

June 2025

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**UC RIVERSIDE**  
**CHANCELLOR'S**  
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP  
**CRF End of the Year Newsletter**  
*University of California, Riverside*

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Center for Undergraduate Research and Engaged Learning  
Division of Undergraduate Education

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## A Successful Year Completed



As we reflect on the 2024–2025 year, we are proud to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of our Mentorship, Leadership, and Marketing Committees—as well as the remarkable achievements of our fellows. This has truly been an exceptional year, filled with growth, collaboration, and impact.

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[engage.ucr.edu/research/chancellor\\_fellowship](https://engage.ucr.edu/research/chancellor_fellowship)

## 2025 CRF Mentorship Events

### How to present research



Angie Lopez led our "How to Present Your Research" workshop, sharing practical tips and tricks for clear, engaging presentations; afterward, students put her advice to the test in practice sessions coached by the CRFs.

### CRF Panel for Application Season



Moderated by Angie Lopez, our Application-Season CRF Panel featured Hannah Moore, Alexa Zelaya, Jacob Hensley, Omnisha Sangani, and Sreenidhi Surineni. They offered valuable advice on writing strong personal statements, preparing for interviews, and staying organized throughout the application process.

### CRF Application Review Session



At our CRF Application Review Session, Sreenidhi Surineni, Alexa Zelaya, Omnisha Sangani, Nicole D'Souza, and Jacob Hensley began by answering general questions from the audience. Afterwards, they provided personalized feedback and one-on-one advice to help students strengthen their applications.



## 2025 CRF Leadership Events

### M.D./Ph.D. Panel



Dr. Lo, Dr. Zagha, and Simone Tiwari-Woodruff (current M.D./Ph.D. student and former Chancellor's Research Fellow) joined us for a panel moderated by current CRF Ulises Matta. They shared valuable insights on the M.D./Ph.D. journey, how to balance research and medicine, and advice for aspiring physician-scientists.

### Research in Industry vs. Academia



Ashley Miller and Merab Gomez joined us for a panel moderated by CRF Omisha Sangani to discuss the differences between research in industry and academia. They shared personal experiences, career insights, and advice on choosing a path that aligns with one's goals and values.

### Summer Research Fellowships



CRF scholars Ulises Matta (CRF/McNair), Ariana Gonzalez (CRF), Christian Macaluso (CRF/UC LEADS), and other student panelists shared tips on finding and applying to summer research programs. They offered personal advice on crafting strong applications and making the most of research opportunities.

## 2025 CRF Networking Events

### PBK Visiting Scholar

The Chancellor's Research Fellowship & Phi Beta Kappa Carl F. Cranor Family Visiting Scholar Program present a public lecture by:

**Dr. Corey Robin**  
Distinguished Professor of Political Science  
Brooklyn College  
and the CUNY Graduate Center


**"Who is Clarence Thomas and Where is he Taking us?"**

RSVP: A political analysis of Justice Thomas's biography and jurisprudence, assessing his and it in the Black Nationalist tradition. Explores his vision of the Court's role in contemporary American politics.

DATE: Thursday, October 17  
TIME: 9:30-10:50 am  
Student Success Center Room 329  
Law and Society 100

CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM

For any questions, please contact [ugr@ucr.edu](mailto:ugr@ucr.edu)



Dr. Corey Robin, Distinguished Professor from Brooklyn College, had lunch with the CRFs, co-sponsored by the Phi Beta Kappa F. Cranor Family Visiting Scholar Program. We discussed his research on Justice Clarence Thomas, the influence of political ideology on the Supreme Court, and his insights on navigating academia as a public intellectual.

### Lunch with Chancellor Wilcox & Diane Del Buono



The Chancellor's Research Fellows had the incredible opportunity to share both lunch and dinner with Chancellor Wilcox and his wife, where they engaged in thoughtful conversations about their research projects, academic goals, and personal growth as scholars. During lunch, they discussed the impact of undergraduate research at UCR and ways to foster a stronger research community.

### Lunch with Vice Chancellor and Provost Elizabeth Watkins



The Chancellor's Research Fellows had the opportunity to share lunch with Provost Elizabeth Watkins, who spoke about her path from scientist and historian to UCR's chief academic officer. She discussed her leadership during the campus's post-COVID recovery, the launch of UCR's 2030 strategic plan, and her commitment to inclusive governance and student-focused research.



## Spring 2025 CRF Socializing Events

### CRF Holiday Party



The CRFs celebrated the holidays together with a festive lunch and a lively game of White Elephant.

### CRF Valentine's Day Social



The CRFs gathered for a Valentine's Day Social, swapping sweet treats and plenty of laughs while battling it out in a spirited game of Mafia!

### CRF Social Dinner



The CRFs enjoyed a fun and relaxing evening out during their social dinner at Vanilla Fish.



# 2024/2025 CRF Marketing

## Fall Quarter

The Chancellor's Research Fellowship & UCR Housing Services Present:

### HOW TO CONNECT TO FACULTY

DATE: OCT 18  
TIME: 11-12PM  
LOCATION: Lothian Galley

Learn from professors about the best ways to approach and build relationships with university faculty so that they can support your academic journey.

RSVP: 

For any questions, please contact [ugr@ucr.edu](mailto:ugr@ucr.edu)

UC RIVERSIDE Chancellor's Research Fellowship

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS AT A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Get advice from program representatives from the **Trio McNair Scholars Program** and the **First Generation Mentorship Program** on how to succeed as a first generation student.

November 4, 12-1 PM  
2nd Floor SSB

Dr. Ana Guerrero, Trio McNair  
Joseph Briones, FOMP  
Naishan Liu, FOMP

TRIO CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP UC RIVERSIDE FIRST GENERATION MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

### Balancing my Research and My Life

Get advice from our CRF mentors on how to **organize research with personal life duties**. With a presentation overview from two of our CRFs, **Jessica and Hannah**.

November 15, 11 AM-12 PM  
2nd Floor SSB

Jessica Steinman, CRF  
Hannah Moore, CRF

UC RIVERSIDE CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP UCR

The CRFs kicked off the academic year with four impactful events designed to help students transition into research, build faculty connections, and find balance in their academic journeys.

## Winter Quarter

CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PRESENTS

### SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAMS

MONDAY 1/27  
2ND FLOOR STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

Connect To Paid Research Opportunities. Open to students in all majors.

FEATURING MSRP, UC LEADS, MCNAIR SCHOLARS, RISE, MELLON MAYS, AND MORE

UC RIVERSIDE CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

### THE CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE

Learn from a student panel:

- How they have grown their leadership skills as a fellow.
- How they balance their academics, research & fellowship responsibilities.
- Get advice on:
  - submitting your application.
  - Preparing your elevator pitch.
  - Preparing your proposal.
  - Preparing your resume.

BRING ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS! WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

FRIDAY 2/21 AT 12PM, 2ND FLOOR SSB

RSVP 

UC RIVERSIDE [ugr@ucr.edu](mailto:ugr@ucr.edu) [@ucr.crf](https://twitter.com/ucr.crf)

THE CRF PRESENTS

### RESEARCH IN INDUSTRY VS. ACADEMIA

Academia: Ashley Miller  
Industry: Merab Gomez

Get tips on career preparation as you learn about the different roles of research in industry and academia.

Monday 2/10 at 12PM  
in The UE, 2nd Floor of Student Services Bldg.

UC RIVERSIDE [ugr@ucr.edu](mailto:ugr@ucr.edu) [@ucr.crf](https://twitter.com/ucr.crf)

The CRFs hosted four Winter events focused on research opportunities and career paths in academia and industry.

## Spring Quarter

The CRF Presents:

### How to Present Research

Are you presenting at the symposium?

Come get tips on finalizing your posters or slides. Bring your questions, we are here to help!

April 21, 12 PM - 1 PM  
2nd Floor SSB

RSVP 



### THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF RESEARCH PANEL

CURIOUS ABOUT RESEARCH?

Monday  
MAY 19TH  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM


Learn from a panel of undergraduate researchers about the highs and lows of working in research. Panelists will share what they have learned and how this has clarified where they will continue their research journeys.


The UE, 2nd Floor of Student Services Bldg

### Is an MD/PhD right for you?

Learn from an MD/PhD panel of faculty and students who will share insights on how the dual degree has shaped their careers in medicine, research, and beyond. You will gain clarity on the MD/PhD track, how to prepare, and what to expect from the career.

May 5, 12 - 1 PM  
UE, 2nd Floor SSB

RSVP 



UC RIVERSIDE CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The CRFs wrapped up the year with three thought-provoking events that tackled topics like research presentation tips, the realities of research life, and guidance for pursuing M.D./Ph.D. programs.



## Highlights - CRF End Of The Year Accomplishments



**Jonathan  
Arredondo**

### **Project Title**

Nano Invaders: Unraveling the Secrets of Nanoparticle-Lung Interactions

### **Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Younjin Min, Chemical Engineering

### **Future Plans**

Jonathan plans to begin working in industry after graduation.

### **Awards and Recognitions**

AIChE Chem-E Car Competition 3rd place performance competition, AIChE Chem-E Car Competition 2nd place poster competition, 7 Dean's Honor List quarters and 2 Chancellor's Honors list, UCR Chancellor's Research Fellowship



**Nicole D'Souza**

### **Project Title**

Effects of Deep Brain Stimulation on Functional Connectivity of the Septohippocampal Network in Schizophrenia Mice

### **Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Vasileios Christopoulos, Bioengineering

### **Future Plans**

Nicole will continue in the CRF program as a senior CRF.

### **Awards and Recognitions**

Society for Neuroscience, Neuroscience Policy Advocate Fellowship, UCR Chancellor's Research Fellowship, UCR Senior Chancellor's Research Fellowship, American Science and Honda Engineering Award, Dean's Honor List, Chancellor's Honors List, University Honors Program, **25/26**

**Senior Chancellor's Research Fellow**



**Joseph Feldman-  
Peterson**

### **Project**

Investigating Critical Mineral Potential in Southern Wyoming

### **Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Andrey Bekker, Earth and Planetary Sciences

### **Future Plans**

Joseph will be attending graduate school at UCLA to pursue a Master's in Geology. He is considering two possible research projects: one focused on sedimentary basins in the Tibetan Plateau in rural China, and another studying a melange complex on Cedros Island off the coast of Baja California.

### **Awards and Recognitions**

2025 Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) Honorable Mention. 2024-2025 Chancellor's Research Fellowship. 2024 CNAS Academic Excellence Award for the Earth and Planetary Sciences. Mike Murphy Endowed Field Studies Fund. McKibben/Turner Undergraduate Scholarship. Winter 2024 Undergraduate Research Minigrant. Terracon Scholarship 2023-24. 2023-2024 Chancellor's Honors List.

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## Highlights - CRF End Of The Year Accomplishments

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**Ariana Gonzalez-Alcazar**

**Project Title**

The Attitudes in a Dual Immersion Education

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Linda Lemus, Hispanic Studies

**Future Plans**

Ariana intends to pursue a Ph.D. in Education, with the goal of becoming a professor.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Chancellor's Research Fellowship, Intern at UCCS.



**Jacob Hensley**

**Project Title**

Generation of Heat Evolved Symbionts to Mitigate Coral Bleaching

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Tingting Xiang, Bioengineering

**Future Plans**

Jacob plans to work as a research lab technician at a company in the San Francisco Bay Area. Following this gap year, he intends to pursue a Master's degree in Biotechnology.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Best Overall Project - Bearhack 2024, Biomedical Engineering Society Officer '23-'25, Chancellor's Research Fellowship



**Christian Macaluso**

**Project Title**

Infant Physical Models for the Testing of Soft Wearable Technologies

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Elena Kokkoni, Bioengineering

**Future Plans**

Christian will continue his studies as a senior in 25/26

**Awards and Recognitions**

Chancellor's Research Fellowship  
UC LEADS



## Highlights - CRF End Of The Year Accomplishments



**Angie Lopez**

**Project Title**

Three-Dimensional Learning Strategies In Organic Chemistry Courses

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Jack Eichler, Chemistry

**Future Plans**

Angie will be attending the University of Michigan to pursue a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry. Her research will focus on organometallic reactions and developing new methodologies in organic synthesis.

**Awards and Recognitions**

American Honda Honors Science/Engineering Endowed Award, Dr. Manuela and Mr. Randy Sosa Scholarship, NSF California Alliance for Minority Participation (CAMP) in STEM Funding, Karin Moore Gandolfo Memorial Scholarship Fund, Best Presenter for the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the Undergraduate Research Symposium Award, Senior Chancellor's Research Fellowship, NSF CAMP Research Award, Undergraduate Education Student Innovation Fellow, ACS Outstanding Organic Chemistry Undergraduate Award, Phi Beta Kappa



**Ulises Mata**

**Project Title**

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

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Diamond Bravo, Psychology

**Future Plans**

Ulises will be pursuing a doctoral degree in human development at the University of Rochester Warner School of Education.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Chancellor's Research Fellowship, Dean's Honor List



**Hannah Moore**

**Project Title**

Social Mediation of Queen Reproduction in Bombus impatiens

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. S. Hollis Woodard, Biology

**Future Plans**

Hannah will be attending UC Berkeley to pursue a Ph.D. in Chemistry.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Chancellor's Research Fellowship

## Highlights - CRF End Of The Year Accomplishments



**Dora Nguyen**

### Project Title

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

### Faculty Mentor

Dr. Kalina J. Michalska, Psychology

### Future Plans

Dora is currently applying for lab manager positions in various psychology research labs. In addition, she plans to continue volunteering at a medical therapy unit to observe occupational therapists as she prepares to apply to OT school in the fall.

### Awards and Recognitions

Stella R. Arambel Award for Academic Excellence Nominee, Chancellor's Research Fellowship, Travel Minigrant, CHASS's Dean Scholarship, Institute for Higher Education Innovation Award, Judith Stolpa Neveau International Studies Endowed Scholarship, Dean's Honors List, Chancellor's Honors List, Phi Beta Kappa



**Madison Juliana Oliva**

### Project Title

Agent-Based Modeling Of Neutrophils Chemotaxis In Wound Healing

### Faculty Mentor

Dr. Qixuan Wang, Mathematics

### Future Plans

MJ will be attending UC Irvine to pursue a Ph.D. in Mathematical, Computational & Systems Biology (MCSB). This summer, before beginning the program, MJ will contribute to a publication with their UCR mentor, Dr. Wang, assist with coding and mathematical modeling projects, and mentor a newly recruited researcher in the lab.

### Awards and Recognitions

Best Virtual Oral Presentation for the College of Natural & Agricultural Science (UCR UGRS); Hays Capstone Project Fellowship (UCR University Honors); Chancellor's Research Fellowship; UCR Research Minigrant for Undergraduate Research; American Honda Honors Science/Engineering Endowed Fund (UCR University Honors); 2nd Best Non-Traditional Hack (UCLA's QWER Hacks); Best Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Hack (UCLA's QWER Hacks); UCR Research in Science and Engineering Fellowship (RISE); Best use of Appwrite (UCR's Citrus Hack); Best Energy Innovation Hack sponsored by Chevron (USC's AthenaHacks); Teach for America Ignite Fellowship



**Kawon (Anzie) Pyo**

### Project Title

Cellular quiescence induced by depletion of RNases P

### Faculty Mentor

Dr. Jernej Murn, Biochemistry

### Future Plans

Anzie will be attending UCR to pursue a Ph.D. in Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology

### Awards and Recognitions

Chancellor's Research Fellowship



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## Highlights - CRF End Of The Year Accomplishments

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**Omisha Sangani**

**Project Title**

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

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Robert Ream, School of Education

**Future Plans**

Omnisha will be continuing her research with UCSF and UCR's 3E Study, focusing on social determinants of cardiometabolic and oral health. During her gap year, she plans to further her research, stay involved with community initiatives like UCR's Inland Empire Street Medicine free clinic, and gain additional clinical experience. She will also support study development, conduct statistical analyses, manage data, and assist with manuscript preparation, all while preparing to apply to medical school.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Chancellor's Research Fellowship



**Amelia Schoch**

**Project Title**

Deriving the Unit of Measurement Used by the Builders of Teotihuacan

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Nawa Sugiyama, Anthropology

**Future Plans**

Amelia plans to attend UCR to pursue a Master's in Computer Engineering.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Chancellor's Research Fellowship (and lead of the Marketing Committee),  
Phi Beta Kappa



**Janna Soliman**

**Project Title**

Hyperosmotic testing of Transgenic Corneal Epithelial Cells

**Faculty Mentor**

Dr. Joshua Morgan, Bioengineering

**Future Plans**

Janna plans to enter her senior year and complete her degree in Bioengineering.

**Awards and Recognitions**

Minigrant, 2025 Chancellor's Research Fellowship, CIRM RAMP trainee,  
**25/26 Senior Chancellor's Research Fellow**

## Highlights - CRF End Of The Year Accomplishments



**Sreenidhi Surineni**

### Project Title

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

### Faculty Mentor

Dr. Sika Zheng, Biomedical Sciences

### Future Plans

Sreenidhi will continue in the CRF program as a senior CRF. He hopes to spend this year applying to master's programs in hopes of pursuing a Master's in biomedical sciences.

### Awards and Recognitions

UCR Chancellor's Research Fellowship, UCR Senior Chancellor's Research Fellow, Barry Goldwater Scholarship, Dean's Honors List, Chancellor's Honors List; **25/26 Senior Chancellor's Research Fellow**



**Sierra Sutton**

### Project Title

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

### Faculty Mentor

Dr. Aerika Loyd, Psychology

### Future Plans

Sierra will be working with an educational non-profit as a Student Success Coach, providing academic and socio-emotional support to students in underserved communities. She plans to gain experience in the education field before reapplying to school psychology programs for Fall 2026.

### Awards and Recognitions

Chancellor's Research Fellowship, Insure the Uninsured Project: Cal-IHEA Scholar, Nomination: The Stella R. Arambel Award for Academic Excellence, Nomination: Nathan Alex Irvin Award



**Alexa Zelaya**

### Project Title

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

### Faculty Mentor

Dr. Kalina J. Michalska, Psychology

### Future Plans

Alexa will be a Postgraduate Research Associate at the Yale School of Medicine, working in the Yale Child Study Affective Youth Lab under the mentorship of Dr. Wan-Ling Tseng. She will help recruit participants and lead independent projects on pediatric irritability using neuroimaging methods. After her gap year, she plans to apply to clinical psychology Ph.D. programs.

### Awards and Recognitions

Psi Chi WPA Regional Travel Grant; Nomination: The Stella R. Arambel Award for Academic Excellence; Hays Capstone Project Fellowship; University Honors Excellence in Research (HEIR) Scholarship; University of California Global Health Institute; Honors Leadership Scholarship; CHASS at Home in the World Scholarship; Chancellor's Honors List; Chancellor's Research Fellowship; Psi Chi Pioneer of Research Award; Honors Study Abroad, UCDC, or UCCS Scholarship; Teresa and Byron Pollitt Endowment for Study Abroad Fund; Research Assistant of the Quarter, Kids Interaction & NeuroDevelopment Lab; Psi Chi International Honor Society of Psychology; Honors Program; District Council of Ironworkers Scholarship; Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholar



# Advice to Incoming CRFs

The Fellowship is not designed to add stress to your already heavy academic curriculum, so the best advice I can give is to enjoy each event, and allow it to augment your research journey. Your peers and other people you meet are some of the brightest researchers on campus, and staying connected as a group will be mutually beneficial. Congratulations! - **Joseph Feldman-Peterson**

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Take advantage of the resources that the CRF offers! - **Alexa Zelaya**

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Don't just focus on running experiments or writing code—take time to understand the scientific question and how your work contributes to the bigger picture. Ask your mentor or lab members about the rationale behind each method and what the research is ultimately trying to uncover. - **Sreenidhi Surineni**

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Don't just complete tasks—seek to understand why they matter. Research isn't about having all the answers; it's about navigating uncertainty with curiosity and purpose. You'll face setbacks, but that's part of the process. What sets great researchers apart is their ability to find meaning in the work and communicate that story to others—especially to those outside their field. Whether you're sharing your results in a meeting or presenting a poster, always aim to make your work understandable, relevant, and grounded in its broader impact. - **Nicole D'Souza**

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Connect with your fellow CRFs and faculty, they are some of the smartest and most interesting people you will meet, and connections are invaluable. Engage with the CRF community, and it will repay you tenfold. - **Amelia Schoch**

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Really get to know the other fellows, the faculty, and guests you meet as part of CRF. I was most surprised by the support system and friends I made as a part of CRF, and am really glad I found a nice research community to settle in :) - **MJ Olivia**

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## CRF Words of Wisdom

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Try to learn from your peers/CRF fellows as they have insight in areas/fields you may not be as experienced in which may help you in unforeseen ways in your future such as through research or academia. - **Jacob Hensley**

Make sure you communicate with your mentors! - **Hannah Moore**

Talk yourself into experiences, not out of them! - **Angie Lopez**

Comparison is the thief of joy! When things get tough, don't compare yourself to others who seem like they're 10 steps ahead. Keep in mind why you started your project and the immense outcomes your research will have on your community. Stay motivated, stay focused, stay disciplined, and the results will show for themselves! - **Sierra Sutton**

Don't lose sight of the humanity in the work you're doing. Research can be a long process that doesn't always directly connect to an immediate impact, but you should always remind yourself of the importance of your project and why it matters to you. Continue to share your research and learn from your peers, reflect on what research teaches you, and think about how you can use your work to benefit the lives of others. - **Omisha Sangani**

One year might not be enough time to make big accomplishments. What matters is that you dedicate yourself to growth, take the initiative, and become the person you will look up to. - **Anzie Pyo**

Take this chance to get involved on campus and learn about different opportunities you would have never known about. - **Dora Nguyen**

Always pursue opportunities that interest you, regardless of what you think the outcome will be. The experience will be valuable and help you be more prepared for bigger opportunities. - **Janna Solliman**



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# Highlighted CRF: Sreenidhi Surineni

## Barry Goldwater Scholarship

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### ***What did your process of applying to the Goldwater entail?***

My application process began with a lot of reflection. I sat down to really think about how my research experiences in neuroscience and other fields connected, and how they aligned with Goldwater's emphasis on STEM research potential. I worked closely with faculty mentors, especially from the Zheng Lab and Undergraduate Education, to refine my personal statement and project narratives. I also sought feedback from previous scholars and advisors, and revised my essays several times to make sure they clearly reflected both the technical depth and the personal motivations behind my work. It was a demanding but ultimately very rewarding process.

### ***What inspired you to apply for this award?***

I saw the Goldwater as more than just a recognition—it felt like a natural step toward validating the translational impact I want my research to have. Working at the intersection of computational modeling, molecular neuroscience, and behavior, I've always been driven by the question of how we can turn scientific discovery into tools that directly benefit people. The Goldwater aligned with that mission and offered a platform to take my aspirations in Alzheimer's disease research to the next level.

### ***What was your reaction to receiving this award and how does it help your plans for the future?***

I was overwhelmed with gratitude. Receiving the Goldwater reaffirmed my commitment to research and gave me the confidence to pursue even more ambitious projects. It also gave me clarity—I want to keep pushing the boundaries of how we diagnose and treat neurological disease using tools from engineering and computer science. The award is helping open doors for graduate fellowships, collaborations, and future training that will bring me closer to making a real-world impact.



**Sreenidhi Surineni**  
Biomedical Sciences, School of  
Medicine  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sika Zheng

### ***Did you ever have a sense of doubt during the application process?***

There were moments when I questioned if my interdisciplinary work—spanning machine learning and neurodegeneration—was “focused” enough. I worried about whether I had done enough or if my story would resonate with reviewers. But I reminded myself that science doesn't have to fit a narrow mold, and that the breadth of my work actually reflected how complex problems like Alzheimer's disease need cross-disciplinary solutions. Talking with mentors and leaning into my story helped me overcome that doubt.

### ***How did your experience as a Chancellor's Research Fellow help you in your application process?***

The CRF experience was foundational. Through it, I not only gained funding for my research, but also professional development opportunities and a supportive community of undergraduate researchers. It forced me to articulate my work to broader audiences, sharpen my proposal-writing skills, and take ownership of my projects. The structure of the CRF program helped me develop many of the materials—like abstracts and research statements—that translated directly into a strong Goldwater application.

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# Highlighted CRF: Joseph Feldman-Peterson

## NSF Graduate Fellowship Honorable Mention

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### ***What was your process of applying to the NSF GRFP?***

The process began in August while I was in Wyoming doing field work for my CRF project. I knew that I was going to be applying for graduate schools in the Fall, and I figured that getting a head start on writing a fellowship application would make it easier for me to reuse the essay for graduate school applications. I went into town for a day, a town with a population under 2,000, to have access to WiFi, and I attended an online seminar discussing the various parts of the GRFP application. While the tips were useful, the most productive part was getting an early start on thinking about what I wanted to write about. Through the same program, I was matched with a graduate student mentor, who helped me through both my GRFP application and graduate school applications later in the Fall.

### ***What inspired you to apply for this award?***

My faculty mentor encouraged me to apply for it, and there are multiple graduate students in the Earth and Planetary Sciences department who received the full GRFP award and the honorable mention. The award is extremely prestigious and therefore competitive, so I also viewed it as an opportunity to use my writing skills and practice creating my own research proposal. This is a skill that I still have little experience with, but will be vital for my graduate school journey and beyond as I continue working in research.

### ***What was your reaction to receiving this award and how does it help your plans for the future?***

I am overjoyed and deeply honored to have been awarded the honorable mention, though the NSF budget cuts this year certainly hurt my prospects of receiving the whole award. The award is extremely prestigious, and just receiving the honorable mention rather than the full award with funding makes me stand out as a student researcher. I am attending graduate school at UCLA next year, and it gives me confidence that I have a good chance of receiving the full GRFP if I were to reapply in the future.



**Joseph Feldman-Peterson**  
Geology, Earth and Planetary  
Sciences  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Andrew Bekker

### ***Did you ever have a sense of doubt during the application process?***

Yes, there was a lot of doubt and impostor syndrome. I chose my own research topic rather than sticking with my PI's ideas, meaning that I worked on it largely by myself. My love for research is fueled by my passion for geology, so I chose a topic by finding a "research gap," an unanswered question that I considered to be both important and answerable within the scope of a graduate-level research project. I knew that the research skills I learned during my time in labs as an undergraduate would allow me to perform the research I proposed, but I doubted my ability to write the proposal clearly while convincing readers that it is important enough to fund. After drafting my research proposal, I ultimately sought outside support in the form of professors from other universities that had more expertise on geology related to my proposal, which helped me make further connections in my field.

### ***How did your experience as a Chancellor's Research Fellow help you in your application process?***

Though I did not use UCR resources to their full potential while writing the GRFP application, being a Chancellor's Research Fellow helped me to believe that I had a shot at receiving the GRFP rather than just using the application as a practice for writing research proposals. I had a similar experience applying for the CRF as I did for the GRFP because I understood it to be practice for writing a research proposal rather than seriously considering that I might actually receive the award. Additionally, I was performing fieldwork in Wyoming, funded by my CRF stipend, without access to the internet for weeks at a time, which complicated starting the writing process.



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## CRF Alumni Highlight: Julianne Rolf

Science Technology Policy Fellow California Council on Science and Technology

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### ***What degree program are you pursuing and where?***

I earned my Ph.D. in Chemical and Environmental Engineering from Yale University in 2023.



**Julianne Rolf**

B.S. Environmental Engineering  
UC Riverside, 2016.  
Ph.D. Chemical and  
Environmental Engineering  
Yale University, 2023

### ***What was your most impactful CRF experience?***

Designing a research project from the start was invaluable. Reviewing literature and coming up with new questions that have never been answered is one of the most challenging aspects of a research career.

### ***How was your transition to Graduate School?***

The transition to graduate school was a lot easier because of the CRF program. I knew what my daily life would look like, but I still needed time to determine what topic I wanted to focus on for my Ph.D.

### ***Please share highlights of your graduate school experience.***

I was able to participate in NEWT, an NSF-funded research center with three other campuses, increasing collaboration and research opportunities. I was also awarded multiple awards, including the PEO Scholar Award and the Tau Beta Pi Fellowship. I also had an incredible opportunity to attend COP 27 in Egypt to learn from world leaders and top scientists addressing climate change.

### ***Do you have any tips for our current CRFs?***

Really think about what you want your future day-to-day work schedule to be before starting graduate school and reevaluate that every year. You'd be surprised how much your goals will change throughout graduate school, so don't be afraid to pursue non-research opportunities, especially ones that can supplement your expertise.

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## CRF Alumni Highlight: Simone Woodruff

M.D.-Ph.D. Candidate at Oregon Health & Science University

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### **What degree program are you pursuing and where?**

I am pursuing a dual M.D.-Ph.D. degree in the Medical Scientist Training Program at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Oregon.

### **What was your most impactful CRF experience?**

The most impactful CRF experience I had was getting the opportunity to moderate a CRF meeting with a college dean as our guest. Being able to introduce the dean to the other fellows and lead a conversation to learn about their background and ask for career advice was a huge honor and great learning experience.



**Simone Woodruff**  
B.S. Neuroscience  
UC Riverside, 2019.  
M.D.-Ph.D. Oregon Health &  
Science University,  
Expected graduation: 2028

### **How was your transition to Graduate School?**

My transition to the M.D.-Ph.D. Program was difficult, as I started in 2020 during quarantine, and I had moved to a new city where I didn't know anyone. With time, I was able to form a support system and settle in. Just as I was starting to get the hang of studying the excessive amount of information taught in medical school and taking exams all the time, I had to transition to graduate school in 2022 and start the learning process all over again. Thankfully, my experience as an undergraduate researcher and Chancellor's Research Fellow gave me a great introduction to graduate school and a foundation of knowledge to build on.

### **Please share highlights of your graduate school experience.**

The highlight of my graduate school experience was receiving the prestigious NIH NRSA F30, which is a research fellowship awarded to M.D.-Ph.D. students.

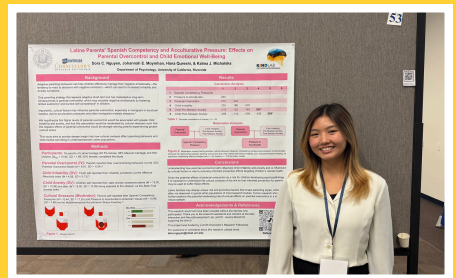
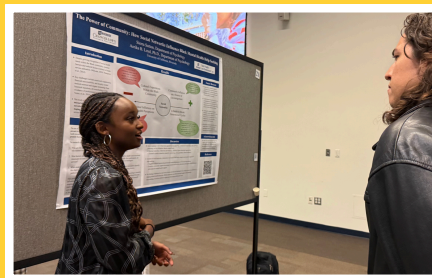
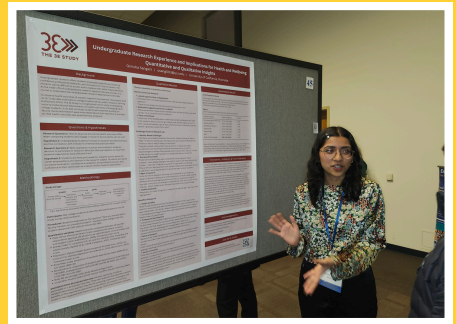
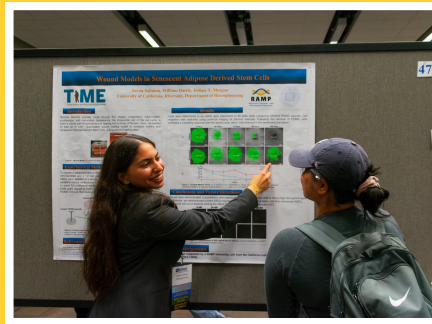
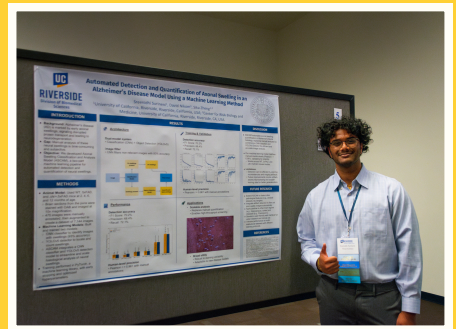
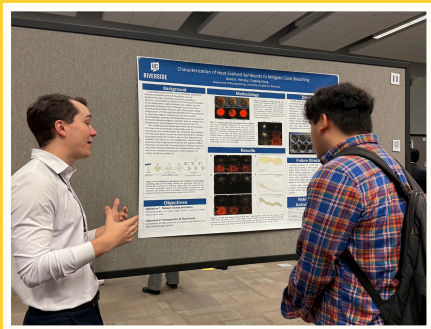
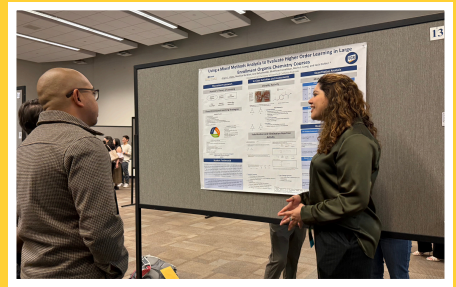
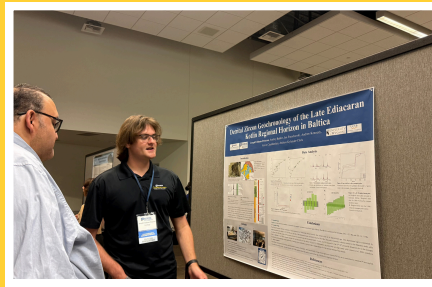
### **Do you have any tips for our current CRFs?**

Take advantage of opportunities and experiences that will help you learn more about your strengths and interests, both personally and professionally. Learn tools for taking care of your mental health, combating imposter syndrome, and avoiding burnout—these will come up over and over throughout your training and career, so start working on these skills now and they will be a lot easier to handle later on.



# CRF Research Presentations

All the CRFs worked hard to make major strides in their research projects and present their research at different conferences & symposiums.



# 24-25 CRF Mentorship Program

The Chancellor's Research Fellowship mentorship program was launched in October 2022. Each CRF was matched with 2 second-year undergraduates to assist them in joining ongoing research on campus. Congratulations to the 2024-2025 mentee cohort for all their accomplishments!

## Mentee Accomplishments

### Thaila Jenkins

Vice President of African Americans United in Science (AAUS),  
2025-2026

Researcher for the 3E Study on Cardiometabolic Health  
Dean's List, Winter Quarter 2025

Volunteer with a local hospice program in the Riverside area

### Shwetha Anand

Digital Agriculture Fellow

Researcher working with Dr. Hoori Ajami in Hydrology  
Participant in the RISE Program, Summer 2025

### Alexis Castaneda

Digital Agriculture Fellow (DAF)

Participant in the RISE Program, Summer 2025  
Researcher mentored by Dr. Elia Scudiero and Dr. Bhawana Acharya  
Member of UCR's Association of Computing Machinery (ACM)  
NAAMA Development Team

### Danielle Gabrielle See

RSAC Committee Representative for the WRC (AY 25-26)  
WRC Student Empowerment Intern '25  
Secured behavioral technician position

## Mentee Cohort

Shwetha Anand  
Yanely Cardenas  
Alexis Castaneda  
Ashley Chan  
Justin Chang  
Jamie Choi  
Jesus Estrada Sanchez  
Alexis Fernandes  
Faith Garcia  
Grace Hernandez  
Thaila Jenkins  
Rebecca Jennings  
Sarah Kim  
Sofia Lopez  
Briza Millan Martinez  
Madelyn Moore  
Siv Nair  
Lorenzo Pedro  
Stephanie Portillo  
Rakshitha Rajamani  
Montserrat Ramirez  
Mariana Saldivar  
Bidipta Sarker  
Kortney Schoenborn  
Danielle Gabrielle See  
Maanasi Sridhar  
Wesley Ting  
Rupa Vijaya Gowd  
Mya Wilson



# CRF Mentorship Program

## Mentee Accomplishments

### Mya Wilson

25-26 Chancellor's Research Fellow  
Project with Dr. Alexander Haskell in the History department

### Madelyn Moore

Accepted into Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship

### Jesus Estrada Sanchez

Global Career Accelerator club member  
Prepared graduate application materials

### Faith Garcia

Research Internship for ThinkNeuro: Researching about Socioeconomic Disparities in Healthcare,  
AAPI Mental Health Internship with LINKED, Won 1st place in scholarship categories "Summer  
Classes while Traveling"

### Mariana Saldivar

MSIRA (2025-2026)

### Thaila Jenkins



### Mya Wilson



### Madelyn Moore



### Faith Garcia



### Jesus Estrada Sanchez



### Mariana Saldivar



## 2025 Spring Reception

### Welcome 2025-2026 CRF Cohort

Samantha Agustin  
Nayan Camalon  
Eva Chen  
Carissa Johnson  
Sawyer Kumar  
Keyanna-Milenia Pinzon  
Yaser Naji  
Atharva Nevasekar  
Mabel Tan  
Benjamin Tobar  
Hannah Velazquez  
Grace Wang  
Mya Wilson



### Mentee Awards

#### Engagement Award

Jesus Estrada Sanchez

#### Professional Development

Rebecca Jennings, Shwetha Anand,  
Danielle Gabrielle See

#### Research Award

Madelyn Moore, Rakshitha Rajamani,  
Alexis Castaneda, Rupa Vijaya



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## 2024-2025 CRF Events

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### Mentorship Committee Events

The Mentorship Committee focuses on hosting workshops to help students learn about different careers, experiences, and opportunities.

#### Fall Events

**Demystifying Research Panel  
(STEM)**

**Public Speaking Series I: How  
to Master Public Speaking  
Workshop**

**Demystifying Research Panel  
(STEM & CHASS)**

**Demystifying Research Panel  
(CHASS)**

**Resume Writing Workshop  
HIP Panel**

#### Winter Events

**How to Form Connections with  
Professors - Student Perspective  
Developing Organization Skills  
Earning Letters of Recommendation  
- Faculty Perspective  
Public Speaking Series II: Presenting  
Yourself - Developing You Elevator  
Pitch and Self-Narrative  
Interview Practice**

#### Spring Events

**Public Speaking  
Series III: How to  
Present at a  
Symposium  
Highs and Lows of  
Undergraduate  
Research**



### Leadership Committee Events

The Leadership Committee focuses creating campus-wide events with guest speakers to help students learn about different careers, experiences, and opportunities.

#### Fall Events

**Crash Course on  
Public Speaking  
Grad Dean Talk  
CORO Campus-  
Wide Visit  
Applying to  
Graduate School  
Prestigious Awards  
& Scholarships**

#### Winter Events

**Talk with Vice Provost  
Louie Rodriguez  
The Graduate Student  
Experience  
Lunch with Nobel  
Laureate Richard  
Schrock  
Study Abroad Panel  
Medical School Panel**

#### Spring Events

**Journey of  
Resiliency: UCR  
Latinas Growing  
Professionally  
through International  
Experiences  
Phi Beta Kapp Visiting  
Scholar  
Impact of AI Professor  
Panel**

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Thank you from the newsletter editing team



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## CRF Important Dates

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### Summer Events

- **July:** CRF Orientation
- **July-August:** Schedule appointment to meet with Gladis – Bring Resume
- **August:** CRF Summer Meeting
- **September:** Respond to Availability  
Doodle for Fall Meetings – Once date and time is confirmed **PUT A HOLD ON YOUR CALENDAR**
- **September:** Peer Mentor Planning Meeting



### Future Events

- **October:** Lunch with the Chancellor
- **April 2026:** CRF Application Deadline
- **May 2026:** Dinner at Chancellor's home
- **June 2026:** Spring CRF Reception



### Quarterly Reports

#### Due the 1st Friday of Each Quarter (except spring)

- Sept 26: Summer Report Due
- Jan 9: Fall Report Due
- April 3: Winter Report Due
- June 4: Spring End of Year Report Due (Last Day of Instruction)

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## Thank You 2024-2025 CRF Cohort

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**Gladis Herrera-Berkowitz**  
Director of CUREL &  
Chancellor's Research  
Fellowship

The CRFs would like to thank Gladis for her constant support and guidance throughout the year. She is a big reason for the program's excellence. We owe our success to her invaluable contributions!



**Thank you to the 2024-2025 CRF cohort! We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. May you achieve great success and find joy in every step of your journey! Please keep in touch, as we would love to hear about your future accomplishments!**



Thank you to our 2024-2025 Senior CRFs for all their help and hard work the past year in improving the CRF program!  
**Dora Nguyen, Leadership Committee Lead**  
**Angie Lopez, Mentorship Committee Lead**



Congratulations to the 2025-2026 Senior CRF recipients!

**Nicole D'Souza, Leadership Committee Lead**  
**Sreenidhi Surineni, Mentorship Committee Lead**  
**Janna Soliman, Marketing Committee and Mentorship Program Lead**

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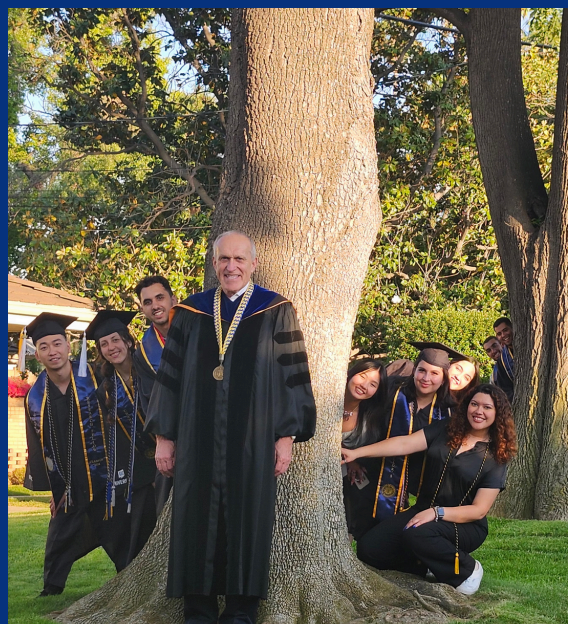
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## Thank you Chancellor Wilcox

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