

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Andrés R. Vindas Meléndez

Andrés R. Vindas Meléndez is currently an NSF Graduate Research Fellow and Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Kentucky where he is advised by Benjamin Braun. He is also an affiliated graduate student in the Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino/a Studies program. Before arriving to Kentucky, he earned a master's degree in mathematics at San Francisco State University where his advisors were Federico Ardila and Matthias Beck. He completed his undergraduate degree in mathematics at the University of California, Berkeley, where he minored in Philosophy and Chicana/o & Latina/o Studies.

Andrés grew up in a Spanish-speaking household in Lynwood, California located in South East Los Angeles. He is the son of Costa Rican immigrants, Sara Meléndez and Rodolfo Vindas. He credits much of his success to his family who has always supported his academic goals. He owes part of his interest in mathematics to his middle and high school mathematics teachers, all of whom were Black or Latinx.

Andrés' research is in algebraic and geometric combinatorics, where he considers algebraic and geometric objects and studies their underlying combinatorial structure. In particular, he investigates combinatorial and geometric properties of polytopes and their lattice point enumeration. Combinatorics is an active research area and Andrés enjoys it because it allows him to collaborate not only with established mathematicians but also with both undergraduate and graduate students who may be new to research.

As an undergraduate, Andres became involved with the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and also co-organized the 2013 American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Regional Conference at UC Berkeley. He served on the culture-setting team for the 2018 Latinxs in the Mathematical Sciences Conference which was hosted by IPAM/UCLA, and with Pamela Harris, he has also co-organized sessions of "Latinxs Count: A Combinatorics (Math) Session" at the SACNAS National Conference. He is currently on the programing committee for the first-ever Queer and Trans Mathematicians in Combinatorics Conference to be held June 2021 in the Fields Institute in Toronto, Canada. At the University of Kentucky, he is a graduate advisor for the Latino Student Union, a graduate mentor for the UK alliance scholars of the Kentucky-West Virginia LSAMP Program and SACNAS chapter co-founder and board member.

"The word "Hispanic" was invented by the US government and is a term that comes with controversies. The reality is that it has now been widely accepted and is the term many people in the community identify with; though, I am cautious to use the word myself because of its erasure of privilege and history. Nonetheless, Hispanic Heritage Month to me means celebration and reflection. It allows us to celebrate the histories, cultures, languages, practices, and diversity that is found in our community. We don't all fit into one image; we are diverse, multi-faceted, and multi-dimensional and it should all be celebrated. It also allows us to reflect on how far our community has come and accomplished and what more needs to be done for everyone to thrive."

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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