



ORDER *of* PEGASUS

CLASS OF 2009

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND ENROLLMENT SERVICES

THE UCF CREED

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

INTEGRITY

I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

SCHOLARSHIP

I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

COMMUNITY

I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

CREATIVITY

I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

EXCELLENCE

I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Spring 2009



Dear Friend of the University:

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2009 Order of Pegasus awardees. The Order of Pegasus is the highest honor the university gives to students. It recognizes outstanding graduating seniors and graduate students who have demonstrated exemplary involvement, leadership, academic achievement, and community service. This year, sixteen students were selected to receive the prestigious award.

The biographical sketches in this handbook provide information on the academic accomplishments, leadership experiences, and UCF and community involvement of the individual awardees.

We are extraordinarily proud of the outstanding achievements of these students and hope you join with us in offering our congratulations and best wishes.

Cordially yours,

John C. Hitt
President

GRADUATE STUDENTS

GREGORY AUSTIN, JR.

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SATYENDER GOEL

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

MUSTAFA GÜL

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

MARGARET ANN SHILLINGFORD

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

GREGORY AUSTIN, JR.



Houston, Texas

Future Plans:

I am currently an event manager at Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex where I will continue after my graduation in May. Long term, I would like to work in the Player Development Department of the National Football League.

Gregory is a master's degree student in the DeVos Sport Business Management program, College of Business Administration. He received an MBA in December 2008 from UCF and his B.S. in management from the University of Nebraska in 2007. In addition to his academics, he has served as a graduate assistant in UCF Fraternity and Sorority Life implementing the First and Second Annual Florida Statewide Conference for National Pan-Hellenic Council fraternity and sorority organizations. He also planned and facilitated other workshops and retreats anchored in responsible alcohol consumption and diversity. He served as a graduate assistant for My Sports Pulse Education Initiative and received the Joe Lapchick Memorial Scholarship and a Black Coaches Association Post Graduate Scholarship. He gives back to his community by service to Hope for Stanley, New Orleans Rebuilding Projects, Camp Boggy Creek and Restore Hope Orlando.

Gregory's UCF Experience:

Scholarship and leadership are of great importance to me as I have pursued dual master's degrees at UCF. As a graduate assistant in Fraternity and Sorority Life, I oversee the National Pan-Hellenic and Interfraternity Councils. I have often aided students with their homework, provided career guidance and assisted in editing their resumes. I am seen as a professional "big brother" to many of my students, therefore I seek to lead by example.

My education at UCF has had a tremendous influence on my life in many ways. I am a student in the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program. This is a program that focuses on how sport can change the face of society. More specifically, we study ethical issues in society and relate them to sport. In terms of my character, this program has enhanced my sensitivity to how others view the world. I am more conscious of how my character influences others and how others can influence me. Coming from Houston, Texas and completing my undergraduate studies at the University of Nebraska, I was not accustomed to UCF's diversity. UCF is a place that provides many opportunities and much diversity, and I have been blessed with the chance to enhance my character with the help of the DeVos program.

SATYENDER GOEL

Satyender is a chemistry doctoral candidate in the College of Sciences. He received his M.Sc. in cheminformatics at the University of Manchester, UK and his B.E. in chemical engineering from North Maharashtra University in India. He is chair of the NSTC Student Body, NanoScience Tech Center UCF, chair of the Indian Awareness Council, Global Peer with the International Services Center, advisory board member of the Graduate Student Association and an E-board member of Sangam Indian Student Association. He is a member of the American Chemical Society, American Physical Society, student chapter of the Physical Society, student chapter of the Astronomical Society, Materials Advantage student chapter, Consortium of American Ceramic Society, Minerals, Metals and Materials Society, and student chapters of the Materials Research Society and Electrochemical Society. He is a researcher in the Nanoscience Technology Center and has numerous publications, presentations and awards. He volunteers with the Hindu Society of Central Florida and in welcoming new Indian students into the Orlando community.



Karnal (Haryana), India

Satyender's UCF Experience:

UCF has benefitted me both academically and socially. My desire to devote myself to research and benefit from the world-class research facilities at UCF led me to enroll in the doctoral program. I have been encouraged to perform collaborative research with various schools at UCF and have presented at more than 20 conferences. The American Chemical Society recognized my work by selecting me for a research excellence award, which is all due to great mentors, faculty and excellent facilities available to me at UCF. I have gained excellent communication skills by representing graduate students on the Graduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee. As a teaching assistant in the Department of Chemistry, I have mentored students to achieve excellence in their lab work.

I have always fulfilled my goal of spreading cultural awareness across the UCF campus by my active participation and the coordination of events and activities. I work diligently to bring motivation, willingness to contribute, innovation and leadership skills to our students on campus.

Future Plans:

I am planning a career in management and planning at a research oriented institute or company where I can make use of my leadership skills and not be away from research work. I envision myself to be an entrepreneur in a field related to the service industry which can do justice to my present outlook. My ultimate goal is to serve mankind by virtue of innovations and ultimate services. I may do collaborative research work by becoming an ambassador of UCF to my home country, India.

MUSTAFA GÜL



Adana, Turkey

Future Plans:

After I receive my doctoral degree, I will stay at UCF as a post-doc researcher for 1-2 more years. My long term plans are to become a professor at a university and stay in academic life.

Mustafa is a civil, environmental and construction engineering doctoral candidate in the College of Engineering and Computer Science. He is simultaneously pursuing a graduate degree in Electrical Engineering also at UCF. He received his M.Sc. and B.Sc. from Bogazici University, Turkey. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers student chapter, and president of the UCF Turkish Student Association. He is a graduate research assistant and teaching assistant in the Civil, Environmental and Construction Engineering Department and has numerous publications, presentations and awards. In 2008, he was funded by National Science Foundation to attend Asian Pacific Summer School on Smart Structures in KAIST, Daejeon, Korea and was a visiting student at the University of Tokyo. Community service activities include working with the International Services Center and welcoming international newcomers to UCF and Orlando.

Mustafa's UCF Experience:

Because of the multi-disciplinary nature of the Structural Health Monitoring (SHM) research I conduct, I have been involved with many different areas of engineering and science. This helped broaden my academic and personal skills in the sense that I can analyze different problems from many different aspects and provide creative solutions. I have published three journal articles and numerous conference papers. I have attended many international conferences and summer school in Korea where I made a number of presentations. I was also a visiting student at the University of Tokyo where I collaborated with a renowned professor and his research group.

As a senior graduate student and researcher, I have played a key role in research and teaching activities at the Structures Laboratory at UCF. During these experiences, I contributed to the academic excellence of UCF in many different ways by mentoring graduate and undergraduate students with their research, course work and other activities.

MARGARET ANN SHILLINGFORD

Margaret “Ann” is a counselor education doctoral candidate in the College of Education. She received her M.Ed. in Guidance and Counseling from Bowie State University, Maryland and her B.S. in Business Administration from Strayer University, Washington, DC. She is a member of the American Counseling Association, American School Counselors Association, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, Florida School Counselor Association, Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (receiving the Emerging Leaders Fellowship) and Chi Sigma Iota. She is a Holmes Scholar, Toni Jennings Scholar and Ross Trust Scholarship Award recipient. She is a teaching assistant, guest panelist and has numerous publications, presentations and awards to her credit. Her community service includes tutoring and mentoring in local K-12 schools.



St. Joseph, Dominica, West Indies

Ann's UCF Experience:

My experience at UCF nurtured me and gave me a desire to contribute to the profession which has empowered me to overcome academic challenges and become more creative and self-confident in being a leader and advocating for school counseling. The most significant difference I have made is in conducting research to enhance the counseling profession and the individuals and families served. I have had the opportunity to publish articles in national refereed journals on issues such as implications for counselors working with students with disabilities, at-risk students and students dealing with systemic family issues.

My leadership activities have been realized through collaborative evaluation of the UCF school counseling program and developing useful learning modules for the professional careers of future school counseling graduates. Through professional presentations on the national, state and local levels, I have utilized my knowledge and skills to help enrich human experience and establish UCF as a significant presence in preparing students for high standards of performance in advancing the well-being of others.

Future Plans:

Upon graduation from the doctoral program in May 2009, I will begin my profession as Assistant Professor of Counselor Education at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

GASTON BLANCHET

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

TAMARA CHAPLIN

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

KATHERINE FERSTADT

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, BURNETT SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

DEMETRIUS FRAZIER

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SAMANTHA GIL

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES, NICHOLSON SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

ASHLEY JORDAN

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

HYE JUNG KIM

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

STEPHANIE MORALES

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, BURNETT SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

MICHELLE MURPHY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

RUTH STRAKOSHA

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, BURNETT SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

THOMAS BLAKE VANBRUNT, JR.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, BURNETT SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

CARISSA VAN DALEN

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

GASTON BLANCHET

Gaston is a member of The Burnett Honors College and is a business management major and international business minor in the College of Business Administration. He is also an international business major in the ICN Business School in Nancy, France. He is a former LEAD Scholar and a member of the President's Leadership Council, Student Government Association, Student Conduct Review Board, and a former Mr. UCF. He served as a research intern in the UCF Global Perspectives office. This past year, he received the UCF International Business Scholarship to study in Nancy, France, participated on the UCF Homecoming Court and was on the President's Honor Roll. He volunteers with Junior Achievement, UCF Relay for Life, UCF Knight-Thon and KnightWalk for Babies.



Winter Park, Florida

Gaston's UCF Experience:

The person I am today is far different than the person I was when I first set foot on campus as a Burnett Honors College freshman. The Honors College provided me with countless scholarship and service opportunities, while the LEAD Scholars Program introduced me to the concept of leadership and gave me opportunities to develop these skills. My role as a student has taken various forms, all of which reflect the multitude of opportunities that UCF provides. From rigorous academic exploration to incredible leadership experiences, to personal and professional development, UCF transformed me and forever altered my life.

Discovering a strong appreciation for Junior Achievement of Central Florida's mission, I focused my energy to strengthen UCF's collaboration with Junior Achievement. I taught more than 60 lessons to Orange and Seminole county students and encouraged others to become involved with the organization. I also complemented my business education by contributing meaningful research to the Global Perspectives Office about the effects of globalization of foreign business in China. In my last year, UCF has given me the privilege of expanding my global awareness and representing the university while studying in France. This experience has made me eager to continue making a difference as an alumnus.

Future Plans:

Upon graduation, I plan to gain several years of work experience in international business in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. After Dubai, I plan to pursue an MBA with a focus on entrepreneurship.

TAMARA CHAPLIN



Kingston, Jamaica

Future Plans:

Following graduation from UCF, I hope to earn a graduate degree at a prestigious university and achieve a successful career in higher education helping first generation students.

Tamara is an elementary education major in the College of Education. She received an A.A. degree from Lake-Sumter Community College. She is a member of the President's Leadership Council, a student ambassador for the western Regional Campuses and a member of the Homecoming Advisory Board. She has been on both the Dean's List and President's Honor Roll, is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society and a recipient of the Minority Programs In Education and Student Government Association Regional Student Achievers scholarships. She coordinated Knights Give Back and Homecoming activities to connect the UCF western regional students to the main campus. She tutors at Carver Heights School, participates in Junior Achievement, and served as a Son Servant rebuilding homes in Mexico, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Fort Myers and other locations affected by hurricanes.

Tamara's UCF Experience:

UCF is known for producing some of the best educators in the nation. My educational experiences at UCF have made a lasting impression on my character and on my educational and personal journey toward becoming a successful individual. The core values of The UCF Creed have guided my decisions, my outlook and my performance in life.

My experiences as a Jamaican female and regional campus student, committed to rendering service in various cultural spheres, have kept me connected to UCF's commitment to diversity and service. I have served in several leadership and service positions that provided me the opportunity to become an agent of change in strengthening relations between the UCF regional campus student body and the UCF community at large. My active participation serves to encourage other regional students to become more involved in leadership, scholarship and service activities to enrich their university experience. Through my involvement and determination, regional students now have a great foundation on which to build new UCF traditions. I strongly believe in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi: "We must become the change we want to see."

KATHERINE FERSTADT

Katherine is a molecular biology and microbiology major in the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine with a minor in chemistry in the College of Sciences. She is an active member in both the American Medical Student Association UCF chapter, American Chemical Society student chapter and Pre-Professional Medical Society. She has been on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List, and was presented the Honors American Medical Student Association award. She has completed undergraduate research in the Chemistry Hydrogen Laboratory, was a Summer Research Academy participant, and is a 2-year participant in the Research and Mentoring Program (RAMP). She is a Patient Pal Volunteer at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Women and Children and volunteers at the Orlando Science Center.



Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela

Katherine's UCF Experience:

My involvement at UCF has allowed me to make a difference in scholarship, leadership and service. I have tutored students in chemistry classes and served as the academics director for the American Medical Student Association, coordinating events to help pre-med students succeed in their classes. As the vice president of the UCF chapter of the American Chemical Society, I developed leadership skills and promoted UCF. As a volunteer researcher in the Chemistry Department, I have worked both in a group and individually, and I now train new team members. We will soon have a project publication and hope to present at the next national conference.

UCF helped me grow as an undergraduate student and will continue to prepare me for my professional life as I join the College of Medicine's charter class next year. At UCF, I have developed confidence, professionalism, leadership, and above all, scholarship. These are the tools that will continue to help me throughout the rest of my professional and personal life.

Future Plans:

Next fall, I will be attending the UCF College of Medicine as part of the charter class of 2013. After medical school, I plan to pursue a surgical specialty and start my own practice.

DEMETRIUS FRAZIER



Winter Haven, Florida

Future Plans:

After the completion of my undergraduate degree, I will attend graduate school to pursue an MBA. I desire to work for a Fortune 500 company and eventually incorporate my own consulting firm.

Demetrius is a member of The Burnett Honors College and is an accounting major in the College of Business Administration. He is a former LEAD Scholar, founding father of the Iota Theta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity, and a National Order of Omega member. He also served as a resident assistant in the Department of Housing and Residence Life. He has been on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List, is a recipient of the Founder's Day Scholar Award, and was named Inroads Intern of the Year. His community service includes Junior Achievement, UCF Knight-Thon, Helping Hands, Lake Como Elementary School art project, Habitat for Humanity, Winter Haven Youth Track League and Give Kids the World.

Demetrius' UCF Experience:

Being a student at UCF has been a humbling experience. I have always dreamed of going to college and making the most out of the opportunity by giving back to the community and excelling in academics. Just getting to college was an obstacle for me. My mother and father both passed away before I came to college, and it was a struggle for me to stay motivated. As a result, I have become more appreciative of the opportunities that God allows to come into my life. Many of my friends who did not get accepted into college tell me how blessed I am to be in school and learning rather than suffering through the harsh realities of poverty and jail that are endured by many of my friends.

I am also grateful for the opportunities UCF has provided me because I am keenly aware that, just half a century ago, minorities were largely denied the opportunity of a college education. UCF fosters an environment of dialogue and free thought that has allowed me to broaden my intellectual and personal horizons. Having the opportunity to work in diverse groups rather than the climate of cultural and ideological uniformity that pervades my hometown has been instrumental in my personal development.

SAMANTHA GIL

Samantha is an advertising and public relations major in the Nicholson School of Communication, College of Sciences with a minor in dance in the College of Arts and Humanities. She is a former LEAD Scholar and a member of the President's Leadership Council, Panhellenic Council Executive Board, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, Quotes AD/PR Club and 4Ever Knights. In addition, she is the 2008 UCF Homecoming Queen. She has been on the Dean's List, is the recipient of both a Community Foundation Scholarship and HAS Pegasus Scholarship, and is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Her volunteer service includes the Women's Residential and Counseling Center, Give Kids the World, UCF Knight-Thon, Heart Walk, Relay for Life and Habitat for Humanity.



Coral Springs, Florida

Samantha's UCF Experience:

My educational experience at UCF has had a huge impact on the person I am today. The young freshman who walked into her psychology class on the first day of school is vastly different than the senior who is preparing for her final advertising campaign. It has been a long journey but one that has taught me much about life and about myself.

I pride myself in my ability to tackle any situation with a great deal of enthusiasm. I find it to be a great way to motivate others and inspire them to strive for excellence. Whether it is a tough advertising project group meeting, an all-day beach clean up, or simply greeting UCF event attendees, I do all of it with a smile on my face and a kind word for others. People may not remember titles or particular leadership positions; however, they do remember the people whose work ethic and unique personalities inspired them. I aspire to be someone who inspires others.

Future Plans:

After graduation, I plan to attend graduate school in higher education administration with a concentration in student personnel. The last four years have been the best time of my life, and I hope to share what I've learned and impact the lives of future college students. I intend to work in a university setting for many years to come, get married, start a family and always remember my years at UCF.

ASHLEY JORDAN



Chicago, Illinois

Ashley is a political science major in the College of Sciences with a minor in Spanish language in the College of Arts and Humanities. She is a former LEAD Scholar and a member of the President's Leadership Council, Society of Leadership and Success, Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, National Scholars Honor Society and the United Resident Student Association. She has been on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List, and received scholarships from Coca-Cola, Student Government Association and the Pasco County Education Foundation. She participated in the Criminal Justice Study Abroad Program in Moscow and Volgograd, Russia. Her volunteer service includes Ronald McDonald House, UCF Relay for Life, Give Kids the World, Women's Residential and Counseling Center, Heart Walk and Alternative Spring Break projects.

Future Plans:

I plan to attend law school with a focus in international relations. After law school, I hope to practice law and in the future, pursue a career with the United States Department of State working for the Office of the General Counsel.

Ashley's UCF Experience:

UCF has provided the perfect environment in which to develop my commitment to excellence and academic integrity. As an incoming Knight, I was determined to make the best of my undergraduate experience, yet my exact aspirations remained undefined. I subsequently sought out internships, and through my experiences with Florida Senator Lee Constantine and the Seminole County Legal Aid Society, I developed a commitment to personal and professional growth. I also had the opportunity to focus on a specific goal; law school soon became my long-term objective, a vision facilitated by peers and faculty. The relationships I forged within the UCF community have played a major role in my academic success.

In summer 2008, I studied abroad in Russia, an experience that increased my appreciation of cultural diversity and furthered my interest in foreign affairs. This interest has matured into a desire to pursue international law. UCF has provided me with a well-rounded collegiate experience that no other university could have offered. The opportunities provided by UCF have increased my enthusiasm for new challenges and future endeavors.

HYE JUNG KIM

Hye Jung is a mathematics major in the College of Sciences. She is a former LEAD Scholar, a member of the President's Leadership Council, Orange County Underage Drinking Task Force, Pi Mu Epsilon National Mathematics Honor Society, and the UCF Homecoming committee chair. She served as a resident assistant in the Department of Housing and Residence Life, and participated in a National Science Foundation sponsored Research Experience for Undergraduates in Differential Equations in Classical and Quantum Physics. She tutors in several math labs on campus and has been on President's Honor Roll, was the recipient of the Student Government Association Tutor Scholarship and received the Florida Excellence in Housing award. Her community service includes Alternative Spring Break trips, Give Kids the World, Heart Walk, UCF Relay for Life, Camp Boggy Creek and Junior Achievement.



Mount Dora, Florida

Hye Jung's UCF Experience:

I learned so much throughout my years at UCF, and the experience formed who I am today. Mathematics is a demanding major requiring one to learn new material on a daily basis. Therefore, school work was always my top priority and I developed a strong work ethic. People often ask me how I am so involved yet still manage to earn good grades. With good time management skills, I found I was able to be involved in multiple activities and not spread myself too thin. I was able to help other students focus on their studies yet still be active within the community.

During my time at UCF, my most compelling experience was serving on the Orange County Underage Drinking Task Force. I had the opportunity to interact with many different members of our campus and surrounding community. I strived to demonstrate to task force members that UCF students are able to contribute to our community in many different positive ways. I cherish my four years at UCF and would not trade it for anything.

Future Plans:

I plan on attending graduate school for a Ph.D. in mathematics and then pursue a career in teaching at either the high school or university level.

STEPHANIE MORALES



Orlando, Florida

Future Plans:

After graduation, I hope to attend medical school to pursue my dream of becoming a physician who is focused on serving the underserved.

Stephanie is a molecular biology and microbiology major in the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine with a minor in health service administration in the College of Health and Public Affairs. She is a former LEAD Scholar and a member of the President's Leadership Council, the Hispanic American Student Association, Pre-Professional Medical Society and the American Medical Student Association. She is a Pegasus Gold Scholarship recipient and was on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List. She was initiated into the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and was awarded Pre-Professional Medical Society Honors status. Her volunteer service includes Junior Achievement, UCF Relay for Life, Heart Walk, Special Olympics, Give Kids the World and a medical mission trip to Panama with Misión Médica Católica.

Stephanie's UCF Experience:

I was thrilled with my choice to attend UCF and most of all, the molecular biology and microbiology program. I have known I wanted to become a physician for several years and was excited to begin. The tough curriculum has prepared me to fulfill the requirements of being a physician, and the caring nature of my professors helped me become comfortable and confident in my field of study. They taught me that perseverance and determination make my medical school goal attainable. For the past three years, I have had the pleasure of taking enjoyable classes with knowledgeable professors who love teaching. Although my major is difficult, I realize being a hard worker makes classes easier. Even in a semester with three science courses and many extracurricular activities, I have remained focused and determined to reach my goal of becoming a doctor.

Most importantly, my educational experience at UCF has taught me to strive for excellence. My commitment to do so has opened doors for internships, leadership opportunities and much more. I am grateful for what I have learned so far and give credit to UCF for making me the person I am today: a confident, determined, caring and passionate future doctor.

MICHELLE MURPHY

Michelle is a history major in the College of Arts and Humanities, and legal studies major in the College of Health and Public Affairs. She is minoring in political science in the College of Sciences. She is a member of the President's Leadership Council, Student Government Association, Undergraduate Student Advisory Board to Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity, Eco-Advocates, Delta Epsilon Iota Academic Honors Society and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She has been on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List, and was a recipient of both the Student Government Association Kaplan scholarship and the UCF Pegasus Gold Scholarship. Her community service includes Knights Pick Up and UCF Adopt-A-Game, Heart Walk, The Nature Conservancy and Give Kids the World.



Clearwater, Florida

Michelle's UCF Experience:

Through UCF's unifying theme: The Environment and Global Climate Change, I have been able to shape my education to my interests. For example, in Spring 2008, I chose to conduct research on ethanol and its effect on the American water supply, something I wanted to learn more about. While I am heavily involved in extracurricular activities, my coursework is placed above all else. I can easily say without a doubt that UCF has given me an education I could not have received at any other university.

As an environmental leader on campus, I have tried to empower others and institutionalize programs for long-term practice. By creating the Student Sustainability Alliance, I am fostering the growth of responsible environmental student service leaders for UCF's future. It is my hope that the Adopt-A-Game program I began for Game Day recycling will continue to grow after I graduate.

Future Plans:

I hope to attend law school and specialize in environmental law before working for a non-profit environmental organization.

RUTH STRAKOSHA



Tirana, Albania

Ruth is a member of The Burnett Honors College and is a molecular biology and microbiology major in the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine. She participated in a summer study abroad at the University of Cambridge. She is a member of the President's Leadership Council, American Society of Microbiology, American Chemical Society student chapter and the Honors Congress. She has been on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List, and was the recipient of the UCF Pegasus Gold Scholarship, President's Scholar Program and the Fourth Year SMART Grant. She has served as a research assistant on two projects and as an intern with the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, National Center for Toxicological Research. Her community service includes Junior Achievement, UCF Knight-Thon, Heart Walk, Pineloch Reading Buddies and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Future Plans:

After graduation, I will be attending medical school and hope to work in the field of infectious disease and to be an active researcher and clinician.

Ruth's UCF Experience:

I first visited UCF 10 years ago on a sixth grade trip. I remember the Reflecting Pond, my tour guide and this extraordinary campus. I never imagined then I could make a difference at this impressive university. Early in my undergraduate career, I contributed to scholarship at UCF by pursuing biomedical research and furthering the goal of UCF to become a leading research university. The first time I examined a brain specimen, seeing dazzling blue nuclei come into focus, was like discovering a brightly lit city. Since that time, I have advocated involvement in research and have urged my peers to be leaders in their respective academic disciplines.

Studying molecular biology and microbiology as a Burnett Honors College student has allowed me to appreciate a broader sense of scholarship beyond lectures. I experienced interdisciplinary perspectives that reinforced scholarship as a central principle. Representing UCF at Ethics Bowl competitions provided the opportunity to consider how integrity and ethical practices influence scholarship. I expected my experience at UCF to be academically significant, but adopting the core values of The UCF Creed as personal principles has been equally impactful.

THOMAS BLAKE VANBRUNT, JR.

Thomas “Blake” is a member of The Burnett Honors College and is a molecular biology and microbiology major in the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine. He is a former LEAD Scholar and a member of the President’s Leadership Council, Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, Interfraternity Council, Pre-Health Professional Medical Society, Order of Omega, Omicron Delta Kappa National Honor Society and National Society of Collegiate Scholars. He has been on the Dean’s List, and is a Pegasus High Achievement Scholar and LeaderShape graduate. He was selected to the 2008 Homecoming Court, and was a member of the winning Flag Football National Championship team both in ’07 and ’08. He volunteers with Junior Achievement, UCF Knight-Thon, Relay for Life, Special Olympics, Second Harvest Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity and Heart Walk.



Altamonte Springs, Florida

Blake’s UCF Experience:

My character has largely been influenced by UCF and the Orlando community. The LEAD Scholars Program molded me into a strong servant leader who values the importance of integrity and compassion. Through this program, I found my voice and developed my interpersonal skills. Today, I feel I have become a genuine servant leader who chooses to lead by example. In the words of my Dad, I have become “the best that I can be for all the right reasons.”

As a pre-med major, I had to overcome the adversity of an extremely challenging program, learn how efficiently to manage my time, and develop my character and work ethic. My advisors in the Pre-Health Office and my professors in The Burnett Honors College mentored me throughout this demanding curriculum. I am extremely grateful to them because not only have I gained a wealth of knowledge, but an acceptance to Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine as well. The great support system that is available to UCF students and the opportunities to become the best one can, for all the right reasons, are prime examples of why I am proud to be a Knight.

Future Plans:

I have been accepted to Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and I am waiting on a response from Florida State University, College of Medicine. Upon graduation from UCF, I will make my decision between colleges and complete my four years of medical school in pursuit of a career in orthopedics or pediatrics. However, my main aspiration is to eventually become the best parent that I can be for all the right reasons.

CARISSA VAN DALEN



Appleton, Wisconsin

Future Plans:

I hope to find a job in the entertainment industry while investing my time in high school fine arts programs. Eventually, I would like to start working in music ministry and earn a master's degree in applied linguistics.

Carissa is a vocal music major in the College of Arts and Humanities with a minor in religious studies and English linguistics. She is a former LEAD Scholar and a member of The Burnett Honors College, President's Leadership Council, Bridges International, Knights of the Round Table, Undergraduate Studies Advisory Board, Campus Crusade for Christ and Sigma Alpha Iota Music Fraternity. She is completing an Honors in the Major thesis in The Burnett Honors College, and has served as a research assistant in the Office of Undergraduate Research. She has been on the Dean's List, and received a UCF Scholar's Award and Excellence in Arts Scholarship. Her community service includes Homestay International, UCF Knight-Thon, Junior Achievement, Hillcrest After School Program, Pineloch Reading Buddies, Katrina Relief and a mission trip to Salerno, Italy.

Carissa's UCF Experience:

From my first day at UCF, in a new state and completely on my own, I knew college would be a different kind of educational experience. I promptly acclimated to the UCF community by engaging in challenging classes, involving myself in student organizations and seeking service opportunities.

I began college interested in many fields of study, and the past four years have opened my eyes to countless opportunities. I have worked and served under outstanding leaders and have learned so much from their professionalism, poise, and accomplishments. Gifted professors have helped me grow to be a strong researcher and writer, and educational community service opportunities have solidified my views about how important every contribution can be. I came to college expecting an excellent experience in the classroom, but I have experienced what it means to be a lifelong learner, and I plan to continue as a "student" for the rest of my life. Anne Frank said, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world," and this has been my theme.

prior recipients

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 Lissa A. Stovall
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 Laura Creegan
 Haydee Cuevas
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 Amanda Ramos
 Charles Reuter
 Lisa Wall
 Gabriela Wolf

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 Kimily Burgess
 Bethany Ensor
 Tyler Fisher
 Yahaira Franceschini
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 Sarika Patel
 Erika Phifer
 Shakeba Thomas
 Duc Tran
 S. Anne-Marie Wolff

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 Carol Mancero
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 Sergey Polyakov
 Sandra Schaal

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 Eddie Ruiz
 Jennifer White



special thanks

Student Development and Enrollment Services would like to thank members of the administration and faculty for nominating students, and the committee members listed below for undertaking the difficult task of selecting the outstanding UCF students receiving this distinguished honor.

2009 order of pegasus selection committee

Mr. Gary Morgan-Muskin, Student Leadership Development, Chair
Mr. Karl Sooder, College of Business Administration
Dr. Nancy L. Marshall, Office of The President
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Ms. DeLaine Priest, Student Development and Enrollment Services
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