

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Laura Colmenajero

Laura was born in Madrid, Spain, where she grew up and studied a major in mathematics because she did not want to spend many years at the university studying medicine. It quickly became obvious that she had fallen in love with mathematics and that she wanted to know more. Laura moved to Sevilla, Spain, to continue with her studies. In Sevilla, Laura discovered the area of algebraic combinatorics and became fascinated by the beauty of the formulas and structures. Laura obtained her Ph.D. in 2016 at the Universidad de Sevilla, under the supervision of Emmanuel Briand and Mercedes H. Rosas Celis. Since then, Laura has been working in different universities around the world, such as York University in Toronto, Canada, and the Max Planck Institute for Mathematics in Leipzig, Germany. Nowadays, Laura is Marshall H. Stone Visiting Assistant Professor at University of Massachusetts in Amherst, United States.

Laura's research has its starting point in the intersection of algebraic combinatorics and representation theory of finite groups and expands to other areas from there, such as algebraic geometry, physics, and stochastic analysis. Concretely, she is interested in getting a better understanding of the combinatorial structures appearing in other areas and that are interesting on their own. As part of her research, Laura also enjoys working with undergraduate students. During the Summer of 2020, Laura worked with her REU student, Christo Keller, on parking functions and the statistics arising from diagonal harmonics. She was also a research leader for a team in the Advancing Inquiry/Inclusion in Mathematics Undergraduate Program organized by Pamela E. Harris.

As a female mathematician and immigrant, Laura shares her experiences with her students and colleagues. She also participates as a panelist in discussions with undergraduate and graduate students or at conferences. Laura considers it essential to talk about the challenges in academia, especially these days with online teaching and a very competitive job market. Laura also knows the importance of role models, so she participates in activities with female and underrepresented minorities organized by the AWM student chapter at UMass Amherst.

Laura is also willing to get more engaged in other service activities once she becomes an assistant professor.

"I grew up in Spain, and we do not learn much about American history other than the main wars. Knowing about Hispanic Heritage Month has made me read and learn more about the Hispanic Americans and understand the relevance of bringing our cultures into every aspect of our lives, including research and teaching. Moreover, as an immigrant in the US, I connect with other Hispanic and Latino communities differently, making me feel at home when I'm thousands of kilometers far from my hometown. This helps me to embrace my culture and share it whenever I can."

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](https://lathisms.org).

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