



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**PRESIDENT'S
LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL**

2024-25

FALL 2024



WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT

Friends of the University:

We are pleased to introduce you to the 2024-25 President's Leadership Council. This select group of student representatives demonstrates a commitment to UCF's vision, mission and values, which can be seen through the amazing example they set.

These students serve as ambassadors who share their unique perspectives and their passion for UCF to help the university reach its full potential. Through their stories and experiences, visitors to our campus and other members in our community learn about our true impact and what makes UCF so special.

This handbook provides information on each member, including how they go above and beyond in their leadership, service and scholarship. It also shows they are generous with their time and abilities, serving in a variety of capacities, including LEAD Scholars Academy, Student Government, athletics, research, mentoring and many other areas across campus and beyond.

The President's Leadership Council has proven to be a valuable asset to our institution and community. We hope you get the opportunity to get to know these students as we have, and to help them grow along their journey and find opportunities for them to share their passion for service with others.

Best,

Alexander Cartwright

Alexander N. Cartwright, Ph.D.
President

Melinda Cartwright

Melinda Cartwright
First Lady

HISTORY

The President's Leadership Council (PLC) was established during the 1977-78 academic year to recognize students who exemplified well-rounded excellence through leadership, academic achievement, extracurricular activities and service to the university and community.

Our charter members established several goals for the PLC, among them to increase community support for UCF and to assist high school students in their knowledge of higher education. They launched a campaign to inform the Central Florida community of UCF's offerings to students and the community. They were also responsible for the development of a peer advisement program, the establishment of a President's Honor Roll and the Pegasus Professor award, and the implementation of a series of leadership seminars for students.

PLC members serve the university by acting as a student advisory group to the president. Its members represent the university in a variety of situations and settings, both on and off campus. During the 2023-24 academic year, the organization contributed more than 4,500 hours of public service to the university.



SELECTION

To qualify for the President's Leadership Council, candidates must submit two letters of reference, along with an application, to the PLC Advisory Committee.

The candidates must be degree-seeking students of junior standing or higher by the end of the spring term in which they apply and have an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better. The candidates must also have demonstrated leadership ability through involvement in university and community activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The members of the PLC serve UCF as official student ambassadors at special events such as commencement, President's Appreciation Receptions, and Board of Trustees' meetings. PLC members have established a tradition of leadership for students at UCF. Members of the council are also expected to maintain a commitment to personal and professional development, and to act with professionalism while carrying out their respective duties.

In return, PLC members receive training in leadership and professionalism as a result of their interaction with campus and community leaders. In return for their service, the council seeks to cultivate and refine the skills and abilities of these top students.

MARIANA SORROZA AGUILAR

2024-25 CHAIR

SENIOR | MAJOR: Mechanical Engineering/International & Global Studies
MINOR: Leadership Studies & Mathematics **CERTIFICATE:** TEFL



HONORS

- » Order of Pegasus Recipient
- » Congress Bundestag Vocational Youth Exchange Program Alumna
 - » International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) International Conference on Nuclear Security Delegation for the Future Delegate
 - » Kissinger Summer Academy Representative
 - » Machining Technologies Vocational Diploma
 - » Honors Undergraduate Thesis Publication
 - » LEAD Scholar
 - » Knights of Distinction

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Chair**
- » National Nuclear Security Administration Minority Serving Institution Internship Program **Intern**
 - » Homecoming Spirit Splash **Director**
- » Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honors Society **Vice President**
 - » Women in STEM **Mentor**
 - » STEM **Ambassador**
 - » K-12 **Tutor**
 - » Anything Works Nonprofit **Founder and President**
 - » Orange County Animal Services **Volunteer**
 - » UCF Student Code of Conduct Board **Representative**

“While at UCF, I have been blessed with the opportunity to follow my passions and learn how I can combine them to serve others to my fullest potential. I have also met lifetime friends and gained memories that I will always happily carry with me. I feel proud to be a Knight due to our inclusive and diverse community that helps every individual thrive and be prepared to serve others.”

ALEJANDO LOPEZ ZELAYA

2024-25 VICE CHAIR

SENIOR | MAJOR: Photonic Science and Engineering
MINOR: Bioengineering



HONORS

- » Order of Pegasus
- » 5x President's Honor Roll
- » 7x Dean's List for the College of Optics and Photonics
- » 2x MASS Multicultural Excellence in Action Award
- » Burnett Honors College Student (2nd year entry)

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council *Vice Chair*
- » College of Optics and Photonics (CREOL)
Undergraduate Research Assistant
- » I.S.O. at CREOL *Founder*
- » IEE Photonics Society of UCF *President (past)*
- » Optical Society of America of UCF *Vice President (past)*
- » Pre-Medical AMSA *Health and Wellness Director (past)*
- » Grace Medical Home *Non-clinical Medical Interpreter and Staff Assistant Volunteer*
- » Organic Chemistry 2 *Supplemental Instruction Leader*
- » Organic Chemistry 1 *Teaching Assistant*
- » Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida *Packaging Volunteer*
- » Timber Creek High School *Tutor for the Biotechnician Assistant Credentials Examination*

“UCF has given me the opportunity to grow and pursue my full potential by advancing my personal, academic, and career goals. Here, I was given an environment to mature, learn, and work alongside leaders and thinkers, making me a better citizen for today.”

AHAD ANSARI

SENIOR | MAJOR: Biomedical Sciences and Religion and Culture Studies



HONORS

- » National Merit Benacquisto Scholarship
- » Burnett Honors College
- » Burnett Medical Scholar
- » LEAD Scholar

INVOLVEMENTS

- » 4EVER KNIGHTS *Ambassador & Vice President of Philanthropy*
- » NanoScience Technology Center *Research Assistant*
- » Pakistani Student Association *Vice President & Treasurer*
- » Umeed For All Refugees *Operations Director*

“UCF has given me some of the best opportunities I could have imagined and continues to provide me with a place to foster my growth in both personal and professional ways. Having such a large and diverse student body has not only allowed me to feel at home, but has also allowed me to gain countless new experiences that I will cherish long beyond my time on campus. I look forward to another remarkable year at UCF and can’t wait to continue my academic journey as a Knight!”

LAUREN BARTHEL

SENIOR
MAJOR & MINOR: Biomedical Sciences, Psychology



HONORS

- » Girls Scout Gold Award
- » BSA North Florida Council 2023 Venturing Leadership Award
- » UCF Pegasus Gold Scholar
- » President’s Honor Roll
- » Hospital Corporation of America Scholars Award Recipient

INVOLVEMENTS

- » LEAD Scholars Academy *Associate Director and Leadership Assistant*
- » Special Needs Camporee *Chairman*
- » Black Student Union *Education and Enrichment Director*
- » Venturing Officers Association *President*
- » Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences *Peer Mentor*

“The University of Central Florida has had a profoundly positive impact on me. The staff at this institution are what truly makes this school spectacular. There is much effort to support students in all of their endeavors. The range of opportunities granted through these connections are remarkable.”

LUKE BROWN

JUNIOR

MAJOR: Event Management | **MINOR:** Studio Art



HONORS

- » Dean's List
- » LEAD Scholar of the Week August 2022
- » Executive Leadership Council (ELC) Member of the Year Award

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Event Coordinator**
- » UCF Campus Activities Board (CAB) **Director of Fine Art**
- » UCF CAB **Associate Council Member**
- » Student Government Leadership Council (SGLC) **Vice Chair of UCF Spirit Committee**
- » UCF Student Government **Executive Leadership Council**
- » Late Knights Council (LKC) **Member**
- » UCF LEAD Scholar Academy **Peer Mentor**
- » UCF LEAD Scholar Academy **Advisory Board**

"UCF has opened me up as a person and as a leader. Growing up out of state and adapting to a totally new environment was an amazing journey and has allowed me to thrive. Meeting a brand new community full of wonderful and caring people quickly helped me to feel at home and welcomed. Though I came to UCF expecting to pursue a career in animation I found a great love for event planning and management and I couldn't be more excited for what the future holds for me here as I continue my journey in UCF."

RACHEL BUKSBAUM

SENIOR | MAJOR: Biomedical Sciences and Psychology

MINOR: Medical Sociology and Diversity Leadership Studies



HONORS

- » Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholar
- » Pegasus Gold Scholarship Recipient
- » UCF President's Honor Roll
- » UCF Dean's List
- » AP Capstone Diploma

INVOLVEMENTS

- » UCF President Leadership Council **Secretary**
- » Alpha Epsilon Phi **Academic Committee, President's Advisory Council, Standards Board, Weekly Forecast chair, Special Events Committee, Second Avenues Chair**
- » Honors Undergraduate Thesis Program **ISRI Conference Poster Presenter, SEPA Conference Poster Presenter, UCF Student Symposium Poster Presenter**
- » UCF Hillel URJ Camp Coleman **Ambassador**
- » DIS Study Abroad Research Practicum **Biomedical Researcher**

"UCF's impact on me transcends mere education; it's a transformative journey where I found my voice, purpose, and belonging. Amidst the vastness, I discovered a nurturing community that propelled my growth through avenues like Greek life, diverse clubs, and academic pursuits like the Honors Undergraduate Thesis Program. UCF's investment in every student's potential empowers us to explore, excel, and effect positive change, shaping not just our individual futures, but also the fabric of our broader community."

OSSYRIS BURY

JUNIOR

MAJOR: Aerospace Engineering



HONORS

- » Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholarship
- » Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow
- » Knights of Distinction Member
- » Research and Mentoring Program Scholar
- » Undergraduate Posters at the Capitol
- » Dean's List
- » National Center for Women & Information Technology 2022 Regional Winner

INVOLVEMENTS

- » KeyHarmony Acapella **Finance Manager & Choreographer**
- » Introduction to Engineering Course **Teaching Assistant/Mentor**

"UCF's vibrant community, unparalleled research opportunities, and dedicated faculty have shaped me into the aerospace engineer I am today. The support and guidance I've received here have fueled my academic journey and instilled a sense of belonging and purpose that I'll carry with me for a lifetime. I'm immensely grateful to call myself a knight and to be part of a university that continuously inspires and challenges me."

LUISA CORDOVA

JUNIOR

MAJOR: Civil Engineering



HONORS

- » Florida Academic Scholarship
- » International Baccalaureate Diploma
- » Dean's List

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Recruitment Coordinator**
- » LEAD Scholar Academy **Peer Mentor/Peer Tutor**
- » Venezuelan Student Association **Vice President, Secretary**
- » Multicultural Leadership Council **Council Member**
- » UCF Undergraduate Admissions **Campus Ambassador**

"Being a first-generation college student here in the United States, I was worried that I would not find the right people for me. My first year showed me that I had nothing to worry about; I found the right community for me, and the right people to help me obtain my degree. I've met people from all over, and who I know will support me and be there for me, hopefully for the rest of my life. I found out very quickly that I chose the right place to both further my academics and become my second home. UCF provided me with a sense of belonging, more than I could have ever expected, and I am eternally grateful for that."

HANNAH DEGRAW

JUNIOR | MAJOR: Biology

MINOR: *Psychology & Genomics and Bioinformatics*



HONORS

- » F-L.E.A.R.N Scholar
- » Dean's List
- » UCF Bronze Pegasus Scholarship Recipient
- » Bright Future Florida Academic Scholar
- » People's Choice Award at the 2024 Student Scholar Symposium

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Socials Coordinator**
- » Sigma Alpha Iota **Vice President of Ritual**
- » Honors Undergraduate Thesis Program
- » U-LEAD
- » Marching Knights
- » LEARN **Mentor**

"Before coming to UCF, I had a general plan for what I wanted to accomplish in my life and I did not realize at the time the tremendous impact UCF would have on me. UCF has given me countless opportunities to find my passions and discover what I want to pursue. UCF has also provided me with a vast community and professional network to push me to become all I can be as well as provide a strong foundation for my future. From my involvement in research to music, I would not be who I am today without UCF."

DII-SHON DURANT

SENIOR | MAJOR: Industrial Organizational Psychology

MINOR: Human Communication



HONORS

- » Dean's List
- » President's List

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Orientation Leader
- » Resident Advisor
- » Blackstone LaunchPad **Ambassador**
- » Marching Knights

"UCF has impacted me by providing me with a community that encourages authenticity and vulnerability, making me strive to be the best version of myself!"

KEZIAH EAGAR

SENIOR | MAJOR: Advertising and Public Relations
MINOR: *Digital Media*



HONORS

- » 2024 Leadership Fellow for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
- » Published Author

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Alpha Kappa Alpha **President**
- » Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity **Membership Team, former President**
- » Caribbean Students Association
- » Black Student Union
- » Poetry Not Dead Prod.
- » Tri- Alpha Honor Society

“UCF has granted me opportunities to be an innovative leader in my community and inspire others.”

TERI FAUCETTE

DOCTORAL SCHOLAR PROGRAM: Exceptional Education Track



HONORS

- » UCF Graduate Dean's Fellowship
- » Golden Key National Honor Society

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Community Outreach Coordinator**
- » UCF School of Teacher Education **Graduate Teaching Assistant**
- » UCF School of Teacher Education **Clinical Coordinator**
- » Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute **Researcher, Doctoral Scholar Coordinator**
- » Association of Doctoral Students in Exceptional Education (RSO) **Secretary**
- » First Year Experience/Student Success and Well-Being Orientation **Family Panelist**
- » Florida Council of Exceptional Children **Student Representative**
- » Down Syndrome Foundation of Florida iCan Series (a UCF Partnership) **Student Co-Liaison**

“As a third-time Knight, I cannot adequately put into words how much UCF has impacted my life. From the beginning, every professional opportunity I have had has been rooted in my affiliation here. I am an incredibly proud student and alumni who genuinely bleeds black and gold. I have been blessed enough to be able to pass down that pride to my sons who are now both proud Knights themselves. I am forever honored and thankful to be a part of Knight Nation and will share that love with anyone who will listen. Go Knights! Charge On!”

LESLIE FLASTERSTEIN

SENIOR

MAJOR: Music Education and Voice Performance



HONORS

- » Opening Conductor of 2023 UCF Celebrates the Arts Choir Concerts
- » Fall '23-Spring '24 Roberta and Howard Brunet Endowed Scholarship
- » Fall 2021 - Present President's Honor Roll

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Florida National Association for Music Education (NAfME) **State E-Board Treasurer**
 - » UCF NAfME Collegiate **President**
 - » UCF Children's Choir and Community Choir **Assistant Conductor**
 - » UCF Navigators Campus Ministry **Student Leader**
-

"UCF has empowered me to discover who I am. From studying abroad, to gaining life and leadership experience that I can confidently state I would have never gotten elsewhere, the very core of my being has changed and become clear. UCF has, from day one, challenged me to have an open mind, grow my goals, inspire (not impress) others, and truly lead with love."

RACHEL FLASTERSTEIN

SENIOR | MAJOR: Marketing (Professional Selling Track) & Management (Entrepreneurship Track)



HONORS

- » Inno Under 25 Orlando Business Journal Award
- » President's Honor Roll
- » Top 3 Finalist in 8 Entrepreneurship/Business Plan Competitions
- » U-LEAD
- » Knights of Distinction
- » Bright Futures Academic Scholarship Recipient
- » Top Ten Knight

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Blackstone Launchpad **Entrepreneurship Coach**
 - » TheTampaMermaid, Professional Mermaid Performer **Small Business Owner**
 - » Entrepreneurship Club **President**
-

"Becoming a student at UCF made me realize that anything is possible. In UCF's mystical world of shining knights and flying Pegasus, my dreams of becoming an entrepreneur and a professional mermaid performer were fully realized. I have met the most magical people who truly believe in me and help me pursue my dreams, there's nothing more impactful than that."

COOPER FOXMAN

JUNIOR | MAJOR: Biomedical Sciences
MINOR: Crime, Law, & Deviance



HONORS

- » LEAD Scholar
- » UCF Provost Scholarship
- » Knight of Distinction
- » Burnett Honors Scholars

INVOLVEMENTS

- » LEAD Scholars Academy **Selections Director**
- » College of Medicine Student Leadership Council **President**
- » UCF Homecoming **Volunteer Director**
- » UCF Cardiovascular Alliance **Director of Recruitment**
- » UCF College of Medicine **Student Advisor**

“UCF has provided me with countless opportunities to develop myself as a leader and a student. During my time at the university, I have been able to find my passions and learn ways to use them to help my community. I have grown immensely and have made some of the greatest friendships I have ever had. I am beyond proud to call myself a Knight.”

ERIN FUCHS

JUNIOR | MAJOR: Political Science (Pre-Law)
MINOR: Leadership Studies



HONORS

- » Girl Scout Gold Award
- » Girl Scout Emerald Circle Scholarship
- » Pegasus Bronze Award
- » Dean's List

INVOLVEMENTS

- » LEAD Scholars Academy **Special Events Director**
- » Student Government **Senator**
- » UCF Homecoming **Royalty Director**
- » School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs **Student Ambassador**
- » Marching Knights
- » Knights of Distinction

“As an out of state student that didn't know anyone when first starting here, UCF has given me a home away from home, where I feel connected to those around me through various student involvement organizations and I have even met my closest friends. The UCF community has allowed me to grow my confidence and develop leadership skills that I will continue to use for the rest of my life.”

MARIANA GUERRERO

SOPHOMORE

MAJOR: Accounting | **MINOR:** Computer Science



HONORS

- » Burnett Honors College
- » UCF Provost Scholarship Recipient
- » Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholarship Recipient
- » President's Honor Roll

INVOLVEMENTS

- » College of Business Ambassador
Communications Committee Member
- » College of Business Dean's Office **Student Assistant**
- » Association of Latino Professionals for America
Alumni Relations Lead
- » Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
Treasury Committee Member

"Coming to UCF has been nothing short of life-changing. I have made so many new connections with great companies and hardworking students that have helped me narrow my focus on a fulfilling career path. More than that, I have made amazing new friendships and feel incredibly grateful for the relationships I have cultivated. To me, UCF is more than a University; it's a community that has shaped me into the person I am today."

JULIANA HIRN

DOCTORAL STUDENT

PROGRAM: Exceptional Education Track



HONORS

- » 30 Under 30 Award Winner
- » American Speech-Language -Hearing Association (ASHA) Award for Continuing Education (ACE) Award
- » Burnett Honors (Honors in the Major; Masters Thesis)

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Florida Council for Exceptional Children **Student Representative**
- » President's Leadership Council 2018 - 2019 **Member**
- » Young Alumni Council **Member**
- » Project Social Code **Lead**

"As a doctoral student, UCF has provided me the opportunity to connect with researchers from all over the country- I've been able to contribute to the scholarship of developmental language disorder (DLD). I'm looking forward to continuing to have the opportunity to go to conferences, learn about evidenced-based practices, collaborate with other researchers, and extend the scholarship related to DLD."

RAJ KHUPERKAR

SENIOR | MAJOR: Biomedical Sciences
MINOR: Medical Sociology & Business Administration



HONORS

- » Burnett Honors College
- » Burnett Medical Scholar
- » National Merit Scholar
- » Honors Undergraduate Thesis Program
- » President's Honor Roll

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Pre-Med AMSA **President**
- » UCF Badminton Club **Secretary**
- » Pre-Med AMSA MSAS **Chair**
- » Undergraduate Admissions Scholars Program
- » UCF Institute of Social & Behavioral Sciences
Research Assistant

"UCF has continuously proven itself to be the best University for me to prosper educationally and provides so many resources to grow professionally and personally. I have had the privilege to be a part of many supportive UCF communities and as an out-of-state student from Michigan, this university has quickly become my home away from home. My time here has been absolutely phenomenal and I am so excited to continue my journey at UCF for the next year!"

JEFFREY LINARES

SENIOR | MAJOR: Integrated Business
MINOR: Professional Selling (pending)



HONORS

- » Dean's List

INVOLVEMENTS

- » UCF Office of Professional Development **Lead Front Desk**
- » UCF Sales Club **Vice President**
- » UCF College of Business **Ambassador**
- » Financial Management Association **Treasury Committee**
- » Action Church College Night College & Middle School **Leader**

"As a first-generation student coming from New Jersey, my parents encouraged me to take advantage of the resources this school will offer. UCF and its College of Business have provided me with the greatest resources and opportunities I could've asked for. From the students, faculty, and staff who have become leaders, mentors, and friends to me, to the organizations I have been able to be a part of, UCF has greatly contributed to my growth and has become my second home. It is a privilege to call myself a Knight, and I am forever grateful to be a part of the University of Central Florida. Go Knights, Charge on!"

KRISTEN LING

DOCTORAL STUDENT

PROGRAM: Electrical Engineering



HONORS

- » “Best in Electrical and Computer Engineering” Senior Design Project (Spring 2023 Showcase)
- » Order of Pegasus Nominee
- » UCF’s President’s Honor Roll
- » Bright Futures Medallion Scholarship

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Antenna, RF, and Microwave Integrated Systems (ARMI) Laboratory **Research Assistant**
 - » NASA OSTEM **Intern**
 - » Qorvo RF Design Engineering **Intern**
 - » Biomedical Acoustics Research Laboratory (BARL) **Research Assistant**
 - » UCF Undergraduate Learning **Assistant**
 - » Curriculum Overnight and Review Committee (CORC) **Student Representative**
-

“UCF has had a tremendous impact on my life by providing an environment that nurtures growth and offers countless opportunities. The support of my professors guided me to discover my passion for engineering while expanding my skills and knowledge. Throughout my undergraduate years, I was constantly amazed by the new doors that UCF opened for me. I am genuinely excited to continue exploring the endless possibilities that lie ahead as I begin my PhD program.”

CHLOE MILLIRON

SENIOR | MAJOR: Health Sciences (pre-clinical)

MINOR: Diversity Studies, Nonprofit Management



HONORS

- » Order of Pegasus Nominee
- » President’s Honor Roll
- » Dean’s List
- » Knights Pantry Employee of the Year

INVOLVEMENTS

- » UCF Knights Pantry **Manager**
 - » UCF Burnett Honors College Honors **Undergraduate Thesis Researcher**
 - » Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine **Scholar**
 - » UCF CHPS Student Advisory Council **Student Representative**
 - » UCF Student Health Advisory Committee **Student Representative**
-

“Since my initial visit to the UCF campus, I’ve felt a profound sense of belonging. The opportunities for personal and academic growth has motivated me to pursue my dreams with unwavering determination. Throughout the past three years, my ties to the UCF community have deepened, fueling my resolve to effect meaningful change for fellow Knights. As my journey continues, UCF continues to foster a nurturing atmosphere, empowering me to develop my passions and unleash my fullest potential!”

AMARYE MORRISEY

SENIOR

MAJOR: Health Sciences (pre-clinical)



HONORS

- » Dean's List
- » Bright Futures Recipient

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Recruitment Coordinator**
 - » Mentor and tutor high school students
 - » Former Orientation Leader (2023-2024)
 - » UCF Anatomy Department Teaching Assistant
 - » Nutrition Department within UCF Athletics **Volunteer**
 - » U-LEAD
-

“UCF has had a profound impact on me. UCF has fostered my personal growth by allowing me the opportunity to grow personally and professionally through leadership roles and building connections. This university provides me with a high-quality education and the necessary resources to ensure I have success in my major and future occupation in the medical field.”

GABBY MURISON

JUNIOR | MAJOR: Film

MINOR: Event Management Certificate, Entertainment



HONORS

- » Henri Landwirth Scholarship Recipient
- » COX Media Group Orlando Scholarship Recipient
- » Dean's List

INVOLVEMENTS

- » LEAD Scholars 2023-2024 **LSA Executive Director**
 - » UCF Homecoming 2024 **Associate Director**
 - » UCF Homecoming 2023 **Marketing Director**
 - » Multicultural Leadership Council 2022-2023 **Marketing Director**
 - » LEAD Scholars Academy
 - » VolunteerUCF
-

“As a storyteller, I know that the people create the story. Here at UCF, the community I have been able to surround myself with is truly unimaginable. Experiences in student involvement such as serving as the LEAD Student Association's Executive Director with the LEAD Scholars Academy or as the Marketing Director for UCF Homecoming have developed my skills as an artist, leader, friend, sister, and daughter. At its core, UCF supplied me with dynamic role models to propel my confidence moving forward. I credit the University of Central Florida with giving me guidance both inside and outside the classroom.”

CHANDA MWELWA

SENIOR

MAJOR: Criminal Justice



HONORS

- » Dean's List
- » UCF Legislative Scholars Award
- » UCF Scholars Award
- » LEAD Scholar

INVOLVEMENTS

- » UCF Legislative *Scholar*
 - » National Black Law Student Association (NBLSA) *Member*
 - » Chief's Advisory Council (CAS) *Member*
-

"Attending UCF has academically, socially, and intellectually challenged me while providing me with the tools and opportunities to excel at higher levels of excellence and integrity. UCF serves as a secure pillar not only to my academic journey but to communities on a local and state level which I have come to recognize and appreciate. UCF provides high level platforms for exposure in leadership and networks of influence for personal growth and development."

MERIAM NAGUIB

SENIOR

MAJOR: Health Sciences - Health Promotion



HONORS

- » President's Honor Roll
- » UCF Scholar

INVOLVEMENTS

- » U-LEAD Scholar
 - » Knights of the Round Table *Leadership Coordinator*
 - » Orientation Leader
 - » Student Council Board
 - » UCF Cares *Ambassador*
 - » Sunday School Teacher
-

"UCF truly impacted me by allowing me to grow as a leader and pursue my goals and dreams. It has allowed me to overcome my challenges and seek new opportunities to grow as an individual and as a leader. UCF has also given me the opportunity to be a part of a wonderful community."

SRITHANVI PASUNURI

SENIOR | MAJOR: Biomedical Sciences
MINOR: Medical Sociology, Religious and Cultural Studies



HONORS

- » Burnett Honors College
- » Provost Scholar
- » Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholar

INVOLVEMENTS

- » American Medical Women's Association
Events Director ('22-'23) & Secretary ('23-'24)
- » Indian Student Association **Creative Chair ('22-'23) & Events Director ('23-'24)**
- » Knight's Khayal at UCF **Singer**
- » Human Physiology Lab **Teaching Assistant**
- » Knights Major and Exploration and Transition Center **Peer Coach**
- » Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk **Committee Member**

"Growing up in Orlando, I have always held a strong desire to find my place and make an impact in a community that I greatly value. Being a student at UCF has not only fulfilled that desire, but has also exceeded my expectations. Through the numerous events and leadership opportunities, I have been able to engage in projects that resonate with my passions and witness firsthand how they positively affect both the student body and the broader Orlando community. The presence of a diverse student population and abundant opportunities has significantly contributed to my professional and personal growth."

ANJIYA PIRANI

SENIOR | MAJOR: Psychology
MINOR: Health Sciences, Human Resources Certificate



INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Event Coordinator**
- » Lake Claire Housing **Resident Assistant**
- » UCF Outlanders **Co-President**
- » Blackstone Launchpad **Marketing Support**
- » UCF Keon Testing Center **Lab Assistant**
- » Psychology Career Readiness 1 **Undergraduate Teaching Assistant**

"UCF has given me a place to call home away from home. I'm forever grateful for the community and support system I've found at UCF. I met some of my closest friends at UCF and also found mentors who work at UCF giving me advice on challenges I've endured. UCF has also given me opportunities to go outside my comfort zone and grow!"

MEDHAVI RADADIYA

SENIOR

MAJOR: Kinesiology | MINOR: Psychology



HONORS

- » Dean's List
- » Knights of Distinction
- » Honors Undergraduate Thesis Scholar
- » Award of Excellence (Ginsburg Center of Inclusion and Community Engagement)
- » Impact Award: Support Staff of the Year

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Volunteer UCF (2024-2025) **Student Director**
- » Volunteer UCF (2023-2024) **Educational and Literacy Director**
- » Gujarati Student Club (2023-2024) **Events Director**
- » Knights Helping Knights Pantry **Member**
- » CHPS **Student Advisory Council**

The growth I've experienced during my time at UCF has been immense, and I am grateful for the myriad of opportunities that have been presented to me for personal and professional development. Being a part of Volunteer UCF and the Office of Student Involvement has been particularly enriching, providing me with avenues to make a positive impact on campus while furthering my own growth and leadership skills.

UCF has truly opened doors for me to thrive, and I am excited to continue seizing opportunities and making a difference in this vibrant community."

MICHAEL SOTO

GRADUATE STUDENT

PROGRAM: Optics and Photonics MS



HONORS

- » U-LEAD Scholar
- » Knights of Distinction

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Society of Optics Students **Treasurer**
- » Give Kids the World **Volunteer**
- » CREOL Events: STEM Day, Optics Day, Lab Tours **Assistant**
- » Advanced Photonic Devices Lab **Graduate Researcher**

"My perspective has been significantly changed by UCF, since it has expanded my views and presented me with experiences that I would not have otherwise had. Its dynamic atmosphere inspired me to take chances and go down unexpected roads, which greatly enhanced my experience and shaped my future for which I am incredibly thankful."

NOELIA VALENCIA

SENIOR

MAJOR: Biological Sciences



HONORS

- » Burnett Honors Scholar
- » President's Honor Roll
- » College of Sciences Dean's List
- » Latin American and Caribbean Scholarship Recipient

INVOLVEMENTS

- » President's Leadership Council **Public Relation Coordinator**
 - » Hercules Community with UCF Housing **Resident Assistant**
 - » UCF First Year Experience **Orientation Leader**
 - » UCF Charge On Fund **Knight's Hospitality Ambassador**
 - » UCF Human Factors Psychology Department **Undergraduate Research Assistant**
-

"UCF has positively impacted me by providing opportunities that have allowed me to experience events that I would not have had the chance to have in my country, as well as focus on my studies because of their financial support. Additionally, UCF has offered opportunities for personal and academic growth and involvement in leadership and community service activities, playing a significant role in my success and development as a student."

JANAPRIYA VIJAYAKUMAR

JUNIOR | MAJOR: Molecular and Cellular Biology,

Health Sciences | MINOR: Health Service Administration



HONORS

- » Burnett Honors College
- » Burnett Medical Scholar
- » National Merit Scholar
- » President's Honor Roll
- » Honors Undergraduate Thesis

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Pre-Med AMSA (**Clinical Experiences Director, Presidential Director**)
 - » Student Academic Resource Center **Tutor**
 - » Burnett Honors College Inspire Program SAT Reading and Writing **Tutor**
 - » Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences Biionix Cluster **Undergraduate Researcher**
 - » Addition Arena On-Site **Emergency Medical Technician**
-

"UCF has been a significant influence in my life from even before my freshman year. Growing up in the Orlando area, I participated in extracurricular activities at UCF and had the opportunity to explore all it had to offer. Its stunning natural surroundings and diverse undergraduate programs initially attracted me to attend. Since then, UCF has presented me with countless valuable opportunities for personal and academic growth, as well as a supportive community of professors, peers, and Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) that resonate with my interests. I am proud to be a Knight!"

HANNAH WAGNER

JUNIOR

MAJOR: Exceptional Student Education



HONORS

- » Girl Scout Gold Award

INVOLVEMENTS

- » Volunteer UCF Disabilities Awareness **Director**
 - » Volunteer UCF Special Events **Director**
 - » ACEing Autism Orlando **Program Director**
 - » UCF Best Buddies **Event Coordinator**
 - » LEAD Scholars Academy
-

“UCF has provided me with diverse leadership, service, and wellness opportunities. During my short time here, I have certainly been given a platform to unleash my potential. I feel confident that I will excel in my future academic and professional career with the resources that UCF has provided me. It is an exciting time to be a Knight, and I am looking forward to what’s to come.”

ZACK ZUNIGA

SENIOR

MAJOR: Photonics Engineering, Electrical Engineering



INVOLVEMENTS

- » Officer of Startup Company **Co-Founder** and **Acting Chief Executive**
 - » UCF Business Incubator Program
 - » Upstarts Incubator Program at UCF **Member**
 - » CREOL **Social Media Ambassador**
 - » UCF’s Venture and Entrepreneurship Community
 - » CREOL Dean’s Advisory Board **Member**
-

“UCF has enabled me to achieve my dreams, introducing me to groundbreaking technology with the ability to change the world and a community to support me to keep my eyes facing the sky with my feet still on the ground.”

The following organizations and honors are among the most distinguished at the University of Central Florida. We are proud to recognize the membership and achievements of these *President's Leadership Council* members.



ORDER OF PEGASUS

MARIANA SORROZA AGUILAR
ALEJANDRO LOPEZ ZELAYA

THE BURNETT HONORS COLLEGE

AHAD ANSARI
LAUREN BARTHEL
RACHEL BUKSAUM
HANNAH DEGRAW
COOPER FOXMAN
MARIANNA GUERRERO
JULIANA HIRN
RAJ KHUPERKAR

ALEJANDRO LOPEZ ZELAYA
CHLOE MILLIRON
SRITHANVI PASUNURI
MEDHAVI RADADIYA
MARIANA SORROZA AGUILAR
NOELIA VALENCIA
JANAPRIYA VIJAYAKUMAR

LEAD SCHOLARS PROGRAM

LUKE BROWN
LUISA CORDOVA
HANNAH DEGRAW
RACHEL
FLASTERSTEIN
COOPER FOXMAN
ERIN FUCHS
CHLOE MILLIRON

AMARYE MORRISEY
GABBY MURISON
CHANDA MWELWA
MERIAM NAGUIB
MARIANA SORROZA
AGUILAR
MICHAEL SOTO
HANNAH WAGNER



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