Department of Mathematics receives $1.4 million to bolster BioCalculus curriculum

Led by Professor Bob Pelayo, the grant will help instructors merge concepts from math and biology.

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Lucas Joel
UCI Physical Sciences Communications



Pelayo's done much to enhance the diversity and inclusion efforts of the Department of Mathematics, including partnering with the Latinx resource center to create something called *Mermeladas de Estudio*. It’s Spanish for “study jams,” and it provides a space for Latinx math students to study together.

Picture Credit:
Laurel Hungerford

On May 27, the UCI Department of Mathematics received news that it won a $1.4 million grant from California Learning Lab — a state-funded organization that supports innovative teaching efforts in higher education — to give the department's teachers resources to infuse its current courses — in this case its Math 5 series — with concepts from biology. The program, called the BioCalculus Preparation, Engagement, and Application (BioCalc PEA) program, aims to give the department's courses more of an applied bend in order to enhance the relatability of the subject material, as well as to increase access to the courses. "A major deliverable will be an open education resource that will be freely available to our students that will replace our standard, for-purchase textbook," said Professor Bob Pelayo, who, alongside with collaborators in UCI Biological Sciences — as well as California State Universities in Fullerton and Fresno, which will receive "subawards" as part of the main UCI grant — will be the program's principal investigator. "This is an ambitious grant with a tangible opportunity to transform how BioCalculus is taught within the State of California," explained Pelayo, who expects the funding support to begin July 1.

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