On Campus

Angela Olinto Appointed University Provost

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Angela Olinto (Eileen Barroso)

Angela Olinto, a prominent astrophysicist and experienced academic administrator, was recently named provost of Columbia University.

Olinto comes to Columbia from the University of Chicago, where she most recently served as dean of the Physical Sciences Division, overseeing seven academic departments and a number of research centers and institutes.

A pioneer of astroparticle physics, Olinto has conducted seminal research on the inflationary origins of the universe, the cosmological effects of magnetic fields, and the structure of neutron stars. The implications of her work touch on everything from the workings of the universe to the evolution of life. She is the principal investigator of two NASA programs studying high-energy cosmic particles: the Probe of Extreme Multi-Messenger Astrophysics (POEMMA) space and balloon missions and the Extreme Universe Space Observatory (EUSO) superpressure balloon missions.

Born in Boston, Olinto spent her formative years in her family's native Brazil, graduating from Pontifícia Universidade Católica of Rio de Janeiro. She went on to receive her PhD in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before beginning her career at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory. She joined the University of Chicago in 1990 and twice chaired its department of astronomy and astrophysics before being named divisional dean in 2018.

Olinto says she was drawn to Columbia by President Minouche Shafik's vision for the University's leadership "in academic excellence in research and teaching, in global and local engagement, and in tackling the hardest problems of today and the future, including climate change, artificial intelligence, and mental health. I'm eager to contribute my small part to developing and preserving the greatness of American universities, and to growing this extraordinary institution."

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