

Alumni Profile

Casey Kelleher – Mathematics PhD Program



Career

Please provide a brief overview of your career path since graduating from UCI.

Starting 2nd year of a postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University.

What made you get into the career that you are in?

I got diagnosed with "Arnold Chiari Malformation" my freshman year of college. Two math professors (Linda Patton and Matthew White) gave me work to do independently and it gave me a sense of purpose. It was something I could do and world I could explore from anywhere.

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

I hope to have a tenure track job at a university in the future.

Your Time at UCI

When did you attend UCI?

Fall 2012 - Summer 2017.

What program were you in?

Mathematics Ph.D.

Reflections

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI?

My most memorable moment was asking as a 1st year if I could attend the geometry learning seminar. I was warned it would be hard but had a surge of bravery to go for it anyway.

Did you do any research while at UCI and what was it?

Yes, I did a lot of work in geometric analysis (primarily Yang-Mills and harmonic map theory).

What has impressed you most about the subject matter that you chose for your research/degree while at UCI?

I was lucky because that particular research group grew significantly while I was at UCI.

Alumni Life

What are you currently up to?

Postdoctoral scholar at Princeton.

What advice do you have for a new graduate student?

Everyone (or almost everyone) is scared and insecure at the start. If you are willing to expose vulnerability, good people will respond respectfully.

What advice would you give to a current graduate student as they look towards their future careers?

Be flexible and don't dedicate yourself severely to anything. Life always twists and turns in bizarre ways.

What is the biggest obstacle transitioning from life of a graduate student to your career?

There is a lot of new pressure to be productive and strong that I had to learn to cope with.

What is the most unexpected life lesson that you gained from your time at UCI?

You do better work when you are enjoying life simultaneously, so keep yourself healthy and happy if you want to excel (even if it feels like procrastinating sometimes).

What are your hobbies/passions outside of your work/research?

Exercise, studying Japanese, making art, picking a history topic to learn well (eg. feudal Japan, Wars of the Roses, Romance of the three Kingdoms.)

How do you balance work/life?

I tend to overwork by myself so I cultivate friendships with fun, active people.

Is there a typical 'down' weekend for you--how do you relax?

Exercise, videogames, having food & drink with friends. Lately, I've been doing swimming, jump roping and rock-climbing.