



# Graduate Research Certification, 2024-2025

# Maria Aladjova

**Counselor Education and Supervision, PhD**

**Department of Counselor Education, School Psychology, and Human Services**

I am a PhD student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program. My research areas include wellness and self-care, burnout, career choice, mental health and holistic well-being. I am interested in pursuing the Research Certificate because I would like to acquire and improve upon the knowledge, training, and skills to successfully complete various research projects. I am looking forward to meeting and collaborating with my fellow researchers.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Amin Asadi

**MBA-Lee Business School**

I transitioned from Mechanical Engineering to Finance. In my previous role as a researcher and R&D engineer, I specialized in studying the thermophysical properties of nanofluids for heat transfer applications. I have a solid background in research and have published in high-impact ISI journals. However, I have not been involved in research over the past few years, during which AI has significantly changed research and publication. I joined this program to refresh my research knowledge and develop new skills.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Mana Azizsoltani

**Ph.D. Hospitality Administration**

With a background in mathematics and statistics, I seek to apply artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to the hospitality industry.

Specifically, I focus on applications to revenue management such as demand forecasting, inventory management, and customer segmentation.

I also have a deep interest in gambling research, where I apply AI and ML to casino marketing, loyalty programs, floor optimization, fraud detection, and responsible gambling.

I am looking forward to refining my research skills in this program so that I can better apply them to my academic and consulting work.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Linnea Bacon

**Ph.D. Student**

**Clinical Psychology**

My name is Linnea Bacon, and I am currently a second year Ph.D. student studying clinical psychology at UNLV. Prior to my time at UNLV, I received my master's degree in sport psychology through the Fulbright Scholar program, studying sociocultural determinants of psychological help-seeking in the United Kingdom. My research at UNLV is largely focused on mental health and wellbeing in athletes through The Optimum Performance Program in Sports lab as well as concussion recovery outcomes in the Brain Injury Translational Research lab. I'm looking forward to participating in the Graduate College Research Certification program to collaborate with other graduate student researchers and learn more about the research process.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Rachel Dugan

**Masters Student  
Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

I completed my bachelors in forensic psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and am currently in my second year of the clinical mental health counseling program. My research interests involve the impacts of adverse childhood events and high conflict parental divorce on an individual's mental health. Through my research, I hope to expand literature to create a more vast understanding of how these scenarios impact mental health as well as what interventions are best equipped to help address these concerns.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Amruta Godbole

**PhD (Public Health)**

As a third-year PhD student in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, my research is dedicated to exploring the adverse health effects of environmental chemicals that people encounter in their daily lives. By analyzing the relationship between these exposures and various health outcomes, I aim to contribute to the understanding of how these chemicals influence public health. My decision to pursue this program is driven by a desire to develop a skills in advanced research methodologies and analytical techniques. I am particularly motivated to equip myself with the skills necessary to address complex public health challenges. Through this program, I seek to bridge the gap between environmental exposure and human health and contribute to informed policy-making for better health outcomes in populations worldwide.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Yuze Ji

**PhD in hospitality administration**

Research offers me the opportunity to explore complex questions, challenge existing paradigms, and develop innovative solutions to real-world problems. The process of inquiry and discovery excites me, and I am motivated by the potential to make a meaningful impact through my findings.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**



# Kaylie Kurland

## Masters in Educational Psychology, Educational Psychology, Leadership and Higher Education

Kaylie holds a B.S. in cognitive science from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is currently enrolled in the Masters of Educational Psychology program. She has worked as a graduate assistant for teaching and research, working on research concerning teacher retention in Clark County. She has several years of experience working in institutional research and assessment. She plans to complete her Masters thesis in Spring 2025 and is working toward developing a research study to investigate flow in educational games.

Pronouns: She/Her



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Calviniqué Lee

**M.S. Biomedical Engineering**

**Department of Mechanical Engineering**

My research journey spans multiple areas, including biochemistry, microbiology, and mechanobiology. In the biochemistry lab, I focused on how lipids influence diseases like diabetes and obesity, using mass spectrometry to analyze their profiles in different models. In the microbiology lab, I explored how flaviviruses interact with lipid droplets, shedding light on how viral genetics impact infection. Now, I work on identifying cellular senescence through holotomography and deep learning in mechanobiology.

I'm excited to join the research certification program to deepen my skills and knowledge in these areas. It will give me the advanced tools and training to further my research and work toward becoming a professor and leading a research team. This opportunity will help me make meaningful contributions to the aging research field while supporting my commitment to mentorship and education.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Samantha Maciech

**PhD Student**  
**Geosciences**

I have always loved paleontology, and I am very excited to begin a career learning more about Earth's past ecosystems. My research focuses on the effects of invasive species in shallow marine paleocommunities from 450 million years ago, specifically during the Richmondian Invasion.

I am at the beginning of my graduate career, and I know now is the time to start learning all the best practices to achieve my goal of one day becoming a professor. I believe that being skilled in research is fundamental to all scientists. I hope to gain additional skills and knowledge through this research certification because that will help me build the foundation of a lifelong career.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Fiorella Ramirez-Guasp

**MS Student, Department of Geoscience**

**Advisor: Carrie Tyler**

Hi there! My name is Fiorella and I am a first-year graduate student in the Department of Geoscience focusing on paleontological research. My specific research and interest lies in the effects of anoxic (no-oxygen) environments on the functional diversity of Mesozoic marine ecosystems across the Norian-Rhaetian boundary (about 208 million years ago), which preceded the end-Triassic mass extinction. This research will then be applicable to current-day concerns of hypoxic (low-oxygen) environments in shallow marine ecosystems, helping in the mitigation of these events. I hope to learn to be a better researcher through the program, meet other graduate students passionate about their fields, and learn about the different types of research happening across UNLV!



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Andrea Rangelova

**Masters in Public Administration & Graduate Certificate in Business Administration Student**  
**Advisor: Jayce Farmer, PhD**

Multilingual graduate student. Andrea has a BA in Art History from UNLV, and is passionate about Art, Sustainability and Nonprofits. Her volunteer work in the Nonprofit sector brought her to the UNLV College of Fine Arts Alumni Board. She is currently Graduate Teaching Assistant and teaches undergraduate level classes with the School of Public Policy and Leadership.

Andrea has various research interests and has conducted a research for the Office of Undergraduate Research. Her Senior year of her undergraduate studies, she won Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship and was able to present her research at OUR Research Symposium.

"I believe that this program is the next step in my research career. I am excited to grow as individual and always learn."



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Dana Surwill

## Master in Public Health

Environmental and Occupational Health

I am currently pursuing a degree in Environmental and Occupational Health, so that I will be able to pursue a career in Public Health after graduation. I have conducted research on resilience in the LGBTQ+ population and am currently working on brain health research for professional athletes.

My goal of participating in the Graduate Research Certification is to feel more confident as a researcher by developing my research skills and learning from my peers.



THE GRAD ACADEMY

# Daniel Tena

**M.A. Economics Student,  
Department of Economics**

My name is Daniel Tena, and I am a second-year master's student studying Economics. My research interests include Macroeconomics and International Economics, particularly how economies grow and interact.

I am eager to join the Graduate Research Certification program to further develop my research and analysis skills. I also hope to grow confident in my knowledge and demonstrate what I have learned. I would like the culmination of my time in the program to be something I can be proud of.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# PRINCE AMFO WIAFE

**MA ECONOMICS, LEE BUSINESS  
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT OF  
ECONOMICS**

Throughout my experiences and academic pursuit, I keep asking myself questions like what can be done in my country, Ghana, to build a more resilient economy post-COVID-19 in order to achieve Africa's Agenda 2030, which deals with inclusive growth and development. This mindset motivates me to study economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I believe research and data modeling will play a crucial role in my pursuit of addressing the economic challenges in Ghana, so with a concentration on quantitative and econometric methods, I can predict practicable and relevant solutions to promote a resilient economy. My decision to participate in this Research Certification program is based on how I want to use my degree to give back to my community in terms of research that will influence policy, not only on the knowledge I will get.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**



# Jaime Young

**PhD Student**

**School of Nursing**

I am a first year PhD student in the School of Nursing. I am currently an Oncology Nurse Practitioner. My research interest is sexual health for cancer patients during treatment and into survivorship. I hope to continue my research on a local level after graduation by developing sexual health classes for my patients after researching the unique needs of this population.

I am interested in the Research Certification because I believe it will help me become more confident in research prior to my dissertation. I am also interested in becoming a Nurse Researcher, and this certification program will be a good knowledge base for my career.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**

# Zhixuan (Selena) Zeng

**Master of School Counseling Program**

**Department of Counselor Education, School  
Psychology, & human Services**

Zhixuan, a bilingual (Mandarin and English) second-year master's student in school counseling, transitioned from hospitality to pursuing her passion for education. Committed to sharing her journey and insights into career change, she aims to contribute to the education field with her international background.

Zhixuan's research lies in the burnout of school counselors and international school counseling. As a future school counselor, she eagerly anticipates applying her knowledge and skills in a practical setting to foster supportive educational environments.

Upon joining this program, Zhixuan seeks to expand her expertise in research methodologies and practices and commits to develop a robust foundation in counseling theories and evidence-based practices. Ultimately these knowledge will support Zhixuan's long-term goal of pursuing a PhD in Counselor Education.



**THE GRAD ACADEMY**