

September 2024

UC RIVERSIDE
CHANCELLOR'S
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
CRF Fall 2024 Newsletter
University of California, Riverside

CUREL - Division of Undergraduate Education

New Friendships & Partnerships



Congratulations to the 2024-2025 Chancellor's Research Fellows (CRF)! This is one of the largest cohorts with three Honorary CRFs. These students engage in all CRF professional development activities and are funded by other research programs. This newsletter will highlight some of the fall activities and update on current CRFs and alumni.

engage.ucr.edu/research/chancellor_fellowship

Chancellor's Research Fellows 2024-2025



Angie Lopez

Senior CRF

Project:

Three-Dimensional Learning Strategies In Organic Chemistry Courses

- **Chemistry**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Jack Eichler
- **Hobbies:** bike riding, painting, visiting botanical gardens, & reading
- **Favorite Food:** hot wings
- **Ideal Superpower:** telekinesis
- **Email:** alope587@ucr.edu



Dora Nguyen

Senior CRF

Project:

Effect of Maternal Overcontrol on Child Irritability and Anxiety in Latina Girls

- **Psychology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Kalina J. Michalska
- **Hobbies:** cooking, traveling, working out, arts & crafts
- **Favorite Food:** noodles & dumplings
- **Ideal Superpower:** freezing time
- **Email:** dnguy549@ucr.edu



Joseph Feldman-Peterson

Project:

Investigating Critical Mineral Potential in Southern Wyoming

- **Geology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Andrey Bekker
- **Hobbies:** hiking/backpacking, reading, writing, video games, TV shows/movies
- **Favorite Food:** sushi
- **Ideal Superpower:** time travel
- **Email:** jfeld011@ucr.edu



Ariana Gonzalez-Alcazar

Project:

The Attitudes in a Dual Immersion Education

- **Spanish Education**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Linda Lemus
- **Hobbies:** hiking, singing, dancing, tennis, & photography
- **Favorite Food:** fish tacos
- **Ideal Superpower:** flight
- **Email:** agonz657@ucr.edu



Jacob Hensley

Project:

Generation of Heat Evolved Symbionts to Mitigate Coral Bleaching

- **Bioengineering**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Tingting Xiang
- **Hobbies:** exercising & hiking
- **Favorite Food:** shrimp
- **Ideal Superpower:** super speed
- **Email:** jhens010@ucr.edu



Christian Macaluso

Project:

Infant Physical Models for the Testing of Soft Wearable Technologies

- **Bioengineering**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Elena Kokkoni
- **Hobbies:** weightlifting, running, hiking, & being outdoors
- **Favorite Food:** Korean beef bulgogi
- **Ideal Superpower:** superspeed
- **Email:** cmaca018@ucr.edu



Jonathan Arredondo

Project:

Nano Invaders: Unraveling the Secrets of Nanoparticle-Lung Interactions

- **Chemical Engineering**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Younjin Min
- **Hobbies:** playing Minecraft with friends
- **Favorite Food:** lasagna
- **Ideal Superpower:** immortality
- **Email:** jarre046@ucr.edu



Ulises Mata

Project:

Discrimination and Microaggressions in the Latinx Community: An Analysis of Coping Strategies

- **Psychology, Education**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Diamond Bravo
- **Hobbies:** cooking; listening to music, podcasts, and video essays
- **Favorite Food:** chile rellenos
- **Ideal Superpower:** polyglotism
- **Email:** umata001@ucr.edu

Chancellor's Research Fellows 2024-2025



Hannah Moore

Project:
Social Mediation of Queen
Reproduction in *Bombus*
impatiens

- **Biology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** S. Hollis Woodard
- **Hobbies:** hiking, swimming, camping, & baking
- **Favorite Food:** mashed potatoes
- **Ideal Superpower:** teleportation
- **Email:** hmoor014@ucr.edu



Nicole D'Souza

Project:
The Effects of Higher Frequency
Stimulation on Hemodynamics in
FUS imaging

- **Neuroscience**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Vasileios Christopoulos
- **Hobbies:** reading
- **Favorite Food:** Pad Thai noodles
- **Ideal Superpower:** mind reading
- **Email:** ndso002@ucr.edu



**Madison
Juliana Oliva**

Project:
Agent-Based Modeling Of
Neutrophils Chemotaxis In Wound
Healing

- **Computational Mathematics**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Qixuan Wang
- **Hobbies:** photography & playing video games
- **Favorite Food:** poke & s'mores
- **Ideal Superpower:** flight
- **Email:** moliv052@ucr.edu



Kawon (Anzie) Pyo

Project:
TCellular Quiescence Induced by
Depletion of RNases P

- **Cellular, Molecular, Developmental Biology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Jernej Murn
- **Hobbies:** binge watching movies
- **Favorite Food:** any pasta dish except for pasta salad
- **Ideal Superpower:** teleportation
- **Email:** kpyo002@ucr.edu



Omisha Sangani

Project:
Social Determinants and Health-
Related Outcomes of the
Undergraduate Research
Experience

- **Biology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Robert Ream
- **Hobbies:** running, writing poetry, crocheting, & being outdoors
- **Favorite Food:** yogurt & fruit
- **Ideal Superpower:** telekinesis
- **Email:** osang003@ucr.edu



Amelia Schoch

Project:
Deriving the Unit of Measurement
Used by the Builders of
Teotihuacan

- **Computer Engineering**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Nawa Sugiyama
- **Hobbies:** drawing, reading, playing video games, programming, & collecting rocks
- **Favorite Food:** apples
- **Ideal Superpower:** shapeshifting
- **Email:** ascho028@ucr.edu



Janna Soliman

Project:
Hyperosmotic Testing of
Transgenic Corneal Epithelial
Cells

- **Bioengineering**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Joshua Morgan
- **Hobbies:** reading & going to the beach
- **Favorite Food:** stuffed cabbage leaves
- **Ideal Superpower:** mind reading
- **Email:** Jsoli076@ucr.edu



Sreenidhi Surineni

Project:
Investigating the Role of
Dysregulated Splicing in Early
Alzheimer's Disease

- **Neuroscience**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Sika Zheng
- **Hobbies:** film photography, weightlifting, reading, soccer, & tennis
- **Favorite Food:** pizza
- **Ideal Superpower:** time control
- **Email:** ssuri011@ucr.edu

Chancellor's Research Fellows 2024-2025



Sierra Sutton

Project:

Understanding the Preventive and Promotive Factors for Accessing Mental Health Care Services among Black Americans

- **Psychology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Aerika Loyd
- **Hobbies:** running track, coloring, & painting
- **Favorite Food:** anything seafood
- **Ideal Superpower:** teleportation
- **Email:** ssutt014@ucr.edu



Alexa Zelaya

Project:

Does Future-Oriented Cognition and Dispositional Empathy Predict Pro-Environmental Behavior and Climate Anxiety in Latinx Children?

- **Psychology**
- **Faculty Mentor:** Kalina J. Michalska
- **Hobbies:** collecting keychains, stickers, & playing video games
- **Favorite Food:** pasta, ramen, fries, & chicken nuggets
- **Ideal Superpower:** teleportation
- **Email:** azela009@ucr.edu

Gladis and the CRF Cohort



CRF Fall Events

LEADERSHIP



- Refining Your Elevator Pitch

Dr. Annika Speer gave a presentation on developing an elevator pitch for research and had the fellows practice their pitches. Everyone contributed to providing constructive feedback.

- CORO Fellowship Speaker

The Fellows learned about the fantastic CORO Fellowship from speaker Callie Spaide.

- Tips for Success at a Research University

Representatives from the First Generation Mentorship Program and the McNair Scholars Program spoke on the challenges faced by first generation students and how to support them.

- Demystifying Professors

A panel of professors gave their experienced perspectives on how students can successfully engage with their professors and how to avoid some common pitfalls.



Thank you to the Leadership Committee for their hard work and enthusiasm this quarter, which allowed us to host so many great events for the CRFs and campus community.

CRF Fall Events

MENTORSHIP



- How To Approach Faculty
Professors shared the most effective ways that students can build relationships and approach them for letters of recommendation, research positions, and more.
- CRF Mentorship Orientation
The new CRF mentees learned about the mentorship experience. Each of the Fellows gave an introduction to themselves so that the mentees could choose a mentor who best aligned with their interests and goals.
- Balancing My Research And My Life
Attendees learned strategies for staying organized and maintaining a healthy balance while working in research, including a guide to a variety of organizational tools.



Thank you to the Mentorship Committee for a fantastic job hosting engaging, valuable events for the community and welcoming this year's CRF mentees.

CRF Fall Events

DISCUSSION & SOCIALS

CRF Holiday Party with delicious homemade dishes and a game of white elephant



Lunch meeting with Dr. Corey Robin,
Brooklyn College & CUNY Distinguished
Professor of Political Science
Carl F. Cranor Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar



Lunch with
Chanellor Wilcox
and Diane Del Buono

Sreenidhi Surineni, Neuroscience major

CRF Project Title: Investigating the Role of Dysregulated Splicing in Early Alzheimer's Disease

CRF Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sika Zheng, Biomedical Sciences

Tell Us About Enlight Education.

I started Enlight Education in high school to tutor local San Diego students in STEM. What began as a small idea has become a program dedicated to inspiring underserved youth through hands-on and engaging STEM experiences. With a team of high school and college volunteers, we bridge the opportunity gap by fostering critical thinking, creativity, and confidence through project-based learning and real-world applications. Students are supported in creating science projects and participating in hackathons. Our goal is to equip them with essential skills and a passion for STEM. Enlight Education paves the way for future leaders and innovators.



How has Enlight Education grown?

By collaborating with tech giants like IdeyaLabs, Microsoft, Infosys, TechVedika, and Tech Mahindra, Enlight Education receives critical funding, resources like computers, and guidance on teaching the next generation of STEM leaders. These partnerships help us shape a curriculum that prepares students for global opportunities.

Enlight Education has grown beyond San Diego, with chapters at six leading universities, including UC Davis, UCLA, and Brown University, reaching thousands of students across the U.S. Globally, our programs have impacted over 75,000 students through collaborations in India, Mexico, and China. Our expansion into government schools in India aims to empower teachers, align curricula with local needs, and build a foundation for sustainable STEM education.

2024-2025 CRF HIGHLIGHT

Tell Us About Enlight Education's Expansion into India.

This summer, Enlight Education expanded to India, led by CFO Yashashree Surineni and myself. We recruited eight volunteers who visited ten government schools, introducing essential computer skills and programming languages like Python, Java, and JavaScript. Our efforts caught the attention of the Telangana state government, leading to a partnership with over 300 schools. By empowering local educators and aligning the curriculum with regional needs, we foster critical thinking and equip students with practical skills for future success in the digital world.



Enlight Education volunteers (from left to right: Sreenidhi Surineni, Saatvika Gorti, Shreya Saraswat, Kainoa Koffman, Matt Carney, and Nina Phatak) celebrate a successful visit to Matthew Gage Middle School, where they engaged over 50 students through hands-on STEM activities.

What is Enlight Education's impact on Riverside?

At UCR, we are collaborating with six middle schools, which has impacted 1,000 students this year. Supported by 25 volunteers, we plan to expand our program to all middle schools in the Riverside Unified and Jurupa Valley school districts by the end of the academic year.

How can UCR students support Enlight Education's Mission?

To make a difference, visit our [website](#) to explore our initiatives and complete the [volunteering form](#). By joining our team, you'll help empower the next generation to thrive in today's rapidly evolving technological world.

Phong Hong, B.S. Entomology

CRF Project Title: Transportation vulnerability: Developing a data collection for transportation barriers among free clinic patients of San Bernardino County

CRF Faculty Mentor: Dr. Andrew Subica, School of Medicine

What was your most impactful UCR/CRF experience?

At this point in my career, I feel very fortunate to pursue research that bridges my diverse interests: entomology, population health, and policies. While these areas may seem unrelated from the outside, they are deeply interconnected with roots tracing back to my earliest studies in entomology at UCR. I first discovered a true affinity for science while watching insects move across the palm of my hand as I observed their interaction with the world. This experience sparked my understanding of the interconnection of life. No agent exists in isolation.



2024 Fulbright Research Award, Vietnam
2018 Fulbright ETA, Germany

Outside of my studies, I took a keen interest in organizing for the collective good, particularly around issues experienced by immigrants and refugees. This manifested through various activities: documenting barriers to healthcare access in San Bernardino Free Health Clinic through the CRF program, learning refugee stories through Critical Refugee Studies R'Course, and mobilizing educational and health resources for the Afghan community with the Donald A. Strauss Scholarship.

Rather than choosing between my academic and personal interests, I never let go of the possibility that both worlds can co-exist. Fast forward 7 years, I am now leading my own research initiative focused on the implementation of a dengue fever forecasting system in Vietnam. In my work, I integrate in-depth interviews to contextualize the health system with advanced modeling techniques to simulate the impact of a forecast system in dengue prevention. My journey is shaped by the various people, spaces and scholarships at UCR, fostering my curiosity and encouraging me to explore my interests, even when they seemed random at that time.

2016-2017 ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

How was your transition to Graduate School?

One of my biggest dilemmas when considering graduate school was how I would finance my education. Fortunately, I was awarded a full-ride scholarship for my master's in public policy at the University of Michigan, having completed the Junior Public Policy and International Affairs Program as an undergraduate. Much thanks to Gladis Herrera-Berkowitz for sharing this opportunity one afternoon in passing. While this financial support eased a significant cost, I needed to be creative to fund my Master of Science degree. Drawing on my experience applying for scholarships at UCR, I quickly adapted to the demands of graduate school. By finding early mentorship and being comfortable with putting myself out there, I became a Graduate Student Instructor. I leveraged my willingness to learn by applying for a leadership fellowship, critical language training, and international research grants. These opportunities not only funded my degrees, but also enabled me to conduct independent research and advance my professional development. Ultimately, I graduated a semester early with two fully-funded graduate degrees.

Please share highlights of your graduate school experience.

- Participated in [Indo-Pacific Alumni TIES Conference on Public Health and Climate Crisis](#) in Thailand
- Interned at [Direct Relief](#) investigating Ukrainian refugee needs for response efforts in Germany/Hungary
- Studied economic development through the [International Economic Development Program](#) in Chile
- Studied Vietnamese and conducted independent research at the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit through the [Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship](#) and [Research Development Grants in Global Health Equity](#) in Vietnam
- Presented my master's capstone research on quantifying early warning systems for dengue control at the [International Conference on Complex Networks and their Applications](#) in France

Do you have any tips for our current CRFs?

- You already put yourselves out there because you won the CRF, so continue to do that because you never know the opportunities that will come knocking on your door later in life.
- Learn to be comfortable speaking up for yourself and be clear with what you need to succeed. Good mentorship requires feedback.
- For those applying for jobs soon: as much as you're applying for a job, the person on the other side is trying to fill a role. When you are addressing their needs, you are offering value. This value could be your time, education, lived experiences, perspectives, etc. Once you fully recognize this, negotiating becomes much easier.

Spencer Pak, B.S. Bioengineering

CRF Project Title: Using Vibrating Reeds as a Medical Diagnostic Tool

CRF Faculty Mentor: Dr. William Grover, Bioengineering

What was your most impactful UCR/CRF experience?

Co-presenting with Gladis Herrera-Berkowitz in various classes to help students understand how to connect to undergraduate research, and my experience working in a lab were the most impactful things I did as a CRF. Connecting with students and showing them a career path they might not have thought was possible was very worthwhile. Among the thousands of students we engaged with, I am certain there are at least a handful of people who were inspired or curious enough to pursue research as a career.

This experience also pushed me to become an Ambassador for Undergraduate Research and Prestigious Scholarships in my senior year, where I helped create the first STEM Peer Mentorship program. My time as a CRF and Ambassador has continued to ignite my passion for helping students who were once in my shoes, as I have continued to mentor many students at UNL

How was your transition to Graduate School?

The first year was extremely tough. Growing up in an Asian bubble in East LA, everything was familiar and I fit in with everyone else who looked like me. However, moving out to Nebraska was a definite culture shock. Gone were all the stores, food, and people I was used to seeing. I had to start over from scratch and begin to write this next chapter of my life. In addition to moving to a completely new environment, I was taking difficult graduate level courses in a new field and in-person for the first time in 2 years since the pandemic. I became very homesick and called my friends and family almost every week because I was so distraught. However, as time went on, I became acclimated to living here. My research slowly picked up, classes got easier, and I met many amazing and smart people. I can't say that I will ever be totally used to living here, but it does get easier with time.



Ph.D. Candidate
Mechanical Engineering & Applied Mechanics
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2019-2020 ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

Please share highlights of your graduate school experience.

One of the best things about graduate school is being able to work with people from around the world and tackle problems using everybody's unique perspectives. There are a few international students in my lab that I work with, and hearing their ideas on how to overcome certain challenges with an experiment or improve the design of a 3D printed part better, like "Why didn't we learn about this in our classes in the US?" I also enjoy spending time with other grad students to just casually talk about our research over some drinks on a night out. The diversity of research never ceases to amaze me, and it has been interesting to compare the types of research being done at UNL vs. UCR and how their geographic locations dictate what each school specializes in.

Another great thing about graduate school is having ownership over your research project. As an undergrad, I was supervised by my grad student and mainly helped him out with his work. Now, I am in total control over how I conduct my work and what avenues I want to explore. This has challenged me to think more critically and conduct quality research, unlike as an undergraduate, where I was primarily following directions from my grad student. It feels great when a project you're leading is published in a journal or presented at a conference and seeing your name as the first author. Even though its impact may be small, it is heartwarming to know that I made a contribution to our collective scientific knowledge.

Do you have any tips for our current CRFs?

Do not let imposter syndrome take advantage of you. It is far too easy to compare yourself to others and go down a rabbit hole of wondering what you're doing wrong and why you're not good enough yet. Just remember that they don't accept dummies in grad school (or any other great institution!) and that you were chosen for a reason. Everybody is on their own path and it takes time to learn and grow. I tried to run before I could even crawl in my first year, and it completely shocked me when I couldn't keep up with my classmates. When coming into a new chapter of your life, be sure to take it easy on yourself and give yourself time to get used to things. As high achievers, we want to get things perfect on the first try, but we have to realize that that is just not possible sometimes. If you are feeling down, recall the great things you have achieved at UCR and the fact that you are a CRF, the cream of the crop of undergraduate researchers. It takes time to overcome imposter syndrome, but with your skills, character, and work ethic, there is no doubt that you can conquer it.

Upcoming Winter Events



CRF Application Workshops

All of the Fellows will participate in guiding interested undergraduates through the application process, shepherding in the Fellowship's next cohort!

Visit the [CRF Webpage](#) for details.

- 1/16
- 1/22
- 1/28
- 2/3
- 2/10
- 2/21
- 2/25

27
JAN

Introduction to UCR Summer Research Programs and Off-campus opportunities (NSF REUs)

10
FEB

Research in Industry vs. Academia

Learn from a panel of professionals who will share their experience in the workforce.

21
FEB

The CRF Experience

Meet the CRFs and learn about their experiences in the program, get application advice, and network.

27
FEB

CRF Application Review Session

Students who attend the CRF Mandatory Application Workshops are invited to get feedback and advice as they finalize their proposal.

Connect with the CRFs



New LinkedIn Page: UCR Chancellor's Research Fellowship



Connect with the current cohort, CRF alumni, and faculty!

Instagram:

 @ucr.crf



Stay updated on Fellowship projects and events!