



PROFILES IN DIVERSITY

March 2021

Catalina Martinez
Regional Program Manager for NOAA's
Office of Ocean Exploration and
Research (OER)



ABOUT CATALINA MARTINEZ

Currently on detail with NOAA's Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights, Catalina is the Regional Program Manager for NOAA's OER. A certified diversity professional with three graduate degrees from the University of Rhode Island (URI) (MS Oceanography, MMA Marine Affairs, MBA), Catalina began her ocean science career with NOAA in 2002 as a John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellow. After spending several years in NOAA Headquarters in Silver Spring, she established a regional office at URI in 2004 to formalize important NOAA partnerships with URI and the Ocean Exploration Trust. She spent many years working on telepresence-enabled expeditions to explore little known and unknown ocean areas.

Catalina overcame tremendous odds to obtain the education of her choosing, and became a courageous trailblazer who demonstrates unparalleled dedication to serving the underserved and marginalized. A self-professed 'community builder' she's been recognized for leading national efforts to break down barriers to entry for underrepresented scholars into academic, enrichment, and workforce opportunities.

She was honored with the URI Diversity Award for Staff/Administrator Excellence in Leadership and Service in 2010, and was recognized by the YWCA as one of their 2015 Women of Achievement in Rhode Island for promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity. In 2019, Catalina received the Women of Color in STEM Diversity Leadership in Government Award for demonstrating sustained leadership in creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive Federal workforce. Armed with an infectious laugh and unwavering determination, Catalina has spent her life converting barriers into detours, and demonstrating that where you begin your life does not have to determine where you end up.