Dr. Idalis Villanueva is a professor in the College of Engineering at Utah State University. She is a faculty mentor for the UTF program. Below, she describes her experience with the UTF program and why she believes it is helping students elevate their education. Enjoy!

Looking at my journey as an engineering educator and researcher, I can’t help but feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the student body as I too can recall the struggles of being a first generation, female, Latina engineer. When I was presented with the opportunity to develop an “Introduction to Engineering” course in the College of Engineering, I was ecstatic.

The College of Engineering is very interested at improving retention rates in our students, since the literature suggests that we are looking as much as about 50%-60% of our HIGHER performing students within the first two years of their engineering education.