



Graduate College Research Certification

Congratulations to our incoming
2020-2021 cohort

AARON CHENG



**Degree:
Undergraduate
Student- School of Life
Sciences**

**Advisor: Edwin Oh
Ph.D. (Medicine)**



Academic Bio

Aaron is currently a Junior pursuing a degree in Cell and Molecular Biology and minors in psychology and neuroscience. He spends much of his time researching rare neurogenetic disorders under Dr. Edwin Oh (Medicine). Our work utilized genetic mouse models to study the *EFTUD2* (Elongation Factor 2 Tu GTP Binding Domain Containing 2) gene and its role in spliceosomal formation. More specifically, it is thought that the spliceosomal protein encoded by *EFTUD2* plays a significant role in the development of Mandibular Facial Dysostosis with Microcephaly (MFDM).


Aaron chose to major in biology because he is passionate about understanding the mechanisms that lead to human disease. After undergrad, Aaron plans on pursuing a dual M.D./Ph.D. program where he plans on pursuing a Ph.D. in Neuroscience or Cell and Molecular Biology to further his education and training in medical research.

**AISLIN
EDALGO**



**M.A./Ph.D. student,
Anthropology**

**Advisor: Pierre
Liénard**

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My research is focused on the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland between the Catholic and the Protestant populations. This divide has resulted in countless deaths across generations, and can still be seen today in the sectarian crimes that occur in the hundreds each year.

My project examines the associations between sectarian crime rates and ethnic heterogeneity levels, which is the degree to which a population is ethnically mixed, and incorporates several environmental factors that may be associated with sectarian crime. The Graduate College Research Certification program will give me the chance to engage with and learn from graduate students outside of my department and my discipline, give me exposure to new interdisciplinary ideas and ultimately help me become a better researcher.

ALYSHA ROBINSON



**Masters
Student/Couples
Family Therapy
Advisor: Dr. Katherine
Hertlein**



Alysha Robinson is a first year Graduate student in the Couples and Family Therapy department. She is interested in the correlation between couples and social media and the effects it has on relationships. Alysha is working closely with her advisor Dr. Katherine Hertlein on collecting data in regards to social media and its influence in relationships in healthy adults. Alysha is interested in being apart of the Graduate College Research team and earning a certificate because she is very interested in collecting data, conducting interviews, and the overall behind the scenes of being a researcher.

CAITLIN REYNOLDS



**Undergraduate
Student, Department
of Kinesiology and
Nutrition Sciences**

**Advisor: Matthew
Dellasalla (McNair
Scholars Institute)**



I am an undergraduate student entering my senior year of the Nutrition Program at UNLV. During my junior year I completed the Grad Rebel Advantage Program, and I am also a McNair Scholar. I am a Sports Nutrition Intern for UNLV Athletics, where I learn how to support an athlete's growth and recovery through nutrition. I aspire to attain a Master's degree and become a Registered Dietitian.

My research interests include circadian rhythm and metabolism. I specifically want to better understand how a disruption to circadian rhythm can impact biological processes. My study involves having participants who experience social jet lag consume a mixed meal tolerance test. This study aims to examine how a change in biological rhythm can influence different health factors.

Involvement in this program will undoubtedly help me assess my strengths and weaknesses as a researcher and help prepare me for graduate school.

EMILY STRICKLER



**Master's Student,
Department of
Environmental Health
and Occupational
Health**

**Advisor: Dr. Jennifer
Pharr**



Emily is a Master's Student in the School of Public Health in the Environmental and Occupational Health Track. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Human Biology from Stanford University. She is a first-generation college graduate.

Her research interests include health disparities, the built environment, and neighborhood health. As a born and raised Las Vegas, she's seen how the city has changed during her life so far and is interested in how we can design cities to grow sustainably while keeping community health for all in mind.

Ultimately, Emily hopes to go on and earn a Ph.D. As part of the Graduate College Research Certification (GCRC), Emily hopes to build and strengthen the skills necessary to conduct research that will benefit the underserved in our community.

JONATHAN ANTONIO MOLINA



**M.S Student,
Department of Couple
and Family Therapy**

**Advisor:
Dr. Katherine Hertlein**



Currently I am helping research the impact that collaborative pornography use in couples has on relationships in terms of individual relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, trust, closeness, and communication.

I am excited to be a part of the Graduate College Research Certification (GCRC) program as I hope to dedicate my life to helping grow our understanding of relationships and family dynamics as well as understanding the role of sex in relationships. When it comes to individuals, couples, and family there are a wide array of research possibilities. Through the GCRC program, I feel that I will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to make an impact in my field which will open many doors for me.

KAYLEIGH MEIGHAN



**Ph.D. student,
Anthropology**

**Advisor: Alyssa
Crittenden**



I am a medical anthropologist interested in studying pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care. Specifically, my interests include perinatal care and obstetric violence, attachment parenting and cross-cultural infant care patterns, and maternal and infant health disparities in the US. My current research analyzes predictors of co-sleeping practices after midwife-led births in the US.



My goal is to gain research skills to streamline the process of conducting research such as project planning, collaboration with other researchers, and data and citation management. I'm excited to work with like-minded people who value ethical practices and producing rigorous and robust research. I'm hopeful that this program will engender reflection as well as tangible goal setting to further my development as both a professional and academic researcher.



**KEVIN AYALA
PINEDA**



**Undergraduate McNair
Scholar, Physics and
Mathematics**

**Advisor: Dr. Michael
Pravica**



● My Name is Kevin Ayala Pineda, and I am an undergraduate McNair Scholar studying Physics and Mathematics at UNLV. My current research is in a new field of science called *useful hard x-ray induced chemistry*, whereas I explore the mechanisms and behaviors of hard x-ray chemical-induced reactions under isolated and/or extreme conditions.

● I have recently investigated high-pressure studies on various materials to understand their correlation with hard x-ray photochemistry. Currently, I am studying how this hard x-ray photochemistry effects live viruses with a potential route of creating a new method for vaccine development.

● As a future scientist, I have a responsibility to learn proper skills for scientific conduct and communication. Things such as learning best practices, well-reasoned arguments, and other essential skills are vital for how impactful research is. The GCRC program can thus help me mitigate this learning process and enhance my skills so that I can become a competent researcher.

NADER NABEH



**Undergraduate
student, Biology and
Sociology**

**Advisor: Dr. Aude
Picard**



Nader Nabeh is a first-generation, rising junior who moved from Cairo, Egypt to Las Vegas at the age of 9. He is an undergraduate researcher in UNLV's geomicrobiology laboratory. His goal is to obtain an MD-PhD after graduation because he is passionate about research and working with people. He is a volunteer at the Nathan Adelson Hospice and the Ronald McDonald House. Nader's research interests include how microbes influence the formation of interactions between organic carbon and minerals. Nader wants to be in the Graduate College Research Certification because he hopes to gain exposure to more research techniques, data analysis, and time management for projects.

NANETTE RASBAND HILTON, MA



**Ph.D. Candidate,
Literature, English**

Advisor: Dr. John Hay



Nanette Rasband Hilton's work is published in travel and trade magazines, literary and scholarly journals, and as instructional manuals digitally and in print. She holds a bachelor's degree in Writing from BYU and a master's degree in Language and Composition from UNLV where she teaches English Composition and World Literature. Nanette is a Ph.D. candidate studying nineteenth century American literature with a focus on rhetoric and composition pedagogy. In the GCRC Program, Nanette hopes to work with other instructors, faculty, and students to broaden her "research tools belt" by adding new strategies to her cadre of research methods. She is particularly interested in addressing diversity issues relating to feminist rhetorics, multiple Englishes, multi-language writers, and cross-curriculum agendas. When she's not creating, Nanette may be found cycling the Mojave or enjoying time with her husband and their five children.

**NICOLE
FENO**



**Master's student,
Couple and Family
Therapy Program**

**Advisor:
Dr. Katherine Hertlein**



I am a graduate student pursuing my master's degree in Couple and Family Therapy and taking additional classes to become a certified sex therapist and sex educator from the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists. With this, I intend to combine my future endeavors of becoming a private practitioner and conducting research surrounding sexuality. My current research is on treating Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder and Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder in couples' therapy. I want to pursue the Graduate College Research Certification to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to be an effective researcher. This will jumpstart my career objectives of utilizing research to explore problems that I may face in private practice.

NORMA NATALIE GOMEZ MARES



**Master's Student/
Couple and Family
therapy**

**Advisor: Dr. Katherine
Hertlein**



My name is Norma Natalie Gomes Mares. I identify as a Mexican Latinx. With the help and support from my immigrant family, I am the first person to attend a Master's program. My purpose and hope to obtain a Master's degree are to be able to educate, empower, and help my Latinx community break the stigma around mental health. I am aspiring to become as educated as possible to achieve this goal and the research certificate program will do just that. As an undergrad student in Mexico, I did not do research because, at the time, it seemed too much to me. Now, with the help of my advisor Dr. Hertlein, I am eager to learn about technology in relationships and about how porn affects relationships. I intend our findings will enhance people's understanding and knowledge around these topics. Thanks to Dr. Hertlein and the research certificate team for this amazing opportunity!

SABRINA MOORE



**MS student,
Department of Civil
and Environmental
Engineering and
Construction**

**Advisor: Shashi
Nambisan, Ph.D., P.E.**



Sabrina is a Master's student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Construction. She comes to UNLV after having been born and raised in Tampa, Florida, and completing her Bachelor's of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Sabrina aspires for a career in research and development of technology for studying the health and efficiency of civil systems. Her thesis, advised by Dr. Shashi Nambisan, is focused on transportation safety.

Sabrina is involved in the Society of Women Engineers and the American Society of Civil Engineers, and when not studying or in class, she can be found exploring local coffee shops and enjoying live music around the city.