

Latinxs and Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences



“As someone who grew up in a predominately white neighborhood in a predominately white city, Hispanic Heritage Month has always been a time where I could attend events and celebrations where I could come together and celebrate with people from similar backgrounds. This is always a special time to honor my culture and country and be able to show that off proudly to friends.”

Tenchita Alzaga Elizondo

Graduate Research Assistant, Portland State University

Tenchita was born in Chihuahua, Mexico but moved to Portland, Oregon with her family at only seven years old. She went to the University of Oregon to initially pursue a business degree. After not taking any mathematics courses her first term, she realized how much she missed and loved mathematics, so she changed her educational plans and completed a bachelor's degree in mathematics. With plans of being a community college instructor, Tenchita went to Portland State University and completed both a Master's in Mathematics and Master's in Mathematics for Teaching. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant, Tenchita had an opportunity to teach Portland State's diverse student population. During her graduate studies, a professor encouraged Tenchita to apply to their Mathematics Education PhD program opening her up to a whole new world of research that she quickly fell in love with. Currently, Tenchita is finishing up her dissertation work which focuses on students' collective mathematical proof activity in online spaces and is planning to pursue an academic career in the future. She hopes to both continue her research and advise future graduate students from underrepresented communities like herself.

Tenchita is lucky that her work allows her to reach hundreds of students and support them in finding a love for studying mathematics. In addition, her work has given her the opportunity to mentor younger grad students in the field of Mathematics Education research which she has found very fulfilling. Tenchita advises to students to more than anything, know that they belong and that their voices matter and should be heard. She tells them “It is easy to be silenced in academic spaces that have historically excluded minorities and where you are often viewed as the exception rather than the norm. Embrace your history and your culture and know that other's experiences are only enriched by yours.” Lastly, she adds, “find your people, while it might not always feel like it, we are out there and want to support one another.”

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).

Thanks to the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematical Association of America for support of Lathisms.