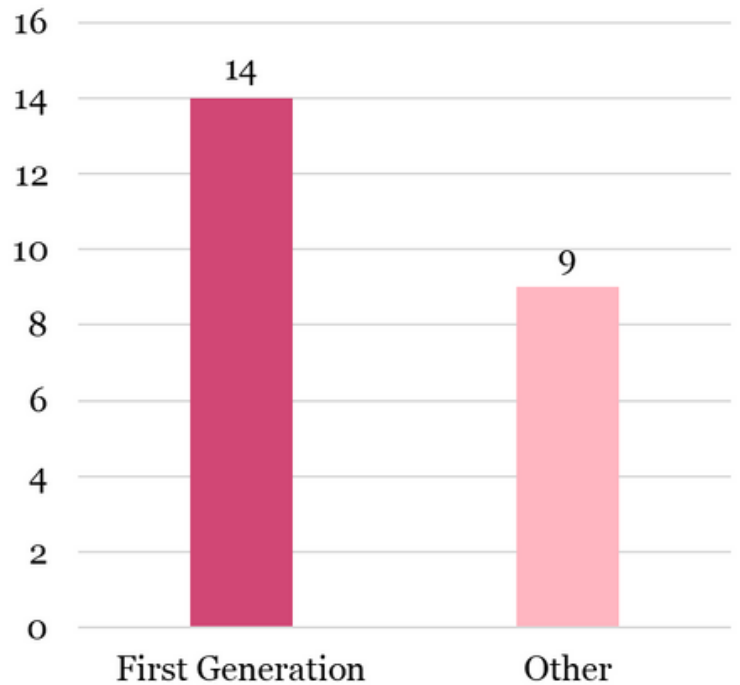
Girls' Rising Grade Distribution



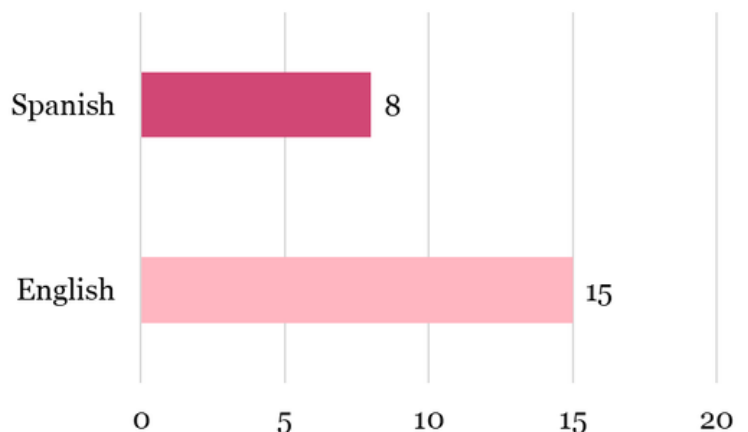
Regions Represented



First in Their Family to Attend College



Primary Language at Home



A day-by-day at ELITE

Monday: Leadership & Strengths

Students discovered their unique talents through CliftonStrengths with Leadership Facilitator, Eduardo Villavicencio.



Tuesday: Personal Branding & N'etiquette

Students gained insights from Google on professional online presence and completed an AI Tools Certification with Ernst & Young.



Wednesday: Pathways to Power

Students maximized their career tools by mastering LinkedIn and resume building with Salesforce. They later visualized their paths with vision boards and personal decks that highlight their goals and strengths with Microsoft.



Thursday: Personal Storytelling & Speaking

Students crafted their personal pitch and prepared to network effectively with Amazon. They also learned how to speak with confidence and power with Public Speaking Coach, Yvonne Armenta.



Friday: Portfolio Presentations

Students showcased their growth and skills to a panel of surprise judges. Students were judged based on Content, Organization and Speaking Skills.



Saturday: Graduation Brunch

ELITE Students and Families were celebrated at Sabores Restaurant in Arlington. LLT hosted families, showcased everyone's accomplishments, gave certificates, and announced the Top 3 and Top 12 Winners of the Portfolio Presentations. Students also won Latina Public Speaking Decks and a free consultation with Yvonne Armenta, from Latina Present!



Our Impact in Numbers: Personal Growth

How we measured growth

Participants completed pre- and post-program surveys to assess their growth across key leadership and career readiness skills. The assessments measured confidence in leadership, self-awareness, public speaking, networking, personal branding, and presentation abilities. This approach helped evaluate the program's impact on participants' professional confidence, communication skills, and preparedness for future academic and career opportunities.

"In just five days, I watched a cohort of young women completely transform. It shows how much potential emerges when you create an environment for young Latinas to thrive." — ELITE Mentor, 2025

Students learned how to present themselves professionally.

Scores for personal-branding knowledge rose from **5.5 to 7.7**, a **41% improvement**.

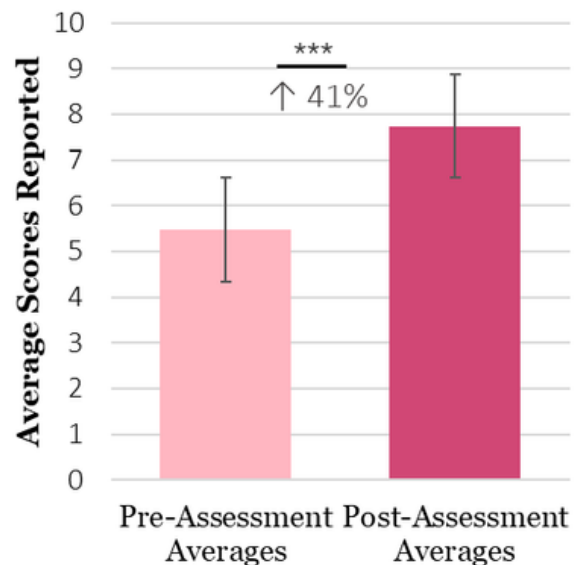
Hands-on LinkedIn and résumé workshops helped students define **their strengths and project confidence in academic and career settings**.



"I've learned to speak up, loved learning about my CliftonStrengths, and everything about this week has been full of new experiences." — ELITE 2025 Participant

Personal branding

■ Pre-Assessment Averages
■ Post-Assessment Averages



Our Impact in Numbers: Personal Growth

Students learned to share their personal stories with clarity and pride.

Comfort in storytelling grew from **6.0 to 7.8**, showing a **31% increase**.



Through elevator-pitch coaching and personal narrative sessions, **participants learned to articulate who they are and what drives them.**

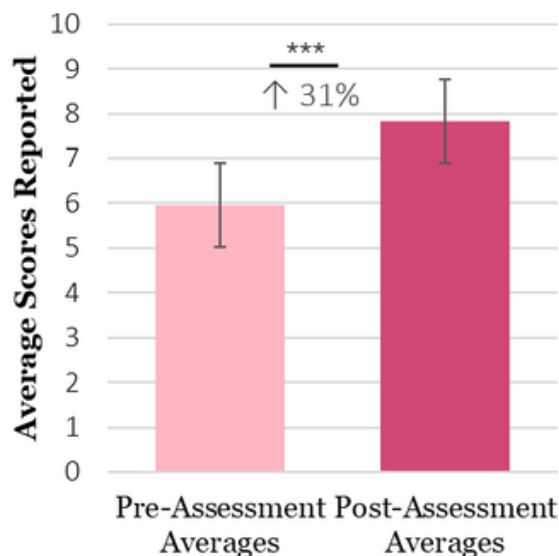
“[What made ELITE valuable was] meeting new people, being vulnerable in a good way, and having a nice environment to open up.”

— ELITE 2025 Participant





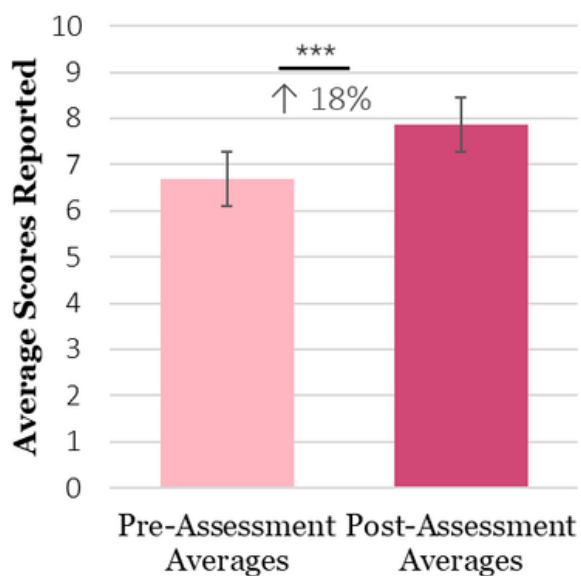
Storytelling skills

 Pre-Assessment Averages
 Post-Assessment Averages



Personal confidence

 Pre-Assessment Averages
 Post-Assessment Averages



ELITE helped students believe in themselves.

Students' overall self-confidence climbed from **6.7 to 7.9**, reflecting an **18% increase**.

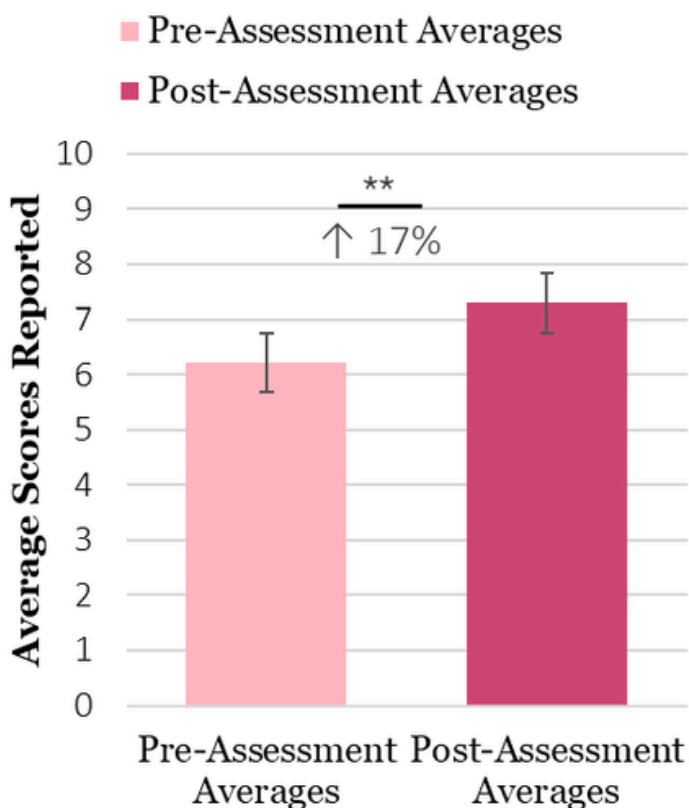
Through reflection exercises and supportive peer circles, **participants built a stronger sense of identity and personal worth.**

“[The ELITE Academy] taught me so much more than I expected it to. I learned a lot about myself and what I want to do in the future.” — ELITE 2025 Participant



Our Impact in Numbers: Personal Growth

Confidence in leadership



Students finished the program with stronger leadership confidence.

After a week of mentorship and team-based workshops, average leadership confidence rose from **6.2 to 7.3**, a **17% increase**.

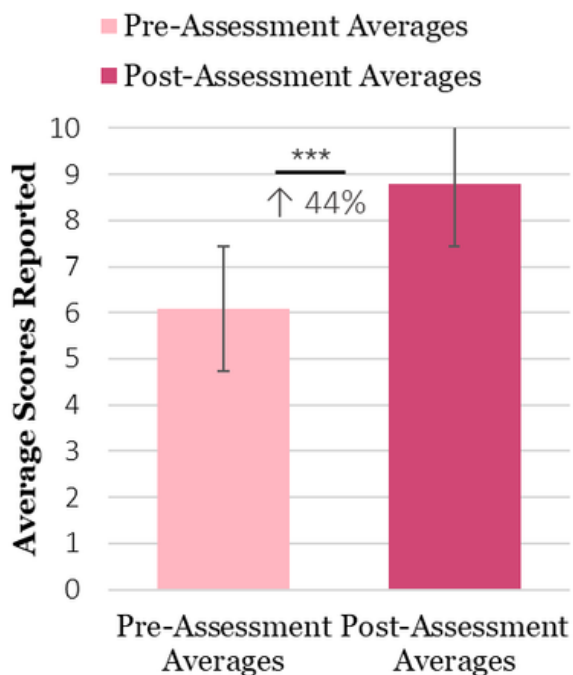
Students left **ready to take initiative and guide others with assurance**.

“Participating in ELITE Leadership Academy has opened so many new doors and opportunities for me.”
 — *ELITE 2025 Participant*



Our Impact in Numbers: Professional Growth

Career readiness



Students left better prepared to pursue their career goals.

Career-readiness confidence rose from **6.1 to 8.8**—a **44% gain**.

Through résumé building, interview prep, and LinkedIn training, **students left ready to navigate professional spaces.**



“It was so valuable to me to be in a room full of Latinas, and to see that there is such a big community here.”

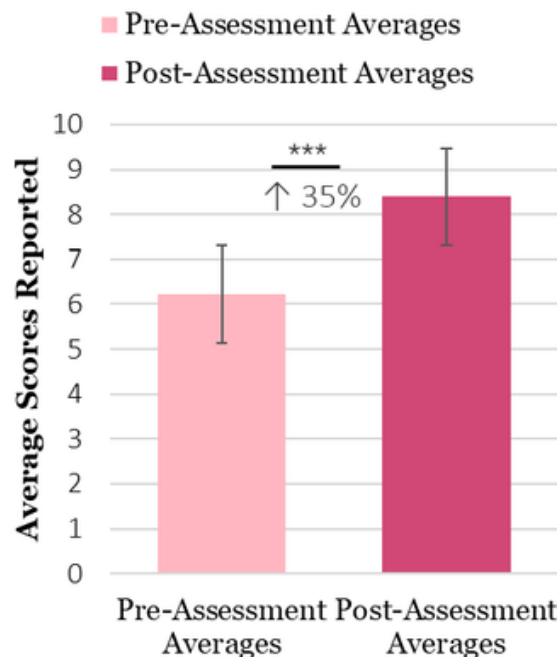
— *ELITE 2025 Participant*

Students increasingly recognized the power of networking for their future.

Understanding of networking’s value rose from **6.2 to 8.4**—a **35% increase**.

Conversations with Google, Amazon, and Salesforce leaders showed how **connections can open doors.**

Networking awareness

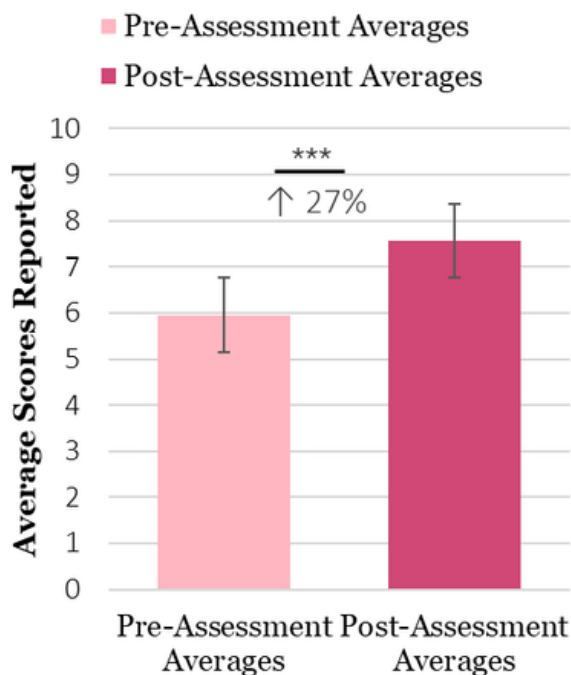


“I gained new friendships, met new people, networked, and gained lots of feedback.”

— *ELITE 2025 Participant*

Our Impact in Numbers: Professional Growth

Presentation skills



Students strengthened their ability to present ideas with impact.

Presentation skills improved from **6.0 to 7.6**—a **27% increase**.

Daily practice, peer feedback, and final showcases **built professionalism that students can carry into classrooms and careers.**



“It was truly a privilege. The advice given was amazing, and [learning] the communication skills I need to have made me more confident.”

— *ELITE 2025 Participant*

Students became more comfortable sharing their voices.

Average comfort with public speaking increased from **5.8 to 6.7**, a **17% growth**.

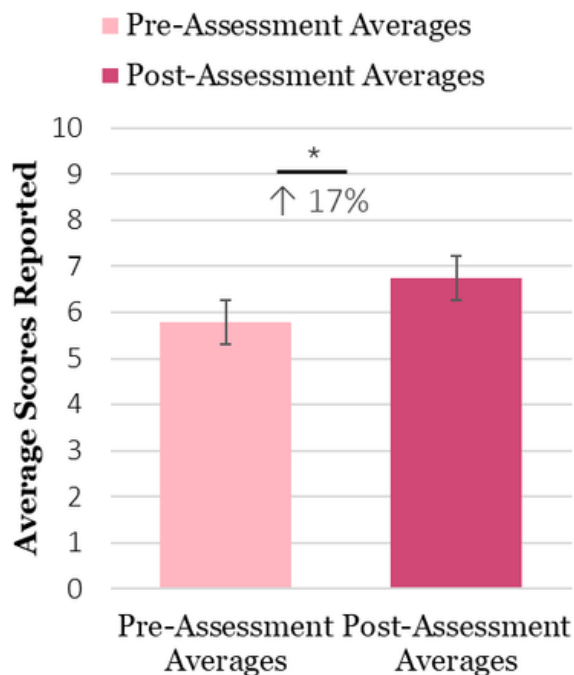
Practice sessions and the final Portfolio Showcase gave students repeated chances to speak before peers and mentors, **turning anxiety into confidence.**

“I really felt like a part of a community and felt comfortable and confident speaking.”

— *ELITE 2025 Participant*



Public speaking



Celebrating Excellence: Awards & Recognition

The ELITE Leadership Academy wrapped up with a celebratory Graduation Brunch at the Latino-owned restaurant, Sabores, in Arlington, VA. Participants were honored for their growth and courage, surrounded by family members and mentors. Students received certificates and raffle prizes as we proudly announced the Top 3 scholarship winners and Top 12 presenters. It was a beautiful moment of *comunidad*, *orgullo*, and celebration!

Top Presenters Earn \$2,500 in Scholarships

All ELITE participants delivered a final Portfolio Presentation showcasing what they had learned and improved on throughout the week (e.g., resume/LinkedIn, Clifton Strengths, etc.) Judges from Microsoft and M&T Bank scored presentations based on **content** and **speaking skills**.

The top three presenters earned scholarships, and the top ten were recognized for excellence:

- 1st Place: \$1,000
- 2nd Place: \$750
- 3rd Place: \$500



Top 12 Presenters Take Their Confidence Beyond the Classroom

The top 12 Portfolio Showcase winners joined LLT staff for a personalized styling session with Macy's. Each student received professional attire, curated for college interviews, internships, and presentations, to help them put their best foot forward.

LLT extends heartfelt thanks to Macy's and its dedicated staff for their generous donation of time, expertise, and funding, which made this empowering experience possible.



Recognizing the Power of Voice

Students also competed for special recognition in public speaking. The top 12 performers received Latina Public Speaking Decks and a one-on-one consultation with public speaking coach Yvonne Armenta of Latina Present!

As a First-Gen Latina in tech and communications leader, Yvonne empowers others to use their voice as a tool for confidence, advocacy, and connection. Her approach to public speaking—rooted in *cultura*, storytelling, and authenticity—reminds students that their lived experiences are their greatest strength.

This award honors students who found their voice and inspired others with clarity, confidence, and authenticity.



Macy's Shopping Experience

The top 1 winners of the Portfolio Presentations enjoyed a professional shopping experience with Macy's stylists. This experience helped students translate what they learned during the week into action, putting their best foot forward in attire designed for college interviews, internships, and professional presentations. The curated wardrobes reinforced the importance of showing up with confidence and authenticity in every setting.

LLT extends heartfelt thanks to Macy's and its dedicated staff for their generous donation of time, expertise, and funding, which made this empowering experience possible.



Conclusion

Full Circle: From Participants to Leaders

This year, seven LLT alumnae returned, not as students, but as mentors, volunteers, and role models. Among them, Valeria and Daniela served as Program Assistants, helping to guide the next generation of Latinas in leadership. Their journeys remind us that LLT's impact continues long after graduation.



"Someone in LLT once saw potential in me when I couldn't see it myself, and that belief changed everything. Now, I want to be that person for the next generation, to show each girl that she is capable, valued, and not alone."
— Valeria Pina, CORE Alumni & Program Assistant

"LLT has helped me become the person I'm becoming day by day. It has helped me step out of my comfort zone, learning to network and make meaningful connections. I loved the sense of community in Elite, filled with inspiring memories" — Daniela Gonzalez Castro, ELITE Alumni & Program Assistant



Their stories represent what ELITE is all about: leadership that multiplies. When alumnae return to teach, mentor, and serve, they turn lessons into legacy. Each year, more young women find their voices through LLT, and many, like Daniela and Valeria, come back to lift others as they climb. That's the power of community and the heart of Latinas Leading Tomorrow.



Acknowledgements

This would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and partners: George Mason University, M&T Bank, Chats with Yvonne, Salesforce, Macy's Inc., Google, Amazon, Ernst & Young, Microsoft, and our individual supporters.

We are deeply grateful.

ELITE Leadership Academy Guest Speakers

Eduardo Villavicencio
Leadership Facilitator

Natalia Mier
Child Safety Enforcement
Specialist, Google

Juliza Majano Poltorak
Trust & Safety Policy
Specialist, Google

Yadira Maldonado-Colón
Manager, Enterprise Risk,
Internal Audit, Government &
Public Sector, Business
Consulting, EY

Yvonne Armenta
Keynote Speaker, Public
Speaking Strategist, and
Consultant

Gaby Barrera
LLT Madrina

Felicia Wilkerson
Director of Business
Programs at Microsoft &
Board Member of LLT

Mike Schoelen
Sr. Account Solution
Engineer, Salesforce

Ray Han
Sr. Site Reliability
Engineer, Salesforce

Beatriz Fernandez
Corporate Marketing Sr.
Manager, Salesforce

Isabella Ray
Agile Transformation
Coach, Salesforce

Rina Moreno
Vice President, M&T
Bank

Marieli Silvia
Student at Virginia Tech,
Salesforce

Andrea Hernandez
President, LatinoForce,
Salesforce

Sam Parsons
Finance Chair, LatinoForce,
Salesforce

Silvia Badilla Arroyo
Philanthropy Chair,
LatinoForce, Salesforce

Elizabeth Almanza
Federal Partners, AWS

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