

ORDER OF PEGASUS

REPRESENTING THE MOST DEDICATED, PASSIONATE AND HIGHEST ACHIEVING KNIGHTS

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CLASS OF

2025



STUDENT DIRECTORY

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Welcome, and thank you for helping us honor the Class of 2025 Order of Pegasus recipients.

The Order of Pegasus is the highest honor a student can receive from UCF, recognizing outstanding graduating seniors and graduate students who have demonstrated exemplary academic achievement, university involvement, leadership, and community service.

This year's 37 students are remarkable and are already making an impact on the world. Aside from focusing on academics and campus causes, many of the student honorees volunteered at hospitals, food banks, shelters, and with many other community service organizations. Among them are ground-breaking national and global scholarship winners, researchers, athletes, teaching assistants, and leaders in campus organizations such as Student Government, LEAD Scholars, and the President's Leadership Council.

They are among our brightest students — with a collective GPA of 3.89 — and include National Merit Scholars, Burnett Honors Scholars, and earners of prestigious honors such as the Astronaut Scholarship, Goldwater Scholarship, National Science Foundation Scholarship, and Gates Cambridge Scholarship.

They conducted, presented, and published research on many subjects, including advancements in healthcare for people of all ages and a variety of conditions, leaning disabilities, global energy issues, sustainability, natural hazards, and food allergies.

The UCF community is incredibly proud of these recipients and all they have accomplished. Please join us in offering your congratulations and best wishes for a very rewarding and impactful future.

Best,

Alexander Cartwright

Alexander N. Cartwright, Ph.D.
President





THE UCF CREED



INTEGRITY

I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

SCHOLARSHIP

I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

COMMUNITY

I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

CREATIVITY

I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

EXCELLENCE

I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.



DEGREE PROGRAM

Physics, Ph.D.

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Spartanburg, South Carolina

DAVE AUSTIN
'22MS '24PHD

GRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

DAVE AUSTIN earned his doctoral degree in physics from the University of Central Florida. His research on single-atom catalysts, on-surface molecular synthesis, and electronic structure engineering has led to three publications in notable journals, such as *ACS Nano* and *Nature Communications*, and he has presented his work at major conferences. In addition to his academic pursuits, Dr. Austin has been actively involved in community engagement through the Florida Education Prison Program, teaching physics to incarcerated individuals and participating in STEM outreach events. As a founding member of the American Physical Society (APS) student chapter at UCF, he contributed as treasurer and vice chair, tutoring graduate students and mentoring high school students in computational research. Dave is dedicated to advancing science and education to inspire future generations.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

My time at UCF has been transformative, providing me with world-class research opportunities, global collaborations, and a supportive community that encouraged my growth as a scholar and leader. UCF has equipped me with the skills and confidence to tackle complex challenges and make a meaningful impact in my field.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Following graduation, **I plan to continue my research journey as a postdoctoral scholar at a national laboratory**, contributing to cutting-edge projects in computational materials science and advancing innovations that address global scientific challenges.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Integrative and Conservation Biology, Ph.D.

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Virginia Beach, Virginia

TIFFANY DAWSON

GRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

TIFFANY DAWSON is a Ph.D. candidate in the Integrative and Conservation Biology program, recipient of the Boyd Lyon Memorial Fellowship, and previously received her M.S. degree in biology from Old Dominion University. She is a graduate teaching associate at UCF, has given over 30 guest lectures, and has presented her research at several international conferences, where she once placed first for her poster presentation. She has mentored seven undergraduates in independent research projects, co-mentored over 40 students during sea turtle field research, and received four research grants. She published five scientific papers and 14 grant and technical reports, with more in progress. She was also elected for leadership positions in the Biology Graduate Student Association as faculty liaison, graduate student recruitment and retention committee member, and as president.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

My time at UCF has provided a sense of community through research collaborations and public outreach opportunities. I gained valuable communication skills as a graduate teaching associate and honed my research skills through applied learning in the classroom and independently through my dissertation work.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I am applying for science policy fellowships through the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the NOAA Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship. **My goal is to apply my research experience toward marine policy and conservation management** at the state or federal level.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Education, Ph.D. (*Exceptional Education Track*)

COLLEGE

College of Community Innovation and Education

HOMETOWN

Plantation, Florida

TERI FAUCETTE

'98

GRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

TERI FAUCETTE is a doctoral candidate pursuing her Ph.D. in Exceptional Education. Having earned her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and her master's degree in Exceptional Education, she is on her way to becoming a three-time Knight! Teri has made significant contributions to scholarship as UCF's lead researcher on Project Social Code, an intercollegiate project that works to shift educational outcomes for students with autism and intellectual disabilities. She also serves as the doctoral scholar coordinator for the Exceptional Education Ph.D. program, the community outreach coordinator for the President's Leadership Council, and the academic coach for the Next-Gen SET Exceptional Education Master's Program at UCF, helping prepare future special educators in the field. Teri's unwavering commitment to scholarship and service is evident in everything she commits to at UCF.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

From the beginning, every professional opportunity I have had has been rooted in my affiliation here. I have been blessed enough to pass down that pride to my sons who are now both proud Knights as well.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

As a passionate educator with 20 years of experience in local public school classrooms, **I plan on taking a step up to become a university professor in order to help prepare the next generation of exceptional educators for classrooms of their own.** My goal is to work at an R1 research university so that I can also continue pursuing research that will improve the social and educational outcomes of students with disabilities.

DEGREE PROGRAM

History, M.A.

SEBASTIAN GARCIA

COLLEGE

College of Arts and Humanities

GRADUATE

HOMETOWN

Miami, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

SEBASTIAN GARCIA is a UCF History M.A. degree candidate whose research interests include technology and media history in the 20th century. Sebastian is the UCF History Department's podcast producer, which includes series such as *Knights HistoryCast* and *The 2023 UCF VLP Institute Podcast Series*, which won the Florida Historical Society's Hampton Dunn Digital Media Award, recognizing outstanding digital media projects that expand knowledge of Florida history. Sebastian also co-produced the acclaimed UCF Burnett Honors College documentary *Jewel of Parramore: The Wells' Built Hotel*. He is also a media production assistant with the Florida Historical Society, producing radio segments for *Florida Frontiers*, a weekly PBS program that explores Florida's history. Through his award-winning multimedia work, Sebastian aims to strengthen our historical literacy.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

Through [my professors at the UCF History Department], **my UCF education has guided me in this labyrinth of our world, opened remarkable opportunities, and continues to indelibly impact my development** as a professional historian and even as a person, to which I will always remain indebted.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I intend to continue my professionalization as a historian by receiving a doctorate in American history. As a professional historian, I aim to produce works that strengthen our historical literacy — through public history projects like podcasting — thereby rendering history more accessible and bridging the gap between academia and the public.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Education, Ph.D. (*Exceptional Education Track*)

COLLEGE

College of Community Innovation and Education

HOMETOWN

Lithia, Florida

JULIANA HIRN

'17 '19MA

GRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

JULIANA HIRN, Ed.S., CCC-SLP, is a doctoral candidate in Exceptional Education at UCF. As a person with disabilities herself, she is committed to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities. She has an Educational Specialist degree from the University of Georgia and is on her way to being a triple Knight, having previously earned bachelor's and master's degrees from UCF. In her advocacy efforts, Juliana was featured on the *Developmental Language Disorder Project* podcast based in Australia. Her leadership roles include serving as president of the Qualitative Research Club and the Association of Doctoral Scholars in Exceptional Education. She has been recognized by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association as a Distinguished Early Career Professional and as one of UCF's 30 Under 30 award recipients. Her research interests include accessibility, literacy, and learning disabilities.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

As a doctoral candidate, **UCF has provided me the opportunity to connect with researchers from all over the country.** I'm looking forward to continuing to have the opportunity to go to conferences, learn about evidenced-based practices, collaborate with other researchers, and extend the scholarship.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to pursue a post-doctoral position to deepen the understanding of developmental language disorder within the fields of speech-language pathology, exceptional education, and learning sciences. A post-doc will provide supervised work with an expert, preparing me for a successful career in academia, advancing my goal of achieving tenure.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Physics, Ph.D.

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Orlando, Florida

STEPHANIE LOUGH '21MS

GRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

STEPHANIE LOUGH is originally from N.W. Arkansas and is a first-generation graduate student. She worked as a lighting technician for a decade before returning to school, where she is currently a Physics Ph.D. candidate slated to defend in Spring 2025. Her research involves the characterization of 2D materials, which will contribute to the advancement of nanotechnologies. While at UCF, Stephanie has won three teaching awards, received an honorable mention for the distinguished NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, secured two internships at national laboratories, and is listed on eight publications, two being first author, with additional publications in progress. Stephanie is a founding officer of the American Physical Society (APS) Chapters, a student-led organization that has assisted in increasing the physics GRA stipend and improving candidacy exam rules. She is also an APS Advocacy Champion.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

I arrived at UCF through the American Physical Society Bridge Program. **My education at UCF has helped me to feel more confident in my abilities as a physics researcher** and I have come to appreciate the unexpected fulfillment I get as a better-educated and well-rounded individual.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

My goal is to continue my research on 2D materials at a national institution, such as the National Institute for Standards and Technology. I hope to achieve this by applying for the distinguished National Research Council Research Associate Program fellowship, which provides postdoctoral opportunities for recent graduates.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Electrical Engineering, Ph.D.

COLLEGE

College of Engineering and Computer Science

HOMETOWN

Tampa, Florida

JUSTIN PHELPS
'19 '22MS '24PHD

GRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

JUSTIN PHELPS earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from UCF in December 2024. His research focuses on microelectromechanical systems (MEMS) for sensing, actuation, and power conversion, as well as laser-machined bulk piezoelectric devices. He has published 15 academic papers, including 10 conference proceedings and five journal articles. As a doctoral student, Dr. Phelps taught Linear Circuits 1 and Linear Circuits 2 six times and served on 12 senior design committees. He received the MDPI Coatings Editor's Choice Award for his work on gallium-doped zinc oxide films deposited using high-impulse magnetron sputtering. His dissertation centered on lithium niobate piezoelectric transformers for compact electronics and low-power atmospheric plasma generation. Dr. Phelps is also a founding member of Protium Power Systems, a startup advancing power electronics for solar energy applications.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

UCF gives students the opportunities to grow personally and professionally, enabling them to contribute to a brighter and more purposeful future.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After Graduation, **I will continue at UCF as a Post-Doctoral Scholar** and teach electrical engineering courses as an adjunct professor.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Event Leadership, M.S.

COLLEGE

Rosen College of Hospitality Management

HOMETOWN

Boca Raton, Florida

SYDNEY WEISMAN

'23

GRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

SYDNEY WEISMAN is pursuing a master's in Event Leadership and a graduate certificate in Event Management at UCF. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with her bachelor's in Hospitality Management from UCF in 2023, where she served as a member of the Peer Outreach Mentoring Program, receiving the Peer Mentor of the Year Award and serving as executive board chair, event team lead, and peer mentor. She currently serves on the Rosen College Leadership Council as a dean's student ambassador and president. Sydney is the founding president of Knights of the RELM and founding secretary of W.I.S.E. Women in Hospitality. On UCF's main campus, Sydney held positions as a FTIC/AA coach for PeerKnights Coaching and a peer advocate for the Office of Academic Advocacy. She completed roles as a graduate research assistant and teaching assistant for two undergraduate courses.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

My education and time at UCF have been among the most meaningful experiences in my life. I have found an engaging community in which I belong while achieving my personal goal and accomplishing the dreams of my parents for me to further my education.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to take the skills and knowledge gained from the Rosen College and apply it to a position within the event industry. **I aim to combine my passion for events and anti-human trafficking efforts to create lasting positive social impact** by leveraging the platform provided by events.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Industrial Engineering

FRANCES AGUAYO**COLLEGE**

College of Engineering and Computer Science

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Orlando, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

FRANCES AGUAYO is a senior at UCF, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering with a minor in International Engineering and Computer Science. She is a member of the Burnett Honors College and has earned multiple academic honors, including the President's Honor Roll and the Pegasus Gold Scholar award. Frances has gained valuable professional experience through her role as a quality engineering intern at Johnson & Johnson Vision, where she optimized processes to improve operational efficiency. She has also contributed to UCF through leadership roles, including serving as conference director for the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers (IISE). In addition to her academic and professional achievements, Frances has participated in several volunteer initiatives, including mentoring middle school students in STEM and promoting study abroad opportunities.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

UCF has given me the tools and opportunities to grow as a leader, engineer, and global citizen. Through hands-on projects, professional development, and cultural experiences, I've gained the skills and confidence to make a meaningful impact in my field and community.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, **I plan to pursue a career in quality engineering or continuous improvement in the healthcare industry,** potentially earning a master's degree simultaneously. Further along in my career, I aspire to become a Certified Quality Engineer and a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt to help companies achieve operational excellence.

DEGREE PROGRAM
Biomedical Science

COLLEGE
College of Medicine

HOMETOWN
Orlando, Florida

ZAIMA ALINE

UNDERGRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

ZAIMA ALINE, an honors undergraduate at UCF, has distinguished herself through substantial research contributions at the Mayo Clinic, UCF's Honors Undergraduate Thesis, Peer Instruction and Laboratory Occupational Training, and the NSF-sponsored Transfer-Student Research and Integration Program. She has presented her research findings at both local and national conferences, earning the Judge's Choice Award and the Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher Award. Beyond her research, Zaima's dedication to lifelong learning and teaching is reflected in her role as a teaching assistant for Quantitative Biological Methods and Molecular Biology II. She demonstrates her leadership by serving on the Dean's Leadership Council and as vice president of It Takes a Village, a UCF organization that supports non-traditional students. Additionally, Zaima conducts health screenings for underserved communities.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

Here, I found the right mentorship and support system, allowing me to explore opportunities in research, leadership, and service. **Ultimately, this university will always be the place where I discovered my path, grew into my potential, and laid the foundation for a future dedicated to meaningful impact.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Witnessing a loved one's battle against cancer inspired me to pursue the development of less harmful therapies that prioritize patient quality of life. As a physician-scientist specializing in oncology, **I hope to be a source of hope for my patients**, ensuring treatments are effective, compassionate, and always centered on their best interests.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Photonic Science and Engineering

COLLEGE

College of Optics and Photonics

HOME TOWN

Cuiabá, Mato Grosso (Brazil)

GABRYELLA KELLY DOS ANJOS BALDACI

UNDERGRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

GABRYELLA BALDACI is a senior majoring in Photonic Science and Engineering. She is passionate about her field of study, as demonstrated by her involvement in undergraduate research and activities that promote science and engineering. Her research focuses on laser surface treatment of metal alloys and their applications. During CREOL's 2024 Industrial Affiliates Symposium, Gabryella presented a poster with her findings. She is also involved in her college's annual summer camp, a unique opportunity for high school students in the community to learn and explore the world of optics and photonics, helping to kickstart the program in 2023 and becoming the director of the event in 2024. Her efforts have been recognized by SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics, as she was recently awarded the Teddi Laurin Scholarship for potential contributions to optics, photonics, or a related field.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

UCF gave me the chance to pursue my passions and grow into a better version of myself. My love for learning was fostered by the Knight community's excellent resources and dedicated faculty, and through my relationship with fellow students, I became a more engaged member of society, driven to use my talents in service to others.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, I aim to start a career in the industry, grow professionally, and promote STEM programs for youth. **I plan to leverage my experience to guide others following a similar path** and promote greater recognition for the field of optics and photonics.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Political Science (*American Politics and Policy Track*)

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Sanford, Florida

AUSTIN BENNETT

'24

UNDERGRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

Graduating a semester early, **AUSTIN BENNETT** is earning his bachelor's degree in political science within the American Politics and Policy Track. During his studies, he specialized in research and intelligence using open-source information with programs such as Stata, R Studios, and Tablue. Over the course of the last four years, Austin explored many studies within a variety of different political topics. His ability to be multifaceted over the last four years truly sets him apart. While advancing his political science studies, he simultaneously received several awards on the UCF Cheerleading Team and served as a community volunteer. In his spare time, he enjoys being creative by rhinestoning clothing for his small business, Bling It On. To foster community, he enjoys cooking dinner for his teammates, friends and family. Austin will continue his scholarly studies by applying to law schools in the spring.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

I arrived at UCF with the hopes of getting a well rounded education and a spot on the sideline leading the crowd. Little did I know, I would be ending this journey with a rich understanding of political science in America, the experiences of traveling all across the nation representing UCF, a deep connection to the Orlando community, and **the opportunity to create the traditions that will be known as a part of UCF history for years to come.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I am going to take the LSAT and apply to law school. **I want to specialize in criminal law** so I can make the nation a safer place and effect positive change.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Chemistry (*Biochemistry Track*)

NICHOLAS BRUNO

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Orlando, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

NICHOLAS BRUNO is a senior at UCF, studying chemistry through the College of Sciences and Burnett Honors College. During his first year, he joined Dr. Karin Torres' research lab, focusing on viral detection technologies for low-resource communities. Nicholas later shifted his attention to his Honors Undergraduate Thesis, focusing on cancer diagnostics and developing biosensors for detecting microRNA associated with lung cancer development. Beyond the lab, Nicholas is involved in International Medical Outreach, a student-led nonprofit at UCF. After serving as a director, he was elected vice president, leading an outreach trip to New Orleans in 2024. He also served on the Medical School Admissions Symposium board, where he was responsible for designing the event schedule and organizing logistics for the 2025 symposium. Nicholas plans to matriculate into medical school in the fall of 2025 to pursue a career as a physician.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

My professors, mentors, and peers have continually pushed me to surpass my own perceived limits and deepen my passion for medicine, research, and global health. **UCF provided me with the opportunities, education, and experiences that aided my success.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Following graduation, I will attend medical school. **As a physician, I aspire to make a meaningful impact on individuals with limited healthcare access** in the United States and abroad. I plan to specialize in anesthesiology, orthopedic surgery, or trauma surgery, meanwhile conducting clinical trials alongside my practice.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biology (Zoology Track)

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Cocoa, Florida

HANNAH DEGRAW

UNDERGRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

HANNAH DEGRAW is majoring in Biology on the zoology track with minors in Psychology and Genomics and Bioinformatics. Her passion for animals, conservation, and learning has led her to engage in extensive research at UCF, starting in the L.E.A.R.N program. She is pursuing an honors thesis examining the presence and prevalence of diseases in the gopher tortoise population at UCF. This impactful research leads to a greater understanding of the vital species' health as she provides a voice for their protection. Additionally, Hannah is a member of the UCF Marching Knights, playing clarinet and cymbals. She is vice president of ritual of Sigma Alpha Iota, a professional music fraternity, which volunteers and supports the Orlando music community. Hannah is a PeerKnights coach for the Office of Undergraduate Research and a teaching assistant for the Herpetology course. She serves as an ambassador and executive board member of the President's Leadership Council.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

UCF has given me countless opportunities to find my passions and discover what I want to pursue while also providing me with a vast community and professional network to push me to become all I can be. **From my involvement in research to music, I would not be who I am today without UCF.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

My transformative research experience has inspired me to **pursue a Ph.D. in conservation genomics, where I aim to save species from extinction** from a genetic point of view. I also would love to work as an animal trainer for some period of time to fulfill my childhood dreams.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biotechnology

MELISSA M. DEINYS**COLLEGE**

College of Medicine

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Hialeah, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

MELISSA M. DEINYS is a first-generation Cuban American pursuing a major in Biotechnology with minors in Chemistry and Environmental Studies at UCF. As an undergraduate research assistant, she investigates mangrove die-offs caused by fungal pathogens and has pioneered the first treatment that can be applied to mangroves and planted into shorelines. Her research has gained national recognition, with news coverage highlighting UCF's role in scientific advancement. She has presented at over 10 international conferences and explores nanotechnology applications in pathogen suppression and environmental sustainability. Beyond research, Melissa serves as a L.E.A.R.N. peer mentor, vice president of the Women in Physics Club, and a member of the American Chemical Society. She also volunteers extensively in community projects that introduce underprivileged youth to science, inspiring the next generation of environmental leaders.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

UCF has been transformative; it has provided me with the tools and opportunities to pursue my passion for environmental research. **From leading innovative projects to mentoring others, my experience here has shaped me into a confident researcher ready to make a meaningful impact.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, **I plan to pursue a Ph.D. to continue exploring how chemistry, plant pathology, and microbiology intersect.** I'm excited to dive deeper into these fields and use that knowledge to contribute to scientific advancements, especially in environmental conservation and ecosystem restoration.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Hospitality Management

(Restaurant and Foodservice Management Track)

JONAE A. EDWARDS

UNDERGRADUATE

COLLEGE

Rosen College of Hospitality Management

HOMETOWN

Nassau, The Bahamas

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

JONAE A. EDWARDS is a rising senior, majoring in Hospitality Management with a focus on Lodging and Foodservice Management. As a first-generation college student, she is a proud recipient of the Lewis Foundation Scholarship and has been recognized as a Knight of Distinction. Jonae serves on the Rosen College Leadership Council, where she represents the student body and works to create opportunities for her peers. During her time at UCF, Jonae founded W.I.S.E. Women in Hospitality, an empowerment organization dedicated to supporting students aspiring to become leaders in the hospitality industry. She also contributes as a young professional consultant for the REED Charitable Foundation, which works to end the literacy crisis and improve dyslexia diagnosis. These roles have enriched her understanding of giving back, enabling her to make a positive and lasting impact on those she encounters.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

My journey as a Pineapple Knight has reignited my dreams, reminding me that the stars are just the beginning and now with the lessons of integrity, service, leadership and professionalism I have gained here, I am fully equipped to make a lasting impact.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to pursue a Master's in Human Resources and Legal Studies. Understanding the significance of human connection in hospitality and tourism, I aspire to go beyond traditional associate services. Promoting professional growth by enhancing mentorship, creating tailored development programs, building career pathways and improving access to educational resources for minorities.

CLASS OF 2025

↑ DIRECTORY

DEGREE PROGRAM

Health Sciences

COLLEGE

College of Health Professions and Sciences

HOMETOWN

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

BEDIS ELKAMEL
'24**UNDERGRADUATE****STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

BEDIS ELKAMEL graduated in Fall 2024 with a degree in Health Sciences. Originally from Tunisia and raised in Canada, Bedis brings a multicultural perspective to his academic and volunteer endeavors. He completed an Honors Undergraduate Thesis examining the impact of adolescent substance use on socioeconomic outcomes in adulthood, inspired by his work with underserved youth. His research has been recognized both locally and nationally for its contributions to public health, shedding light on the long-term consequences of early substance use. Outside the classroom, Bedis supports homeless and at-risk youth through mentorship and tutoring, creating an environment that fosters confidence and belonging. Additionally, as a child advocate, he represents abused and neglected children in the foster care system, ensuring their voices are heard during family crises and legal proceedings.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

My UCF journey has been transformative, marked by the guidance of exceptional professors and mentors, like Dr. Scheidell, who fueled my academic pursuits. Despite being from Canada, this university has been a welcoming, new home where I've cherished the chance to give back to the community that embraced me.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I will work as a research assistant under Dr. Scheidell to gain valuable experience before starting medical school in the summer. **My long-term goal is to become a physician who addresses healthcare disparities and provides care to underserved communities,** inspired by my volunteer work and experiences in Tunisia.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biomedical Sciences

COOPER FOXMAN**COLLEGE**

College of Medicine

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Port Orange, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

COOPER FOXMAN is a student majoring in biomedical sciences with a minor in crime, law, and deviance. He is a graduate of the LEAD Scholars Academy and a student in the Burnett Honors College, where he has learned to excel as both a leader and a scholar. During his time at UCF, Cooper has served in several roles with the College of Medicine. He has also worked as a teaching assistant for the Chemistry Department, as the volunteer director and Spirit Splash director for UCF Homecoming, and as a member of the President's Leadership Council. He has also taken on positions with Hearts for the Homeless International and Parkinson's Together, two nonprofit organizations, to serve his community in new and innovative ways. As a pre-medical student, Cooper constantly works to develop his patient care skills. He is a volunteer for Nemours Children's Health and an intern at Jewett Orthopedic Institute.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

Being a part of an institution as innovative as UCF has pushed me to grow as a creator.

The constant support from faculty, staff, and students has inspired me to build new programs to enrich my community in diverse ways.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to attend medical school, become a strong agent of patient care, and assist my community in every way I can, medically

and beyond. After I graduate, I hope to stay in touch with UCF and give back for all of the lessons this institution has taught me.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Industrial Engineering and Management Systems

COLLEGE

College of Engineering and Computer Science

HOMETOWN

Oviedo, Florida

LIANA LAURA ALVAREZ GARCIA '24

UNDERGRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

LIANA LAURA ALVAREZ GARCIA graduated *Magna Cum Laude* from UCF in December 2024 with a degree in Industrial Engineering. Throughout her academic career, she interned at United Launch Alliance and Blue Origin, applying her expertise to the launch of two groundbreaking rocket programs, Vulcan and New Glenn. As an executive board member of the Society of Women Engineers at UCF, Liana was dedicated to inspiring and mentoring young girls in STEM fields, helping them realize their full potential. Her academic excellence and contributions to the Hispanic community were recognized by the Association of Cuban American Engineers, who awarded her for her achievements. Liana's commitment to space exploration continues as she currently works as an Industrial Engineer at Blue Origin, furthering her dream of reaching for the stars.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

UCF has provided me with the knowledge, support, and mentorship that shaped my career, while inspiring me to pay it forward

by empowering the next generation of first-generation women in STEM. I believe that with determination and the right opportunities, any dream is within reach.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I'm thrilled to be joining Blue Origin as an industrial engineer, to further my passion for advancing space technology. This role allows me to apply my skills in optimizing complex systems and supporting innovation. I look forward to combining industry experience with advanced study to drive meaningful contributions in engineering.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Environmental Engineering

JULIA GOING**COLLEGE**

College of Engineering and Computer Science

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Cedarburg, Wisconsin

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

JULIA GOING is an out-of-state student from Cedarburg, Wisconsin, whose environmental passion stems from growing up in a town with two EPA Superfund sites. She is currently a senior in the Burnett Honors College studying environmental engineering. Additionally, her research in the Microsensor Biofilm Lab under Dr. Woo Hyoung Lee aided in two prestigious research grants for UCF: the EPA P3 Grant and the NASA Florida Space Grant. Her research focuses on algae-based green energy alternatives and waterborne pathogen electrochemical sensors. Outside of the classroom, Julia is a coxswain for the UCF D1 Women's Rowing team, and in her junior year she coxed the first eight in the team's first season in the Big 12 Conference. She is also the recording secretary for Tau Beta Pi, the nation's oldest engineering honors society.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

As an out-of-state student, UCF represented an opportunity to gain connections across the country while joining a large and diverse student population. Yet, my time at UCF never made me feel like 1 of 70,000; rather, **UCF helped me to create lasting professional relationships with my coaches and professors.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to build upon my developed discipline and continue my education with a master's degree in materials science and engineering from UCF. I aspire to increase the scope of my environmentally focused research by collaborating with laboratories worldwide to enhance renewable energy systems.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biology

NELSON JONES

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Port Orange, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

NELSON JONES is pursuing a degree in Biology with a minor in Medical Sociology at UCF. His passion for health equity began at a young age, witnessing the lack of access to physicians in his hometown. With guidance from his mentor, Dr. McKenzie, he founded the Youth Enrichment Society at UCF, where he serves as president and educates middle and high school students about careers in medicine. Nelson has also served as an undergraduate teaching assistant for general and organic chemistry for three years and as a supplemental instruction leader for one year. His research in nanoscience, supported by a UCF research grant, expanded his wet-lab experience. Additionally, Nelson has held a leadership role as a board of director member for the MMSP program at the UCF College of Medicine, mentoring students to become competitive medical school applicants.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

Growing up as the son of an AlumKnight, attending UCF was a lifelong dream. Through its supportive community and resources, **I've grown both personally and academically, building lasting connections and empowering myself to positively impact others** at UCF and beyond.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, I will attend medical school, using the skills developed at UCF. I'm committed to improving accessibility for underserved communities. My goal is to return to Central Florida as a compassionate physician, addressing healthcare disparities and promoting equity.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biomedical Sciences

RAJ KHUPERKAR**COLLEGE**

College of Medicine

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Troy, Michigan

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

RAJ KHUPERKAR is a senior graduating with a bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences and minors in Business Administration and Medical Sociology. He currently serves as president of UCF's largest and only pre-medical club while being a research assistant in UCF's Institute of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Raj consistently aims to give back to his UCF community through the President's Leadership Council and to the greater Orlando community as an active volunteer serving the homeless population. As a pre-medical student, his future endeavors in medical school will undoubtedly be strengthened by the strong foundation he has built here at UCF and the many diverse communities he has been a part of.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

UCF has been the best university for me to prosper educationally. I have had the privilege to be a part of many diverse, supportive UCF communities and as an out-of-state student from Michigan, this university has quickly become my home away from home.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to attend medical school right after graduating and earn my MD degree to one day become a practicing physician. I hope to open up a private practice of my own to deliver the best clinical service to my patients in the specialty I choose to pursue.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Health Sciences

AYAKA KIMURA

COLLEGE

College of Health Professions and Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE

HOMETOWN

Memphis, Tennessee

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

AYAKA KIMURA is a senior at UCF pursuing a bachelor's degree in Health Sciences on the Pre-Clinical Track. She has demonstrated academic excellence throughout her time at UCF, earning notable awards such as the Benacquisto Scholarship and the Burnett Honors College's Allyn M. Stearman Research Scholarship. Her research focuses on stem cell therapies, and she has made meaningful contributions even as an undergraduate research volunteer. In addition to her academic achievements, Ayaka has been an active leader on campus. She served as an associate justice in the Student Government Judicial Branch, where she helped students navigate appeals and worked on initiatives like translating UCF regulations into Spanish to improve accessibility. Currently, she is vice president of the Korean Culture Club, promoting cultural awareness and community involvement.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

My time at UCF has been unforgettable, with many opportunities that allowed me to grow academically and personally. **The supportive environment with inspiring professors and supportive peers I met at UCF has provided me with the tools and confidence to pursue my goals and make a difference.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduating, I plan to apply to medical schools in the 2025-2026 admissions cycle. **My goal is to pursue a career in pediatrics,** where I can provide dedicated care to children and their families to support their health.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Health Sciences

YUKA KIMURA

COLLEGE

College of Health Professions and Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE

HOMETOWN

Memphis, Tennessee

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

YUKA KIMURA is a student in UCF's Burnett Honors College, pursuing a B.S. in Health Sciences. Inspired by a personal connection to cardiovascular disease in her family, Yuka is passionate about understanding and addressing this critical health issue. She contributes to Dr. Manish Gupta's lab, where she explores cardiovascular disease mechanisms, co-authoring a publication on HIV protein-induced cardiomyopathy and earning prestigious honors such as the Undergraduate Research Grant. Beyond research, Yuka leads as president of UCF's Korean Culture Club and serves in student government, where she champions accessibility and inclusivity. Her dedication extends to over 400 volunteer hours, assisting underserved communities and engaging in clinical roles at Orlando Health. She has received numerous awards and academic honors, including the Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher Award.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

Being a student at UCF, I **found myself with many opportunities to get involved, met amazing friends, faculty, and classmates**, whom I hope to treasure for a lifetime.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I am hoping to **continue my research with Dr. Gupta, apply to medical school** for the upcoming 2026 admissions cycle, and work as a medical scribe.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Nursing

COLLEGE

College of Nursing

HOMETOWN

Orlando, Florida

JENNA KOO**UNDERGRADUATE****STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

JENNA KOO is a student in UCF's College of Nursing, graduating with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) in May 2025. Having grown up homeschooled prior to college, she can confidently say that UCF has significantly developed her as a leader and person. As a nursing student, she currently serves as the legislative director for the Student Nurses Association at UCF, allowing her the opportunity to inspire and develop the skill of her fellow aspiring nursing students. In the summer of 2024, she participated in a study abroad service trip to Mexico, expanding her perspective on healthcare. Currently, Jenna works as a nurse tech at AdventHealth Winter Park, growing her leadership and knowledge in patient care. Her hard work and leadership earned her an offer into the prestigious AdventHealth Emergency Department Nurse Residency program post-graduation.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

My experience has been nothing short of exciting, gaining opportunities and growing in so many ways I never thought were possible. Through experiences with organizations such as the Student Nurses Association, ROTC, and other volunteer communities, **I have gained invaluable leadership experiences for my professional career.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I have received a job offer as an Emergency Room nurse with AdventHealth where I will be working upon graduation. I plan on taking my nursing career overseas a couple years into the future to help aid underserved communities and working as a disaster response nurse.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biomedical Sciences

SUN LATT**COLLEGE**

College of Medicine, Burnett Honors College

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Lakeland, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

SUN LATT is a junior Burnett Medical Scholar majoring in Biomedical Sciences with a minor in Computer Science. He has been extensively involved as an undergraduate researcher in Dr. Mehdi Razavi's Biomaterials and Nanomedicine Laboratory. He has delivered over ten oral and poster presentations at local and national research conferences, earning multiple awards for his work. In addition, he has submitted a first-author paper for publication and is a co-author of a recently published review paper. Outside the lab, Sun has impacted UCF and the local community by volunteering as a teacher for patients at Nemours Children's Hospital and serving as a high school test preparation tutor for the local nonprofit Elevation Scholars, as a Student Undergraduate Research Council member, and as Pre-Medical AMSA research director, where he helped many students begin and succeed in research.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

Growing up with limited access to mentors, **UCF's abundant resources and opportunities have been invaluable in equipping me to pursue rigorous academic training and contribute meaningfully to groundbreaking research.** I will always cherish the lifelong friendships and supportive community that has shaped not only my academic journey but also my personal growth.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, **I intend to pursue an M.D./Ph.D. in Tissue Engineering and Biomaterials,** aspiring to become a principal investigator at a collaborative research institute. I hope to discover regenerative biomaterial therapeutics that are translatable, safe, and effective.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Health Sciences (*Pre-Clinical Track*)

CHLOE MILLIRON

COLLEGE

College of Health Professions and Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE

HOMETOWN

Mars, Pennsylvania

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

CHLOE MILLIRON is a Health Sciences major at UCF with minors in Diversity Leadership Studies and Nonprofit Management. Her passion for food allergy advocacy stems from her childhood diagnosis, inspiring her to address the complexities of living with dietary restrictions. As manager of Knights Pantry, Chloe established the dietary restrictions section, supported by grants, to better serve students facing similar challenges. As dietary restrictions consultant for Dining Services and a member of the Student Advisory Council, she led surveys that contributed to True Balance, UCF's first allergen-free kitchen, and implemented allergen signage in dining halls. Additionally, Chloe is conducting research for her Honors Undergraduate Thesis on providing holistic support for food-allergic and food-insecure students while collaborating with the Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research at Northwestern University.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

UCF has provided me with a strong academic foundation and countless opportunities to grow personally and professionally, setting me up for success in medical school. At UCF, I've been able to combine my passion for healthcare with hands-on work, preparing me to make a meaningful difference in the medical field.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, **I plan to attend medical school and become an allergist and immunologist,** driven by my experience with food allergies and a desire to care for others with similar conditions. At UCF, I've raised awareness and am committed to continuing this mission, improving lives, and promoting inclusion in medicine.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Computer Science

ANEESHA NAYAK

COLLEGE

College of Engineering and Computer Science

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Tampa, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

ANEESHA NAYAK is a senior pursuing a degree in Computer Science. As a member of the Burnett Honors College Undergraduate Thesis program, she has researched the impact of generative AI on interactive learning and published her work in UCF STARS. She also serves as a teaching assistant for Introductory Python and Computer Science 1, where she supports students in understanding complex programming and algorithmic concepts. Aneesha is a dynamic leader, serving as president of Girl Up, where she mobilizes her peers to conduct hygiene kit drives for under-resourced communities, in addition to facilitating confidence workshops to empower young women. She also works with the Office of Student Involvement through Knights of the Roundtable and Volunteer UCF, where she organizes campus-wide events sharing the spirit of community service, and previously served as a PeerKnights Coach.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?****UCF has pushed me to reach new horizons.**

The College of Engineering and Computer Science has been a constant source of inspiration by shaping me into a confident leader, and equipping me with the knowledge and technical skills to one day make a meaningful impact through technology.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in Computer Science, with concentrations in Machine Learning and Data Science, to further my academic research and learning. I also aspire to engage in entrepreneurship and hope to bring my senior design project to life via a carpool startup for students with transportation needs.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Health Sciences (*Pre-Clinical Track*)

APOORVA PALLED

COLLEGE

College of Health Professions and Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE

HOMETOWN

Suwanee, Georgia

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

APOORVA PALLED is a senior majoring in Health Sciences with a certificate in Health Communications. She has made an impact on the UCF community as a volunteer with the Knights Helping Knights Pantry and marketing chair in the Residence Hall Association. As a Burnett Honors Scholar, she has guided students during their time at UCF as an honors orientation ambassador and mentor through the Honors Congress. Apoorva has been involved in research since her first semester at UCF through the Institute of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Judo for Autism Program. In 2024, she successfully defended her Honors Undergraduate Thesis on the Knowledge and Perception of Type 2 Diabetes. Beyond her academic endeavors, she serves as a teaching assistant for the Physiology Lab, Gift of Life Campus Ambassador, LEAD Scholar, and clinical intern at the Foot and Ankle Sports Medicine Institute.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

As an out-of-state student, UCF has truly become my home away from home; the plethora of academic, research, and extracurricular opportunities have allowed me to build a strong support system. **I am truly thankful for my UCF education which has guided my personal and professional growth and inspired me to pursue further education.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Following graduation, **I plan to pursue an MD/MPH program in the Fall of 2025.** My goal as a physician is to advocate for my patients and be a leader in health policy, working to improve healthcare access and outcomes, particularly for underserved populations.

CLASS OF 2025

↑ DIRECTORY

DEGREE PROGRAM

Electrical Engineering (*Power and Renewable Energy Track*)

COLLEGE

College of Engineering and Computer Science

HOMETOWN

Winter Haven, Florida

NICOLE PARKER

'24

UNDERGRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

NICOLE PARKER is passionate about contributing to the evolution of sustainable power systems and dedicates her time to research in this area. Nicole has published multiple academic works and has won awards for her efforts as an undergraduate research assistant in the UCF Digital Grid Lab. She is a two-time recipient of the prestigious IEEE PES Scholarship, was awarded the Honors Undergraduate Thesis Scholarship, and won “Best in Show” at the UCF CECS Senior Design Showcase. She graduated in Fall 2024 with a degree in Electrical Engineering — Power and Renewal Energy track — with a 3.9 GPA. Outside of academics, Nicole prioritizes volunteering with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Ideas for Us, Society of Women Engineers, and Second Harvest Food Bank. She has led multiple UCF student organizations to support volunteer efforts both on campus and in the local community.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

As a UCF student, I have experienced a diverse learning environment that motivated engineering innovation and abundant personal growth. **My UCF education has provided me with the knowledge and skills to pursue my goals in sustainable energy engineering and cultivate a deep sense of community.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Following graduation, **I will volunteer abroad with organizations focused on environmental advocacy and sustainability.** In June, I will be working at Siemens as a Power Protection and Automation Engineer in North Carolina. After working for two years, I will begin a master's in Power Systems and Sustainable Energy.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Aerospace Engineering

CHLOE PINKSTON

COLLEGE

College of Engineering and Computer Science

UNDERGRADUATE

HOMETOWN

Oviedo, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

CHLOE PINKSTON, a Burnett Medical Scholar majoring in Aerospace Engineering with minors in Bioengineering and Mathematics, sought to bridge the fields of engineering and medicine through biomechanics research beginning in her first semester of college. She is now leading a study that analyzes the dynamic function of the Achilles tendon and has presented her work several times, including internationally, and received a Judges' Choice Award at the 2024 Student Scholar Symposium. Chloe is a member of the Student Undergraduate Research Council and UCF's Biodesign Program in Rehabilitation Engineering, where she developed biomedical engineering solutions addressing unmet patient needs, several of which became capstone design projects. Additionally, her volunteering efforts with Shepherd's Hope Clinic and HOPE Helps have improved access to essential resources for underserved communities.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

My UCF experience has been truly transformative, providing countless opportunities perfectly aligned with my unique interests. With the support of UCF's vibrant community and resources, **I've developed the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue my passions and create a meaningful impact on the world.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduating in May 2025, **I will attend medical school as part of the UCF College of Medicine's Class of 2029 M.D. program.** Following this, I plan to pursue aerospace medicine, using my engineering background to address the unique health challenges faced by individuals in air and space travel.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Psychology (*Clinical Track*)

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Oviedo, Florida

GABRIELA POLERA

UNDERGRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

GABRIELA POLERA is a senior at UCF, majoring in psychology on the clinical track, minoring in legal studies, and pursuing a certificate in litigation and advocacy. She has made the President's Honor Roll each semester. While at UCF, Gabriela worked at the College of Community Innovation and Education Dean's Office, the Office of the President, the Florida Senate, and Student Government. Gabriela served as a UCF Legislative Scholar, president of the Mediation Team, Student Body Senator, member of the Hispanic Bar Association of Central Florida, and fundraising chair of the Knights Pre-Law Association. She volunteered at Boys Town Central Florida, the Addison of Oviedo, and the First Baptist Church of Chuluota. Gabriela serves the student body as the Governmental Affairs Coordinator, addressing student lobbying concerns and leading initiatives to enhance civic education and engagement.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

UCF has empowered me with both the resources and the confidence to embrace every opportunity, helping me to truly unleash my potential. I feel incredibly blessed to have the chance to give back to the school that has invested so much in my growth and success.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to attend law school and earn my J.D. in order to provide legal services to the community, advocate for justice, continue serving those in need, and champion policies that enhance access to and quality of higher education.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Health Sciences

COLLEGE

College of Health Professions and Sciences

HOMETOWN

Oviedo, Florida

ROSHNA CHERUGAIL RAMADOSS

UNDERGRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

ROSHNA CHERUGAIL RAMADOSS is a senior Health Sciences major at UCF whose impact spans research, leadership, and service. She is currently working on her Honors Undergraduate Thesis, in which she focuses on cerium oxide nanoparticles for expedited wound healing. After being recognized at UCF's Student Scholar Symposium as a Judge's Choice Award and scholarship recipient, she is also working to publish review papers on immunotherapy and inorganic nanocomposites. Roshna serves as vice president for UCF's Pre-Med AMSA, one of the largest chapters in the nation, and is also vice president for PERIOD @UCF, an organization dedicated to ending period poverty. As diversity and inclusion coordinator in UCF's Student Government, she spearheaded key initiatives, including UCF's first annual Cultural Fusion Fest, which earned the "SG Initiative of the Year" award.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

My time at UCF has affirmed that I truly made the right decision in choosing this institution to be my second home. **The unwavering support, opportunities, and diverse community have prepared me to confidently embark on the next phase of my personal and professional journey,** ready to give back by making a meaningful impact in the world.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I plan to apply to medical school after graduation to pursue my dream of becoming a physician and focus on specializing in obstetrics and gynecology. I am truly passionate about women's health and patient advocacy, and have a desire to advance this critical field.

DEGREE PROGRAMS

Film and English (*Creative Writing Track*)

COLLEGE

Burnett Honors College

HOMETOWN

San Juan, Puerto Rico

HEIDI RIVERA

UNDERGRADUATE

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

HEIDI RIVERA is a Burnett Honors College scholar in her final year at UCF pursuing dual degrees in English, Creative Writing track, and Film with a certificate in Editing and Publishing. She has completed numerous internships; some of them, including Roadmap Writers and The Florida Review, related to her love of storytelling. Heidi has served as the secretary and author of the 2024 *The Courier* newsletters, director of volunteer affairs for Honors Congress, program manager and marketing director for the UCF Latin American/Latinx Film Festival, and as a two-time Honors Orientation Ambassador. Outside of UCF, she was a legal intern for Tiffany & Bosco, P.A., and is part of the inaugural cohort of the Law School Admission Council Plus, Guided Journey Program. She enjoys discovering ways in which language unites us, no matter its form, and identifies these connections through her work with law, film, and stories.



HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?

My experience as a UCF student has taught me not just to reach for the stars, but to believe that through hard work and dedication, I can achieve a place among them. My UCF education has encouraged me to explore new opportunities; helping me have some of the most wonderful years of my life. I am profoundly prepared for the exciting future that lies ahead.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Upon graduation from UCF, **I plan to attend law school.** I intend to be a lawyer while simultaneously working as a film and television screenwriter and as a fantasy and magical realism novelist. Through law and creative writing, I aim to use language to make positive change in the world.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Human Communication

COLLEGE

College of Sciences

HOMETOWN

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

ANDERSON ROSA
'24**UNDERGRADUATE****STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

ANDERSON ROSA graduated in December 2024 with a major in Human Communication and a minor in Sports Business. As captain of the UCF Men's Soccer Team, he has led the program to historic achievements, including reaching the No. 1 national ranking for the first time in UCF Athletics history and competing successfully in both the American Athletic Conference and the highly competitive Sun Belt Conference. Anderson's on-field excellence has earned him All-Conference First or Second Team honors every season of his collegiate career. In addition to his athletic success, Anderson is a standout academically, having been named to the Dean's List for six semesters and the President's List for exceptional academic achievements. He is equally committed to giving back, mentoring local kids to inspire them and help them pursue their goals through soccer.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

UCF has shaped me into a better leader and teammate, providing opportunities to excel on the field, in the classroom, and in the community. The skills I've gained in teamwork, resilience, and communication will help me in my future career and in making a meaningful impact in everything I pursue.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Following graduation, **I will play professional soccer for the Colorado Rapids in the MLS (Major League Soccer)**. This opportunity allows me to pursue my passion at the highest level while applying the leadership, discipline, and teamwork skills I developed at UCF to achieve success both on and off the field.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Biomedical Sciences

COLLEGE

College of Medicine

HOMETOWN

Orlando, Florida

NICOLE STEVENS

UNDERGRADUATE**STUDENT BIOGRAPHY**

NICOLE STEVENS, a biomedical sciences major, wife, and mother of three, transferred to UCF in 2022. At UCF, Nicole greatly benefited from the mentorship and research experience she received as a Transfer-Student Research Integration Program scholar. Leveraging these skills, Nicole earned an internship at Nemours Children's Health, where she dedicated over 400 hours to researching the impact of social determinants of health on allergic diseases. Her research at UCF and Nemours enabled her to represent UCF at local and national conferences. Nicole founded and presides over "It Takes a Village," a student organization dedicated to supporting UCF students by increasing the accessibility of relevant resources. Additionally, Nicole works to positively impact her community as a peer mentor, student outreach coordinator, member of the Student Advisory Council, and child life volunteer at Nemours.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

Transferring to UCF transformed my life in ways I never anticipated. The university fosters a strong culture of advocacy, altruism, and mentorship, that provided me with unparalleled opportunities — not only empowering me to thrive as an undergraduate but also equipping me with the skills and insights essential for my future career; **UCF truly paved the way for my success.**

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

After graduation, **I plan to pursue a career in medicine, focusing on pediatric care** and the intersection of social determinants of health and immunologic disorders. I aim to be a compassionate physician who advocates for vulnerable populations, combining clinical expertise with a commitment to health equity.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Marketing

BRIELLE YOUNG**COLLEGE**

College of Business

UNDERGRADUATE**HOMETOWN**

Wellington, Florida

STUDENT BIOGRAPHY

BRIELLE YOUNG is a senior majoring in Marketing with a minor in Mass Media and a certificate in Leadership Studies. A Burnett Honors Scholar, she is active in the honors community, serving as a marketing student assistant, Honors Congress mentor, and co-coordinator of the Deans' Leadership Council. Passionate about service, Brielle was a LEAD Scholars Academy peer mentor and selections committee member. She volunteers with World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and the nonprofit Learning Ally. As communications chair and former student engagement chair of the College of Business Ambassadors, she has contributed to the success of events, including Welcome to the Majors, The Invitational, and Hall of Fame for 1,000+ attendees. She has served as an Excel teaching assistant, completed four marketing internships, and received numerous awards for her academic achievements.

**HOW HAS UCF IMPACTED YOU?**

As a first-generation student, **UCF has offered me countless opportunities to challenge myself and flourish as a servant leader, and reach for the stars.** My experience at UCF has been extraordinary, and I am endlessly grateful for the relationships I have built within such a supportive, inclusive, and dynamic community.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Following graduation, **I plan to pursue a career in digital marketing,** specializing in social media management. I aim to develop creative, yet informative marketing campaigns using strategic communications to foster genuine human connections. My goal is to craft content that resonates with audiences while sparking conversations and positive interactions.

THANK YOU

2025 ORDER OF PEGASUS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

UNDERGRADUATE SELECTION

Melinda Cartwright

UCF First Lady

Robert Borgon, Ph.D.

College of Medicine

Christina Campbell

Office of the President

Manoj Chopra, Ph.D.

College of Engineering
and Computer Science

Maribeth Ehasz, Ph.D.

Student Success
and Well-Being, Retired

Albert Manero '12 '14MA '16Ph.D.

Limbitless Solutions

Vivian Ortiz

Student Success and Well-Being

Margot Winick

Communications and Marketing

Ronnie Zimmerman, Ph.D.

College of Community
Innovation and Education

GRADUATE SELECTION

Bethany Backes, Ph.D.

College of Health
Professions and Sciences

Christina Campbell

Office of the President

Joel Cramer, Ph.D.

Faculty Excellence

Ali P. Gordon, Ph.D.

College of Engineering
and Computer Science

Jeff Stout, Ph.D.

College of Health
Professions and Sciences

John Weishampel, Ph.D.

College of Graduate Studies

Margot Winick

Communications and Marketing

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