

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Luis David García Puente

Luis David García Puente was born and raised in Mexico City. He received his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in 1999 and his Ph.D. in Mathematics from Virginia Tech in 2004. He has held postdoctoral appointments at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute and at Texas A&M University. In 2009, he was a New Researcher Fellow at the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute. Currently, he is Associate Professor of Mathematics at Sam Houston State University. His research focuses on computational and applied algebraic geometry. He is an associate editor for the American Mathematical Monthly and the Journal of Algebraic Statistics. His professional activities are motivated by the need to increase the number of underrepresented students that pursue advanced degrees in mathematics and the sciences. He is an active member of the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science and The National Alliance for Doctoral Studies in the Mathematical Sciences. He has directed research projects for 15 years, involving close to 100 undergraduate students in his work. Several resulting projects have culminated in award-winning student presentations and joint research publications. He is happily married and has three young daughters.

His research area is applied algebraic geometry. He uses and develops methods from algebra, discrete mathematics, and symbolic computation to understand and solve problems in industrial and applied mathematics. His research has been focused on addressing problems arising in biology, geometric modeling, physics, and statistics. His most important contribution has been in the novel area of algebraic statistics. Some of his early work provided the foundation for a large research branch in this field, namely the algebraic study of graphical models. Currently, he is co-developing a package in the statistical software R that allows scientists to perform contingency table analysis on small data where traditional asymptotic analysis is not applicable. In the future, he hopes to continue bridging the gap between theoretical advances and software tools that can aid further scientific discovery.

“Caminante’, wrote Spanish poet Antonio Machado, ‘no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.’ Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking. We as Latinos know about traveling long journeys, about dedication, responsibility, honesty and hard work. Our culture and beliefs form an integral part of the set of values and characteristics that make the United States of America the greatest country in the world. The future prosperity of our country is deeply dependent on our ability to close the current educational gap and become an integral part in the development of scientific and technological advances. The celebration of our Hispanic heritage serves to motivate our younger generations to travel the paths leading to advanced degrees in science and technology, to showcase that these destinations are open to us and that we can contribute to our country and society not only with our hard work but with our minds and our creativity.”

Lathisms was founded in 2016 in order to showcase the contributions of Latinx and Hispanic mathematicians during Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated in the United States from September 15 and October 15 every year. During this time, we feature/reveal a prominent Latinx/Hispanic mathematician daily. See all the featured mathematical scientists at LATHISMS.ORG.

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