



Graduate Research Certification

Congratulations to our incoming
2022-2023 cohort

BAILEY WAY



**Ph.D. student
Clinical Psychology**

Advisor: Shane Kraus

I am a third-year graduate student in the Clinical Psychology PhD program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I moved to Vegas for graduate school during the pandemic from Canada. My research interests include behavioral addictions and sexual functioning. In particular, I am interested in understanding pornography use, especially by women. I have published two articles on sexual health related research and have several other manuscripts in progress along with my thesis. I want to be in the Graduate College Research Certification to continue to gain insight into the research and scholarly process. I also want to learn from other graduate students' experience with research and presenting.



BARBARA LEWIS



Ph.D. student
School of Public Health
Health Service Management and
Policy

Advisor: Chris Cochran, Ph.D.

I started my career as a journalist and then segued into marketing where I helped clients grow for over two decades. In 2012, I spent two weeks in the ICU with my sister before she died. As a result of her tragic death, I decided to devote my life to improving the patient experience by writing, researching and speaking, and by working with organizations that help enhance the patient experience. Both as a journalist and a marketer, I've done a lot of research. I am pursuing a doctoral degree to conduct innovative research that impacts the patient experience. Initially, I was planning to focus my dissertation on improving patient satisfaction scores; however, that would be difficult with the pandemic. Now I'm planning to research Patient and Family Advisory Councils which provide hospitals with the patient voice to help them design programs and make decisions.

BENJAMIN PIERCE BISHOP



**Master of Business
Administration
Master of Science Quantitative
Finance**

Advisor: Dr. Daniel Chi

My research will assess the accuracy of valuation techniques used by the venture capital industry. This is an important topic for venture capitalists as they choose their investments based on the future valuations of startup companies seeking capital. Identifying which startup companies will succeed and provide a future profitable exit for a venture capital fund is an essential choice.

As the Director of Deal Sourcing and Due Diligence with the Rebel Venture Fund, we continually prospect to invest in early-stage companies with growth potential. Identifying the characteristics and traits of the companies that will succeed is based on my factors, but too often relies on “gut feel” from personal experience. My research program will test the success rate of current techniques used by the venture capital industry to evaluate the future value of early-stage prospects. There is limited existing research on valuation techniques to build upon.

Colette R. Towles



**Ph.D. Student
Mechanical Engineering**

Advisor: Hui Zhao, Ph.D.



I am a Spring 2022 graduate from the illustrious Fort Valley State University with a B.S. in Mathematics. Currently, I am a first-year Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering student with an emphasis in Aerospace. My research goals are to find ways to make fuel-focused apparatuses more environmentally safe with the use of solar energy.

I want to use the Graduate Research Certification to increase my research experience, become a more efficient researcher, and learn new and enlightening information from my fellow peers.

DANIELA AMOROSO



**M.Ed. Student
School Counseling**

Advisor: Chris Wood

Bilingual (Brazilian Portuguese and English) education professional with 4+ years of Early Childhood Education and Child Care experience developing and deploying educational planning and classroom instructional techniques to support students' growth and development. My research interests are based on my professional and personal experiences. I truly believe that mental health should be an important part of our school systems, especially within our low-income communities. My goal is to research the impact that a school counselor has in its community. Moreover, I hope to be able to bring this discussion back to my country, and to prove that for our low-income students to succeed, we need to talk about mental health.

Danielle Le



**Ph.d Student
Psychological and Brain
Sciences**

**Advisor: Dr. Gloria Wong-
Padoognpatt**

Danielle Le (she/her/hers) is a first-year doctoral student in the Psychological and Brain Sciences Ph.D. program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). As a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, she has seen first-hand the experiences and disparities of substance and behavioral addiction treatment. This has led her to her research interests in (1) examining the sociocultural disadvantages facing people with substance and behavioral addictions, (2) the role that social stigma in substance and behavioral treatment outcomes, and (3) how social stigma related to drug use and drug users might differ among certain marginalized populations.

While Danielle aspires to expand the field of psychological research, she self-identifies her area in need of development are her comprehensive researching skills. She is interested in this certification to better strengthen her abilities and reinforce a standard of research.

DAVID WADE



**Ph.D. Student
Learning Sciences**

**Department of Educational
Psychology, Leadership, and
Higher Education**

Advisor: Dr. Jonathan Hilpert



I am a second year Ph.D. student in Learning Sciences. My research focus will likely be centered around self-regulation in learning and performance.

My interest in the Graduate Research Certification is to be engaged in a formalized learning experience where I receive guidance and feedback on my research performance; to understand the concrete and intangible components of research within a university system; and to build my contacts and resources within UNLV. This year, I have been provided the opportunity to work with the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (CREA) here at UNLV.

It is my intent, post-graduation, to obtain employment within a university system engaged in teaching, research, and writing. I am open to the opportunities that life offers to be inspired and engaged with others.

Dayanira “Dee” Lopez



**Ph.D. student
Anthropology**

Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Byrnes



My name is Dayanira but most call me Dee for short. I am a first-generation college student from Florida working towards my doctoral degree in Anthropology. My future career goals are to become a practicing Forensic Anthropologist in the US and throughout Latin America, striving to seek justice for those having suffered from structural violence. Presently, my research focuses on gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals composing the skeletal collection of the ancient Maya from the archaeological site of Copan, Honduras. In the future, I hope to be able to evaluate the remains to learn how individuals suffering from disabilities were cared for and how they formed part of society. The Graduate College Research Certification will aid me in reinforcing the necessary skills to carry out this research, and ultimately, grow professionally to be able to serve as a mentor for future minorities with hopes of becoming anthropologists.

Jennifer Le



My name is Jennifer Le and I am an upcoming first year Ph.D. student studying clinical psychology from Long Island, New York. I am interested in completing the graduate research certification because I believe it will expand my research skills and help me to able to exercise critical reasoning skills, ask valuable questions, and test these questions in a consistent and calculated manner. I strive to not only build my knowledge base of past literature but apply this knowledge to new research in a creative way. I hope to become as acquainted with the research process as I can and collaborate with others to become a strong, confident, and sound researcher.

**Ph.D. student
Clinical Psychology**

Advisor: Stephen Benning

JOSELIN DANIELA GUILLEN



**Undergraduate Senior
Early Childhood Education**

Advisor: Jessica Ogens



My name is Joselin Daniela Guillen, I'm a 23-year-old, I'm majoring in Early childhood education. I was born and raise in Guatemala and move to the united states when I was 14 years old. I learn English when I was in high school, and this gives me more motivation to keep studying. My goal with this program is to develop my leadership skills and get stronger and more knowledgeable to help my Latinx community and the ESL community to follow their dreams and finish their higher education. I want to be an inspiration to others, but also I want to be an example to others.

KATHERINE GADDIS



**Ph.D. Student
Anthropology**

Dr. Jennifer Byrnes

My background is in bioarchaeology and I am primarily interested in how individuals and societies have experienced health and disease in the past. I currently work as a field osteologist for two active medieval bioarchaeology research sites located in Poland, where my recent research has focused on taking an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of skeletal biomarkers of stress in order to form a more comprehensive understanding of frailty in medieval Prussia. Currently, my PhD research involves exploring biocultural theories of ageing as they relate to health across the lifespan in order to better understand the lived experiences of elderly adults in both bioarchaeological and forensic contexts. I am interested in the research certificate because I would like to improve upon my research skills and put more time into my current projects.

KATRINA PINILI

M.S. Biology (Integrative Physiology)

Advisor: Dr. Allen Gibbs



I completed my B.S. at UNLV in 2019, taking in all that the university has to offer. Now, I am a second year M.S. student in Dr. Allen Gibbs' lab. My research investigates the energetics and metabolism of starvation-selected *Drosophila melanogaster* populations when subjected to exercise. We ask how these populations are affected by induced exercise in order to delve more into issues regarding obesity and exercise in humans.

Culminating various kinds of research experience over the years has made me appreciate even the nitty-gritty of working in a laboratory setting; exploring the unknown will always be fun no matter how we traverse through it. The simple idea of asking questions and trying to figure things out has always been intriguing to me. The GCRC will challenge my research abilities and allow me to practice being the scientist that I have always wanted to be.

KAYLEE O'DONNELL



**Graduate Student
Master of Public Administration**

Advisor: Dr. Jessica Word

Taking note from my youth and the passion I still have for the Vegas arts community; my career goals have pivoted to focus on increasing civic association in the urban community at large. Throughout my college career, I've asked why civic engagement at the local and federal level has and is extremely polarized with varied findings coming up. Currently, my research primarily focuses on the fluctuations of civic association in the US, nationally and locally. Currently, I am working with an educational nonprofit that provides civics education to k-12 students within the framework of state standardized learning. With goals to deepen the work my nonprofit is already doing; my research works to find theoretical measures and variables that are sustainable to study the trends that civics education has on civic association in k-12 students as they move into adulthood. I am focused on finding best practices that will give accurate data to follow trends in realm of civic association.

Keishmer Cardoso



**Ph.D. student,
School of Public Health**

**Advisor: Dr. Gabriela Buccini,
PhD, MSc, IBCLC**

I am a First-Generation Latino in the School of Public Health at UNLV. My current research interest is in Physical Activity, Physical Education, Nutrition, and Child Development. Like most First-Generation students, I am the first to be stepping foot into unknown territory, particularly in a Ph.D. program. Unaware of what lies in this journey, I want to develop my skillset, techniques, and strategies as I continue my studies. I hope that this program provides me with a better understanding of research, but I also hope to publish the product I develop from this experience.

KEONI CASTELLANO



**Ph.D. student
Mathematics**

Advisor: Dr. Rachidi Salako

My research interests include looking at problems that live at the intersection of mathematics and biology. In particular, I am interested in exploring problems of a biomedical nature from the perspective of mathematical analysis. I use tools like partial differential equations and variational methods to study infectious disease and chemotaxis models. Ultimately, I would like to pursue a career in mathematical oncology so that I could contribute to finding solutions to one of the most challenging scientific issues of our time.

I am excited to be a part of the Graduate Research Certification program because I want to develop my skills to be an effective and independent researcher. I aim to utilize what I learn from this program in my academic career and beyond.

MARINA F WONG



Undergraduate Senior

Dual B.A. Student / Art & Psychology

Major: Art photo/sculpture & Psychology



I am incredibly grateful and pleased to be a part of the Rebel Grad Advantage and Research Certification programs. Hi! I'm Marina and I am a senior completing dual bachelors degrees in psychology and art with studio concentrations in photography and sculpture. I am enthusiastically preparing to graduate in the spring.

I identify as neurodivergent and I have experienced an unusually high frequency of relocation, just short of being a nomad, leaving me with the feeling I have acquired a massive collection of metal maps that must be in some way useful, in a manner that will be of positive consequence for humanity.

The direction of my thoughts often lead me to wonder if I'm on some undercover assignment that has a loosely defined unified field theory and hermetically principled context to it. These programs are important to me as they are a means to assisting me in articulating my focus on the quality and accuracy of research methodology so I may present material with much more confidence.

RAJ DOSHI



Ph.D. Candidate - School of Life Sciences

Advisor – Dr. Qian “Chris” Liu



Research is not the first thing I aspired to do when I was younger, but it has become a pathway for the rest of my life. I am apart of Biological Sciences graduate program on the Quantitative Biology and Bioinformatics. Starting this fall, I will be assigned to work with my advisor. His research focuses on using AI to detect DNA modifications to give insight into disease pathology. I would like to be in the Research Certification program because my previous experiences did not provide enough clarity into “doing” science.

RICHARD "RICH" CHANG



**Ph.D. student, Psychological &
Brain Sciences**

**Advisor: Dr. Gloria Wong-
Padoongpatt**



Richard "Rich" Chang (he/they) is a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and a Sally Casanova Predoctoral scholar. Because of his personal experiences within higher education, his research focuses on marginalized and underrepresented (e.g., LGBTQ, first-generation) individuals' experiences.

Through the research certificate program, Rich plans to strengthen his research skills to mentor future generations of scholars.

ROBERT ANDREW JACKSON

Ph.D. student, Geoscience

Advisor: Dr. Minghua Ren



My research interests focus on using methods of geochemistry, igneous petrology, and volcanology to assess magmatic processes influencing silicic magmas prior to eruption or emplacement. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, camping, climbing and whitewater kayaking to explore the natural wonders of our world and see more rocks.

I am excited to be participating in the Graduate College Research Certification program to grow my skillset for conducting research and communicating science to various audiences. I am also eager to meet other researchers in the cohort to learn from their techniques and expand my network for future collaboration. With the knowledge of this program, I aim to enhance my methods of data collection and data visualization, which will strengthen my contributions to the geologic community and promote excellent practices to future researchers and students.

ZHENYU YANG



**Doctor of Musical Arts
Candidate, School of Music**

Advisor: Dr. Mykola Suk

I am interested in Performance Practice issues in music and believe the Graduate College Research Certification will strengthen my research skills and broaden my research methodology.