

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Diego Torrejón

Senior Staff Machine Learning Engineer, BlackSky

Dr. Diego Torrejón received his Ph.D. in mathematics from George Mason University in 2017. His dissertation research focused on modeling the coarsening process of polycrystalline materials via continuous-time random walk theory. During graduate school, he spent a year as a researcher for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), where he investigated the local structure of dipole glasses from molecular polarity vector fields. During his last year of graduate school, he accepted a data science internship position with the startup company OpenWhere. After graduation, he continued working with the startup as a machine learning engineer, implementing algorithms to solve natural language processing problems arising from news articles. OpenWhere was acquired in 2016 by global monitoring company BlackSky, where Dr. Torrejón has been working for the past five years to derive analytics and insights from satellite imagery utilizing state-of-the-art computer vision technology. Since 2018, he has joined the George Mason University Mathematical Sciences Department as an Affiliate Professor to teach deep learning with satellite imagery.

“Hispanic Heritage Month is a reminder to study hard, work smart, get ahead, and pursue your dreams; but don’t forget to keep the door open for others coming behind you.”

He was awarded the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship in 2014. He received the GRC Carl Storm Underrepresented Minority Fellowship in 2015. He received the SIAM Student Chapter Certificate of Recognition in 2013 and the Best Poster Award at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in 2012. Lastly, he’s received multiple travel grants from IPAM, SIAM, IMA, GRC, and PCMI.

At BlackSky, Dr. Torrejón handles satellite imagery data to solve cutting-edge computer vision problems such as image segmentation, object detection, and change detection. To do so, he uses an extensive library of mathematical tools including deep learning, statistical modeling, information theory, graph theory, dimensionality reduction, and machine learning.

Dr. Torrejón tells students that in this time and age, knowing how to program is an essential skill required by most industry jobs. As an emerging mathematician, combining your analytical skills with the versatility provided by coding will differentiate you from other co-workers. Another piece of advice is to learn non-mathematical concepts from physics, material science, finance, economics, pharmaceuticals, etc. Even though mathematics is the universal language across all scientific fields, knowing the proper terminology and open-ended challenges in each domain will keep you a step ahead in industry.

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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