

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Aisha Najera Chesler

Mathematician, RAND Corporation

Dr. Najera Chesler studied mathematics in Mexico City at the National University of Mexico, UNAM. In 2004, she was awarded a Gabino Barreda Medal, and as a high school student, she represented Mexico in an international math competition. Right after she finished school, she moved to Tucson, Arizona, for graduate school, and she obtained her M.S. in Mathematics. Upon completing her degree, she worked as a technical consultant for IBM doing SAP implementations for a couple of years and went back to school to get her Ph.D. in mathematics with Professor Radunskaya at Claremont Graduate University. While she was a doctoral student she went to summer schools, learned to program, worked as a research assistant, attended as many conferences as she could, and got an internship at RAND. A week after she graduated, her second child was born, and she took some time off to care for her before starting a job at RAND as an associate mathematician. For five years, she has been doing research focused on analytical and modeling work for the Army that supports readiness, efficiency, and modernization. Other research interests of hers include social media analysis, Latino populations, gender violence, and embedding diverse perspectives into data science practices.

“Hispanic Heritage month is an opportunity to celebrate our culture, commemorate our traditions and history, and highlight contributions of the Hispanic community.”

Dr. Najera proposed and co-organized an NSF-funded workshop for Women in Mathematics and Public Policy at IPAM-UCLA which resulted in the publication of a Springer book, which she co-edited, with the same title. The American Association for University Women honored her with a dissertation fellowship and, throughout her studies at CGU, she was a BLAIS/Maguire fellow. Dr. Najera has been involved in various mentoring programs and has taught math at Latino Technology events and elementary schools for Spanish-speaking immigrant parents. She has been invited to give talks at cybersecurity events for girls, about career advice for high school students, and on career panels at AWM and IPAM conferences.

Dr. Najera would advise students to learn to program, to take a diverse set of math classes, and to see it as an opportunity to learn new things rather than to specialize in an area. She thinks a modeling class is a must. She would also encourage them to learn about math applications to different industries and to take advantage of the projects and teamwork where there are often opportunities to do exploratory work and sometimes research.

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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