

# Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



## Roberto Pelayo

A native of the Los Angeles area, Roberto Pelayo was raised in a family of five children that valued education above all else. After finishing high school, Roberto attended Occidental College, where he majored in Mathematics and Psychology. For the next five years, he attended the California Institute of Technology (CalTech), where he obtained a Ph.D. in Mathematics in 2007, focusing his research on geometric topology. After a one-year visiting assistant professor position at the Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Roberto moved to the central of the Pacific to begin a tenure-track position at the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Hilo. During his time at UH Hilo, Roberto focused on providing unique educational and research opportunities to underrepresented undergraduate students. His research area shifted from geometric topology to computational algebra to better fit the needs of his students. Through several National Science Foundation grants, Roberto worked with dozens of students on research experiences and pedagogical training in the mathematical sciences. His current interests lie in Data Science curricular development and in training future mathematics teachers in novel educational techniques. This year, Roberto is transitioning to a new position at the University of California, Irvine.

Roberto Pelayo has always prioritized curricular and research programs that have lasting impacts on underrepresented students in the mathematical sciences and exposing all students to novel areas of mathematics. Early in his professorial career, Roberto was awarded the Board of Regents' Excellence in Teaching Award, the highest teaching commendation given by the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Outside of the classroom, Roberto secured several grants from the NSF that provided scholarships, research experiences, and new curricular programs for students around the country. His first major NSF grant was the Hawai'i Noyce Teacher Scholarship, which provided 10 UH Hilo students with scholarships and pedagogical training to become high quality teachers within the state of Hawai'i. With the Pacific Undergraduate Research Experience in Mathematics (PURE Math), Roberto helped provide pre-research and research experiences for dozens of students, co-authoring numerous publications with rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors, in the areas of computational commutative algebra. Most recently, his work with the 'Ike Wai EPSCoR Hawai'i grant has allowed him to develop the UH Hilo Data Science program. As director of this program, he developed an undergraduate certificate program and led summer research experiences and bridge programs.

*"Hispanic heritage month is a crucial time during the year when the Latinx / Hispanic community has the opportunity to reflect on our achievements and take stock of the obstacles that remain in our way. In the mathematical sciences, Latinx achievements are many, but it is easy to not recognize the vast impact we have had on this discipline. Looking forward, Hispanic heritage month gives us the opportunity to empower the next generation of Latinx mathematicians by recruiting, sharing, and collaborating on the next theorems, algorithms, and curricular packages."*

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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