

The Graduate Rebel Ambassadors Program

Congratulations to our incoming cohort
2015-2016

ALICIA CRESPIN



Alicia Crespin is a second-year M.S. student in the School of Life Sciences studying community ecology. Her thesis research is based on the mutually beneficial relationship between local ants and butterfly larvae. The goal of her project is to determine the importance of chemical communication in maintaining this association. She hopes that understanding this fascinating relationship will shed light on the importance of inter-species cooperation for butterflies in the Mojave Desert and provide essential information needed to effectively manage and protect local butterfly habitat for species of conservation concern. In addition to her studies, Alicia seeks out opportunities to bring her passion for science and the STEM fields to the community, especially through volunteer work with local schools. Away from her studies, Alicia is an avid aquarium hobbyist and bookworm.

PATRICK DALEIDEN



Patrick Daleiden is a second year Ph.D. student in the Department of Computer Science supervised by Dr. Andreas Stefik. He currently serves as a doctoral graduate research assistant in the Software Engineering and Media Lab where he works on compilers and programming languages. He also works as a teaching assistant for Software Engineering and Programming classes. His dissertation research is in the area of parallelism and concurrency in programming and software development, particularly in the area of high performance and scientific computing. He is currently working on general purpose computing with graphics processors and programming language usability.

KATE EUGENIS



Kate Eugenis is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science. She is currently writing her dissertation on the influence of primary elections on judicial selection at the state level with a particular focus on the ways the news media can influence challenger emergence and election outcomes. This, in conjunction with a broader interest in the effects of the news media on political events, keeps Kate busy in the world of academia. Kate also enjoys teaching undergraduate classes in International Relations and U.S. Government as well as working with high school students through UNLV's Upward Bound Program. In her spare time, Kate enjoys hiking, photography, and wants to learn computer programming in the near future.

KIMBERLY FLORENCE



Kimberly M. Florence is a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education. She is currently studying to receive her PhD in Higher Education with an emphasis on teaching, college preparation/success, and first/ second-year college students. Much of Kimberly's research has examined the motivation and self-regulatory learning of college students and how these components can be enhanced through classroom instruction and academic support. Presently, she works as a First-Year Seminar Instructor in the College of Education.

MILIA HEEN



Miliaikeyala S.J. Heen is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Criminal Justice under faculty advisor and mentor Dr. Joel D. Lieberman. Ms. Heen received both her B.A. and M.A. from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in Criminal Justice. She is actively involved with research examining public attitudes toward the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, with a specific focus on perceptions of law enforcement usage and application, and the personality and social factors that influence those attitudes. In addition, she has conducted research under the Forensic and Crime Scene Investigation Consortium (FCSIC) that examines the application of cognitive persuasion models and expert testimony manipulations within the context of jury decision-making. As part of her Graduate Assistantship, Ms. Heen teaches two sections of undergraduate Research Methods in the Criminal Justice Department.

CHRISTOPHER HICKS



Chris Hicks is a MSEE candidate in the College of Engineering, Computer and Electrical Engineering Department at UNLV. His current direction is specialization in Fiber Optics and Optical Sensors. In his research he is examining the use of novel fiber structures for control networks and physical security. He was raised in northern Nevada before accepting undergraduate study at UNLV where he graduated in 2005. After graduation he spent 10 years working in the Nation's nuclear industry on enrichment facilities, new nuclear design and construction, and online outage support for extended power uprates. While at UNLV he has mentored three undergraduate senior design teams, one of which was awarded the 2015 Young Minds Awards in electromechanical systems. He performs active research in the Water Energy Nexus as a graduate team lead, and research assistant to Dr. Yahia Baghzouz at the Center for Energy Research studying photovoltaic micro-grids and SMART inverter technology.

KELLIE HOILAND



I am currently working on a Master's degree in Medical Physics through the department of Health Physics and Diagnostic Sciences. Medical physics is a broad field of study which includes facets of cancer radiation therapy, medical and diagnostic imaging, nuclear medicine, and research opportunities within medicine. Through my studies I have had the opportunity to further my education in particle and radiation spectroscopy, health physics, and medical physics. I am researching High dose-rate brachytherapy for prostate cancer for my master's thesis. High dose-rate brachytherapy involves the use of radioactive implants that are surgically placed within or near a malignant cancer sight. These implants will then safely administer a radiation dose to the cancerous cells while minimizing or eliminating the dose to the normal tissue. My future career goals include clinical radiation therapy for cancer patients and research using of physics in medicine.

ERIKA MASAKI



Erika K. Masaki is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science, where her focuses are international relations and political theory. One of her main research interests is the study of regional environmental cooperation, with a special focus on the conditions that lead to cooperation in Southeast Asia. She is also interested in global environmental institutions, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and on the implications of treaty design on compliance and effectiveness. Erika is also interested in political theory, both ancient and modern, and on researching theorists' stances on the relationship between humans and the environment. Additionally, she enjoys studying the questions surrounding natural law. Erika is also committed to the importance of improving her teaching skills and is a member of the first cohort of the UNLV Graduate College Teaching Certificate Program.

DANIEL MAST



Daniel Mast is a doctoral candidate in the Radiochemistry program. Daniel works collaboratively with the High Pressure Science and Engineering Center at UNLV as well as with research groups at Lawrence Livermore and Idaho National Laboratory. Daniel's work is focused on structural analysis of technetium containing systems under extreme conditions. Pressure and temperature can be used to manipulate the atomic structure and chemical reactivity. Systems of interest included technetium metal as well as several transition metal oxides related technetium(IV) oxide. Daniel also provides service crystallography for UNLV researchers. He has participated in the Nuclear Fuel Cycle summer as a Teaching Assistant and hope to pursue more teaching opportunities.

TANVIBEN PATEL



Tanviben Patel, is a Ph.D. student in School of Community Health Sciences. She was born in India and moved to the United States when she was 6 years old. Since moving to the U.S. she has lived a majority of her life here in Las Vegas. Tanvi received all her pre-college education through the Clark county school system and her college education at the UNLV. She is the supervisor of a joint pollen and mold monitoring program by Clark County School District and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her research focuses on the trends of air contaminants and how it can affect people in the community. She is also the founding and current president of the Public Health Student Association. Tanvi is involved in her Indian community and participates in cultural dances every year. Her career/academic goal is to work in academia and increase the limited knowledge in the field of aerobiology.

To learn more about the
program visit:

[www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/
gradrebel/ambassador-program](http://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/gradrebel/ambassador-program)