

GRADUATE REBEL AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

Congratulations to
our incoming cohort
2016-2017

JANNA BERNSTEIN



Janna Bernstein is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Teaching and Learning, with an emphasis in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). Born and raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley, Janna received her B.A. and M. Ed. from the University of Southern California. Janna's research interest is how religion and spirituality have an impact on college students' identity development. She hopes to focus her dissertation on interfaith engagement on public college campuses. Through this work, Janna is also creating an *Interfaith Initiative* at UNLV to put theory into practice. Additionally, Janna works on campus full-time as a Residential Life Coordinator within the Division of Student Affairs. Janna also serves as a mentor for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Undergraduate Fellows Program and is participating in UNLV's Graduate College Mentorship Certificate Program. As a lifelong learner, Janna is always looking for new ways to engage in professional development opportunities and is thrilled to be an Ambassador!

BREE BOPPRE



Bree Boppre is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Criminal Justice. Her research interests broadly involve corrections and sentencing. In particular, Bree is interested in gender-responsive correctional strategies, racial disparities and cross-national differences in female imprisonment, the implementation of evidence-based practices in correctional agencies, and the effects of emotive trial stimuli on capital jurors' sentencing decisions. Her prior research has been published in *The Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice* and *Victims & Offenders*. Bree's dissertation research will explore intersectional differences in women's risk factors for recidivism. For her graduate assistantship, Bree serves as the editorial assistant for a top academic journal in Criminal Justice.

ALICIA CRESPIN



Alicia is a third-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. Her project aims to determine the importance of chemical communication in maintaining this association. She hopes that understanding this 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 third year Ph.D. student in the Department of Computer Science and was awarded an M.S. in Computer Science in May 2016 from UNLV. He currently serves as a doctoral graduate research assistant in the Software Engineering and Media Lab where he works on compilers and programming language research as well as a teaching assistant for Software Engineering and C++ Programming classes. His dissertation research is in the area of parallelism and concurrency in programming and software development, with a particular focus in the area of high performance and scientific computing. He is currently working on a software project with the Physics Department for computational astrophysical simulation on the Cherry Creek computer cluster at NSCEE. He has been active in the GPSA since 2014 and is currently serving as Student Body Vice President responsible for the Sponsorship Committee and Research Forum.

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. She also enjoys working with high school students through UNLV's Upward Bound Program during the summer and on Saturdays.

KIMBERLY FLORENCE



A Ph.D. Candidate in the Higher Education program, Kimberly's research focuses on understanding the learning of first-year college students through social-constructivists theory, self-regulated learning, and co-regulated learning to improve performance outcomes. Her dissertation is titled *Starting in Last Place: Understanding the Lived Experience of Learning Among First-Year, First-Semester, College Students*.

WENDY GELBART



Wendy Gelbart is a second year PhD student in the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies. She serves as a doctoral level graduate assistant instructing pre-service teachers. She also supervises practicum and student teachers for her department. Her areas of study include family involvement in the special education process as well as researching the efficacy of computer-based testing for students with learning disabilities. She is also interested in promoting the integration of technology based tools into the curriculum for students with disabilities. A Rebel through and through, she has received both her BS in Business and her MEd from UNLV. When not writing for academic pursuits, Wendy also enjoys reporting entertainment news for several local media outlets.

CHRISTOPHER RYAN HICKS



Chris Hicks is a MSEE candidate in the College of Engineering, Computer and Electrical Engineering Department. As a graduate student in the Center for Energy Research, he is examining the electrical contributions of variable frequency drives within micro-grids and photovoltaic networks. He was raised in northern Nevada and completed his undergraduate study at UNLV. After graduation he spent 10 years working in the Nation's nuclear power industry. He has mentored five undergraduate senior design teams, one of which was awarded the 2015 Young Minds Award in electromechanical systems. For the 2016-2017 academic year he was selected to serve as a Peace Corps Campus Ambassador at UNLV to generate campus participation and communicate Peace Corp opportunities.

JENNIFER HIGHTOWER



Jennifer Hightower is a second year student in the Master of Business Administration program. She is specializing in a marketing concentration within the program in order to continue her work in direct, email, and interactive marketing in the Las Vegas casino and hospitality industry. Jennifer completed her undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in southern Mississippi where she focused her degree in Casino and Resort Management. With her graduate education from UNLV, Jennifer plans to focus her marketing efforts on creating and developing new strategies to continue to drive tourism to Las Vegas.

ERIKA K. MASAKI



Erika K. Masaki is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She specializes in the study of environmental cooperation with a focus on the conditions that lead to cooperation in Southeast Asia. She also researches global environmental institutions, particularly the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Erika is also interested in political theory, both ancient and modern, and on researching theorists' stances on the relationship between humans and the environment. She recently completed the Graduate College Teaching and Research Certificates, was accepted to the Graduate College Mentorship Certificate Program and previously served as a Grad Rebel Ambassador for the 2015-2016 school year.

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 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 of materials. Systems of interest included technetium metal, dioxide and heptoxide as well as the related transition metal systems. 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.

CHLOÉ LOUISE POWELL



Chloé Powell is a second-year M.A. student in the department of Communication Studies under faculty adviser and mentor Dr. Donovan Conley. Her thesis research is based on the fictional portrayals of climate change in film as public pedagogy. This research should help rhetoricians and community members to understand another facet of their position in the climate change debate. As part of her graduate assistantship, Chloe teaches three lab sections of COM 101: Fundamentals of Oral Communication.

TYLER SNELLING



Tyler Snelling is a second-year M.A. student in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs studying communication. His primary research interest is the rhetoric of dissent and activism. Under the advisement of Dr. Henry, his thesis questions the Young Americans for Freedom's role as a conservative social movement during the 1960s. Barry Goldwater's 1964 Republican Party nomination and Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential election were significantly influenced by the activities of these collegiate activists. Yet, most of the research done on this period only considers radical and liberal student activism. In his first co-authored publication, Tyler explores how *South Park*'s episode "Sponsored Content" contains both empowering and problematic representations of disability. He also works as an assistant coach for the Sanford I. Berman Debate Forum at UNLV.