

# Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



## Maria Mercedes Franco

Dr. Maria Mercedes Franco is Associate Professor and Chair of Mathematics and Computer Science at Queensborough Community College–The City University of New York. She has a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics from Cornell University. She also holds a M.S. in Applied Mathematics from Cornell University and a B.S. in Mathematics from Universidad del Valle (Cali, Colombia). Dr. Franco is a very committed educator, who for nearly 30 years has taught college and high school students at institutions in Colombia, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Dr. Franco is actively involved in activities that seek to increase the number of women and minorities in STEM disciplines, increase public understanding of and appreciation for mathematics & STEM, and address issues relevant to social justice. She is the author of a forthcoming book chapter entitled “Examining Human Rights through the Lens of Statistics” to appear in *Mathematics for Social Justice: Perspectives and Resources for the College Classroom Vol II* (Mathematics Association of America Press, projected for late 2019).

*“To me, the Hispanic Heritage Month is a platform that can serve multiple purposes, from showcasing the accomplishments of members of the Hispanic/Latino communities within the mathematical sciences, to helping us recognize and connect with one another, to reminding the larger mathematical communities (from K to 16 to graduate school to academic/non-academic employers and funders) that the gap in participation and opportunities remains large and will continue to be large unless we are intentional and strategic in our efforts to address issues of underrepresentation in the discipline. Lathisms offers a very creative way to help achieve some of these goals.”*

At Queensborough, Dr. Franco has worked on a wide range of initiatives. From 2006 to 2009, she was co-PI and Associate Project Director for a grant-funded initiative that led to the establishment and institutionalization of Service-Learning as a high impact practice at the college. From 2010 to 2012, she led a departmental, grant-funded initiative that supported the integration of Service-Learning into College algebra and pre-calculus courses. Under the same grant, she worked developing and co-directing the Minority Student Mentoring Program in Mathematics. From spring 2014 to summer 2016, Dr. Franco served as the college’s Coordinator for Undergraduate Research, and in that capacity she: co-led institutional efforts that established undergraduate research as a high-impact practice and launched the research-in-the-classroom modality on campus; was (founding) Campus Director for the CUNY Research Scholars Program. The program funds year-long research opportunities for associate degree students; and represented the college at the CUNY Undergraduate Research Council (CURC). At the department level, Dr. Franco led efforts to establish two research courses in mathematics and helped establish the OUR SUN Award for students engaged in undergraduate research in the mathematical sciences or computer science. From spring 2014 to summer 2015, Dr. Franco also served as the college’s Research Integrity Officer. She was instrumental in securing Queensborough’s participation in a 2016-2019 NSF-funded project led by the Community College Undergraduate Research Initiative (CCURI) and is a member of the college’s CCURI Team.

Dr. Franco is a member of the inaugural Mathematics Advisory Group for Transforming Post-Secondary Education in Mathematics, TPSE Math. Sponsored by Carnegie Corporation of New York, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and National Science Foundation (NSF), TPSE Math seeks to advance mathematics education reform efforts across the nation and across all types of institutions of higher education, from 2-year colleges to research universities.

---

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](http://LATHISMS.ORG).

*Thanks to the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematical Association of America for support of Lathisms.*