



ORDER OF PEGASUS

CLASS OF 2019



APRIL 10, 2019

Spring 2019

Welcome from the Interim President

I am very pleased to introduce the recipients of the 2019 Order of Pegasus — the university's most prestigious student award.

Open to seniors and graduate students, the Order of Pegasus recognizes outstanding students who have demonstrated exemplary academic achievement, university involvement, leadership and community service.



Included in this year's 22 recipients are eight LEAD Scholars, eight members of the President's Leadership Council, three Student Government Association leaders, 14 Burnett Honors College scholars, one Greek member, two student-athletes and one transfer student. The biographical sketches in this handbook will provide additional information on honorees' academic accomplishments, leadership experiences and UCF and community involvement.

These are some of UCF's most dedicated and passionate students, and we are very proud of their outstanding accomplishments. Please join me in offering your congratulations and best wishes for a very rewarding and impactful future!

Sincerely,

Thad Seymour, Jr.
Interim President

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.



MOHAMMAD ALI

Mohammad Ali is a master's student in Health Administration and an alumnus of the University of Central Florida. He graduated in 2016 with his bachelor's in health sciences and is a UCF Alumni Fellows Leadership Scholar. Ali is currently serving as a returning member on the President's Leadership Council, and has served as an Associate Justice for the Student Government Association for the past three years. He placed second at the 2018 Collegiate DECA International Career Development Conference in Business Finance. Additionally, Ali was an Ambassador for 4EVER Knights, Volunteer UCF Health Director, UCF Cares Ambassador, and a Psychology Teaching Assistant. Previously, Ali conducted research on SV5 Virus replication at the College of Medicine. He received funding from the Boeing Company and presented at the 2016 Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence.



Mohammad Ali
Clermont, FL

Mohammad's UCF Experience:

UCF gave me the ability to lead and serve at the university and to make an impact on the local Orlando community. Originally from Clermont, attending UCF was an easy decision. I was able to attain skills that prepared me for anything that may come my way. This past summer, I interned at Florida Hospital in Cardiology and Imaging, which allowed me to put my education into practice. I was responsible for reviewing the patient experience in the Emergency Department and incorporating volunteers to reduce wait times and increase efficiency. In addition, my diverse leadership experiences allowed me to hone my skills and grow personally and professionally. Participating in volunteering events such as Clean the World and the Walt Disney World Marathon have allowed me to make an impact on the community, which I am proudly part of. It has truly been an honor and a privilege of a lifetime to be a Knight over the last six years. UCF has given me the framework to Reach for the Stars and I look forward to a lifelong connection with the University of Central Florida.

Future Plans:

Following my graduation from UCF, I intend to fulfill my aspirations by attending medical school. I strive to become a Family Practice Physician prioritizing patient care along with serving as a healthcare executive within a hospital setting.

BRETT ESTRELLA



Brett Estrella
Pepperell, MA

Future Plans:

I will continue to advance in my current role as a Business Development Coordinator at Excel Sports Management in New York City. Excel is one of the top sports agencies in the industry and our team specializes in stadium naming rights deals, NBA jersey patches and other major sponsorships for the properties we represent.

Brett Estrella graduated with his M.B.A. from the DeVos Sports Business Management Program this past December. He is currently working full-time at a sports agency in New York City completing the final requirement of his master's in sports business management curriculum. While at UCF, Brett was a graduate assistant to Dr. Richard Lapchick and led 14 other graduate students in The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport. In this position, Brett worked directly with chief diversity officers and HR leaders in the NFL, MLB, MLS, NBA, WNBA and NCAA to publish Racial and Gender Report Cards that analyzed how inclusive the hiring practices were in professional sport leagues and college athletic departments. Brett was a recipient of the 2018 Joe Lapchick Annual Scholarship, which is awarded to a student in the DeVos program that shows strong academic rigor and a commitment to service in the Greater Orlando community.

Brett's UCF Experience:

My UCF experience only lasted 18 months, but it had a profound impact on my professional and personal development. While at the university in the DeVos Sports Business Management Program, I was given countless opportunities to have an impact in the community and work on projects that influenced decision makers in the sports industry. Whether it was working directly with Dr. Lapchick and leaders in all major U.S. sport leagues to publish the Racial and Gender Report Cards, or presenting a strategic market analysis to ESPN on the U.S. sports gambling industry, UCF has given me the chance to master my education both in the classroom and out in the field. Most importantly, I will never forget the impact made by my cohort through our Hope for Stanley service trips, the Bithlo Youth After School Program and the COMMUNITY Rainbow Run.

CHRISTOPHER FAULKNER

Christopher Faulkner, College of Sciences, is a Security Studies Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at UCF. He received his B.A. in Political Science (2008), M.P.A. (2010), and M.A. in International Conflict Management and Resolution (2013) from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and a Graduate Certificate in Intelligence and National Security (2018) from UCF. While a doctoral student, Faulkner has published six-peer reviewed articles, was the recipient of the College of Sciences Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching Award for 2017–2018, and was selected as a 2018–2019 Minerva-Jennings Randolph Peace and Security Scholar with the United States Institute of Peace. He has served as an executive in the Political Science Graduate Student Association and as the graduate student member of the International Studies Association Southern Region executive council. His research explores violence against civilians during wartime with a focus on the causes and consequences of child soldiering. He has won several awards for his work and has presented his research at multiple national and international conferences.

Christopher's UCF Experience:

UCF provided me with an incredible opportunity to grow personally and professionally. My experience has been one of increased global awareness, intellectual growth, and it has instilled in me a commitment to life-long learning. Through rigorous training, supportive faculty and colleagues within my department, along with the countless opportunities I have been afforded throughout my time as a doctoral student, I have been able to conduct meaningful research. I have made my academic work directly serve UCF's core mission of internationalization of its research agenda, teaching pedagogy, and public service. For the doors UCF has opened for my future and for the impact I hope to have on others, I am forever grateful.



Christopher Faulkner
Cape Carteret, NC

Future Plans:

After completing my Ph.D. in Security Studies, I plan to pursue a career in academia where I can continue to conduct research, teach, and mentor undergraduate and graduate students. I hope to collaborate with international organizations, think tanks and policy institutes, and U.S. agencies on research and policy projects aimed at addressing issues related to conflict and security.

TYLER JANZ



Tyler Janz
Cape Coral, FL

Future Plans:

I plan to do my residency in Otolaryngology, hopefully to be followed by a fellowship. My goal is to become a holistic physician who incorporates community service, innovation, and research to further advance medical care for patients.

Tyler Janz, College of Medicine, graduated from the University of South Florida as an undergraduate majoring in biomedical sciences and minoring in public health. After completing his undergraduate education, he worked as a medical assistant and pharmacy technician prior to medical school. Since enrolling in the College of Medicine, Janz focused on both medical research and medical student wellness. He found joy in being able to volunteer at the student-run KNIGHTS healthcare clinic and by volunteering to coach basketball for children with disabilities. During his first two years of medical school, Janz was able to publish two papers studying infectious disease processes. Additionally, he worked as the primary investigator examining the association between asthma and obesity in children at Nemours Children's Hospital. These research opportunities resulted in the generation of 18 different manuscripts with 9 currently published both in press and online. Janz also had the opportunity to file for a full utility patent for a device designed to help patients with eustachian tube dysfunction. He hopes to continue these interests throughout his residency.

Tyler's UCF Experience:

My experience at the UCF College of Medicine has been incredible. The opportunity to be a part of a school that is constantly advancing in both the curriculum and clinical exposure has been integral to my education. Additionally, UCF has provided the opportunity for me to partake in medical research early on. UCF has instilled a sense of passion in me that has driven my desire to provide the highest quality of medical care to patients. I feel driven by the ambitions and vision for the UCF College of Medicine to constantly strive to achieve my goals in academics, community service, research, and medical innovation. I am very blessed and honored to have been able to attend such an amazing medical school.

KATE KILPATRICK

Kate Kilpatrick, College of Arts and Humanities, is pursuing her M.F.A. in Theatre with a focus in Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA). She has a passion for intergenerational work, and she is currently involved in two programs working with people living with Alzheimer's and Dementia with a specialized focus on their caregivers. She serves as the graduate research coordinator for UCF's interdisciplinary Arts and Aging project (which received the 2018 Pabst Steinmetz Foundation Arts & Wellness Innovation Award). Kilpatrick is the lead investigator for the Multimodal Performing Arts Intervention (MPAI) research study, a partnership between Advent Health and the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. Kate has her B.F.A. in theatre from Michigan State University and particularly enjoys working with middle school students and creating Theatre for the Very Young.



Kate Kilpatrick
Traverse City, MI

Kate's UCF Experience:

UCF's commitment to community partnerships has been instrumental to my journey as a graduate student. I was drawn to the TYA program at UCF because of its professional partnership with the Orlando Repertory Theatre and the opportunities for community engagement and creative enrichment the affiliation provides. It is because of this partnership that I have been able to establish myself as a teaching artist, playwright, and director. I am continuously developing my unique style as a facilitator and curriculum designer leading residencies at institutions such as Edgewood Children's Ranch and Orange County Public Schools. UCF has also gifted me with an incredible network of colleagues, professors, and mentors who encourage curiosity and collaboration. I am a stronger scholar, practitioner, and artist because of my time at UCF, and I am honored to call myself a Knight.

Future Plans:

After graduation, I plan to continue my work in theatre education. I also hope to continue developing intergenerational community programming, researching senior theatre, and writing plays for young performers.

KATRINA PHILLIPS



Katrina Phillips
Spartanburg, SC

Katrina Phillips, College of Sciences, is a Ph.D. candidate in Conservation Biology. She holds a B.S. in Marine Science from the University of South Carolina and a M.S. in Marine Affairs and Policy from the University of Miami. Her research on the early years of the sea turtle life cycle — known as the “lost years” — is critical for building conservation strategies that encompass all sea turtle life stages. In addition to her research, Phillips has been a graduate student leader for undergraduate research interns since 2015. She is a recipient of the UCF Boyd Lyon Memorial Fellowship, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, Microwave Telemetry Rising Scholar Award, and Gumbo Limbo Graduate Student Grant. During the fall 2018 semester, Phillips was a visiting researcher at the University of Copenhagen through the NSF Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide program.

Future Plans:

After completing my Ph.D., I plan to build an academic career that allows me to continue making discoveries about marine life while inspiring others to ask questions about the world around them.

Katrina’s UCF Experience:

UCF has provided me the freedom and support to explore biology and conservation from new perspectives, with opportunities to meet diverse people and develop novel ideas to approach my research and its applications. UCF travel support made it possible for me to present at seven international conferences at locations ranging from Peru to Turkey to Japan. Closer to home, I gained leadership experience as an officer for the Biology Graduate Student Association and as a graduate teaching assistant. I have shared my passion for sea turtle research with middle school students at UCF STEM Day, high school students through the UCF Biology Integrated Orlando Training and Enrichment Camp, and the community through events in Orlando and Melbourne Beach. The research and outreach experiences I have gained at UCF have supported my development into an interdisciplinary scientist and mentor.

RAQUEL ARTHUZO

Raquel Arthuzo, College of Medicine, is a biomedical sciences major. During her time at UCF she has been part of the LEAD Scholars Academy, Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE), Peer Instruction and Laboratory Occupational Training (PILOT). The research she currently conducts looks at the impact of CD16 engagement on NK Cell expansion, cytotoxicity, and phenotype shaping with the hopes of improving current immunotherapies. Arthuzo has also served on the executive board for MEDLIFE and Relay for Life. Over the last four years she has been on two medical mission trips to Peru and one public health trip to Nicaragua, which have impacted her view on health care. This past year, Arthuzo served as Chair of the President's Leadership Council, was part of Homecoming Court, and was a teaching assistant for Molecular Biology II and Neurobiology. Arthuzo is thankful for her time at UCF and how her experiences have shaped her into the person she is today.

Raquel's UCF Experience:

My UCF experience has been one of knowledge, growth, and opportunity. UCF has given me all the resources to reach my highest potential, while at the same time reminding me to use my skills to help those around me. I had the opportunity to pursue my passions but also found new passions along the way. My mentors have encouraged me not be afraid to take chances and push the envelope every chance I get. My mentors, friends, and family have been pivotal in my UCF experience and have stood by me through the ups and the downs. From classes, to IM sports, research, volunteering, Homecoming, PLC, every moment has been an adventure. I look forward to what the future holds, but a part of me will always be at UCF. Go Knights, Charge On!



Raquel Arthuzo
São Paulo, Brazil

Future Plans:

After graduating in spring 2019, I plan on applying to medical school. Long term, I hope to become a neonatologist and conduct research on a smaller scale.

ANGELO BALDADO



Angelo Gabriel Baldado
Dumaguete City, Philippines

Future Plans:

After graduation, I will volunteer with the Peace Corps in the Philippines for two years as a Youth Development Facilitator. Afterwards, I plan on following wherever the flow of life takes me with the hope of becoming an international human rights activist.

Angelo Gabriel Baldado, College of Health Professions and Sciences, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work with a minor in sociology. During his undergraduate career, he served as a member of Team Knightro, an orientation team leader, a student orientation coordinator, student director of Volunteer UCF, and was Mr. UCF 2017. Baldado's passion for equity, diversity, and inclusion led him to advocate for the diverse student body at UCF from his membership on the President's Leadership Council and as the Vice President of the Asian Pacific American Coalition. Throughout his collegiate career he has worked tirelessly to make student leadership positions and experiences more accessible to all. As an Honors in the Major student, Baldado pursued his own research on how the American Dream Ideology affects Filipino college students. His continued devotion to service can be seen in his recent work with the company Aspire Health Partners, where he conducted case management and provided housing assistance for persons with HIV or AIDS.

Angelo's UCF Experience:

I personally find it important to ground the opportunities of my UCF experience in my privilege. Much of my growth and success at the university has come from the people who invested time to mentor, guide, and build relationships with me throughout my UCF experience. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it has taken a village to make me the person I am today. From my time with the UCF Spirit Team, First Year Experience, the Student Union, the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life, and the Office of Student Involvement to my academic involvement with the UCF School of Social Work, Honors in the Major, and professors from other disciplines, I have learned the true essence of impact lies in the excellence one puts in their relationships. These experiences have given me the courage to live life as my authentic self with the hope I can empower others to do the same. It is in this mindset that I will share UCF's vision of access, inclusion, and equity to all that I meet.

MARIA BOWER

Maria Bower, College of Engineering and Computer Science, is majoring in environmental engineering with minors in Spanish and bioengineering. She is a member of The Burnett Honors College and is a National Scholars Mentor. Bower is conducting research on global tidal flooding with Dr. Thomas Wahl, and she is extending the project through an Honors in the Major thesis. Bower has held leadership roles in Tau Beta Pi, Honors Congress, the Pre-Professional Medical Society, and the Relay for Life Executive Board. As a Student Academic Resource Center tutor and a teaching assistant, she has had the opportunity to help her peers achieve success in their coursework. Currently, Bower is a volunteer intern with the Orange County Environmental Protection Division, where she promotes environmental health and education. She also enjoys volunteering at Shepherd's Hope, a free clinic for the uninsured, as well as participating in environmental restoration projects.

Maria's UCF Experience:

During my time at UCF, I have had the opportunity to become involved in a diverse community that has encouraged me to try new things. The professors and faculty at UCF have never failed to provide encouragement and resources for each and every interest I have chosen to pursue. I have been able to gain a global perspective by studying abroad, expand my ability to think critically by performing meaningful research, and enhance the experience of my peers through mentoring and tutoring. My experiences at UCF have helped me to grow as an individual and develop my passion to give back to my community. I became a stronger leader, scholar, and community member through the bonds I formed with my peers and the knowledge I gained from my professors. UCF has given me the inspiration, opportunity, and ability to change the world, and I will always be honored to be a Knight.



Maria Bower
Tampa, FL

Future Plans:

Upon graduation, I plan to pursue an M.D.-M.P.H. degree, which will allow me to focus on public health as well as environmental effects on health. I hope to work as a physician in underserved areas to expand access to health care and promote global health by working with Doctors Without Borders.

JONATHAN BRESCIA



Jonathan Brescia
Ocala, FL

Future Plans:

After graduation, I plan on attending graduate school here at UCF in the CREOL program. I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Optics and Photonics, under the tutelage on Dr. Arkadiy Lyakh, working with Quantum Cascade Laser technology. Eventually, I hope to work for the Department of Defense, or a government contractor working in optics.

Jonathan Brescia, College of Sciences, is majoring in physics and minoring in mathematics. During his time at UCF, he served on the President's Leadership Council, was a LEAD Scholar, was a member of The Burnett Honors College, and was the founding president of the Student Support Foundation, a scholarship committee providing grants to UCF students in financial crisis. This past year he served as the project's coordinator for PLC, planning their service activities. He completed his Honors in the Major thesis dealing with non-homogenous grating couplers for surface waves based on electric displacement currents.

Jonathan's UCF Experience

This fantastic institution has been an endless source of knowledge, wisdom, friendship, and opportunity during my four years as an undergraduate. I will cherish the time I spent here, further the education that I received, and nurture the bonds that I formed for a lifetime. UCF not only gave me a place to pursue my academic and career goals but provided the support I needed in my lowest times and gave me a home away from home in which to grow as a person. I am grateful for the many mentors that I have had during my time at UCF, each one helping me cultivate an area of my life whether academic, professional, or personal. I love this place, and I always will. I am proud to call myself a Knight.

JULIA CARLIN

Julia Elizabeth Carlin, College of Sciences and The Burnett Honors College, is a pre-veterinary student majoring in biology. She is an American Pre-Veterinary Medical Association scholar, Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher, and a John Russell Williams Endowed award recipient. She is currently working on an Honors in the Major thesis in the Coastal and Estuarine Ecology Lab investigating microplastic accumulation in the gastrointestinal tract in birds of prey, for which she has won several scholarships and presentation awards. During her undergraduate career, she has maintained a 4.0, served as president of the Pre-Veterinary Society, was a tutor for students in organic chemistry, and has inspired other veterinary researchers to adopt her novel methods, thereby contributing to conservation nationwide. As an aspiring conservation and wildlife veterinarian, Carlin has had many influential experiences working with jaguars and lemurs at exotic animal hospitals and being the giraffe ambassador at the Central Florida Zoo. The culmination of her work at UCF has resulted in her being one of twenty students in the nation to be accepted into North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Julia's Experience at UCF

UCF taught me that knowledge cultivates passion, and when you're passionate, anything is possible. My unique opportunities at UCF have allowed me to discover my fullest potential, solidify my future aspirations, and shape me into who I am as a human being. UCF has provided me with the opportunity to grow as an intellectual, leader, and professional. I have gained mentors, such as Dr. Linda Walters, who have made all the difference in my career. Through creating original and innovative research and many similar influential experiences, UCF has taught me that no idea is too big to make come true. I am proud to be a UCF student and forever grateful to UCF for making all my dreams into reality.



Julia Elizabeth Carlin
Wellington, FL

Future Plans:

I will be attending North Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine with a wildlife and conservation medicine focus. As a veterinarian, I plan on continuing conservation research in hopes to aid in the health and wellbeing of animals facing anthropogenic pressures. Additionally, I hope to host a TV show on Animal Planet to advocate for conservation and animal welfare.

MARLEY DENIERIO



Marley Denierio
Merritt Island, FL

Future Plans:

My international service and travel is fueled by my interest in global health. Following my graduation from UCF, I plan to pursue a M.D./Ph.D. that would qualify me for a service-based medical career through one of the world health organizations, such as the CDC, WHO or Doctors Without Borders.

Marley Denierio is pursuing dual degrees in Biomedical Sciences (College of Medicine) and Anthropology (College of Sciences); a minor in Biology and certificates in Human Biology and Anthropology of Global Health. She is a LEAD Scholar and member of The Burnett Honors College, Honors Congress, National Society of Leadership and Success, and A.M.S.A. As an Honors Peer Advisor, Honors Orientation Ambassador and Peer Mentor, Denierio assists students in acclimating to UCF and achieving academic success. Her passion for health, science and the environment is evident in her volunteer work at Give Kids the World, Make-a-Wish Foundation and the Orlando Science Center; and as officers for Advocates for World Health and The Scientific Student. She presented her research, conducted in the UCF Laboratory for Bioarchaeological Research, at S.U.R.E, and conducted field research in Peru. Denierio completed her Honors in the Major with her thesis, *Feeding the Children: A Paleodietary Reconstruction of Juveniles from Kuelap, Peru*.

Marley's UCF Experience:

I remember my feelings of excitement when I was a Knight for a Day and validation during orientation, knowing I made the right decision to attend UCF. Today, I still experience those same feelings every time I walk through campus and am honored to share my Knight Pride with each incoming class of students and their families. I understood that UCF means opportunity; but, I was unaware of what that really meant. I could not have anticipated the personal growth and leadership development that I would experience, nor, the life-changing impact of my mentors, professors and administrators. I've been empowered to practice the leadership skills that I learned as a LEAD Scholar, challenged to conduct and publish laboratory and field research, and encouraged to pursue dual degrees with the highest academic standards. Along the way, I built an amazing network of advisors to whom I'll always be grateful for their inspiration and support.

YANELIS DIAZ

Yanelis Diaz is earning a double degree in Biology and Health Services Administration. She is a member of The Burnett Honors College and President's Leadership Council. Yanelis has served as president of two non-profit organizations, Children Beyond Our Borders and Global Medical Brigades. To share her passion of empowering through education, she started a tutoring program and summer science camp for a children population residing in a motel in West Orlando. Additionally, she served as a trip leader for the Bounds for Peace Program that travels to Colombia to provide educational workshops for children. Her research focuses on universal health care systems and disease prevalence in Ghana, the country she will be visiting to lead a medical mission trip. She is currently the Global Medical Brigades Research Team Founder, Neuroscience Research Group Graphic Designer, and Smoke Free UCF Chair. Prior, she was a Private Practice Clinical Intern, Florida Hospital East Patient Access Intern and Chemistry Supplemental Instructional Leader.

Yanelis's UCF Experience:

UCF has provided me an environment that cultivates innovative thinking, allowing me to embrace the power of diversity to be my most authentic self while striving to make an impact on those around me. Through collaborative partnerships and altruistic initiatives, I have been able to flourish as an individual both within the university and community.



Yanelis Diaz
Miami, FL

Future Plans:

I plan on attending medical school to pursue a career in Clinical Research. I aim to work closely with patients, scientists, and the community to deliver breakthrough medical services at a lower cost to the public.

ZACHARY GOOD



Zachary Good
Apex, NC

Future Plans:

I plan to pursue a masters degree in environmental or public policy. My long term goal is to work for the Department of State as a civil service officer advancing diplomatic efforts to protect the environment.

Zachary Good, College of Sciences, recently graduated with a degree in political science. He was a proud member of The Burnett Honors College and the LEAD Scholars Academy where he served as the LSA Executive Director. During his time at UCF, he worked as an outreach assistant at the Department of Sustainability Initiatives, Environmental Fellow in the Global Perspectives Office and Peer Advisor at Career Services. Good was a member of the President's Leadership Council and conducted research in the Political Ecology lab. He was the Volunteer UCF Environmental Director, establishing Knights Go Green, a volunteer-led initiative to reduce waste at athletic events and volunteered on sustainable and conservation projects in South Africa as a part of an Honors Study Aboard trip. Good has interned at the Foundation on Economic Trends, U.S. Department of State and currently serves as a Florida Gubernatorial Fellow in Tallahassee with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Zachary's UCF Experience:

My UCF experience has been a journey filled with academic rigor, stimulating relationships, and a plethora of leadership and service opportunities that have prepared me for a future career in environmental protection. I came to UCF with the plan to run a children's hospital one day and, thanks to a study abroad trip in South Africa, I graduated with the goal of working for the federal government. I was lucky to have opportunities at UCF where the people around me believed in me and wanted to see me excel. This institution has given me the tools to become a life-long learner and the passion to pursue a dream.

ABBYGAIL LAPINSKI

Abbygail Lapinski, College of Nursing, is a nursing student with a minor in medical sociology. She is a member of The Burnett Honors College and HIM Program. Lapinski was recently selected for the UCF Founder's Day Award and to be inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Honors Society of Nursing. Dedicated to promoting health and education through community engagement, Lapinski participated in two service-learning honors abroad programs to Intabazwe, South Africa and Chiapas, Mexico. Throughout her time at UCF, Lapinski has served as the Director of Philanthropy for Honors Congress and Region 3 Director and Membership Chair for the Florida Nursing Students Association (FNSA). Currently, she serves as the President of the FNSA, Treasurer of the Student Nurses Association at UCF Orlando, and Director of Community Outreach for Hearts for Homeless Orlando.



Abbygail Lapinski
Davenport, FL

Abbygail's UCF Experience:

Choosing to attend the University of Central Florida for my undergraduate education was one of the most rewarding decisions I have made. My experience at UCF has not only allowed me to expand my academic knowledge in a respected nursing program but has allowed me to gain valuable leadership and community service experience. As a student, I have been able to connect with individuals and organizations from all over the world, expand my knowledge on social issues through service, and gain insights required to provide compassionate care as a future nurse. The support I have received from professors, faculty mentors, and peers has been instrumental in my time here at UCF, and I am sincerely grateful for their guidance and support. My journey at UCF has taught me many invaluable lessons including the importance of making sustainable impact as a scholar, leader, and professional, a lesson I intend to take with me as I start my career.

Future Plans:

Following graduation, I intend to continue building my foundation in nursing by providing compassionate care in the acute care setting. I plan to continue my education by pursuing a master's program in leadership and management and a Doctorate in Nursing Practice. I aspire to continue my leadership journey in the nursing profession and advocate for the health and wellness of underserved communities.

ADRIENNE LI



Adrienne Li
Ottawa, Canada

Adrienne Li, College of Health Professions and Science, is majoring in health sciences pre-clinical. She is a member of the women's soccer team, the student-athlete advisory committee and a recipient of the Florida-Canada Linkage Institute scholarship. Despite suffering two season ending injuries, Li found her way in the classroom and in the community. While serving as the assistant director for the Foot & Ankle Sports Medicine clinical internship, Li also participated in the UCF Surgical Internship, where she was able to observe various surgical specialties and mentor incoming interns. During her time at UCF, Li used her platform as a student-athlete to give back to the Orlando community through several volunteer organizations. All the while, Li remained on the President's Honor Roll or Dean's List.

Future Plans:

Following graduation, I intend to take a year to volunteer overseas and apply to medical school. My long-term goal is to provide care to underserved communities and later join Doctors Without Borders.

Adrienne's UCF Experience:

UCF has provided me a place to grow academically and athletically in a culturally diverse environment. In addition to being a student-athlete, I have had the privilege of being involved in various extracurricular activities at both the university and in the community of Orlando. I have been able to serve the community through organizations and events including Habitat for Humanity, Knight of Giving and Pack to Attack. During my time at UCF, I learned to face adversity, take on new challenges and strive to be the best version of myself every day. UCF offered an abundance of opportunities, which allowed me to make memories and relationships that will last a lifetime.

LATIFAH MAASARANI

Latifah Maasarani, CREOL College of Optics and Photonics, is majoring in Photonic Science and Engineering. She is a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar, Astronaut Scholar, Founders' Day Award recipient, and a member of The Burnett Honors College. At UCF, Maasarani conducted a year of research with Dr. Ryan Gelfand in the NanoBioPhotonics Lab where she initiated a nanofabrication method for developing nanoaperture optical traps for single protein biophysics applications. She also completed two NSF REU programs and currently holds an internship in her field. Maasarani served as the President for the Society of Optics Students at CREOL for two consecutive years. As president she organized 50+ society events including professional development workshops, research seminars, student socials, and team-building exercises. Maasarani is an advocate for optics and photonics in her college and in her community. She regularly volunteers her time to present optics concepts and career outlooks at local K-12 schools and recently represented photonics technology on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Outside of her STEM-related volunteering activities, Maasarani has also coordinated an annual Christmas charity fundraiser for a local foster children organization, Impower Florida, for the past five years.



Latifah Maasarani
Canton, OH

Latifah's UCF Experience:

Being a student at UCF has truly pushed me to become the best version of myself. My leadership and academic experiences have shaped my ideals through thought-provoking classes and student-focused professors. Those experiences also improved my technical skills to prepare me for my graduate studies, as well as enhanced my interpersonal and entrepreneurial skills in preparation for developing a biomedical startup company. I am forever grateful for my time as a UCF student. I could not be the successful young academic leader I am today without it.

Future Plans:

After graduation, I will pursue a Doctoral Degree in Biomedical Engineering at Duke University. I will conduct translational research by developing low-cost biophotonic point-of-care systems that detect and monitor various diseases, while simultaneously collaborating with life science researchers to provide disease treatment options. Subsequently, I intend to lead a biomedical startup company to create accessible healthcare solutions.

UZOAMAKA MBIONWU



Uzoamaka Catherine Mbionwu
Orlando, FL

Future Plans:

Before matriculating into medical school, I plan not only staying close to UCF by working in the Office of the President, but I will also continue to volunteer at the UCF Creative School for Children, Nemours Children's Hospital, and AdventHealth for Children. I will also be participating in an internship at Grace Medical Home, as well as continuing my research with Dr. Self in his biology lab. After completing two medical mission trips in Nigeria and Ghana, I will pursue a medical degree back in the states to ultimately fulfill my passion of becoming a pediatrician — devoted to serving the under-served and uninsured.

Uzoamaka Catherine Mbionwu, College of Health Professions and Sciences, is majoring in health sciences pre-clinical with a minor in health services administration. She is a first-generation Nigerian-American. Decorated with awards including the Past Presidents Legacy Award, Dr. John T. Washington Service Award, and the Most Engaged Scholar Award, Mbionwu's dedication to academics, involvement, and service, never failed to shine through. After her first year at UCF, she earned a 4.0 GPA and President's Honor Roll every semester. Mbionwu was a volunteer teaching assistant for the Anatomy Laboratory and served as an undergraduate researcher under Dr. William Self, studying the role of metalloenzymes in *Clostridium difficile*. Similarly, she had the privilege to conduct an independent research project about virtual and interactive distraction therapy in pediatrics, which she presented at the American Medical Education Conference in Philadelphia and published in the Orlando Medical News.

Uzoamaka's UCF Experience:

My life-changing UCF experience would have been unimaginable without our remarkable faculty and staff, innovative administrative leaders, and ground-breaking programs that allow students to maximize their potential. UCF has allowed me to use my platform as a student-leader to make a lasting impact at UCF and in the Orlando community; transforming the lives of many by holding over 18 leadership positions on and off campus. I have had the honor to serve on the President's Leadership Council, serve as a 4EVER KNIGHTS Ambassador, lead the Student Health Advisory Committee as president, become a peer mentor for the integrative Academic Center for Engagement, and volunteer as a peer ambassador for Student Accessibility Services. I will be forever grateful to my soon-to-be alma mater for believing in me and providing limitless opportunities to expand my horizons and become a leader for the next generation.

MICHAEL MCWATERS

Michael McWaters, College of Business Administration and College of Sciences, is pursuing a double major in economics and political science. He is a proud member of both The Burnett Honors College and the President's Leadership Council. McWaters has served UCF as an Honors Team Leader, a Student Senator, and as Captain for Knights of the Round Table's Knight-Thon team. He also competed with the Moot Court Organization, where he qualified for the national tournament in two consecutive years and was ranked second among all advocates in the nation. McWaters has a distinct interest in law, and he has applied this background to the implementation of public policy; he explored DUI adjudication in the Legal Studies Undergraduate Law Journal, he analyzed bail reform procedures as a research assistant under Dr. Alisa Smith and, most recently, he has served the City of Orlando as an economic development intern with the Community Redevelopment Agency.



Michael McWaters
Palm Harbor, FL

Michael's UCF Experience:

I committed to attend UCF before I ever set foot on campus, and I never could have anticipated how important this institution would be to my personal growth. Although I am not originally from Central Florida, my experiences here have transformed UCF and Orlando to feel like my home. UCF has afforded me the opportunity to connect with faculty and staff who have served as mentors and challenged me in my development as an aspiring leader and scholar. This university has not only provided me with an outstanding education, but it has also given me the necessary experiences to learn about myself and to understand how I can use my interests and talents to give back to this community that has given so much to me.

Future Plans:

After graduation, I plan to attend law school and earn my J.D. I hope to work as a practicing attorney with a focus on constitutional law, and enter politics as a public servant.

MANSOOR QURESHI



Mansoor Qureshi
Orlando, FL

Future Plans:

After graduation, I plan to attend medical school and continue conducting research. I intend to become a practicing physician and aim to improve healthcare delivery and public health education while providing care to underserved communities.

Mansoor Qureshi, College of Medicine, is pursuing a degree in biomedical sciences and is a member of The Burnett Honors College and the LEAD Scholars Academy. His enthusiasm for learning and encouraging academic growth led him to excel in guiding other students as a COMPASS mentor, teaching assistant for the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, and peer mentor for the Office of Undergraduate Research. During his time at the university, he has been extensively involved in the Honors College serving as a team leader, orientation ambassador, and as an Honors Congress philanthropy committee member. He particularly appreciated his role as a team leader, as it allowed him to convey the importance of service and community engagement to incoming Honors students. Qureshi's passion for medicine and research is demonstrated by his involvement in the UCF Clinical Internship Program and his poster presentations in the Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence. He also spends his time volunteering with several organizations that aim to improve the health of individuals in underserved communities.

Mansoor's UCF Experience:

UCF has provided me the framework for tremendous personal, professional, and academic growth during the last four years. I had the privilege of meeting many brilliant and driven people through communities such as The Burnett Honors College, LEAD Scholars Academy, COMPASS, and many others. I am also grateful for my mentors, who have been instrumental in helping me find my path. Their passion for discovery and their attitude as life-long learners sparked my interest in research. They encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and to start working towards my goals instead of worrying about failure. UCF has also taught me the importance of community and giving back, and these values continue to shape me and inspire my progress.

LAUREN SCHMIDT

Lauren Schmidt, College of Engineering and Computer Science, is a Provost Scholar studying environmental engineering and chemistry. A proud member of The Burnett Honors College, she is a four-time Honors Peer Ambassador and served as Director of Academic Affairs and Secretary of Honors Congress. Schmidt is the current President of the Florida Delta Chapter of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society and Treasurer of Chi Epsilon, the Civil and Environmental Engineering Honor Society. She leads undergraduate students as a Teaching Assistant for the Introduction to Engineering courses and conducts research on the removal of harmful contaminants from drinking water. With a desire to serve the community, Schmidt volunteers at Knights Pantry, tutors engineering students, and worked as an intern at UCF Sustainability Initiatives. In her free time, she loves to dance at her local studio, where she has been a student for eighteen years.

Lauren's UCF Experience:

UCF has provided me the opportunity to grow as a student, leader, and professional woman. My involvement in The Burnett Honors College has given me the confidence and ability to succeed in life's challenging adventures. Through my leadership positions at UCF, I have been able to mentor and inspire young students to pursue careers in STEM. I have formed lasting relationships with my fellow members of Tau Beta Pi and the professional engineering community. UCF has fueled my passion to further my education and make a positive difference in the world. I am extremely grateful for my supportive professors, mentors, family, and friends who have guided and encouraged me. I am honored to have attended this university and will always cherish the memories made as a UCF Knight.



Lauren Schmidt
Orlando, FL

Future Plans:

After graduation, I will attend graduate school to pursue a master's degree in environmental engineering, focusing on environmental chemistry research. I plan to become a Professional Engineer and have a career in environmental protection. I look forward to solving the world's challenges related to the earth, energy, and the environment.

ADAM SEARLES



Adam Ross Searles
Palm Bay, FL

Future Plans:

I plan to continue my education in graduate school. Through this, I plan to become a professor of marine ecology at a top research university. This position will allow me to conduct relevant ecological research that can be used to inform ecosystem-based management strategies. Professorship will also allow me to mentor future scientists and educate the public on the importance of preserving nature for the benefit of future generations. Additionally, I plan on becoming the next Crocodile Hunter, where I will be able to use my fame to campaign for conservation around the globe.

Adam Ross Searles, College of Sciences, is a fourth generation Floridian and is majoring in biology. He is a NOAA Hollings Scholar, Founder's Day Award recipient, and Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher. During his time at UCF, he has maintained a 4.0, volunteered heavily with the FWC, and was the first UCF student to be awarded the NOAA Hollings Scholarship. Through UCF and NOAA, Searles has conducted research on many topics within marine biology including restoration ecology of oyster reef communities in Mosquito Lagoon and seagrass ecology in Biscayne Bay. He is also active with his campus ministry, the UCF Navigators, and serves as an undergraduate teaching assistant for the Principles of Ecology and Oceanography at UCF.

Adam's UCF Experience:

I entered UCF as a lost student with zero affinity for school. Driven by my desire to be outside, I pursued meetings with several professors in the UCF Biology Department. They took me under their wing and gave me the opportunity to work on several projects in the field and lab. The opportunity UCF gave me instilled in me a yearning for success. My involvement in campus life united me with life-long friends and grew my professional network exponentially. UCF enabled me to reach the summit of my field and to have significant positive impacts on the world. I am forever indebted to UCF for what it has done for me. Go Knights, Charge On.





ORDER OF PEGASUS LOUNGE

The Order of Pegasus Lounge is located on the second floor of the Student Union, overlooking the Pegasus Grand Ballroom. In honor of the inductees, a plaque with the 2019 Order of Pegasus names and a group photo will be on display on the lounge wall along with previous Order of Pegasus inductees.



2019 ORDER OF PEGASUS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Dr. Stacey Malaret, Chair, LEAD Scholars Academy
Mr. Arup Guha, College of Engineering and
Computer Science
- Dr. Carolyn Hopp, College of Community Innovation
and Education
- Dr. Keisha Hoerrner, Undergraduate Studies
- Dr. Vivian Ortiz, Office of Assessment and Grants
- Dr. DeLaine Priest, Division of Student Development
and Enrollment Services
- Mr. Rex Roberts, The Burnett Honors College
Mrs. Mary Whittaker



The Division of Student Development and Enrollment Services would like to thank members of the administration and faculty for nominating students, and the committee members listed above for undertaking the difficult task of selecting the outstanding UCF students receiving this distinguished honor. A special thank you to the Student Government Association for sponsoring the generous scholarships for the Order of Pegasus recipients.

