

2021-2022 AntLeader of the year

Samantha Padua



Samantha Padua (Sam) is a third year Psychological Sciences major with a minor in Sociology from Garden Grove, CA (she/her). She enjoys reading, writing, singing, dancing, going on walks and napping! Some of her involvements include:

- Summer Multicultural Leadership Institute (SMLI), Cross Cultural Center - Summer 2019
- Center for Student Leadership Volunteer - Winter & Spring 2020
- Diamond Crew at UCI - 2019-2020, 2020-2021 (as Social Media Chair)
- UCI Student Alumni Association (SAA) - Winter & Spring 2022, 2020-2021 (as Director of Spirit and Traditions), 2021-2022 (as President)
- SPOP - 2021 (Solaris Year)
- ASUCI - 2020-2021 (as the Mental Health Commission Logistics Staffer), 2021-2022 (as the office of the President co-Chief of Staff)
- UCI C.O.A.C.H. Program, UCI Counseling Center - 2021-2022

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

There are a lot of accomplishments I achieved throughout my life so far that I'm proud of. The most recent one has to do with a mix of professional and personal growth. When I was running for the position of President in SAA, I has spoken about a list of goals I wanted to accomplish if I got elected into the role. Recently, as I was reflecting back on the year, thinking about all that I had got done and everything that is still a work in progress, I rewatched it. I was very pleasantly surprised when I realized that every goal I set for myself, I met. I completed everything I wanted to complete as President, and I was satisfied with how my term went. This was a really big accomplishment for me because I went into the role doubting that I had the capabilities to be a good leader. That self-doubt in my abilities to be a successful President eventually waned after a few months, but it never completely left. Being able to say that I did everything I wanted to do, and I did them well, is something I'm really proud of. Being able to say that I noticed my growth form then to now after rewatching my speech is also something I'm proud of because there are times when I doubt that I'm growing. That was proof that I did indeed learn a lot, and I'm closer to becoming the woman and leader I want to be.

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

There are quite a few people I want to highlight, but the one I'll focus on for this question is Dr. Jessica Ortega, a senior staff psychologist in the UCI Counseling Center and the coordinator of the C.O.A.C.H. Peer Program. She was the person who helped me believe that UCI faculty and staff who have "Ph.D" in their title aren't all intimidating. I learned that it's possible to stay kind and loving even when life is full of adversity because of her. I aspire to be as warmhearted as she is while advocating for many others and helping those who need that support the most. She is always giving back and teaching others what she has learned, but she seeks out different resources and aims to never stop learning. The way she has lived her life, her journey, is so inspiring, and I'm very thankful for all of the support she has given me since I've known her.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

Keep going for what you want, but also give it time. Don't feel discouraged if you don't get an opportunity right away or if things don't go as planned. You'll get where you need to be eventually. Everything happens for a reason, and I am living proof that you'll be okay.

# October 2021

## ANTLEADER spotlight

### Reem Khan



Reem is a fourth year Earth System Science major from Visalia, CA. Some of her hobbies include painting, graphic design, watching sitcoms, thrifting, and listening to Taylor Swift.

One of Reem's most fulfilling experiences in a leadership role was seeing students from Summer Bridge step onto campus for the first time because she felt happy that they were able to finally have an in person college experience after being virtual their entire first year.

When it come to dealing with failure, Reem's mom's words come to mind "abh kya karoge?" which roughly translates to "Now, what will you do?" reminding Reem that it's equally important to acknowledge what's done is done, and the best thing to do is start planning for what come next and how to make peace with oneself again. She has been involved in various campus organizations, including:

- Mesa Court Housing Sustainable Committee (2018-2019)
- Campuswide Honors Collegium (2018-Present)
- CalTeach Program (2019-Present)
- Summer Bridge Peer Mentor (2020-2021)
- Freshman Edge Peer Mentor (2021-Present)

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of my own personal growth at UCI. I remember being known for keeping my thoughts to myself all throughout K-12, which was a frustrating image to defeat internally and externally when I was seeing the same people everyday. Thus I am proud every time I am able to voice my opinion because it wasn't always so easy.

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

My role model is probably Rachel Green from the TV show Friends. I admire her strength in showing up to the big city with just herself. To me that was very brave for her to purposely make herself uncomfortable and grow from it, and I find myself looking for that bravery within me when I try new things. Something else that stuck out to me was that she essentially came home to a piece of her past, Monica to try and find her future self. This reminds me that you don't have to reinvent completely to rework your life to fit who you are.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

I would tell my first-year self to start work earlier. Both in the day and also in terms of due dates. Although I am a night owl, it is so much nicer to work during the day when everyone is busy than it is to try to cram it all at night feeling FOMO the entire time and thus not keeping focus. It's good to look forward to things. Just because it's due Sunday night at 11:59 doesn't mean start on Saturday! Getting everything done during the week is so rewarding.

November 2021  
ANTLEADER spotlight  
Nathan Alteza



Nathan is a fourth year Public Health Science and Public Health Policy major from Lincoln, CA. He enjoys sketching, spray paint, reading, listening to music, and watching movies/TV. As a Peer Health Educator, Nathan specialized in the health topic "Alcohol and Other Drugs" not just because of his own interests on the subject matter, but because I knew it was an important topic for other students to be knowledgeable it. Since he became a PHE member, he's been able to interact with so many students because of it and really teach them about a significant topic. One of his proudest accomplishments is become president of Pre-Health Alliance. He's gotten to meet so many great people since being a part of the club since the start of his UCI experience. Despite being frustrated by failure, this not doesn't stop Nathan from looking to the future as respite. He sees failures as more challenges to overcome, a motivator for innovation and drive. Some of his involvements include:

- ICS Computer Lab Attendant (September 2021-Present)
- UCI Center for the Study of Cannabis Social Media Manager & A.R. Development Assistant (August 2021-Present)
- Peer Health Educator at the UCI Center for Student Wellness & Health Promotion (March 2020-Present)
- Pre-Health Alliance Secretary (April 2019-June 2020)
- Pre-Health Alliance President (June 2020-Present)
- CALPIRG (California Public Research Interest Group) Activist (September 2018-February 2019)

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of becoming the president of Pre-Health Alliance. I've been with them since the start of my UCI experience and I've gotten to know so many great people because of it, I'm glad to contribute to such a great club. As their new president, I can only hope to achieve what previous presidents have done. As a whole though I think I've managed fairly well - especially through the Zoom year. I've networked with so many medical professionals, graduate schools, and exam prep counselors - I'm glad I've continued offering great resources to our members.

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

I would say Abby Hyland, who worked at the UCI Center for Student Wellness & Health Promotion, has held the most impact. I first knew her as a coordinator for the Peer Health Educator program, and I've been amazed at what she's accomplished since then. Not only is she very knowledgeable in harm-reductions and other drug-related issues, but she's just a great person in general! Down-to-earth, understanding, and very savvy in navigating life - I admire her drive to act on her passions and I can only hope to be as motivated as her in my future endeavors.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

First, I'd say that while it is good to have some sort of plan while you're at UCI - don't be too hard on yourself if things don't always go as expected. Embrace any surprises that come your way, and make the best of it! Secondly, I would say to take time to enjoy your life at UCI. Yes, school is important, but so is experiencing what being in university has to offer. Who knows, there may be some cataclysmic public health crisis that could rob you of a year at UCI - so be sure to make every moment count!



December 2021

ANTLEADER spotlight

Jimmy Wong



Jimmy is a second year Environmental Engineering major from Elk Grove, CA. Some of hobbies include hiking, art, rowing, spending time with friends, listening to music, and watching anime. One of his most fulfilling experiences in a leadership role was being a SPOP Staffer because he was able to work alongside other amazing anteaters who were passionate about helping transition incoming students to UCI. He especially enjoyed answering questions that they students may have entering the university and working behind the scenes to create a meaningful experience for the students. During his time at UCI, he learned that failure or rejection is redirection. He would always take it as an opportunity to succeed in something else while also keeping in mind what ways he can improve himself and grow so that he won't fail again. Also, when UCI was remote, there weren't too many people walking around ring road or Aldrich park. So to cope, he would sometimes ride his bike around campus and nature. His involvements include:

- Student Leadership Institute for Climate Resilience (1 year)
- Campus as a Living Lab: Energy Conservation and Marketing Assistant Intern (1 year)
- EarthReps (1 year)
- Cool Block Group Leader (1 year)
- Move-Out Donation Drive Attendant (1 Year)
- Rowing (2 years)
- Engineers for a Sustainable World (2 years)
- American Society of Civil Engineers (1 years)
- Student Parent Orientation Program (SPOP) Staffer (1 year)
- Middle Earth Housing Attendant (1 year)
- ASUCI Sustainability Project Commission Intern (1 year)

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of the work I was able to do for the Sustainability Resource Center. As an energy conservation intern, I helped initiate and publish a four year-long project, the first educational LEED building videos for the center's social media pages. While doing this, I had many opportunities to grow my creativity while exploring around campus, researching the LEED buildings all while being remote during the pandemic.

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

My role model is my SPOP mentor while I was entering UCI. They helped answer questions that I had and guided me to resources and programs. My mentor has also encouraged me to apply to different opportunities, even if I think I wouldn't be accepted. From that, they helped me get out of my comfort zone and become the leader that I am today from SPOP to interning to housing attendant.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

One advice I would give to myself as a first year would be to take advantage of as many resources as I can. It's sometimes easy to forget that there are mentors, advisors, and programs out there that can help with almost any situation. Reaching out and finding programs would be a great way to deal with any obstacle, especially with the many resources UCI has to offer.



January 2022  
ANTLEADER spotlight  
Elaine Tran



Elaine is a third year Biological Sciences major from Burbank, CA. Some of her hobbies include playing musical instruments (piano, violin, ukulele, erhu, and kalimba), hiking, photography, traveling/sightseeing, watching kdramas, Disney+ shows, and spending time with family and friends. One of her most fulfilling experiences in a leadership role was working with her Co-Workshop and Outreach Chair towards creating an online format to teach S.T.E.M. lesson plans to at-risk elementary and middle school students at H.O.P.E. in Garden Grove. They were able to provide fun, informative, and interactive lesson plans for students over Zoom when everything went online for 2020-2021. They were also able to open this opportunity to other M.E.M.O. members to volunteer and contribute to underserved communities through the online format. One of her role models is her friend and former MEMO 2020-2021 Co-Workshop and Outreach Chair, Sam. She has always been a source of positivity, support, and advice. With the help of Sam, Elaine has become more confident in herself and her decisions. Elaine wanted to acknowledge and thank her friend for being such stellar role model for her and others at UCI. (Go Sam!) Her involvements include:

- Medical, Educational Missions and Outreach (M.E.M.O.) Intern (2019-2020), Co-Workshop and Outreach Chair (2020-2021), President (2021-2022)
- Bio 199 Student in Dr. Gall's Anatomy and Neurobiology Lab at UCI School of Medicine (Spring 2020-2022)
- SURP (Summer 2021)
- Working towards Excellence in Research (Fall 2020-2022)
- Member in Chinese Orchestra at UCI (Fall 2021-2022)

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

Although I still have a lot yet to learn, an accomplishment that I am proud of this year is learning a new instrument, the Chinese Erhu! It was difficult at first to play this new instrument, but I put a lot of practice and hard work into learning it. This may be a small accomplishment, but music is my outlet and this accomplishment makes me feel happy!

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

My role model is my friend and former MEMO 2020-2021 Co-Workshop and Outreach Chair, Sam! She has always been a source of positivity, support, and advice. I admire that dedication and hard work that she puts in not in her MEMO tasks, but also beyond in any task that she is given. Sam has helped me become more confident in myself and my decisions and helps ground me whenever I lose track of our goals. I am continually working on being clear, supportive, and a source of inspiration for others as well. I'd like to acknowledge and thank my friend for being such a stellar role model for me and others at UCI.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

I would tell my first year self to branch out to many orgs and have more fun! I want to tell myself to develop friendships and go explore around Orange County more. There are so many restaurants and places to visit so that I can make memories with my friends! In my first year, I was focused on going to school, and then going back to my hometown on the weekends, so I didn't get that chance to make the most of my first year at UCI. As a commuter now, I realize that I have so much more to explore with my friends as that I should maintain my relationships! My friendships provide a huge source of support for me and help me balance my personal life and school.

February 2022  
ANTLEADER spotlight  
Kimberly Moran



Kimberly Elizabeth Moran (she/her) is a third year Psychology major with a minor in Chicano/Latino Studies. She is from El Monte, CA and enjoys creating Spotify playlists, working out, creating/styling outfits, skin care, organizing, brunch dates, sitting in the sun+nature, coffee/matcha, and the most interesting hobby she has is the color green! One of their most fulfilling experiences in a leadership role was during their time as volunteer coordinator for the Latinx Resource Center. It's a safe community for her to find others that share a similar background. It's also been a position where she not only gets to share the knowledge that she had prior to this experience but also have the opportunity to get mentored. She is always learning and developing in this role. In terms of dealing with failure, Kimberly takes any rejection to positions she has applied for as redirection. These times of redirection have led her to apply and do things she would have never considered, things that have nothing to do with what she is interested in career wise for the future. She has learned a lot from those experiences and met people that have become great friends. She looks back at these experiences and reminds herself that she is creating her own journey and because it's her own, it will look different than someone else's path and that is okay. Some of her involvements at UCI include:

- External Student Advocate (ASUCI)
- CONNECT@UCI
- SPOP
- Admin Intern Program: Latinx Resource Center as the Volunteer Program Coordinator

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

As a first-gen student, I am most proud of still being in college. I remember wanting to drop out during week 1 of my freshman year because I didn't see anyone that looked like me. I didn't feel prepared or capable because of imposter syndrome. It's difficult navigating spaces that, in the past, weren't intended for people like you. Since then, I've been able to cross paths with others who share similar experiences, and they have become my support system on campus. They also motivate me to keep going, and thanks to all that, I can say I am still here.

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

Definitely my mom. She immigrated here when she was 14 and was never able to finish her education. She raised me on her own. Even though she always wanted to pursue more for herself, trying to provide financially made it difficult on its own. She has always encouraged me to make a dream come true for both of us. Now a few years later I also have two younger sisters, and they motivate me to do more for myself each day.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

Be okay with change and unlearning. Create safe spaces for you and others.

March 2022

ANTLEADER spotlight  
*Edith Crisostomo*



Edith Antonia Crisostomo (she/her) is a second year Psychological Sciences and Criminology, Law, and Society major. She is from San Diego, CA and enjoys listening to a variety of music, learning to play different instruments, photography, traveling, playing video games, watching anime, and doing a lot of handcrafted things. She is really open to any new hobbies! One of her most fulfilling experiences in a leadership role is when she got to see the progress of her growth as both a leader and individual over time. Throughout high school and her first year at UCI, she was very introverted and never would have imagined herself stepping out of her comfort zone and taking on a position of leadership because she used to think that she was not fit for it. Fast forward to now, she has taken so many initiatives that she never would have imagined possible. Although she is still working on her leadership skills, she is very proud of herself for seeing how far she has come and how far she will go! When it comes to failure, Edith views failure as a natural part of life and it's something she only recently learned. Growing up as a perfectionist, she inevitably met challenges and obstacles as time went on. She struggled a lot with imperfection and failure was really distraught upon my her first instance of imperfection. After receiving some well-needed advice and upon reflection, she realized that everyone goes through failure at some point in their life and that not everything can perfect all the time. If things don't go her way, she no longer sees it as failure, but instead as redirection. Some of her involvements include:

- Circle K International Family Head (2021-2022)
- Hunger, Over Easy Fundraising Chair (2022), Vice President of Service (2022)
- Middle Earth Housing Attendant (2021-2022)
- Sigma Delta Sigma (2021-2022)
- Badminton Co-Captain (2018-2020)

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

As a first-gen student, I am most proud of still being in college. I remember wanting to drop out during week 1 of my freshman year because I didn't see anyone that looked like me. I didn't feel prepared or capable because of imposter syndrome. It's difficult navigating spaces that, in the past, weren't intended for people like you. Since then, I've been able to cross paths with others who share similar experiences, and they have become my support system on campus. They also motivate me to keep going, and thanks to all that, I can say I am still here.

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

Definitely my mom. She immigrated here when she was 14 and was never able to finish her education. She raised me on her own. Even though she always wanted to pursue more for herself, trying to provide financially made it difficult on its own. She has always encouraged me to make a dream come true for both of us. Now a few years later I also have two younger sisters, and they motivate me to do more for myself each day.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

Be okay with change and unlearning. Create safe spaces for you and others.

April 2022

ANTLEADER spotlight  
Sumaita Hossain



Sumaita is a third year Public Health Policy major from Los Angeles, CA. Some of her hobbies include painting, origami, drawing, listening to music, watching movies and TV shows, trying out new food/drink places, learning about other cultures, and spending quality time with loved ones. Sumaita's most fulfilling experience in a leadership role was when she interned for ASUCI's Student Health and Wellness Commission and had the opportunity to work closely with a group of students to plan and organize activities for the campus community that promote health and wellness while spreading awareness about current health issues. She also worked with a variety of campus organizations to promote health involvement, as well as figure out the best ways to help students. The Sexual Health Fair is one well-known project to which she is delighted to have contributed. She was able to educate students about the importance of sexual health, consent, and healthy relationships and gain professional skills by organizing this event. When it comes to facing failure, Sumaita believes it is always very important to remind herself that rejection is protection. It is always best to stay in her hula hoop. She would have a better time focusing on what she can provide to a situation rather than what she is not getting. It is also best to calm down and not hurt and blame herself or others. Utilizing resources and relying on her support system of people who truly want to help her improve as a person are some of her coping techniques. Learning from failure lead to not only redirection but an opportunity to self-reflect. Her involvements include:

- UCI International Center (2021-2022)
- Associated Students of University of California, Irvine (ASUCI) Student Health and Wellness Commission (2022)
- UCI Cross-Cultural Center (2022)
- UCI Student Parent Orientation Program (SPOP) (2022)



## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

Getting to where I am to this day is a huge accomplishment. I am thankful to be alive and I'm glad that I have come a long way. I am proud of believing in myself and for being a loving, caring, and sharing person. I feel accomplished about how I am always persistent and never giving up on going after what I want. Despite failure, tiredness, heartbreak, and disappointment, I continue to strive for success, and I am grateful for the bravery I showcase to hope that a new endeavor will result in a new result. I feel accomplished knowing that by listening to myself and tuning into my own needs, I can be open, honest, and authentic while still loving myself in the process. It is such a huge accomplishment to be able to show everyone my big, soft, beautiful heart. <3

## **Who is your role model (at or outside of UCI)?**

The people that I've met along the way have all had an impact on my journey to success, whether they are friends, family, mentors, or anyone else I've met in my everyday life. The individuals who come and go in my life all have an impact on me because they teach me the things that can only be learned through experience and that, in the end, it is up to me to work on myself. It's important to value those who come in contact with you, care about you, and what out for you since they all have a purpose in your life to teach you more about yourself. Because role models encourage you to be your best self, I can inspire people by becoming a role model myself and showing them how to be confident and treat themselves with love and respect.

## **What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

Please stay truthful and don't be too hard on yourself. Continue to strive to be your authentic self when wearing your heart on your sleeve and let others respect you for it. You will feel appreciated and as if you belong somewhere. Be brave enough to show off your tenacity, individuality, and true strength. Take advantage of any chance that comes your way, and let your strong passions empower you to be expressive and creative while contributing fantastic ideas. Learn how to appreciate and respect both yourself and others, as well as their differences. Appreciate what you have, but also welcome change; constantly stand up for yourself, regardless of the circumstances; and never forget to communicate clearly about what you want.