

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Photo courtesy of Richard del Guercio

Dr. Olivia Del Guercio

Visiting Assistant Professor
Colorado College

Olivia Del Guercio was born and raised in Eugene, Oregon. She did not grow up especially enjoying or excelling in mathematics. It was not until she took linear algebra, relatively late into her undergraduate degree, from Dr. Stephan Garcia (featured in Lathisms Sept. 21st, 2017) that she saw how interesting and fulfilling math could be. She had the opportunity to pursue math further through the post-baccalaureate program at the Center for Women in Mathematics at Smith College. Olivia loved Smith for the math and for being a part of the cross country and track and field teams. Olivia was inspired to continue on to graduate school because of the example set by her mother, a first-generation Mexican-American college student and PhD in Economics.

Olivia was fortunate to continue on to graduate school at Rice University. There she would not have made it through without the help of her advisors, Dr. Tony Várilly-Alvarado (Oct. 11th, 2017) and Dr. Emily McMillon. Tony was a role model for Olivia in not only how he looked at math, but also in the kindness with which he treated other people. Emily provided compassionate guidance through the process of shifting research areas. In graduate school, Olivia worked on a classification of a particular kind of algebraic geometry code, which is a vector subspace one can build from a curve or surface that has applications to engineering. Olivia is now a Visiting Assistant Professor at Colorado College.

Olivia wants mathematics to be a more welcoming place at every level. She advocates for this in her classroom through including more scaffolding that makes the steps students must take to succeed explicit. During graduate school, Olivia helped develop a co-requisite pre-calculus course meant to support students in calculus. Olivia also participated in the Pomona Research in Mathematics Experience (PRiME) as a graduate student mentor. She assisted four undergraduate students on a commutative algebra project studying trace ideals over semigroup rings. At PRiME, Olivia also had the fortune of meeting and learning from Dr. Luis David Garcia Puente (Oct. 7th, 2016), Dr. Alex Barrios (Sep. 28th, 2020), and Fabian Ramirez (Oct. 5th, 2023).

"Many of the people featured in these testimonies have had a profound impact on my life, so I'm glad that we have this month to celebrate the myriad accomplishments of this community I am so lucky to be a part of."

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.