

“For Carlos it was hard,” Galván Sr. said. “Imagine you’re in college, you have all this pressure, being far away from home, and then dealing with the uncertainties this disease comes with. Fortunately enough, God blessed me and I survived this. With my son studying how to cure cancer, it had a big impact on all of us, but this was more of an inspiration for him to do better.”

As a doctoral student, Galván researches a type of skin cancer called squamous carcinoma, tracking its progress in the body as it grows and metastasizes.

“While studying biochemistry at UCLA, I was in a program that encouraged me to join a research lab which was something that was completely unfamiliar to me,” Galván said. “I’ve always had the curiosity to figure out why things happen and had a high disease prevalence in my family and friends growing up, so having conducted research since 2016 has allowed me to tackle down these two areas.”

Galván also treasures the outreach he does as president of UCLA’s Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), which helps to guide low-income and underrepresented students into STEM fields. SACNAS focuses heavily on outreach and invites K-12 students to campus for daylong science activities, like explaining the science of silly putty to elementary school students or making lava lamps with middle school students.

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