Latinxs and Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences

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Maricela grew up in El Monte, CA, a low-income suburb in Los Angeles County composed of first- and second-generation immigrants with few college graduates. As the only U.S. born person in her migrant family, Maricela felt a lot of pressure to do well in school but often didn't know what 'doing well' entailed, apart from getting good grades. In high-school, Maricela participated in an Upward Bound program that motivated and prepared her to attend college; that was the first academic program, in a slew of many, that changed her life. Maricela received a full-ride scholarship to attend Pomona College where she obtained her B.A. in mathematics. Now, Maricela is an Assistant Investigator in the Biostatistics Unit at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute and an Affiliate Assistant Professor in the University of Washington Department of Biostatistics.

Maricela’s research primarily focuses on developing novel statistical methods to assess and evaluate the impact of complex health interventions. Currently, Maricela is developing statistical methodology to assess the impact of prediction models implemented in the clinical setting and of nursing processes with various implementation effect time lags across hospital units. Maricela works alongside researchers in behavioral health, mental health, Alzheimer's disease, and insurance design.

Maricela enjoys talking to higher-education students about her academic journey in any format (panels, presentations, informal discussions, etc.). She advises students to spend time and energy finding support systems like academic mentors, friends, family, therapists, activity groups, mathematically compatible peers, pets, plants, etc. She reminds students “Navigating institutions that have systematically excluded groups of people can be taxing, especially for people from one or more of these groups. Surround yourself with those who believe in you, give you the space to ask ‘silly’ questions, value your input, and/or understand your struggles. Do activities that will help you blow off steam. No one person or activity will meet all your support needs, so find the right group and balance for you.”

"Hispanic Heritage Month means visibility. It is a time in which the wonderful work of various Latinx and Hispanic people is highlighted, when it otherwise may have gone unrecognized."