Tampa, Fla. (February 25, 2010) – Adriana Chacon, a senior in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, was awarded first place in the engineering category for best oral presentation during the 17th Annual NSF Florida-Georgia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (FGLSAMP) Career Expo held at USF, February 26-27. This year’s conference was hosted by USF’s FGLSAMP Bridge to Doctorate and FGLSAMP programs and sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the USF College of Engineering, and the Office of Research & Innovation.

Adriana’s research “Evaluation of the RT3 Tri-axial Accelerometer to Measure Physical Activity in Manual Wheelchair Users with Spinal Cord Injury” was completed during a summer 2009 internship with the NSF-funded Quality of Life Engineering Research Center at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. She has participated in undergraduate research with the Center for Assistive and Rehabilitation Robotics Technologies (CARRT) at USF and the College of Engineering Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program. Adriana is a member of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and has received scholarship support from NSF-funded programs (FGLSAMP and S-STEM) and the College of Engineering.

Annually, the FGLSAMP Career Expo provides a national forum for minority undergraduates in science and engineering disciplines to give research presentations (oral and poster), attend workshops, and panel sessions focused on gaining admission to graduate programs and obtaining research internships. Students are afforded opportunities to meet and network with exhibitors from graduate programs, national labs and industry.

The University of South Florida is one of the nation’s top 63 public research universities and one of only 25 public research universities nationwide with very high research activity that is designated as community engaged by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. USF was awarded $380.4 million in research contracts and grants in FY 2008/2009. The university offers 232 degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, specialist and doctoral levels, including the doctor of medicine. The USF System has a $1.8 billion annual budget, an annual economic impact of $3.2 billion, and serves more than 47,000 students on institutions/campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and Lakeland. USF is a member of the Big East Athletic Conference.