2022-23
SCHOLARS SPOTLIGHT
UCR Alumni Scholarship Program
The UCR Alumni Association (UCRAA) established a scholarship program in 1976 to support Highlanders in their educational journey and pursuit of academic excellence. Each year, the association awards more than $100,000 to entering and continuing students. Providing scholarship support to students is a proud tradition of the UCR Alumni Association.

Alumni scholars are selected by dedicated alumni volunteers who serve on various scholarship committees to award the next group of deserving scholars. Scholarships are awarded to incoming freshmen, transfer, and continuing students.

Our scholars are remarkable individuals who shine in their respective fields of study inside the classroom, and within their diverse areas of involvement, while providing meaningful contributions to the community.
**FIRST YEAR SCHOLARS**

The First Year Scholarship is the largest scholarship the association awards. Nine incoming first-year students are selected each year based on GPA, enrollment for fall quarter, and residency within California. Recipients are selected by regional committees formed by alumni volunteers. After many applications and rounds of interviews, the most qualified students are selected and receive a scholarship in the amount of $5,000.

**BIANCA NEGRETE | CELL, MOLECULAR, AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
SAN BERNARDINO REGION**

Bianca aspires to attend medical school and ultimately become a physician. During high school, she completed the Medical Leaders of Tomorrow summer program at UCR and plans to continue participating in various organizations and being involved on campus. As a first-generation student, she looks forward to contributing to the community environment and diversity of UCR.

**ETHAN TORNBERG | PRE-BUSINESS
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION**

Ethan is an outspoken activist in his community on a wide range of social and political issues and serves as a volunteer for many activities. He has a desire to continue his activism and volunteering with issues impacting his community. He looks forward to spending more time on his education and furthering his business and finance skills in his pre-business major at UCR.

**JONAH DAMIAN | BIOCHEMISTRY
RIVERSIDE CITY REGION**

Jonah is interested in the medical field and sees to become a surgeon. He is looking forward to the lab experience he will obtain at UCR and is excited for the various opportunities to be involved in extracurricular events on campus. He wants to contribute to the community through his leadership and collaboration skills gained from his involvement in many clubs during high school.

**MINA TOUFANI | NEUROSCIENCE
ORANGE COUNTY REGION**

Mina loves research and learning and wants to devote the rest of her career life to this path. As a neuroscience major, she looks to participate in extracurricular activities and educational opportunities at UCR. She enjoys spending time playing both volleyball and water polo as hobbies in her free time.
ODALYS ZAPATA | PUBLIC POLICY
LOS ANGELES REGION
What matters most to Odalys is advocating for equitable policies in her community. She looks forward to fully immersing herself in her studies in hopes of giving back to her community once she graduates. Odalys is currently interning at the California Latinx Capitol Association and is also a certified lifeguard.

REBECCA BELECHE | BIOLOGY
RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGION
With a career path of becoming a surgeon, Rebecca is enthusiastic for the various learning opportunities through UCR’s biology program. She looks forward to being part of the diverse community. In high school, she was involved in Link Crew helping middle school students transition to high school and wants to continue helping others in the future.

SANDRA AISPURO | ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
SAN GABRIEL VALLEY REGION
As a first-generation student, Sandra is thrilled to start her educational journey to becoming an environmental consultant. She is looking to delve into the different areas within her field of study and is very interested in exploring UCR’s Botanic Gardens. She has always had a heart to take care of birds, which started at age fourteen with a single canary, to now fifty-five birds of different species under her care.

TABITHA CONSTANTINO | NEUROSCIENCE
SAN DIEGO REGION
Tabitha is delighted to join the Highlander community and will be immersing herself in mentorship and club opportunities on campus. She was the head member of the College Ambassadors and College Club team and hopes to continue expanding on her past leadership roles. She will be applying to join UCR’s Honors Program.

VALERIE VALENCIA CASTILLO | PRE-BUSINESS
INLAND EMPIRE REGION
Valerie is a first-generation student from the Coachella Valley. Her major goal in life is to take all the opportunities she can to reach success and take her community with her on that pathway. She loves movies, vintage antiquing, and learning about others to further understand the world around her.
TRANSFER SCHOLARS

The Transfer Scholarship is awarded to three incoming transfer students who are selected each year based on GPA, enrollment for fall quarter, and residency within California. The Transfer Scholarship Committee is comprised of alumni volunteers who review applications and conduct interviews with the students. The top three deserving students are selected and receive a scholarship in the amount of $5,000.

ALEXANDRIA KOZLE | PUBLIC POLICY
Born in California and raised in Michigan, Alexandria wants to use her unique bi-coastal viewpoint and experiences to help the community. As a first-generation student she looks forward to joining the Dean’s Brand Ambassador Program to help develop her professional skills and use them towards continuing the culture of inclusiveness on UCR’s campus. She aims to attend law school and be an advocate for others in the community.

MIA MEDRANO | PSYCHOLOGY
Mia is a first-generation student and plans to pursue a doctoral degree in psychology and ultimately practice as a clinical psychologist. She is interested in participating in research labs on campus and contributing to current topics. She has grown a strong passion for helping marginalized populations and her future goals are centered around providing care for inmate patients.

PATRICK WILLIAMSON | NEUROSCIENCE
Patrick’s professional goal is to become an emergency medical physician within the Inland Empire. He has always maintained a goal of community service and helping others and currently works to provide medical care as an emergency department/medical technician. In addition to gaining experience in the medical field, he plans to be a part of the Health Coaches program, the Future Physician Leaders program, and the Red Cross Disaster Action Team within Riverside County.
BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR

Continuing students also have an opportunity to apply for support through Alumni Scholarships. As First-Year and Transfer Scholars, students who qualify are eligible for either the Brithinee Alumni Endowed Scholarship or the Sher-Right Endowed Scholarship. Scholars are selected by the UCRAA Scholarship Committee who reviewed applications and awarded three $4,000 Brithinee scholarships and three $4,000 Sher-Right scholarships.

BRITHINEE SCHOLARS

ADAMARI MACIAS CARDONA | CELL, MOLECULAR, AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

Adamari is a third-year, first-generation student who enjoys learning how the human body functions and seeks to become a doctor to work in the healthcare field for underserved populations. She hopes to help heal her community through addressing disparity issues. She is currently participating in UCR’s Street Medicine Clinic as a Medical Spanish Translator and has been accepted into the Medical Scholars Pathway Program.

AILEEN TRAN | PSYCHOLOGY

Aileen is a second-year student who intends to pursue medicine, specifically as a child psychiatrist. Empathizing with those who face adversity, she hopes to destigmatize mental illness for the next generation. She currently serves as a publicity committee member in the American Medical Student Association, where she can actively contribute both her passion for healthcare and leadership ability.

NATALIE BISHARA | BIOLOGY

Natalie hopes to one day go to medical school and ultimately become a physician working overseas. As a second-year biology major, she is the first in her family to attend college in the United States and is committed to her educational journey. She is also cultivating her interest in writing and has enjoyed her writing course at UCR while writing her own stories.
SHER-RIGHT SCHOLARS

ANH-THO NGUYEN | BIOLOGY
Anh-Tho is an aspiring physician who hopes to work in the Inland Empire to provide quality care in the underserved region. As a third-year student, she is currently involved in the Future Physician Leaders program and is also a current Residential Advisor and Supplemental Instructor on campus. In addition to working two jobs, she hopes to begin volunteering at free clinics around campus.

CORI ZUVIA | NEUROSCIENCE
As a second-year student, Cori is involved in research under the Talbot Research Group at UCR and is growing in her skills and knowledge of the field. She is currently studying as a neuroscience major and seeks to go into the medical field in the future. In addition to being involved in research, she is also participating in A Friend in Me club and the Salsa club on campus.

SNEHA PADMANABAN | NEUROSCIENCE
Sneha aims to become a physician in the future and is immersing herself in opportunities in her field as a fourth-year neuroscience major. She is a member in the Brain Exercise Initiative, Neuroscience club, and is a research assistant in a lab on campus. With all the experience and learning she receives at UCR, she hopes to showcase her care and compassion towards her future patients.
In 2013, the UCR Alumni Association Board of Directors voted to establish an endowment to support scholarships in perpetuity. This allows the scholarship selection committee to award additional scholarships at $5,000 to entering students and ensure that the UCR Alumni Association continues to play a vital role in supporting academic excellence.

**GIVE THE GIFT OF A SCHOLARSHIP.**

Of all campus traditions, student support holds a special place in the hearts of Highlanders. Alumni scholarships embody the very essence of UCR: individuals making a difference in the lives of others. Your philanthropic contributions help today’s Highlanders achieve their academic and professional goals, propelling them into their brilliant futures.

Make your gift online at [alumni.ucr.edu/give-ucraa](http://alumni.ucr.edu/give-ucraa)

Or send check to:
UCR Foundation
PO Box 112
Riverside, CA
92502-9879

Include “Alumni Association Endowed Scholarship Fund” in the memo line.

UC Riverside Foundation is a charitable organization under IRS tax code 501(c)(3). Tax ID: 23-7433570.