



Grad Rebel Ambassadors Program

**Congratulations to our incoming
2020-2021 cohort**

ALDO BARRITA



**Ph.D. Student,
Department of
Psychology**

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



Aldo is a Ph.D. student for the Experimental Psychology Program. He received his B.A. in Psychology at UC Berkeley in 2017. His research includes the impact of racial and gender microaggressions on the well being of individuals from marginalized communities. Aldo will serve as president for the Experimental Student Committee at UNLV during 2020-21 and is the current media coordinator for the National Latinx Psychology Association (NLPA). As a non-traditional queer Latinx immigrant graduate student he seeks to advocate as a UNLV rebel ambassador for inclusion and equity.

ALEXA BEJINARIU



**Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of
Criminal Justice**

**Advisor: M. Alexis
Kennedy, Ph.D./ J.D.
Associate Professor,
Department of
Criminal Justice**

Alexa Bejinariu is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), where she teaches an upper-division course on quantitative applications in criminal justice. She received her B.A. and M.A. in Criminal Justice from UNLV as well.

Bejinariu's research interests include civil domestic violence protection orders, human trafficking, and prisoner reentry program evaluation. Currently, Bejinariu is working on a collaborative interdisciplinary research project that explores the physical and psychological barriers victims encounter when attempting to exit commercial sexual exploitation. She is also the Co-Editor and Communications Committee Co-Chair for the Division on Critical Criminology and Social Justice (DCCSJ) Newsletter, namely *The Critical Criminologist*.

As a UNLV Graduate Student, Bejinariu is extremely honored to be accepted into the Graduate Rebel Ambassadors Program. She is hoping to become more involved with the Rebel community as well as strengthen her leadership and communication skills.

EMILY STRICKLER

**Master's Student,
School of Public
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 earned her Bachelor's degree from Stanford University with a degree in Human Biology in 2016.

As a second-generation born and raised Las Vegan, her family has lived in the same home for over 60 years. Seeing the city, and her neighborhood, change so drastically since growing up inspired Emily to study how our environments can ultimately impact our health.

Her future research will examine how social cohesion in a neighborhood community contributes to feelings of perceived safety.

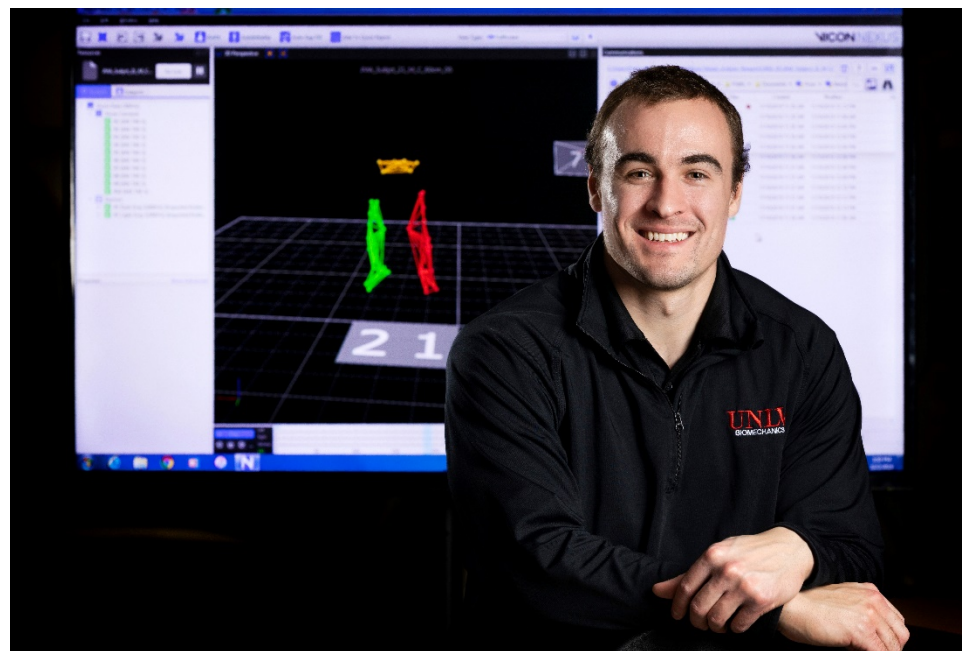
As a Graduate Ambassador, Emily is excited to help build a strong and vibrant graduate community. She believes this is a great opportunity to connect the broader Las Vegas valley to the amazing work that UNLV graduate students are engaging in every day.

Go Rebels!

**JASON M.
AVEDESIAN**

**Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of
Kinesiology and
Nutrition Sciences**

**Advisor:
Dr. Janet Dufek**



Athletes across all levels of sport are at greater risk for lower extremity (LE) injury following a sport-related concussion (SRC). However, the biomechanical movement patterns, and their relationship to LE injury risk, following an SRC have not been elucidated. The purpose of my research is to examine jump-landing biomechanics in adolescent and collegiate athletes with a history of SRC.

Through the Grad Rebel Ambassadors Program, I will take advantage of the opportunity to share my experiences as a graduate student at UNLV. I will inform interested parties on the novel research being conducted and strengthen the bond between the Graduate College and members of the Las Vegas community.

LATOYA BURDISS



**Ph.D. Student, Higher
Education**

**Advisor:
Dr. Blanca Rincón**



LaToya is a second-year doctoral student in the department of Educational Psychology & Higher Education under faculty advisor Dr. Blanca Rincón.

Sports and recreation led her to her current career as the Associate Director of Recreational Programs here at UNLV. But it was a combination of her ten years of working in the mental health field paired with the uniqueness of living in the state of Alaska that piqued her research interest in the mental health and well-being of undergraduate students.

The Grad Rebel Ambassador Program provides an opportunity to strengthen my knowledge and skills as a student, advocate for the graduate college and students, and help new students navigate their way to success while at UNLV.

SHAIMAA ABDELHALEM



**PhD candidate,
Geoscience**

**Advisor: Prof. Wanda
J. Taylor**



I am a 4th year PhD candidate; I am currently pioneering research about differential compaction modelling in Las Vegas Valley. I have always had passion about Earth's natural resources since I was in elementary school. I am also the Sponsorship Lead of UNLV's team of the DOE Solar Decathlon, where we aim to build a net-zero energy efficient house, which is my other passion; finding the balance between energy production and consumption while maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

The Graduate Collage has provided me with many professional development resources that helped me thrive in my academic and professional life. To give back to UNLV, I joined the Ambassadors program to help build a stronger graduate student community and strengthen ties between the Graduate College and community members.

SHIVANGI KHURANIA



**Masters Student,
Management in
Information
Systems**

**Advisor: Gregory
Moody**



Shivangi received her Bachelors of Science in Hospitality Management from UNLV in Fall 2018 and is now back to pursue a Masters of Science in Management in Information Systems.

Her goal is to combine her passion for hospitality with the skills she gains through her masters to positively impact the future of the hospitality industry. In her career, she also hopes to give back to the community by teaching, coaching and mentoring students.

As a Grad Rebel Ambassador, Shivangi aspires to inspire students and share with them the importance of higher education. She also hopes to motivate them to constantly grow and succeed while engaging in alumni relations. Finally, she would like to take advantage of this opportunity by contributing towards creating a stronger rebel community at UNLV.

SHU ZHANG



**MS student,
Lee Business School**

**Advisor:
Dr. Michael J. Lee**

Shu received her B.A. in Statistics from a university in China and M.S. in Statistics from a university in Japan. Due to her interest in consumer behavior and big data technology, Shu's research focuses on mining online product reviews and exploring the social network influence on review helpfulness votes.

Shu works as a graduate research assistant at the Graduate College. She is an ambassador for Strong Start Nevada to advocate quality early childhood education. She started a UNLV registered student organization – Moms' Momentum to support mothers at UNLV.

As a Graduate Rebel Ambassador, Shu is looking forward to connecting all graduate student Rebel community members and contributing to a stronger graduate student Rebel community.

TSION MELAKU



**Master's student,
Management
Information Systems**

**Advisor: Dr. Gregory
Moody**



Born and raised in Ethiopia, TSION came to the US as an international student in 2016.

Passionate about data science and analytics, she joined UNLV soon after she completed her MBA at Texas A&M International University. She is currently studying Master of Management Information Systems focusing on data analytics. Her Graduate Assistant role at the Graduate College with systems team has built her technical and professional capability towards data management.

In her role as Grad Rebel Ambassador, TSION strives to work towards building a strong rebel community that educates and empowers women and minority who are determined to advance their careers.