

PRESS RELEASE

Dr. Tatiana Toro Named Next MSRI Director, 2022-2027

Distinguished University of Washington mathematician will lead international math institute

Berkeley, CA, June 15, 2021 – The Board of Trustees of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) announced today the appointment of Dr. Tatiana Toro to the position of Director of MSRI. Toro is the Craig McKibben & Sarah Merner Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Washington in Seattle. MSRI is one of the world’s leading centers for collaborative research in mathematics, overlooking the campus of the University of California, Berkeley and the San Francisco Bay.

“On behalf of the Berkeley campus, I want to offer a warm welcome to Professor Toro. We are thrilled and certain that her academic accomplishments, values, and experiences make her uniquely suited for the position,” said Carol Christ, chancellor of UC Berkeley and a trustee of MSRI. “I look forward to working with Tatiana to sustain and grow our rich and robust partnership with the Institute.”

Toro will maintain her tenure at the University of Washington during her five-year term at MSRI, which begins August 1, 2022.

“Professor Toro’s appointment as director of MSRI recognizes her wonderful accomplishments as a mathematician, educator, and champion of diversity and access in the field of mathematics,” said Mark Richards, provost and executive vice president of academic affairs at the University of Washington. “Her appointment brings great honor to the UW and our Department of Mathematics, and we look forward to even closer relations between the UW and MSRI as she takes the helm there.”

Her primary research interest lies in the interface of Partial Differential Equations, Harmonic Analysis, Calculus of Variations, and Geometric Measure Theory. The main premise of Toro’s work is that under the right lens, objects that at first glance might appear to be very irregular do exhibit quantifiable regular characteristics. Her work establishes unexpected bridges between these areas of mathematics, opening new landscapes for research.

As MSRI Director, Toro will build upon her long-standing relationship with the Institute to continue its mission to support mathematical research, foster talent, and further the appreciation

of mathematics by the general public, in the US and abroad. Her career path has included a strong focus on service to the mathematical community, including extensive mentoring of students at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels. Toro's commitment to addressing issues of equity and inclusion of underrepresented groups in the mathematical sciences is a guiding principle in each of these settings.

"MSRI has played a fundamental role in the development of the mathematical sciences and its workforce over the past four decades. Now more than ever, it is called upon to lead the community in a post-pandemic world, facilitating mathematical research at the highest level," said Dr. Toro. "We must work to ensure the well-being of the profession, and to communicate the relevance of mathematics to the public. I am fully committed to working with the deputy director, the board of trustees, the advisory committees, and the staff to write a new chapter in MSRI's history."

Toro's involvement with MSRI began during her graduate education at Stanford in the 1980s, when she participated in one of MSRI's first summer graduate schools. Since 1997, she has been deeply involved in the Institute's research programs, including co-organizing a semester-long research program and topical workshops. She was appointed the UC Berkeley Chancellor's Professor in the Harmonic Analysis program in 2017. Toro has also served on MSRI's guiding Scientific Advisory Committee since 2016, as co-chair since 2018.

Toro was born in Bogotá, Colombia and received her BS equivalent from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. She earned her PhD from Stanford University in 1992 under the supervision of Leon Simon. Toro has held positions at the Institute for Advanced Study, UC Berkeley, and the University of Chicago, before joining the University of Washington faculty.

Her honors and awards include a Sloan Research Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, and two Simons Foundation Fellowships. She was an invited session speaker at the International Congress of Mathematicians in 2010 in Hyderabad, India. She is a fellow of the American Mathematical Society (AMS), a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales. Toro is the recipient of the 2020 Blackwell-Tapia Prize and the 2019 Landolt Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award from the University of Washington. Her research has been continuously supported by the National Science Foundation since 1994.

Toro is the sixth director in the Institute's 40-year history. She succeeds David Eisenbud, who has served in the role for 20 years, from 1997-2007 and 2012-2022. Eisenbud plans to continue his teaching and research as a professor at UC Berkeley, where he looks forward to having more time to participate in the rich academic culture of the campus.

"When I became director of MSRI in 1997, the very first program I oversaw was on Harmonic Analysis, and I noted with interest the important role played by a promising young researcher: Tatiana Toro. Since then she has returned to MSRI in many different roles, most recently as a leader of MSRI's Scientific Advisory Committee, which determines all the major scientific activities of the Institute," said Eisenbud. "I have enjoyed working with Professor Toro over the

years, and have deeply appreciated her scientific acumen, wide knowledge, and high standards. I believe that she will continue the best of MSRI's traditions and lead it in exciting new directions, and look forward to watching these developments!"

Toro says she is grateful for the legacy that her predecessor has shaped at MSRI. "Under David Eisenbud's leadership, MSRI has flourished. He was responsible for a major expansion of MSRI's facilities and funding and he oversaw a strengthening and diversification of MSRI's scientific portfolio as well as the creation of outstanding programs in outreach and education. These developments have greatly increased the Institute's scientific stature and influence. I have had the invaluable experience of working with and learning from Professor Eisenbud, and I look forward to deepening my understanding of the Institute during the transition."

Toro's appointment as director of MSRI follows an international search led by a committee of the Institute's trustees, chaired by Edward Baker.

"It is a pleasure to congratulate Dr. Toro on her appointment as Director of MSRI," said Robert Stacey, dean of the University of Washington College of Arts and Sciences. "Dr. Toro is an outstanding mathematician and a widely admired leader in the mathematical community. I cannot imagine a better choice to lead MSRI, one of the premier mathematical institutions in the world."

Toro currently serves as a trustee of the Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics (IPAM) in Los Angeles, California, and of the Banff International Research Station for Mathematical Innovation and Discovery (BIRS) in Alberta, Canada. She serves on the Board on Mathematical Sciences and Analytics (BMSA) of the National Academy of Sciences as well as the US National Committee for Mathematics, which represents the International Mathematical Union (IMU). She was an elected member of the AMS Editorial Boards Committee (2016-2019) and currently serves as an elected member of the AMS Nominating Committee. Toro has played a leading role in the organization of the Latinx in the Mathematical Sciences conferences at IPAM, which has now joined the slate of programs under the NSF Mathematical Sciences Institutes Diversity Initiative. She has previously served on the board of directors of the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS) at the University of British Columbia.

About MSRI:

The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) is a landmark of US and world collaborative mathematical research. Over 1,700 mathematical scientists spend time at MSRI's Berkeley, California headquarters each year. It is a place where breakthroughs are made, research areas are created, and brilliant careers are launched. MSRI's education and outreach programs and film production for public television reach millions worldwide. MSRI has been supported since its origins by the National Science Foundation, now joined by other government agencies, private foundations, corporations, individual donors, and over 100 academic institutions. Learn more at msri.org.



Photo of Dr. Tatiana Toro, by Corinne Thrash, University of Washington College of Arts & Sciences. ([Download high-resolution image](#))

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