

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Iliana Perez

Director of Research & Entrepreneurship/Lecturer, Immigrants Rising/UCLA/Claremont Graduate University (CGU)

Dr. Perez holds a B.A. in Mathematics from Fresno State, an M.A. in Economics from Claremont Graduate University, and a Ph.D. in Education Policy, Evaluation, and Reform, also from Claremont Graduate University. Dr. Perez was a 21st Century Civil Rights Graduate Fellow and a Douglas & Ethel Pearce Fellow while at Claremont Graduate University. She currently serves as the Director of Research & Entrepreneurship at Immigrants Rising, where she oversees the research and evaluation agenda of the organization, as well as the entrepreneurship programming. In 2021, Dr. Perez began leading the implementation of the SEED initiative, a \$5.4 million grant from the state of California that will expand Immigrants Rising's entrepreneurship work across the state. Dr. Perez also lectures in the Labor Studies Department at UCLA and in the Allies of Dreamers Certificate Program at Claremont Graduate University's School of Educational Studies.

“The opportunity to highlight the contributions and accomplishments of different groups of people throughout the year gives us an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the diversity within the U.S. I am proud of my Mexican heritage and appreciate the opportunity to celebrate my language, culture, and customs that are the core of my existence. After living in this country for over 25 years, I have embraced a dual identity with much appreciation for what I've received from both worlds. I hope these monthly celebrations help us understand ourselves and each other better to find consensus among us.”

Dr. Perez has been part of Immigrants Rising for over a decade, primarily working to raise awareness about income generation through entrepreneurship. This work began as a project to understand the post-college life for undocumented youth and evolved into an exploration of broader economic opportunities for the immigrant community through entrepreneurship. As a DACA recipient, Dr. Perez understands first-hand the challenges that the undocumented community faces and has devoted her academic and professional career to identifying and advocating for tangible solutions to improve the lives of immigrants in the United States.

Dr. Perez utilizes statistical and econometric methods to make sense of data. In a previous role as a research analyst, she worked with primary and secondary data for the write-up of technical reports and academic papers and used predictive modeling to produce national estimates. As a research analyst at an institution of higher education, she utilized assessment tools to assess student learning outcomes and engagement; helped build and manage a data warehouse that integrated variables from various offices; and used descriptive, inferential, and predictive analyses to understand enrollment, retention, graduation, and faculty course workloads.

Dr. Perez's advice is “to follow your passion and work to identify solutions. My academic and professional trajectory has been completely influenced by my personal experiences as an immigrant in the U.S. and my desire to contribute to positive social change. An investment in yourself will always pay off; this could be education, training, certifications, or even self-care. My education and training have opened up many more professional opportunities than what I thought was possible. It is also very important to make professional connections early on and foster good relationships.”

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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