

THE STEP SCHOLARS PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

LOOKING BACK AT LAST YEAR

This past 2018-2019 academic year was a complete success for the STEP Scholars TRiO (SSS) Program. This program, a support service program for students who are first-generation, low-income, or have a documented disability, has made progress since its establishment in 2016. With the eleven events that STEP organized, the program was able to have 550 contacts just through event programming alone. These contacts occurred through events such as our professional roundtables, the Imposter Syndrome Roundtable, the UC Davis Pre-Health Conference, and the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education.

Through one-on-one counseling, fellows were able to have 142 student contacts with their scholars. The contact the program has had with scholars has been particularly effective as scholars have demonstrated academic excellence. Exactly 88% of the program's scholars have been classified with good academic standing. The accomplishments STEP has surpassed are noteworthy. In the upcoming academic year, the STEP team wishes to surpass these numbers by increasing student-to-fellow contact in the hopes of increasing academic excellence amongst STEP Scholars. The team hopes to bring in fresh ideas to meet these goals as our new Retention Coordinator, Alexandra Chavez, and two new fellows, Alex Del Toro and Jasmine Posada, join the team.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR COORDINATOR

Meet our new retention coordinator Alexandra Chavez: Raised in Firebaugh, CA, Alex was inspired by her rural upbringing and college involvement to pursue a career in higher education. Prior to coming to UC Merced, Alex was a student and staff member in a number of TRiO and state funded educational programs. She hopes to implement practical and engaging programming that will support scholars meet their academic and professional goals.

Alex is a double alumna from Fresno State with a Master's in Counseling. She enjoys spending time with friends, going outdoors, and sits on the Alumni board of her sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta.





ALEXANDER DEL TORO

Alexander Del Toro is a third-year transfer student from Oakland, California, and is majoring in Cognitive Science. Alex is active in other programs such as being a scholar in the Transfer, Returning, and Veterans (TRV) program, and is currently an undergraduate researcher in the UC Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees (UC LEADS) program. As a first-generation student, Alex hopes to train, teach, and educate the next generation of scholars in his home community of Oakland. One of Alex's goals is to continue his education with earning a PhD in either neuroscience or neurobiology.



JASMINE POSADA

Jasmine Posada is a passionate, third-year, undergraduate student majoring in Human Biology along with a minor in Anthropology. She is from North Hollywood, Los Angeles and is currently part of a Developmental Immunology Lab and hopes to one day become an Immunologist or Pediatric. Her determination and commitment to succeed in academia comes from her parents. As a first-generation college student, she aspires to and acts as a role model for future leaders through mentorship, leadership, and research. Being part of an organization called Global Medical Training Jasmine was able to travel to Nicaragua and serve medically deprived communities. Along with her passion for helping others, she is also a mathematics tutor at the STEM Center. Feel free to email her with any questions or concerns, she is always glad to help!



STEPPING INTO A NEW YEAR

As the new academic year kicks off to a new start, STEP has implemented new changes to the program. First and foremost, STEP has decided to implement policies for their loan program. As of August 2019, STEP will now require its Scholars to sign off on a policy when checking out laptops, headphones, and test prep books. Furthermore, each of these check out items will also require time limits. Laptops will be available to check out for a period of four hours. Scholars will need to stay within the Bright Success Center during the time of usage. Clickers will be available for check out only for a given semester. They must be used solely for UC Merced courses that the Scholar is enrolled in. Kaplan books will also have a loan period of one week. However, exceptions can be made to check them out for longer periods of time. With this new policy in place, STEP wishes for more scholars to have the opportunity to loan out items.

Furthermore, in hopes of making the STEP program interactive, fellows have decided to take the initiative to make competitions amongst their cohorts. The Fellows not only want to gain stronger relationships with their fellows, but also hope that Scholars create relationships amongst themselves. Fellows will announce their team names during Fall Welcome. Throughout the academic year, Scholars will hold competitions amongst their cohorts. At the end of the academic year, the cohort with the most points will be awarded a prize during the STEP recognition event.

The STEP team hopes that these new adjustments to the program bring forth a sense of community in UC Merced's TRiO (SSS) program. The STEP team looks forward to meeting new scholars and welcoming back old scholars.

STEP SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT(SSS)

As the new school year begins, the STEP team has decided to implement a STEP Scholar Spotlight. Each month, a scholar will be chosen based on their outstanding performance as a scholar and student. To kick off this new tradition, we have selected Leah Lopez-Bazan for August's STEP Scholar Spotlight.

My name is Leah Lopez-Bazan. I am a second year Biology student with an emphasis in Evolution and Ecology. My hometown is Sonoma, CA. On campus I am part of 3 clubs; Pre-Veterinary Club, LAMBDA, and Pause it!. Besides being a member, I would offer free tutoring to people in my dorm building (Half Dome) on Chemistry. Off-Campus, specifically during the holidays, I would go work at my job as a kennel assistant taking care of dogs. I've been there for three years and I love it! Over the summer I was in a silent protest for my town, so they would raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2020. I also did some telemarketing for the town next to mine, Petaluma. They also increased their minimum wage to \$15 dollar by 2020. STEP has been a great part of my college experience. They provided me a sense of community, when I needed it the most. I had a group of people supporting me, especially when I felt lost. I loved going to the conferences at UC Davis, the Imposter Syndrome Event, Study Jams and the Student Optimum Success Series. STEP has offered me so many wonderful experiences and has pushed me to do more things that I know I would not have done without their help.



TAKING A STEP FORWARD

FALL WELCOME

On September 4th, we will hold our first event of the semester. This social, will give scholars the opportunity to meet their fellows and our new retention coordinator. We will also set up a presentation for students interested in becoming Scholars.

YASS SERIES

This semester, our Your Academic Success Series (YASS) will revolve around professional development. This four-week series will consist of exploring interests, resume building, interview tips, and will end off with amock interview. Free food will be provided every week. *Participating in this series will satisfy ALL participation requiremnts.

FIELD TRIP TO UCSF

This October, the STEP Program will offer a field trip to UCSF for our scholars. During this trip, we will receive a tour of the campus. After, there will be a student panel of current students attending UCSF.

MIDTERM STUDY JAMS

Before midterm season kicks in, expect to come to our week long study jams where we will offer a free space to study, free scantrons and testing materials, and free snacks.



SPRING 2019 DEAN'S LIST

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING SCHOLARS FOR RECEIVING A 3.5 GPA OR HIGHER THIS PAST ACADEMIC SEMESTER

Xochilt Alcala Quinonez
Monique Anguiano-Sandoval
Ed Blessie Joyce Fontanilla
Brandon Hudson
Harmeet Kalsi
Asmaa Mohamed
Anakaren Monroy

Maria Rivas Reyes
Jazmin Sandoval Bustamante
Michael Vang
Denise Venegas
Tim Wu
Thelma Yeboah
Brenda Yu

SPRING 2019 RECOGNIZED SCHOLARS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING SCHOLARS FOR COMPLETING AT LEAST ONE SEMESTER OF PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Sydney Adams
Kaila Anderson
Priscila Bacio
Alexouis Bruce
Stephanie Camacho-Duarte
Guadalupe Camacho-Garcia
Ashley Cortez
Keila De La O

Alexander Del Toro
Tania Diaz
Ed Blessie Joyce Fontanilla
Keandra Franklinegino Fronda
Xiclaly Garcia
Brenda Giang
Jessica Hernandez
Ali Hussien
Amarpreet Kaur
Smita Kumar

Leah Lopez-Bazan
Anakaren Monroy
Ariana Morales
Esmee Morales
Josephine Mulherin
Anthony Munoz
Eddison Portillo Vasquez
Jasmine Posada
Monica Ramos
Emily Rosales

Cameron Smith
Alfredo
SolisYulissa Torres
Ashley Truong
Michael Vang
Isabell Wu
Dong Sen Yan
Tania Diaz
Jose Lopez

SPRING 2019 RECOGNIZED FELLOWS

Annie Nguyen & Hy Nguyen

Thank you both for your contribution towards STEP.
Best of luck in your future endeavors.



INTERNSHIPS FOR UCM STUDENTS

MCOE Caring Kids Internship- Location: Merced

The Merced County of Education Caring Kids Playground is an informal playground in which interns will prepare and deliver science and math based lessons plan. This is a paid and highly valuable opportunity for students interested in teaching.

To Apply: Email resume and cover letter to jteransalazar@ucmerced.edu
Deadline: Friday, September 13, 2019

STEAM Center Internship-Location: Merced

The CalTeach program is looking for interns for Fall 2019 & Spring 2020. The center is aimed towards Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math in the 4th-6th grade levels. It is located at Ada Givens Elementary and allows students to experience hands on activities and challenging lesson plans. This is a great opportunity for anyone interested in teaching and upon completion, interns will receive a \$500 stipend.

To Apply: Email resume and cover letter to jteransalazar@ucmerced.edu
Deadline: Friday, September 13, 2019

The Law Clinic

Interns will help students find free legal assistance, understand their rights, and help them navigate the legal system.

To Apply: <https://asucm.ucmerced.edu/services/law-clinic>

Immigration Support Intern- Location: Turlock/Modesto

Under the supervision and direction of the Immigration Caseworker, the Immigrant Support Intern will help immigrants attain residency and citizenship in the United States and promote civics outreach throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The intern will assist clients with paperwork, assist with completion of reports and documents, contact clients, participate in workshops, and oversee projects. Must be current undergrad or grad with a focus in Sociology, Social Work, Political Science Public Policy or related field.

To Apply: <https://rescue.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/1/requisition/2782/application?source=LinkedInA#1>

OFF CAMPUS JOB OPPORTUNITIES

AVID Tutor- Location: Planada

Establish and maintain rapport with students. Tutor students in small study groups or individually, assisting them in small study subject areas based on the class and text notes they have collected in their AVID binders. Currently, there are two part-time positions (15 hours/week) available. To apply, you need a letter of interest, three letters of recommendation, a HS diploma, and 20 college credits.

For more information contact: jgonzalez@planada.org
Deadline: Until position is filled.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

STEP Up for Down Syndrome Volunteers - Location: Fresno

The Down Syndrome Association of Central California is always looking for dedicated, hardworking volunteers to help achieve our mission to enhance the quality of life for all people whose lives are touched by Down syndrome! Step Up is the largest Down syndrome awareness event in the Central Valley and DSACC's largest fundraiser of the year! Step Up is a Timed 5K run/walk, 1 Mile Awareness Walk and Festival being held on Saturday, October 19, 2019 at the Clovis Rodeo Grounds. You can sign up for different volunteer opportunities online!

Register Here: <https://www.dsacc.org/events/volunteers/>