



Nicole Balbuena is a fifth year Sociology, Political Science, and Chicano/Latino Studies major from Santa Ana, CA. Nicole's involvements include:

- 2nd Year Transfer Experience Program (2018-2019)
- CALPIRG Students (Winter 2018-Spring 2019)
- Campuswide Honor Program (Spring 2017 - Summer 2017)
- Chi Alpha Epsilon (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)
- Jumpstart at UCI (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)
- Pre-Law Society (Fall 2016-Winter 2018)
- President & Founder of Healthy Emotions and Attitudes in Relationships Today (Spring 2017-Spring 2019)
- President and Founder of Natural High (Spring 2017-Spring 2019)
- Student Achievement Guided by Experience Scholarship Program (Winter 2017-Spring 2019)
- Summer Academic Enrichment Program (Summer 2018-Spring 2019)
- Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (Summer 2018-Spring 2019)
- Undergraduate Researcher for Chicano/Latino Studies Honors Program (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)
- Vice President and Founder of Anti-Bullying Campaign for Orange County Youth (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

## **What are three words to describe yourself?**

Resilient, empowering, and activator. I am a domestic violence survivor and went through a lot during those five years, starting from the age of 15. In spite of the emotional and physical obstacles that I faced, I was able to overcome them by being an activist and spreading awareness about domestic violence, especially to the youth. Through my education, I empowered myself to get to this point of higher education, taking three majors, and starting three student organizations on campus. I empower myself but also empower others to be resilient and to be an advocate for themselves.

## **How have you grown as a leader during your time at UCI?**

I've grown as a leader by joining leadership programs such as SAGE Scholars, or "Student Achievement Guided by Experience," at UCI. They gave me leadership skills and enabled me to network with professors such as Dr. Valdez, Dr. Enriquez, and Dr. Flores - all three of them playing a major role in my leadership and academic development at UCI. With the help of Dr. Valdez's guidance and connections, I started the Healthy Emotions and Attitudes in Relationships Today (HEART) program at UCI. I worked closely with the founders of after school programs as well as nonprofit organizations, and soon they became my mentors that I looked up to for their skills and knowledge in leadership.

## **What are you passionate about? Do you see yourself doing something with this passion in the future?**

After I graduate, I plan on applying to Ph.D. programs in sociology and social work, depending on which universities I get accepted to. Unfortunately, UCI does not have a program in social work, so, for now, I plan on applying to UC Berkeley and USC. Afterwards, I plan on applying for a government job in Orange County Courthouse in Santa Ana, to gain experience as a social worker, specifically with neglected and abused children and at-risk youth. Once I gain experience, I want to start my own nonprofit organization and work closely with domestic violence victims as well as at-risk youth in order to promote social change and policy.

## **If you could drop all of your responsibilities for a day and do anything with this free time, what would you do?**

I hardly see my family because we are always busy doing other things, so it would be to spend time with them. I would like to have dinner with my family and devote my entire time to them. I want to spend it with my doggy too because I love my dog!

## **Who motivated you during college?**

Despite the fact that they were not able to get education in the United States, my parents always encouraged me to do more than just high school. I was this close to not doing a third major, but my dad told me, "You're capable of doing this. I know you have the strength to pick up a third major because you've already finished two." Even though they cannot provide full financial support, they provide emotional support. They're the main people in my life that encourage me to pursue what I'm doing now. I volunteer at four to five different nonprofit organizations, I have a job, I have three majors, and do other things around campus, but because of them, I can do it all.

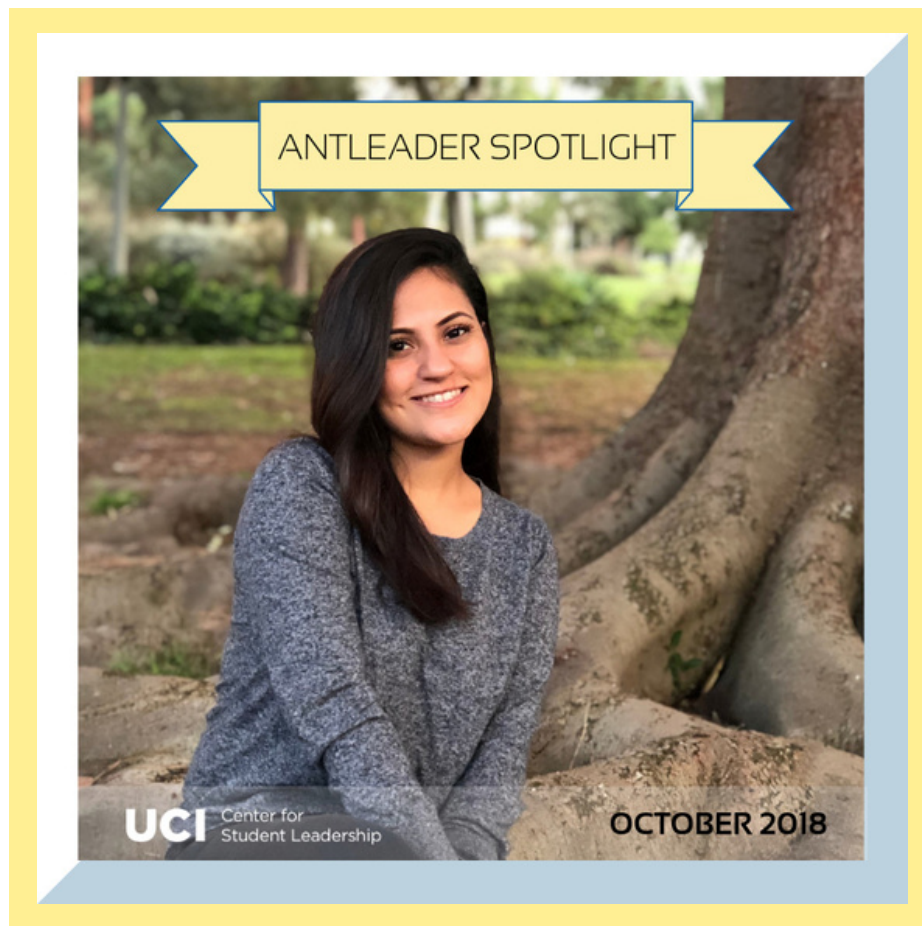
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## **What is your favorite memory at UCI?**

I'm a transfer student and a commuter, so I felt really isolated at one point, so I guess it's just meeting new people! Initially, I thought I was just going to finish up my political science major and leave, but after meeting professors and peers through student organizations, I felt more connected with the campus. Dr. Valdez became a father figure to me at UCI not only because of his immense support and mentorship but because he encouraged me to get more involved on and off campus. As I started recruiting members from my organizations and applying to programs such as the Diversity Student Empowerment Program and the Summer Academic Enrichment Program (SAEP), I began to realize that I had friends and faculty here that made me feel at home.

## **Tell us about a time that you failed. How did you deal with this failure?**

I applied to the Dalai Lama Endowed Scholarship, where participants propose a year-long project, called "Cross-Cultural Health and Individual Learning Development" (C.H.I.L.D.). I made my proposal based on my student organization, targeting at-risk youth, and eventually made it to the top three finalists. PTSD and anxiety is something I struggle with, so when my proposal did not come out the way I expected it to during my interview, I got really nervous, couldn't think straight, and stumbled my words. When I received the news that I did not get the scholarship, I felt like a failure. However, my friends, family, and UCI professors reassured me that making it that far was a success rather than a failure and that I should be proud of myself. Although I did not receive the grant, the support I received helped me pursue my project.



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Zenith Farin is a fourth year Public Health major and English minor from Los Angeles, CA. Zenith's involvements at UCI include:

- DubHub Intern at Womxn's Hub (Fall 2018)
- COACH, Counseling Center (Fall 2018)
- President of South Asian Student Union (Spring 2017-Fall 2018)
- Chapter Ambassador of HEART Women and Girls (Winter 2018-Fall 2018)
- Cross Cultural Center Community Programs Volunteer (2015-2016), Personal Development Intern (2017-2018)
- Antleader Mentorship Program Mentee (2015-2016), Mentor (2016-2018), Workshops Coordinator (2016-2017), Assistant Commissioner (2017-2018)
- Bengali Rural Education Advancement Intern (2016), Public Relations Chair (2017)
- Alternative Break Site Leader for Campus Organizations and Volunteer Programs (2016-2017)
- Planning Committee for ALL-U Leadership Conference (2016)
- Pakistani Student Association (2016)
- Mentee for Humanities Peer Mentor Program (2015-2016)

## **What are three words to describe yourself?**

My roommate describes me as a leader, active, and pristine. When I was younger, my talkativeness and busy body personality type made me the center of a teacher's worries and detention slips, but now as a senior in college, it has translated into something more: a leader. I am still learning as a leader, learning to give space, take space, to give empathy and love, and acknowledge those who were before me and will come after. As I grow into the future leader I hope to be, I also hope to motivate others to know that those who never believed in them is such a small number compared to how many people do believe in them. Everyone has the capability to be their own leader and there is no set way to lead effectively. I am defiantly not physically active, but I do try my best to be active in people's lives and in the social justice scene as best as I can. I am only one person, but I believe in the importance of sharing/giving space with others and holding myself accountable to my actions. Pristine can be interpreted in different ways, because I feel like I am far from pristine, but I do like this definition: "in its original condition." I always remind myself to remember who I am, where I come from, and who was there for me through a lot. I will always be my authentic, original, and pristine self.

## **What would you say is your greatest strength? How have you utilized it to empower yourself?**

My greatest strength is my ability to be unwavering, even through difficult times, but there are still moments when I can't always be so. I recently saw a quote from writer Katherine MacKenett that states, "Now, every time I witness a strong person, I was to know: What darkness did you conquer to your story? Mountains do not rise without earthquakes." I resonate with this statement a lot because I often hear people telling me that I am strong, that I look put together, and that I have it all under control. Yes, I appreciate that those around me can see how hard I work and do truly love my unwavering attitudes at times. But, I do have my dark days and dark past that haunts me. I have had many moments in my life where I put myself down or was put down by those I thought loved me. I began boosting myself up by trying to find the glimmers of confidence and affirmation that reminded me about why I am here, why I matter to myself, and why I matter to those around me. I empower myself to be proud of where I have been able to reach, and remind myself that being unwavering does not make me any less human



## **What are you passionate about? Do you see yourself doing something with this passion in the future?**

I'm passionate about deconstructing and revitalizing the mental health care system around the world and poetry for the soul. I am hoping to receive higher education in public health or community health to work with mental health initiatives for marginalized communities, but poetry has been a tougher part of my passions lately as well. I am trying to find more time to write and remind myself that I am writing myself for me. One day I hope to publish poetry that soothes the soul and reminds people what it means to be human each day.

## **What is your life motto?**

Remember what you are worth, that is your life's importance/

## **If you could drop all of your responsibilities for a day and do anything with this free time, what would you do?**

Students, especially prominent student leaders, deserve to have days to themselves for preservation and reflection, so I would definitely want a carefree day alone in order to rejuvenate myself for when I need to get back to work. I would spend a day in a flower field with my dog, Max, while I read books, paint a new painting, and somehow have magical wifi to watch a few episodes of an anime.



Ghadi Ghanem is a fourth year Biological Sciences major from La Crescenta, CA.  
Ghadi's involvements at UCI include:

- Assistant Laboratory Manager, Waterman Lab - UCI Cancer Research Institute - Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (2017-2018)
- "Peers Under Bio Sci" Mentor and Event Coordinator (2017-2018)
- Bio Sci Mentor Program Mentee (2017-2018)
- College Student Interest Group in Neurology, Vice President (2015-2018)
- Emergency Medicine Research Associate Program (2017-2018)
- Medical Community at UCI - Founder, President (2017-2018)
- UCI Outreach Clinic Volunteer (2017-2018)
- UCIMC Emergency Department Undergraduate Study Coordinator (2017-2018)

## **What are three words to describe yourself?**

Charismatic, Ambitious, Jolly

## **How have you grown as a leader during your time at UCI?**

UCI has allowed me to find organizations I am passionate about - and given me the confidence and opportunity to take up a leadership position to help further the mission of the organization. This has fortified my sense of responsibility and ability to work with a motivated team of like-minded individuals. It has also allowed me to surround myself with friends that support me to go on to greater heights.

## **What would you say is your greatest strength? How have you utilized it to empower yourself?**

My greatest strength is that I am highly driven and goal oriented. For many years, I have had my sights set at going to medical school - and have used this to motivate me to take leaps forward to achieve my goal and take up opportunities whenever they arise. This in turn has allowed me to gain leadership positions on campus, and in my research at the Emergency Department.

## **What is an obstacle that you have overcome as an undergraduate at UCI?**

With all the commitments I have, times has often not been in my favor. Finding a balance between working as an assistant laboratory manager in the cancer research institute, research at the UCI Emergency Department, volunteering at free clinics, running multiple organizations, and maintaining a 3.95 GPA, it has been a difficult road to traverse. But I have learned to manage my time, and be efficient in everything I do - while still sparing time to have fun and spend time with family and friends.

## **What is your proudest accomplishment to date?**

Earlier this year, I was selected for the "Distinguished Anteater" scholarship by the UCI Alumni Association. This award was a culmination of all the things I have managed to achieve at UCI - and has served as motivation to push myself forward onto the next step, while reassuring me that all the sacrifices I have made been worth it.

## **What are you passionate about? Do you see yourself doing something with this passion in the future?**

I am passionate about advancing the field of medicine by improving patient care, reducing the incidence of disease or injury, and conducting research to explore new methods of diagnosing and treating diseases. I hope that as a future physician, I am able to incorporate these principles in my medical practice, while striving to continue my aspirations in research.

## **What is your life motto?**

"Live your life by a compass, not a clock"

## **What is the greatest piece of advice that you have been given?**

From a young age, I was taught to lead by example - don't tell others to do things, rather, empower them to walk alongside you.

## **What is something you have learned in college that you would like to share with other students at UCI?**

Make the most out of your time at college: get involved in clubs, research and extracurricular activities that you feel passionate about. These will all help shape you into the successful person you are destined to be!



Brian Paul is a fourth year Chemical Engineering and Materials Science major from Lake Forest, CA. Brian's involvements at UCI include:

- AIChE - American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Vice President of External Affairs (Spring 2018-Winter 2019), Western Regional Conference Sponsorship Chair (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)
- ASM Material Science Club (June 2018)
- BioEngine/Senior Design Capstone, Executive Team Lead (Fall 2018-Winter 2019)
- Ceramics Characterization Lab under Professor Martha Mecartney, Undergraduate Research Assistant (Fall 2016-Spring 2017)
- Colloid Science Lab under Professor Ali Mohraz, Undergraduate Researchers (Fall 2017-Winter 2018)
- Initiate of Omega Chi Epsilon, Chemical Engineering Honor Society (Summer 2016-Winter 2019)
- Initiate of Tau Beta Pi, Engineering Honor Society (Summer 2017-Winter 2019)
- Introduction of Engineering Freshman Design Projects (Fall 2015-Spring 2016)
- UCI Applied Innovation, Engineering Prototyping Lab Intern (Summer 2018-Winter 2019)
- UROP/SURP (volunteered for UROP Symposium May 2017, SURP Fellow Summer 2018, UROP Fellow 2018-2019)



## **What are three words to describe yourself?**

Motivated, genuine, and passionate. When I care about something, I pour myself into it and I will move mountains for it. I think very carefully and critically before making decision, but once I make a decision I am all the way in. When I first became the Sponsorship Chair for the AIChE Wester Regional Conference, I had not done anything quite like it before. For that reason after I decided to take the position, I worked hard and pushed myself to succeed, and I accomplished what I had never seen myself being able to accomplish. I have been able to move far outside my comfort zone and grow because of my determination and passion for my work, and my success is a reflection of that.

## **What are three words other people would describe you as?**

Altruistic, professional, and dependable. In everything that I do, I strive to make the greatest positive impact possible, and I often go out of my way to help others. I can't count how many times I've been a mentor for someone this year, and to come from mentee to mentor in the same community is a unique and special feeling. Through my AIChE Conference experience and experience as Vice President, the professional I have worked with have been impressed with my professionalism. I have a natural feeling for how to communicate with professionals, and my thoroughness with event planning, attention to details on emails, and most importantly my ability and willingness to follow up and take initiative to communicate with those I need to have impressed my professional contacts multiple times.

## **How have you grown as a leader during your time at UCI?**

My time at UCI has allowed me to become not just a more effective leader, but a more confident leader as well. I have become more comfortable with speaking to a room full of people, with striking up a conversation with people I haven't met before AIChE events or professional networking events, and with drawing on my own experiences in order to give advice to those who ask for it. When I started at UCI, I was the one asking questions of my mentors and seeking to grow from their advice and expertise; now I get to grow from the opportunity to be a mento and to help others in that way. This has been incredibly inspiring and humbling experience that helped me to focus my desire to help others.

## **What is your proudest accomplishment to date?**

This is a difficult choice because I have accomplished many things that I never thought I would be capable of, but my proudest accomplishment would be getting into graduate school! I will be starting a PhD Program at a Top 10 Chemical Engineering program in Fall 2019, and I am incredibly proud of my ability to compete at this level as a researcher and as a young professional. Obtaining a PhD in engineering from a high quality program will teach me to focus myself as a researcher and apply my engineering knowledge to improve our world, and I am both incredibly excited and humbled to be a part of that.

## **Who is your role model at UCI? How have they shaped you into the person you are today?**

My two role models at UCI are two of my chemical engineering classmates, Ariana Romero and Sierra Gross. They are both incredibly hard-working and determined, and I have been impressed time and again with how they persevere and overcome any obstacles. Ariana is devoted to her research and puts in many long hours, and Sierra is passionate for her work with the Society of Women Engineers. Working with them both has inspired me to improve myself and to emulate how they balance responsibilities, and I absolutely look up to each of them for those qualities.

## **What are you passionate about? Do you see yourself doing something with this passion in the future?**

I am passionate about helping others. I decided to pursue engineering in order to make a positive impact on my community, and I have found ways to do that both through my research and my leadership in AIChE. Engineering allows us to create innovative solutions for the problems facing us today and improve the lives of others, and I am incredibly excited and humbled to be a part of that. My experiences have shown me that technical knowledge and campus leadership go hand in hand to create the greatest impact possible, and I plan to pursue both technical and leadership opportunities after UCI to make that impact.

## **What is your life motto?**

"You are capable of anything if you set your mind to it." It's not what you can already do that makes you successful, but your ability and drive to push yourself to succeed in something you've never done before. I've lived this multiple times in my UCI career, and I'm grateful for taking those leaps and for the personal and professional growth that came from them, and most of all for the mentors who encouraged me along the way.

## **What is something that you have learned in college that you would like to share the other students at UCI?**

Definitely join student organizations and get involved on campus! Being in AIChE has been the experience of a lifetime, and having the opportunity to lead the club and shape the way we support our community has been especially incredible. Before my Junior Year I never saw myself as a Board Member of anything, and my AIChE experience has shown me, more than anything else, that I was capable of more than I imagined. For everyone thinking about running for a Board position, starting a club, founding a startup, asking for that research position, applying for that school or job, or just going the extra mile to put yourself out there: do it. You are capable of more than you think, and you will always be grateful for taking that leap to see if you can fly.

## **If you could drop all of your responsibilities for a day, what would you use this free time to do?**

I would play music with my family! My whole family plays and we play enough instruments between the five of us to have a family band. I have less time to play now than I used to, and it would be amazing to spend more time on music.



Mayalen Mercado is a fourth year Biological Sciences major from San Diego, CA.  
Mayalen's involvements at UCI include:

- Alternative Break Volunteer (Winter 2017)
- American Red Cross Club general member, Co-Events Coordinator (2017-2019)
- BioSci Mentor Program Mentee (2017-2019)
- Freshman Edge Mentor (2017)
- Job Shadow Day Participant (Spring 2016, Spring 2017)
- Physician Assistants Coming Together (PACT) (2018-2019)
- Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) Fellowship (Summer 2018)
- TRIO Scholars Program (2015-2019)
- UCI Medical Center Volunteer (2018-2019)
- UCI Outreach Clinic Volunteer, Patient Educator Representative (2017-2019)
- Undergraduate immunology research (2017-2019)
- Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Fellowship (2018-2019)

## **What are three words to describe yourself?**

Three words that I would use to describe myself are diligent, determined, and passionate. I am diligent because I like to get things done ahead of time, as there are many responsibilities to balance with school, clubs, volunteering, and research. I am determined because I continue to work hard to reach my goals despite any obstacles that may arise. I am passionate, specifically about giving back to the community through volunteering as well as learning new things.

## **How have you grown as a leader during your time at UCI?**

I have grown as a leader through my leadership experience as being Co-Events Coordinator for Red Cross Club as well as being Patient Educator Representative for UCI Outreach Free Clinic. As Co-Events Coordinator, I am responsible for helping book and organize community service events for the club. Through this position, I have improved my communication skills through working with board, and my professional skills when contacting different volunteer organizations. I have also grown as a leader as I feel more comfortable speaking at general meetings, leading ice breakers during meetings, and approaching general members overall. Serving as Patient Educator Representative for UCI Outreach Free Clinic has also shaped me into a better leader. Patient educators are volunteers that talk to patients in the clinic about lifestyle changes, mostly concerning diet and exercise, to help patients improve their health. I also help train the new patient educators and work on new changes that can benefit our patients. Through this position, I have grown as a leader by leading by example and taking initiative to implement new changes in the clinic in regards to patient education.

## **What is your life motto?**

Scared? Good. We don't grow when stay inside our comfort zone.

## **If you could drop all of your responsibilities for a day, what would you use this free time to do?**

I would love to spend more time with my family and friends. I would also love to go on a one-day vacation and just relax to destress from school. I would dine at a new restaurant and perhaps go shopping.



## **What is your favorite memory during your time at UCI?**

My favorite memory at UCI was during my second year when I attended a basketball game with some of my friends. Before the game started, a staff member approached us and asked if my friend and I would like to participate in the half-time event that featured students. She told us we would compete against each other by seeing who can shoot the basketball in the fastest, and the winner would get a coupon for free ribs. At first, we were hesitant to say yes, but then agreed. We continued to watch the game and I was getting a little nervous as we were almost approaching the half time-point. It was soon time to go up and the crowd began to cheer. I tried my best, and to my surprise, I won. Looking back, I would have never imaged myself doing something like that. I was proud of myself for stepping out of my comfort zone.

## **What is something that you have learned in college that you would like to share with other students at UCI?**

UCI offers a variety of resources that are underutilized by student, and I learned to take advantage of these resources. During my second year, in addition to attending office hours, I would always go to peer tutoring for organic chemistry. Then during my third year, I would always go to physics tutoring hosted by the TA's in the Physics Department. The courses I took as a Biology major oftentimes got really challenging for me, and these resources have helped me better understand the material and practice the essential skills necessary to succeed academically. Another resource that I enjoy utilizing is the Writing Center. The staff at the Writing Center has helped me improved my writing in terms of flow and conciseness. They have assisted me in various ways, such as by editing class assignments, lab reports, and scholarship applications. Lastly, the Career Center has helped me work on my professional skills by helping with mock interviews, looking over my resume, and providing career preparation workshops. I would highly recommend students to take advantage of these academic resources, as they are free and available to anyone taking the courses.



Hannah Jiyoung Kang is a fourth year Nursing Science major from Irvine, CA.  
Hannah's involvements at UCI include:

- Alpha Tau Delta (Fall 2015-Spring 2017)
- Nursing Science Student Association (NSSA) - Nursing Science Student Representative (Fall 2017-Spring 2019), Publicist (Spring 2016-Fall 2016)
- Nursing Science Student Council (NSSC) - President (Spring 2018-Spring 2019), Vice President (Winter 2018-Spring 2018)
- UCI Chemistry Peer Tutor (Fall 2016)
- UCI LARC Chemistry Tutor (Winter 2016-Fall 2016)
- UCI Outreach Clinic - Nursing Coordinator (Spring 2016-Spring 2019), Nursing Volunteering (Spring 2016-Spring 2019)
- UCI Undergraduate Research Assistant (Winter 2017-Spring 2019)
- Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Fellowship, Undergraduate Symposium (2019)

## **What are three words to describe yourself?**

Positive, responsible, and communicative. I always like to look on the optimistic side of my life and start my day with a smile on my face. I believe that there is always a reason to smile whether it be my friends, family, or a cup of hot americano. A smile opens a door to happiness and changes my attitude which can help me boost my confidence and positively affect people around me. I am responsible because I try to stay highly organized by taking notes and using tools to help me stay on top of deadlines. When tasks are given, I try to go the extra mile to make sure the work is the best it can be. I am passionate about my job and positions I have so I take my assigned duties and roles seriously and take personal pride in them. I believe that the quality of work is a representative of me. I am communicative and open-minded. I try to make sure that everyone in feels equally heard, respected, and understood.

## **How have you grown as a leader during your time at UCI?**

Through my leadership positions at UCI, I became more flexible and understanding. I realized that it is important to have essential qualities of a good leader such as intelligence, decision making capabilities, and passion but the most crucial leadership skill is the ability to listen and communicate. There are so many people with different backgrounds, circumstances, and culture so I have learned to understand their life from their experience and perception. I learned to care for the well-being of my members, listen attentively to their concerns and input, respond openly and quickly to their concerns, and act truthfully to build trust. I try to have an abundant mindset and focus on what my members need rather than what they cannot do. Being a leader requires constant learning because as years went by, I have found a better way to communicate with my members, delegate tasks, prioritize things, and solve conflicts. I continually seek feedback because leaders can grow their organization to the extent that they grow themselves. Achievement in organizations is never accomplished by one person and I would not have come this far without my supportive board members.

## **What is your life motto?**

"Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value." - Albert Einstein

## **What are you passionate about? Do you see yourself doing something with this passion in the future?**

Through volunteering to serve low income populations, working in the healthcare field, and doing clinical rotation as a nursing student, I have realized that I am not in the situation to receive help from others, but rather in situation where I can give out help. I am passionate about serving other people and helping people through their most difficult times. There is an old saying, "If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody." It is gratifying to know that I will be able to impact someone's life as a registered nurse (RN). I am excited to work as an RN after I graduate, and I hope to expand my clinical role in the future.

## **What is the greatest piece of advice that you have been given?**

I used to volunteer at a healthcare facility, where seniors with Alzheimer's disease reside. One day, I met Barney, who shared his life stories and adventures of when he was young, and we talked for several hours. When I shared my concerns, he gently patted my hair and said, "Life is a long journey and you have not even come halfway." He said this and I thought about it. He had received three surgeries for cancer and was close to death, but he was enjoying every second of his life and advised me not to rush. He said, "time will take care of all your pain." I volunteered here to comfort these patients, but unexpectedly gained courage from ones like Barney. As I saw him enjoying his life regardless of difficulty, I became certain that one day I would achieve my goal. From the time, I have tried to enjoy my life to the fullest.

## **What is something that you have learned in college that you would like to share with other students at UCI?**

Treat others how you want to be treated. If you decide to be kind to people, you will most likely feel happier. I also realized that helping others can actually help yourself. Helping others is not always a selfless act because when you help someone, they will be more likely to help you. Do not forget that your good deeds will be given back when needed.



Henry Amir is a third year Physics and Mathematics double major from San Luis Obispo, CA. Henry's involvements at UCI include:

- Certified Learning Assistants Program (CLAP) - Learning Assistant (2017-2018)
- Climatepedia (2018-2019)
- Dollar Lab - Undergraduate Researcher (2017)
- MathBioU Fellowship - Undergraduate Researcher (2018)
- Physics and Astronomy Department Committee for Inclusive Excellence - Undergraduate Representative (2018-2019)
- Resonance Physics Mentorship Program - Mentor (2018 -2019)
- Siryaporn Lab - Undergraduate Researcher (2018-2019)
- Society of Physics Students (SPS) - President (2016-2019)
- Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) Fellowship (2018-2019)



## **How have you grown as a leader during your time at UCI?**

I've learned that leadership is a service more than anything else. The most valuable members of a community are the members-at-large: the everyday students who want to be part of a club or to participate in on-campus events. I've learned at college that my role as a leader is to build and facilitate that community for them: for new and old members alike, no matter what their level of involvement is. In my experience, running a successful club/community requires catering to the interests of my constituents. While that seems obvious on paper, understanding what that means necessitates listening to the diverse set of opinions found in any community and then acting to make those ideas into reality. And member's feedback is always important!

## **What are you passionate about? Do you see yourself doing something with this passion in the future?**

I entered UCI as physics major, and I immediately fell in love with the subject after my first few physics lectures. Entering an academic environment had imbued me with a whole new energy that I hadn't experienced before. I was eager to experience the knowledge a research university had to offer. I regularly attended physics department colloquia, and I also enrolled in Physics 99: a freshman seminar for physics students. This class remains one of my favorite undergraduate experiences; every week, a different researcher would present their research and how undergraduates could get involved. The feeling of being part of the scientific community has fueled a lot of what I do on campus. I try to foster that feeling as the president of the Society of Physics Students by promoting and hosting scientific community-building events, and that is something I plan on continuing to do.

## **What is the greatest piece of advice that you have been given?**

Be as responsive and communicative as possible. If I get an email, I respond as soon as I can. I try to leave thorough feedback for events or classes. I announce club events and club decisions openly, and try to let the whole community know what's going on. People need to know that they can reach you, that you're listening, and that they can expect a response or action from you. They want to know that there's someone responsive on the other end. That way, they can count on you as a professional and a leader.

## **Who or what has motivated you during college?**

When I was in high school, I read about the life of the biologist Dr. Norman Borlaug. Dr. Borlaug developed new strains of wheat and rice in Mexico, Pakistan, India, and Africa during food crises, saving millions of lives each time. He won the Nobel Peace Prize as "The Man Who Saved a Billion Lives." I was immensely inspired reading this, and fascinated how science was able to impact the world on a massive scale. Since then, I've been driven in college to build my own scientific problem solving skills, motivated by a desire to improve the lives of others.

## **What is something that you have learned in college that you would like to share with other students at UCI?**

Nas said "The World is Yours" and it took me until college to realize what he was talking about: the world really is yours. People make the world go round, and I'm one of them. Everything that's in the newspaper, on television and online is the result of people like you or me. There isn't some central institution that determines how the world moves forward or what people are going to do: it's entirely up to us what the world looks like tomorrow. I try to live every day like this: with the knowledge that my actions have the ability to influence what everybody experiences.

## **What is your life motto?**

"Just give it a go." You'll never know what it takes to succeed until you try it. I've found that it's impossible to determine, even if the odds are completely stacked against me, to KNOW if I'll fail or not. And even if I fail, then I've learned a lot of the process, and that's very valuable too.



Brian Wi is a fourth year Biological Sciences major from Chino Hills, CA. Brian's involvements at UCI include:

- Excellence in Research - School of Biological Sciences (2018)
- Global Medical Missions Alliance (GMMA)
- Korean Campus Ministry (KCM) (2015-2019)
- Medical Community at UCI Co-Founder, Vice President (2017-2019)
- Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) Fellowship (2017)
- UCI Disability Services Center Notes Provider (2019)
- UCI Kendo Club - Vice President/Team Captain (2016-2019)
- Undergraduate Research, Walsh Lab - UCI Stem Cell Research Center - Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry (2016-2019)

## **What are three words other people would describe you as?**

Compassionate, Driven, Cheerful

## **What would you say is your greatest strength? How have you utilized it to empower yourself?**

I think that my greatest strength is my strong desire to succeed. All of us are relatively motivated and determined but sometimes, when things don't come as quickly as expected, we tend to give up. I like to look at the small steps that I take forward as mini successes, even if they seem insignificant. Life will throw obstacles my way but as long as I take these tiny steps forward and stay determined, I know that I will eventually succeed.

## **What is your proudest accomplishment to date?**

Last year I was awarded "Excellence in Research" upon completion of my research project regarding the generation of Neural Stem cells and its immunological effects on mouse models of Multiple Sclerosis. I was happy to see that the effort that I put into this project was acknowledged by my peers and especially the professors that I look up to. This accomplishment gives me confidence to take on challenges that I will face in the future.

## **What is your life motto?**

Be yourself and don't be afraid of how you are perceived by others. Often, I couldn't say or do something because I was afraid of how people would perceive me. Society places importance in "fitting in" and this is a problem because it prevents us from being who we truly are. I think it is important to strive to be authentic and have the confidence to express ourselves without worrying about how we appear to others.

## **What is something that you have learned in college that you would like to share with other students at UCI?**

Don't be afraid to try new things and try to meet people from various backgrounds. Take advantage of all the extracurricular opportunities that UCI has to provide! The four years you spend here at UCI will pass by quicker than you think. Also, I think it is important to focus on your career path but don't make it your only commitment. Life is so much more than just your career and I believe it is important to set aside time for other things that life has to offer.

## **What is your life motto?**

I would probably use this free time to play basketball or hang out at the beach with my friends and family.