

Oscar González
Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholar Class of 2009
Studied Computer Engineering at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, NJ
Radio Frequency Traffic Engineer with Verizon

When Oscar was in high school, he hoped to be a student at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. For financial reasons, he had resigned himself to attending a community college instead.

From a financial perspective as well as an academic one, “school got to a point where my parents couldn’t really help me,” said Oscar. When he was chosen to be an Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholar, the Alliance not only helped him to afford college but it connected him to a network of new mentors and new experiences.

Oscar majored in computer engineering at NJIT. During his first summer, the Alliance paired him with an internship at the Food and Drug Administration in Maryland, which forced Oscar to live away from home.

“That was probably the biggest turning point in my life,” he said. Oscar learned how to make a healthy meal for himself, how to balance a work routine, and how to navigate the traffic of Washington, D.C.

He returned to the FDA the following summer. An Internship at the Department of Defense followed. More specifically, he worked at Picatinny Arsenal testing and enhancing artillery systems. For his final summer, he interned at Verizon.

He was hired by Verizon after graduating from NJIT and is currently completing a three-year leadership development program with the company. His job is to study the radio frequency patterns at wireless cell towers and to determine where more capacity is needed, for example at football stadiums or concert venues.

He is also completing a master’s degree in science and telecommunications management online through the Stevens Institute of Technology.

At work, Oscar says, “I really do feel like I have a voice.” He is often involved in executive level assignments and is currently developing a workshop to teach others how to use a geographic information system. “I’m trying to become the go-to guy at work for maps.”

He loves being able to see his work in action.

Oscar doesn’t have family, friends or any support system in Georgia and every year of the program he will move to a new city. Still, he says, “I saw the most personal growth out of an experience that would take me out of my comfort zone.”

Already he’s pleased with the progress he’s made. Walk into any retail store in Georgia or Alabama and you’ll see maps indicating areas where an enhanced voice quality service is available. Oscar designed these maps and said: “That’s the best part—being able to see my work in action.”