

Henry L. Alder Awards

Pamela Harris

Williams College

Dr. Pamela Harris of Williams College has achieved tremendous success as a teacher and undergraduate research mentor. Her teaching evaluation scores are consistently high, and her students describe her as passionate, masterful, and inspiring. One student writes, “Dr. Harris always pushed us towards the deeper questions... and pushed us to think and learn in ways that were not always within our comfort zone.”

In the area of undergraduate research mentorship, Dr. Harris excels. Since arriving at Williams College in 2016, Dr. Harris has supervised 27 students, resulting in a staggering 16 joint publications with students. Williams College has already recognized her with the Davis Center Outstanding Mentor Award. Beyond campus, Dr. Harris has achieved a national impact on mentoring through her work as an editor of the AMS e-Mentoring Network. Additionally, she will soon begin serving as chair of the MAA Committee on Undergraduate Research.

Dr. Harris is a fierce advocate for a diverse and inclusive mathematics community. As co-founder of the Lathisms.org platform, she is internationally known for her impact on future generations through her efforts to highlight LatinX/Hispanic heritage in mathematics.

For all of these reasons and more, we recommend Dr. Pamela Harris for the Alder Award.

Response

To say that it is an honor to receive the 2019 Henry L. Alder award barely begins to express the sincere gratitude I feel. Since becoming an educator, I have had the fortune of being surrounded by colleagues who believe in making mathematics accessible and who share a passion for excellence in undergraduate education. Their support has been instrumental in my growth as an educator. In particular, I thank Drs. Alicia Prieto Langarica, Cindy Wyels, Chad Topaz, Erik Insko, and Mohamed Omar for their feedback and suggestions as I embarked on introducing inclusive pedagogical techniques in my classes.

Arriving at Williams, a beautiful place surrounded by mountains and where the setting sun turns the sky purple, I felt isolated and out of place. Yet I have seen my students succeed in the face of adversity, mathematical or otherwise, and they taught me the value of a community and the importance of belonging. They have also traveled with me on wild mathematical adventures—flipped classes, research based courses, and writing a book! Through these experiences, we discovered that mathematics is a vibrant and lively field to which we can all contribute meaningfully. Working with them has been the greatest joy in my professional career and I will do my best to continue to live up to the standards of this award.

I would also like to thank my family. Dear Jamual, thank you for supporting my dreams and being my rock. Akira thanks for being the reason I never settle—I know you are watching. Lastly, I thank my parents for inculcating in me the value of hard work and for their unending sacrifices giving me the opportunity to pursue an education.

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Pamela E. Harris is a Mexican-American assistant professor in the department of Mathematics and Statistics at Williams College. She received her BS from Marquette University, MS and PhD in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and was a Davies Fellow of the National Research Council with an dual appointment at the United States Military Academy and the Army Research Lab. Her research interests are in algebraic combinatorics, with a particular focus on the representation theory of

Lie algebras. Dr. Harris is a prolific researcher. Since 2016, she has published thirty peer-reviewed research articles and received grants from the National Science Foundation and the Center for Undergraduate Research in Mathematics.

Dr. Harris is an advocate for diversity and inclusion in the mathematical sciences. She has led efforts to secure funding for mathematics sessions and for student travel scholarships for the national conference of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science. In 2016, she co-founded lathisms.org, an online platform that prominently features the research and mentoring contributions of Latinxs and Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences. She serves as an editor of the e-Mentoring Network Blog of the American Mathematical Society and was lead editor for the 2018 Special Issue on Motherhood and Mathematics of the *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*. Dr. Harris has mentored over 30 undergraduate students on research projects and received the 2018 Outstanding Mentor of the Year by the Davies Center at Williams College. Dr. Harris has been featured in various publications, including being one of the fifty women featured in the book *Power in Numbers: The Rebel Women of Mathematics*.