



# ORDER OF PEGASUS

## CLASS OF 2020



SPRING 2020

Spring 2020

Welcome from the Interim President

I am very pleased to introduce the recipients of the 2020 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 24 recipients are seven LEAD Scholars, five members of the President's Leadership Council, seven Student Government leaders, 11 Burnett Honors College scholars, three Greek members, two student-athletes and three transfer students. 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.



## KARLA BADILLO-URQUIOLA

Karla Badillo-Urquiola, College of Engineering and Computer Science, is a Ph.D. candidate in Modeling and Simulation and McKnight Doctoral Fellow. She holds a B.S. in Psychology with a minor in Writing and Rhetoric (2014) and a M.S. in Modeling and Simulation (2015) from UCF. Her dissertation research, which is partially funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, helps reduce the digital inequalities experienced by teens in the foster care system. She contributed to over 25 peer-reviewed publications, earning a Best Paper award at ACM's CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, the premier international conference of Human-Computer Interaction. Karla is a former Ronald E. McNair Scholar and Russell V. Ewald Academic Excellence Award recipient. Beyond research, she is a caring mother, a dedicated mentor to promising researchers of color like herself, a mission ambassador for an anti-sex trafficking nonprofit organization, and a member of UCF's Center for the Study of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery.

### **Karla's UCF Experience:**

My diverse experiences at UCF transformed me into a focused, driven, and accomplished doctoral student who strives to demonstrate the caliber of UCF's research. My training at UCF afforded me the opportunity to publish and present at the international level, advocate for the importance of research at Florida's Capitol, and serve as a bridge that unites, not only different academic scholars and institutions, but also different cultures. My experiences at UCF have taught me to courageously strive for excellence and live out my purpose. I became a leader, scholar, and mentor, and learned to embrace my diversity and empower others to do the same. I am infinitely grateful and blessed to be a forever UCF Knight.



Karla Badillo-Urquiola  
Orlando, Florida

### **Future Plans:**

My career aspiration is to become a tenured professor and join the 2 percent of Latinas nationwide in the computing workforce. I will use my professional career to promote more diversity within academia and continue researching technology-driven solutions that will improve the quality of life for underserved populations.

## TIMOTHY HILL



Timothy Hill  
Hollywood, Florida

### Future Plans:

After completion of the dual master's program, my plans include employment at the local or federal levels of government where I can use my strengths of being a connector towards working in areas such as governmental/community relations, emergency operations, or higher education consulting. Ultimately, I aspire to make a lasting impact in helping at-risk communities and people across the world. I also have a passion for writing and want to share my stories with the world.

Timothy Hill is a dual master's student in Public Administration and Criminal Justice under the College of Community Innovation and Education. He is originally from Hollywood, FL and an alumnus of the UCF Class of 2018 where he earned his B.S. in Public Administration with a minor in Emergency Management and Homeland Security. During graduate school, Timothy was appointed by the UCF Board of Trustees to serve on the Presidential Search Committee. Additionally, Timothy served on the President's Leadership Council, Technology Fee Committee, and has facilitated much student success as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for Experiential Learning. Timothy is also a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. — Winter Park Alumni Chapter. During his undergraduate years, Timothy was selected for the UCF Legislative Scholars Program and worked in Tallahassee for Senator Randolph Bracy. Timothy is also past president of the International City/County Management Association — UCF Student Chapter.

### Timothy's UCF Experience:

UCF had a unique, unexpected way of transforming the person I am today. From starting at this university in 2015, there were many mentors, faculty, and staff who have helped me along the way. I want to extend a huge thank you to those individuals. UCF created a leader who is ready to take on any challenge and that will greatly impact the world. One of the biggest lessons I have learned at UCF is to never give up. Many people in this world will doubt your abilities, but it is your responsibility to prove them wrong. Through difficult times keep pushing forward and ultimately trust God's plan for your life. I am extremely grateful for my time at UCF and witnessed exponential growth in my personal, academic, and professional endeavors. To everyone that supported me in this journey, I appreciate you so much. Thank you for the memories UCF and I look forward to remaining connected with this university. Ever upward in our flight...

## STEPHANIE JARMAK

Stephanie is pursuing her Ph.D. in Physics on the Planetary Sciences track in the College of Sciences. She received her B.S. in Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her M.S. in Physics from Texas A&M University-Commerce. She is currently a graduate research assistant in the UCF Center for Microgravity Research where she explores the earliest stages of planet formation through low-velocity collision experiments in microgravity. She has made critical contributions to UCF's first two small satellites along with several other parabolic and suborbital flight campaigns. She has demonstrated a commitment to her community through her active role in expanding mentorship opportunities and resources to underrepresented groups within UCF.



Stephanie Jarmak  
Orlando, Florida

### **Stephanie's UCF Experience:**

The incredible mentorship and education I received as a UCF graduate student inspired me to take an active role in mentorship and advocacy within my community while establishing myself as an emerging leader in the field of space exploration. I had many opportunities to contribute to my community through my role as the Vice President of UCF's Women in Physics Society and by establishing a mentorship committee within my department. I was also privileged with many amazing opportunities as a researcher in the UCF Center for Microgravity Research. UCF afforded me with endless opportunities to grow not only as a researcher but as a contributing member of an amazing community that I will always be grateful for.

### **Future Plans:**

I have accepted a postdoctoral research position at the Southwest Research Institute where I will contribute to planetary mission proposals, analyze spacecraft data, and pursue my dream of one day leading a major planetary exploration mission.

## SHARON PARK



Sharon Park  
Apopka, Florida

### Future Plans:

After graduation, I will obtain a Ph.D. in materials science and engineering, conducting research in materials development of additive manufacturing. In the future, I aim to become a professor and will lead research efforts to proliferate applications of additive technology in the fields of materials science, biomedical engineering, and in the energy, aerospace, automotive, and defense industries. All while simultaneously forging the next generation of diverse and talented scientific world leaders.

Sharon Park, College of Engineering and Computer Science, is pursuing a master's degree in Materials Science and Engineering. Sharon is a RAMP Scholar, McNair Scholar and an inaugural member of UCF's Founder's Academy: Tech Entrepreneurship Program. She has conducted materials science research at the Laboratory for Advanced Materials and Additive Manufacturing for the past four years. Her research involves optimization studies for gas atomization and selective laser melting technologies. She collaborated with scientists at the US Army Research Laboratory, and Office of Naval Research. Sharon presented her research projects at five international research conferences and contributed to six journal publications. She also completed a fellowship at Siemens Energy as part of the US Department of Energy's University Turbines Systems Research fellowship program. Sharon also acts as a diligent advocate for materials science, and regularly volunteers her time to mentor young students through programs like Camp Connect and STEM Day. In her free time, she enjoys practicing Tae Kwon Do, drumming, and volunteers as a student teacher in the Seminole County School system.

### Sharon's UCF Experience:

My UCF experience has been enriched by the resources, faculty and staff that have aided in my growth as a student. I am extremely grateful for the life-changing mentorship I have received at UCF, from my research advisor, Dr. Yongho Sohn, and my scholarship advisor, Mr. Michael Aldarondo-Jeffries, to name a few. Overall, UCF effectively served as a stepping stone for my career, providing me with the knowledge, research experiences and lasting friendships that will undoubtedly aid in my pursuit of a successful future career as a professor and leader in scientific research.

## RYAN RIDENBAUGH

Ryan Ridenbaugh, College of Sciences, graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2016 with a B.S. in Biology. Currently pursuing a M.S. in Biology, his research focuses on the mechanisms and interactions that drive speciation, and what it means to be a unique species. Through an international collaboration with researchers from Australia and New Zealand, his work at UCF has been crucial to developing an alternative pest management program, reducing harmful pesticide use in the New Zealand forestry industry. Beyond his research, Ryan has taken an active role as a leader at UCF. To date he has mentored 3 graduate students, 7 undergraduates, and 4 high school students involved in a wide range of research projects.



Ryan Ridenbaugh  
Oviedo, Florida

### **Ryan's UCF Experience:**

UCF has introduced me to new ideas and opportunities, providing me an avenue to channel my passion into my research. From the peaks of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado to the Snowy Mountains in New South Wales, Australia my research at UCF has taken me to places I never dreamed I would get to experience. This never would have been possible without the many faculty mentors I've had and the resources available throughout my undergraduate and graduate career here at UCF. I gained valuable teaching experience at UCF having taught four different classes as a Graduate Teaching Associate and guest lecturer for the Evolutionary Biology class. Without UCF, I would not be the academic I am today.

### **Future Plans:**

After completing my M.S. in Biology, I will continue my education at the University of Kentucky where I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Biology. My goal is to become a professor of Entomology with a focus in systematics and evolutionary research.

## RACHEL SAMPSON



Rachel Sampson  
Ithaca, New York

Rachel Sampson, CREOL College of Optics and Photonics, is an optics and photonics Ph.D. candidate. She received her B.S. in Physics and M.S. in Optics and Photonics from Stony Brook University and UCF, respectively. Sampson is currently a member of the Optical Fiber Communications group at UCF and her research focuses on next-generation telecommunication systems to increase information capacity. In addition to her research, Sampson held leadership roles within UCF's Optical Society student chapter and the CREOL Association of Optics Students. Within her leadership capacities, Sampson organized 20 events and served as the conference chair for IONS Orlando 2019, a student-organized conference with over 150 attendees from 10 states and 12 countries. She is a recipient of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, Northrop Grumman Fellowship, UCF Doctoral Research Support Award, and the ORC Doctoral Fellowship.

### Future Plans:

After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in research and development in the telecommunications industry working on systems-level design. I also intend to continue my efforts to increase accessibility and inclusivity in my field.

### Rachel's UCF Experience:

UCF's extensive resources and strong commitment to innovation have enabled me to make both a local and international impact in my field. Due to UCF's status as a leader in optics and photonics, UCF's Optical Society student chapter was selected to host an International OSA Network of Students (IONS) conference in 2019. I had the honor to serve as conference chair and led a team of 12 passionate and dedicated students to create, develop, and organize the conference. The conference brought together a diverse set of attendees from around the world with a variety of technical and educational backgrounds. My experiences at UCF have been critical in helping me grow as a leader and furthering my commitment to developing creative and inclusive programming.

## SIRIKANYA SELLERS

Sirikanya Sellers, College of Medicine, is earning her medical degree while demonstrating a fierce initiative and dedication to mental health when she founded Rising Youth, a preventative medicine and education 501c3 nonprofit aimed to increase mental health literacy in high school. Sirikanya also demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and compassion for the underserved when she cofounded Chapman Compassionate Care, a student-run skin and wound care clinic for the homeless. Further demonstrating her commitment to service and individuals, she served as a board member responsible for the organization of Apopka Clinic, a student-run multidisciplinary clinic for migrant farmworkers of Central Florida. Additionally, she volunteered at the Kara Tepe refugee camp for Syrian and Afghani asylum seekers in Lesbos, Greece, during her first summer of medical school.



Sirikanya Sellers  
Bangkok, Thailand

### **Sirikanya's UCF Experience:**

My time at the University of Central Florida College of Medicine has been integral to my personal and professional growth and success. Our medical school excelled in providing a supportive environment while encouraging rigorous training, innovation, and scholarship. When I wanted to gain more leadership and clinical experience through serving the local immigrant community, a faculty member welcomed me with open arms and promoted my professional development. I know that this experience will be instrumental to my future in destigmatizing mental health and provide comprehensive compassionate patient-centered care. I cannot emphasize enough how grateful I am for the University of Central Florida College of Medicine.

### **Future Plans:**

After medical school, I plan on completing my residency in psychiatry at an academic institution, training to be an excellent clinician. I want to continue advocating for mental health care rights and serving the marginalized population, with a specific focus on the homeless and asylum seekers.

## YASER AHMAD



Yaser Ahmad  
Orlando, Florida

### Future Plans:

After graduation, I will matriculate into medical school, which has been a lifelong dream of mine. As a physician, I plan to advocate for the healthcare of all individuals, regardless of background or socioeconomic status. In addition, I hope to be a clinical educator aiming to inspire the next generation of students, just as my professors have inspired me.

Yaser Ahmad, College of Medicine, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences. He is a National Merit scholar, an alumnus of the LEAD Scholars Academy, and member of the Burnett Honors College. Ahmad has been involved in numerous research projects understanding craniofacial and brain morphometry and has presented and published his findings, as well as defended an Honors thesis. He was recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative University for investigating factors affecting postsecondary success of first-generation and foster care students. Ahmad served in a variety of leadership roles at UCF, including Assistant Director of the UCF Surgical Internship, Student Undergraduate Research Council member, and Election Commissioner within Student Government. With a passion for education, he has also served as a teaching assistant in four upper-level undergraduate courses. An individual dedicated to tackling pressing challenges in society, Ahmad has co-founded a 501(c)(3) nonprofit which provides a career-focused curriculum to local high school students, preparing them for life after graduation.

### Yaser's UCF Experience:

Attending UCF has taught me to always reach for the stars, and joining this institution has been one of the greatest decisions of my life. With the support of world-class faculty and outstanding peers, I achieved tremendous personal and professional growth. UCF has imparted on me a spirit of innovation that I will embrace as a future physician to transform the practice of medicine. I am grateful for the many opportunities I was awarded as a student and will cherish the lasting memories I have made. I will always be proud to be a Knight and will make every effort to maintain a lifelong connection with UCF. Go Knights, Charge On!

## KYLE BENKEL

Kyle Benkel, College of Medicine, is a biomedical sciences major. He is a proud member of The Burnett Honors College and a wide receiver for UCF's football team. His passion for football and the medical field afforded Benkel the opportunity to shadow the football team's physicians at Jewett Orthopedic Clinic. Benkel has also conducted independent research on bacteria capable of hydrocarbon degradation in marine environments as part of the Honors Undergraduate Thesis program. In addition, Benkel used his platform as a student-athlete to give back to the Orlando community through several volunteer organizations including Advent Health hospital and Central Florida Dreamplex. During his time at UCF, Benkel has continued to remain on the President's Honor Roll or Dean's List and was also awarded the UCF Football Academic Excellence Award.



Kyle Benkel  
Orlando, Florida

### **Kyle's UCF Experience:**

My experience at UCF has been a dream come true. Growing up in Orlando and having UCF alumni parents was the beginning of my love for this university. One of my earliest goals was to one day play football at UCF. Making the football team as a walk on and being a part of the most successful years of UCF football ever, is more than I could have imagined. Memories of our undefeated season, the Peach Bowl, and the National Championship will forever be a part of my experience at UCF. This amazing university shaped me into the person I am today and has allowed me to grow through the knowledge I have gained and the leadership skills I have learned. The Burnett Honors College and the College of Medicine have been an integral part of my development as a pre-med student. The friendships I made and the experiences I had will stay with me for the rest of my life. I can't imagine being able to accomplish so much at any other university.

### **Future Plans:**

After graduation, I will attend medical school at the UCF College of Medicine. I aspire to become an orthopedic surgeon and work with athletes like myself, to help them recover from injuries and get back on the field.

## SAMANTHA BERG



Samantha Berg  
Winter Springs, Florida

### Future Plans:

Following my graduation from UCF, I plan to enter a clinical psychology doctoral program and conduct research focusing on understanding risk factors for sexual assault, developing risk reduction strategies, and evaluating PTSD treatments. I aim to become a university professor and direct my own research laboratory.

UCF's remarkable faculty and programs developed me into the strong researcher and individual I am today. Upon entering The Burnett Honors College (BHC), I immediately became involved with Honors Congress and its fundraising committee where I planned and oversaw fundraisers for events such as Knight-Thon and Relay for Life. Subsequently, I was elected Director of Fundraising. In this role, I further nurtured my passion for fundraising and building relationships by organizing activities to support various charities and strengthening relations with BHC staff. Following this, I ran for Director of Recruitment within Honors Congress, an executive position which allowed me to present at various campus events and an Honors Council Conference in Washington, D.C. I also had the opportunity to gain a global perspective by participating in an international service-learning program. Since my first year at UCF, I have also explored my passion for psychology and research by cultivating laboratory experiences and increasing my critical thinking skills through UCF RESTORES, multiple independent research projects, and conducting trauma research as part of the NSF-funded Research Experience. I also discovered a passion for mentorship when I began working as a Peer Mentor for the Office of Honors Research. Moreover, I mentored students as the President of the Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society and as a teaching assistant for Research Methods in Psychology and for Honors Symposium. In Spring 2019, my desire to continue developing my leadership experiences prompted me to apply and be accepted into the President's Leadership Council.

### Samantha's UCF Experience

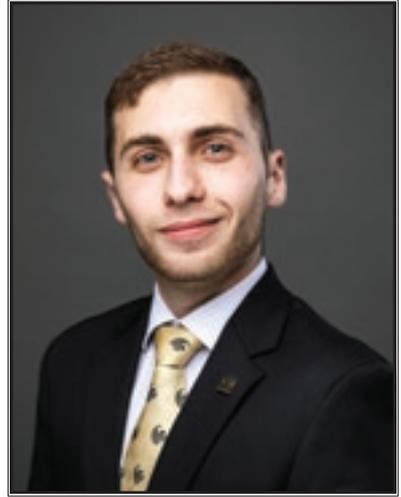
UCF has provided me endless opportunities to grow tremendously both academically and individually. I am incredibly grateful for the community and mentorship provided here that have nurtured my abilities, career aspirations, and ambitions.

## GIORGI BERUASHVILI

Giorgi Beruashvili, College of Sciences, is majoring in International and Global Studies with a minor in Diplomacy and a certificate in Intelligence and National Security. During his first two years, Beruashvili served as a Wellness Ambassador of the Student Development Office, and as the President of Valencia International Club at Valencia College — East Campus. After transferring to UCF, he continued involvement through joining the Student Government — Legislative Branch, the Department of Housing and Residence Life as a resident assistant, and 2019–2020 President’s Leadership Council. As an undergraduate researcher, he has increased awareness on the Russo-Georgian War through his internship with the United Nations Association of Orlando Chapter. Additionally, with the Honors in Major Undergraduate Thesis, he explored the phenomenon of female terrorism and associated vulnerabilities in the counter-terrorist forces. Throughout his undergraduate path, Beruashvili has maintained a 4.0 GPA, striving for the excellence pillar of the UCF Creed.

### Georgi’s Experience at UCF

UCF — a home far away from home. I settled in a community completely different from mine as a non-national and yet I was warmly accepted and treated as a part of the family. I am proud to say that the Knights’ community has given me home, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in life. There is a reason why Community is one of the UCF Creed pillars. Today I find myself in a reverse role, now aiding other students who are going through the same adaptation process, trying to give them knowledge, involvement, and the most important — feeling of belonging to not only enhance their experience as a UCF student, but one day for them to impact others as well.



Giorgi Beruashvili  
Tbilisi, Georgia

### Future Plans:

Fast-forward to Fall 2020, I will be pursuing my Master’s of Science in Management — Integrated Business track, once again as a Knight. Upon getting my master’s, I intend to work in the business world, in the field of Human Resources concentrated on leadership development and/or risk management.

## SAFIA CENTNER



Safia Centner  
Lake Mary, Florida

### Future Plans:

After graduation from UCF, I plan on attending medical school and pursuing a pediatric subspecialty. I intend on continuing to do research along with providing clinical care to my patients.

Safia Centner, College of Health Professions and Sciences, is majoring in Health Sciences, pre-clinical. She is a National Merit Scholar, LEAD Scholars Academy graduate, Burnett Medical Scholar. She also received the Congressional Gold Medal for Youth. Safia serves on the executive board in Honors Congress, Relay For Life of UCF, and Be The Match at UCF. She created opportunities for peers to obtain medical shadowing, is a peer mentor, and serves as a Genetics learning assistant. Safia has participated in Pediatric Cardiology and Gastroenterology research. She presented a poster about “Prevalence of Anxiety and Depression in Children with POTS” at the American Autonomic Society’s International meeting. Safia is currently working with Dr. Suha Saleh on her Honors in the Major thesis. Because of her commitment to working with pediatric patients, Safia, and her twin sister, cofounded Kits for Kids, a non-profit organization, which has created and donated over 5,000 craft kits to sick children. She has volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House and volunteered over 350 hours at Nemours.

### Safia’s UCF Experience:

UCF, The Burnett Honors College, and the LEAD Scholars Academy allowed me incredible opportunities to become involved in many organizations, causes, and scholarly activities. Here at UCF, I have been able to mentor my peers, have leadership positions, help create new organizations, and get involved in research and scholarly opportunities. UCF provided me with so many incredible resources that allowed me to embrace my passions and excel. The amazing administration, faculty, staff, and peers provided me with encouragement and guidance — inspiring me to set aspirational goals and helping me reach my highest potential. They are what have made my experience at UCF the most meaningful.

## BREON CLARK

Breon Clark, College of Health Professions and Sciences, is majoring in health sciences pre-clinical. During his undergraduate career, he served as the Community Service Director of the LEAD Scholars Academy, a UCF Cares Ambassador, Education and Literacy Director of Volunteer UCF, Diversity and Outreach Coordinator in Student Government Association, and participated in undergraduate research for neurological linguistics as a part of the Transportation Research Group (TRG). His strong will to be a voice for student concerns led Mr. Clark to run for student body Vice President as a sophomore and he currently serves as a member of the President's Leadership Council. As a product of his efforts, Breon has been accepted and will attend UCF's Doctor of Physical Therapy program as a recipient of the Professional Doctoral Diversity Fellowship.



Breon Clark  
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

### **Breon's UCF Experience:**

UCF contributed tremendously to my development by allowing me to explore my interests, providing opportunities and then proceeding to challenge my grit and ambition in every way imaginable. Because of these challenges, I formed a better sense of identity and gained reassurance that my capabilities are only limited to the efforts I make toward my own fruition. Despite my own efforts, I find it hard to imagine that I could have endured the rigorous demands of college without the support system this university hosts.

### **Future Plans:**

After graduation, I will continue my education at the University of Central Florida as a part of the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. Long term, I plan on earning a Ph.D. in neuroscience and pursuing a career in academia.

## KRISTEN DETZ



Kristen Detz  
Wesley Chapel, Florida

### Future Plans:

I plan to become an elementary school teacher at a Title 1 School here in Orlando. My long term goal is to earn my masters in educational leadership so I can become a principal, after that a superintendent, and maybe even the Secretary of Education to improve education for all.

Kristen Detz, College of Community Innovation and Education is pursuing a major in elementary education and a minor in exceptional student education. She is a proud member of The Burnett Honors College and the President's Leadership Council, as well as a graduate of the LEAD Scholars Academy. Detz has served UCF as an Orientation Team Leader, an Honors Orientation Ambassador, an ACE Academic Coach, and an Access Peer Mentor. She is also a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, the Nightmare Advisory Council, and the Student National Education Association. Detz was a trombone player in the Marching Knights for three years. Her passion for community engagement is evident in her volunteer work through UCF's Alternative Break Program, and multiple elementary schools. As a founding member of the Student Knights Club and its Advisory Board, Detz established a student donor program to benefit UCF athletics for years to come. All the while, she remained on the President's Honor Roll or Dean's List.

### Kristen's UCF Experience:

I would describe my experience as an uphill battle. There were many challenges along the way. Things almost never went according to plan. Patience and excellence in all I do is how I made the impact I have. Coming as far as I have would not have happened without my involvement and those that invested their time to mentor, guide, and build relationships with me. From my time in various organizations, roles, and jobs on campus, I have been able to learn, grow, and better myself as a person and a leader. Those that I have met along the way throughout my extensive involvement have molded me into the proud Knight I am today. Without UCF, I am not sure I would have found my passion for education. I was originally a film major, but a service-learning opportunity through The Burnett Honors College my first year led me to my calling. I hope my story as a successful first generation college student, empowers others to step out, get involved, and leave their mark.

## JENNA DOVYDAITIS

Colorado-born, but Florida-raised, Jenna is the middle child of a family of five. Her parents, a librarian and a pilot, instilled the importance of curiosity in her from a young age. Growing up, the Dovydaitis family would spend their summer vacations crisscrossing the country on extensive road trips, exploring both cities and national parks. Jenna credits her family, these adventures, and the many books she read on them, with jumpstarting the passion for learning that has persisted into her adulthood.

### **Jenna's UCF Experience:**

As a biology and political science double major, Jenna's college experience has been interdisciplinary at its core. Her most significant involvement, research and fieldwork on chemical weapons in Iraqi Kurdistan, stemmed from the support of UCF's Kurdish Political Studies Program and The Burnett Honors College. Outside of academics, Jenna has been consistently involved with the UCF and Orlando communities. On campus, Jenna served as a two-term team leader with Honors Symposium, a content developer and research assistant for the Organic Chemistry Department, a student member of the Faculty University Honors Committee, an Undergraduate Research Council representative, a Francis Bok Human Trafficking Awareness Fellow, a Dr. Najmaldin Karim Kurdish Studies Fellow, and a Burnett Medical Scholar. Locally, Jenna volunteered with Grace Medical Home, a nonprofit clinic, and founded UCF Young Scientists, an afterschool program to encourage STEM interest in children within the Orlando neighborhood of Parramore.



Jenna Dovydaitis  
Sanford, Florida

### **Future Plans:**

Jenna will start at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA on a full-ride scholarship in August 2020. Down the road, she intends to blend her medical and political studies into a career rooted in global health and science-based security.

## TAYLOR DUFFY



Taylor Duffy  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### Future Plans:

I plan to attend a medical school that will provide me with the tools and education to not only become a physician, but a leader in the field of medicine. This career will provide me with the platform to serve as an advocate for underserved populations and create lasting change within these communities.

Taylor Duffy is earning a bachelor's degree in Health Sciences through the College of Health Professions and Sciences. During his time at UCF, Duffy utilized education to empower his peers as Co-Founder of PREP Scholars — a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing career-focused guidance to at-risk youth — a teaching assistant for five classes and a peer tutor within the Student Academic Resource Center. In addition to serving on the Executive Board of the Pre-Med American Medical Student Association, Duffy has mentored surgical interns — inside and outside the operating room — as Assistant Director of the nationally recognized UCF Surgical Internship Program. As a research assistant within the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Health Sciences, Duffy has shared his findings at esteemed conferences across the country, in addition to being a published author in the Orlando Medical News. As President and Founder of Knights Exemplar — a service-based organization providing support to students with intellectual disabilities — Duffy has advanced UCF's pursuit of campus-wide inclusivity, always believing in the transformative role scholarship plays in the lives of all individuals.

### Taylor's UCF Experience:

UCF taught me how to turn my passions into change by providing me with the opportunities, resources, and human connections to make this not only possible, but unprecedented. This university fostered the merging of my medical ambitions with my commitment to transforming the landscapes of inclusion by helping me to establish organizations, create initiatives, and build open communities for all UCF Knights. The UCF Creed will remain the foundation of every achievement of mine moving forward.

## KYLER GRAY

Kyler L. Gray, College of Community Innovation and Education, is a public administration major and education minor. In his time at UCF, Gray dedicated his collegiate career to over 68,000 stakeholders of the institution, having served most recently as Student Body President and as a member of the UCF Board of Trustees. Among his accomplishments, he has served in executive leadership roles of several registered student organizations, a member of many advisory boards, a legislative intern for Senator Marco Rubio, Director of the Florida Student Association, and is the Founding Director of the UCF Greek Leadership Institute. Gray has a demonstrated history of fierce advocacy and lobbying efforts in support of K-12 schools and public higher education, which has taken him across the state and country. His efforts have brought local and national attention to basic needs funding spearheaded towards finding solutions for student homelessness and food insecurity.

### **Kyler's UCF Experience:**

Coming from a small, underserved rural community in North Florida, I could not have imagined the endless opportunities that I would have at UCF. With every growing year, I got more and more entranced into the amazing works of this institution and found my love for learning and service. The relationships I forged with my fellow peers, and the education and mentorship I received from my professors and administrators, will have a lasting impact on my life. If there is one lesson UCF has taught me, it is to reach for the stars, and that no endeavor is too big for the undertaking. The greatest part of our institution is that our story is still being written, and I am happy to have been a contributing author. For our beloved UCF, the best is truly yet to come.



Kyler Gray  
Live Oak, Florida

### **Future Plans:**

After graduation, I plan to attend law school in Florida, specializing in constitutional/government and criminal law, in hopes of reforming the criminal justice system. With my passion for leadership and public service, I plan on becoming a professor and eventual university president, with eventual goals of entering local and state politics to advocate for the great people of the Sunshine State.

## SAMUEL MIKHAIL



Samuel Adel Mikhail  
Melbourne, Florida

### Future Plans:

This fall, I will be attending the University of Central Florida College of Medicine. There, I will endeavor to improve healthcare access to underserved populations in the Orlando community, conduct medical research, and continue to promote education and mentorship to our youth.

Samuel Mikhail, College of Medicine, is pursuing a degree in biomedical sciences. A proud member of The Burnett Honors College, Samuel has served as an Honors Orientation Ambassador and as the President of Honors Congress. He was awarded the Honors in the Major Scholarship for his thesis which explored the use of microbial biomarkers in the early detection of head-and-neck cancers. Samuel is active as a teaching assistant for the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, and was accepted into the prestigious UCF Surgical Internship, where he currently serves as a mentor to incoming interns. Samuel also serves as a community ambassador for Embrace Families, working to address the low rates of college matriculation among foster youth. He expanded upon this mission by traveling to Jamaica to likewise teach children in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

### Samuel's UCF Experience:

I came to UCF as a follower, treading the path my older sister had already paved, my parents cheering me on as they proudly sent another child to college in America. I never expected to deviate from her time-tested formula for success. Yet from day one, I was surrounded by UCF mentors that provided continual support and resources to fuel my as-yet unknown aspirations. I discovered a desire to represent my university and advocate for my community, and UCF tirelessly provided me with the boundless resources and endless inspiration needed to develop and follow my new passions. Most importantly, the UCF community taught me to treasure the relationships I have made, and to pay it forward in honor of the giants on whose shoulders I was privileged to stand. I came as a follower. UCF made me a leader. "Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me." (Psalm 139:10)

## VICTORIA MILLINGTON

Victoria Millington, College of Medicine, is majoring in biomedical sciences with a minor in health sciences. During her undergraduate career at UCF, she has been part of the LEAD Scholars Academy, The Burnett Honors College, the Knights of Distinction program, and the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences Clinical Internship Program. She is also part of the Honors Undergraduate Thesis program where her research focuses on the role of dSLC128A in polyamine transport which could one day be used to produce new cancer medications. Her leadership roles include being on the Honors Congress executive board for two years, serving on the Relay for Life executive board, along with the Pegasus Palooza executive board. She has served as Peer Mentor for the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, Honors Congress, and Pre-Med AMSA, along with serving as a Housing Leadership Institute Team Lead where she mentored 80 incoming students. Victoria is also a teaching assistant for the Human Physiology Laboratory and the Quantitative Biological Methods Laboratory and serves as a volunteer at Shepherd's Hope and Camp Boggy Creek.

### Victoria's UCF Experience:

During my time at UCF, I have become part of the ever-growing Knight Nation family that supported me through tough times, exposed me to endless diversity, helped me pave my path to success, and provided me with experiences that will last a lifetime. I am so thankful for the opportunities I have received at UCF and how these experiences and special relationships have shaped me into the person I am today. UCF taught me that anything is truly possible if you put your mind to it and to never stop reaching for the stars. I am so glad I had the privilege to attend UCF and I will never forget the memories I made here.



Victoria Millington  
Tampa, Florida

### Future Plans:

Following graduation, I plan to either attend Medical School and specialize in Oncology or pursue a Ph.D. in Cancer Biology. My goal is to conduct research in the field of cancer biology which could then be used to help those affected by cancer and help to create a world with more birthdays.

## MADELINE MILLS



Madeline Mills  
Waconia, Minnesota

Madeline Mills is a Senior majoring in Political Science pre-law with a minor in Global Peace and Security Studies. She has immersed herself in the LEAD Scholars Academy, the Panhellenic community, and Student Government. Madeline has traveled to the Clinton Global Initiatives University Conference twice to represent her project, receive funding, and promote a solution to food insecurity on college campuses. She has traveled to the White House to have discussions on the current state of our nation. Madeline has been recognized nationally as the top servant leader at the University of Central Florida as the Newman Civic Fellow. As the Student Body Vice President, she has chaired and overseen various committees and has collaborated and organized campus-wide initiatives.

### Future Plans:

Madeline is planning to attend law school in Fall 2020 after interning over the summer in the Orlando area.

### Madeline's UCF Experience:

Madeline's efforts are centered on creating an inclusive campus culture by tackling issues from: food security, empowering minorities, and illiteracy rates. In November 2016, she founded Green Greeks, an organization whose aim is to end food insecurity, by planting nine gardens behind Greek houses. Through a variety of events and meetings, she has collaborated with multiple cultural groups to amplify their voices and hosted a campus-wide Women Empowerment Conference. As the Vice President of Philanthropy for Pi Beta Phi, she coordinated an outdoor competition with sororities and fraternities that raised thousands of dollars for local elementary schools. In March 2020, she traveled to Africa to do missions work with libraries in Rwanda bringing books to various sites.

## TAYLOR PRYOR

Taylor Pryor, College of Arts and Humanities, is majoring in English literature. She is a United States Air Force veteran, a member of The Burnett Honors College, the College of Arts and Humanities Founders' Day Award recipient, the Marlin Family Burnett Honors College First Generation Scholarship recipient, and the College of Arts and Humanities Honors Undergraduate Thesis Scholarship recipient. She is extremely interested in the study of dystopic societies, and her UCF research engages with corrosive power structures and their affects, gendered work and weariness in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*. Pryor is deeply committed to promoting the significance of the humanities. She is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society, the Student Veterans Association, and the Tau Sigma National Honor Society. She is currently President of the Sigma Tau Delta English Honors Society, and has collaborated with the Alafaya Library Branch, the University Behavioral Center, and the Curriculum Materials Center to encourage communal literacy and education.

### Taylor's UCF Experience:

I am fiercely grateful to have had the opportunity to pursue my degree at UCF. Attending this university allowed me to study and engage with diverse literary forms and kindled my passion for research. Participating in UCF's Burnett Honors College HIM Program has molded me into the scholar that I am today, and prepared me for the rigor of graduate level coursework. Completing my undergraduate thesis was an extremely rewarding experience, and helped me realize what I was put on this earth to do. UCF prepared me to be a leader in my field and a mentor to the next generation of scholars. My professors and faculty mentors were with me every step of the way, and to them I am eternally indebted.



Taylor Pryor  
Altamonte Springs, Florida

### Future Plans:

Upon graduation, I plan to pursue a doctorate in English literature and language at Cornell University. My long-term goal is to be a professor of English literature, and I aim to conduct research that transcends the realm of academia and tackles societal issues such as marginalization, oppression, and injustice.

## ALLISON SABOL



Allison Sabol  
Dublin, Ohio

### Future Plans:

Alli began as a Local Search Strategist for RevLocal, a digital marketing agency in Columbus, Ohio in January 2020. She gets to help small and medium-sized businesses achieve their dreams by helping build their online presence and gain recognition from consumers. She plans to build her career in marketing and one day have her own international marketing agency.

Allison Sabol graduated from the College of Business with a degree in marketing in December of 2019. She was a four-year member of the women's volleyball team and helped her team earn back-to-back conference championships leading UCF to historic finishes. She was a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee and served as the marketing committee head, helping bridge athletes together on a national platform. Alli maintained a Dean's List or President's honor roll status throughout her time as both a student and athlete and graduated Magna Cum Laude. Alli dedicated her time to numerous volunteer organizations and spent a week in rural Costa Rica with Volunteer UCF to help rebuild schools and community gardens. She served as a coach and mentor to young athletes every summer and assisted in their development through training sessions and mentoring.

### Allison's UCF Experience:

UCF gave me the opportunity and the freedom to grow into the person I always dreamed of becoming. I was given every chance to learn from amazing mentors, faculty, and peers who inspired me to become a better member of the community. UCF allowed me to pursue my passions of volleyball and compete at the highest level for an outstanding athletics program as well as follow my heart in volunteering abroad. I was able to see the impact that UCF can have locally through events like Relay for Life and abroad through Volunteer UCF's Costa Rica trip. The mark that UCF leaves is truly immeasurable. It allowed me to meet people from all different backgrounds and build ever-lasting relationships worldwide. As a young adult, I could only wish to be surrounded by a community that would help build me personally and professionally. UCF has embraced the community and family atmosphere and will forever be a part of my lifelong journey through the connections I've made and lessons I've learned. I am beyond proud to be a knight and will forever cherish my time at UCF!

## SARAH SWIERSZ

Sarah Swiersz, College of Undergraduate Studies, is majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies with Concentrations in Computational and Physical Sciences, Minors in Geoscience and Environmental Studies, and a Certificate in Service-Learning. Sarah has served as the Vice President of the Russian-American Student Association and the Publications Chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Student and Honor Societies, and she was a 2019 Founders' Day Awardee. As a student in The Burnett Honors College, she built on her Honors service-learning with Orange County Public Schools by serving as a Spanish-English reading tutor for first-grade students. Sarah has conducted research in botany, community-based plant science, Russian studies, coastal geoscience, paleoclimatology, astrochemistry, space policy, and political ecology that has been supported by several university and external fellowships and grants. She has been deeply committed to advancing social justice and sustainability initiatives on campus and in Central Florida through her tenure on the Student Sustainability Advisory Committee and work as the Campus Innovation Coordinator of the Student Government Executive Cabinet. Sarah was a member of UCF's NCAA Division I Women's Rowing Team and has served as the TriKnights Treasurer for two seasons.

### **Sarah's UCF Experience:**

My time at UCF has led me to grow into a strong, resilient, and interdisciplinary scholar, developing my passion for community-based sustainability and environmental justice. Whether I'm pondering an insightful conversation with research collaborators, laughing with friends, or simply biking around campus, I see the diversity of the UCF community illuminated by the shared experiences of its members. I am filled with wonder and gratitude when I think of how each of my moments in the UCF community has brought innumerable opportunities that have empowered me to think deeply, create boldly, live empathetically, and learn by seeking to serve and understand others as we Reach for the Stars.



Sarah Swiersz  
Fort Myers, Florida

### **Future Plans:**

I have been dedicated to advancing social and environmental justice in my home communities of Fort Myers and Fort Myers Beach, FL, since childhood, and I will continue this work. I plan to pursue graduate studies at the intersection of philosophy of science, political economy, and science and technology policy to research and construct policies that empower communities to guide the creation of a more equitable, just, and sustainable future for all of Earth.

## GEORGE WALTERS-MARRAH



George Walters-Marrah  
Miami, Florida

### Future Plans:

I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics. My long-term goal is to become a principal investigator and create a research environment that combines traditional biological techniques along with biophysical and computational methods to study infectious microorganisms. As a doctoral student and later as a faculty member, I will continue to engage in and develop programs that encourage and assist students from underrepresented communities in pursuing higher education.

George Walters-Marrah, Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, is majoring in biomedical sciences on the molecular microbiology track. He is a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and an alumnus of the Learning Environment and Academic Research Network (LEARN) program. Walters-Marrah is conducting research on mycobacterial virulence mechanisms with Dr. Kyle Rohde, and the merits of this project were recognized by his receipt of the Barry Goldwater Scholarship. He has held leadership positions in the American Society for Microbiology UCF Student Chapter, the UCF Student Undergraduate Research Council, and the Summer Research Academy. As an undergraduate, he has had the opportunity to participate in three research internships at Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Chicago. His dedication to recruitment and retention of underrepresented students in higher education can be seen by his participation as a Peer Mentor for LEARN and a Peer Advisor for Academic Advancement Programs Graduate School Preparation.

### George's UCF Experience:

As a first-generation college student, I started my first year at UCF determined to take advantage of all opportunities and resources at my disposal by networking with faculty and staff. I was delighted at the fact that I was greeted with open arms and surrounded by a community of peers and mentors that are always willing to lend a helping hand or open ears. This allowed me to reach my full potential since I was aware of the opportunities available at UCF because a simple conversation sparked all my most impactful opportunities. I significantly benefited from the mentorship that has helped me navigate higher education and I am grateful to everyone who supported me throughout my journey at UCF.



## 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 2020 Order of Pegasus names and photos will be on display on the lounge wall along with previous Order of Pegasus inductees.



## 2020 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  
Mr. Michael Aldarondo-Jeffries, Academic Advancement Programs  
Dr. Anna Maria Jones, English Department  
Dr. Vivian Ortiz, SDES Assessment and Planning  
Mr. Rex Roberts, The Burnett Honors College  
Mrs. Katie Seymour



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.