

Latinxs and Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences



"Truthfully, I do not feel a connection to Hispanic Heritage Month. These things can be tricky with only an allotted time for appreciation."

Larissa Peru

Mathematics Teacher and Math Lead, Desert View High School

As a first-generation college graduate, Larissa has always valued learning. Her mother emigrated from Mexico at a young age in pursuit of a better education. Despite this instilled affinity for learning, Larissa was advised against a career in math education by high school teachers and college advisors. However, as she progressed through college, she discovered there was much more to the subject of math than what was presented in high school. She could no longer resist the urge to teach mathematics, particularly in a way that promoted the logical yet remarkable beauty of the subject. Furthermore, she hoped to provide encouragement for future mathematicians and math educators who may have encountered push back, as she did. After graduating from the Secondary Math Education Program at the University of Arizona, she returned to the Sunnyside Unified School District to teach. Recognizing the tension often associated with mathematics, Larissa was aware she would need to provide a convincing argument for the subject. This meant keeping her practice fresh, actively seeking out professional development, engaging with educational research, and furthering her personal education to ensure she was providing the best possible instruction she could. This led her to return to the University of Arizona for a Master of Art in Teaching and Teacher Education through the Teachers in Industry program, where she continued to teach high school math while interning in the STEM industry over the summer. She is currently teaching Calculus while enrolled in a doctoral program through the University of Arizona's College of Education, with a major in math education and minor in diversity and social justice.

Larissa has found her calling in teaching, and in particular, teaching mathematics. While she loves the mental gymnastics of crafting lessons that allow students to experience joy in math, the true reward in teaching is the opportunity to learn with and from students. She is inspired by this generation of young people who hold an incredible depth of social awareness. She wants to contribute to the progress being made in solving the problems faced by our educational system and our society for the sake of these students, leading the charge for change. Most recently, Larissa proposed and received approval to offer an Applied Statistics course for the upcoming school year which will allow students to use statistical tools to critically analyze social issues in our world.

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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