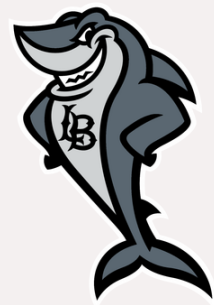


SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER



MAY 2026

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WHAT IS OURS

The Office of Undergraduate Research Services (OURS), established in 2016, is charged with expanding undergraduate research opportunities to the California State University, Long Beach student body. OURS works in collaboration with staff and faculty in all CSULB Colleges, Divisions, and units to cultivate strong relationships in support of undergraduate research.

OURS OFFICE

Please stop by our office in SSSC-120 to ask us any questions related to undergraduate research, meeting with a peer advisor, or regarding upcoming undergraduate research workshops.

END OF SEMESTER

We would like to commend all students, staff, and faculty for the work you do as part of the various undergraduate research programs this semester. Congratulations and good luck in your future endeavors to the CSULB Class of 2026. For our new and continuing students, we look forward to working with you all this upcoming year as we return to campus for the fall semester.

Elyzza Aparicio, Ph.D.
OURS Director

Contact Info

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California State University,
Long Beach Shakarian
Student Success Center,
Suite 120

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS**TERESA FALCON'S STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

"As an undergraduate student, I prioritized discovering my research and career interests. As a first-year student, I joined the University Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and worked in Dr. Michael Schramm's molecular chemistry lab, developing synthetic molecules that regulate biological functions. I presented my findings at the Annual UROP Symposium, which catalyzed my enthusiasm for scientific research. I discovered I enjoyed asking research questions, conducting scientific procedures, and communicating my research, but I was uninterested in the research questions in chemistry.

I discovered Psychology aligned with my interests and offered opportunities to conduct research in behavioral neuroscience. I got involved in Dr. Zavala's lab as a volunteer with the Office of Undergraduate Research to understand the relationship between the brain and behavior. A few months later, I applied and joined the Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) Program as a Research Fellow.

This experience cultivated discipline, perseverance, and adaptability, which are skills invaluable to a successful researcher. I now have experience presenting at international conferences, mentoring students in advocacy and neuroscience, and leading a project as an undergraduate student that investigates the persistence of alcohol-seeking behavior. I was accepted to the Master's in Psychological Research Program at California State University, Long Beach, and I look forward to continuing my work as a graduate student. "

**Teresa Falcon**

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

ISMAEL ORTEGA SALAZAR ACCEPTS AN AWARD

Ismael is a second year Biochemistry major and UROP student. He was awarded the Jeannette Santage Summer Research Assistantship for Summer 2026.

- Research title: Analysis of Butyrylcholinesterase Inhibitors to Understand the Importance of Aromatic Groups in Potential Alzheimer's Therapies
- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jason Schwans

This summer research assistantship opportunity allows students to conduct research during summer recess. It's purpose is to allow students to receive need-based funding to continue research.

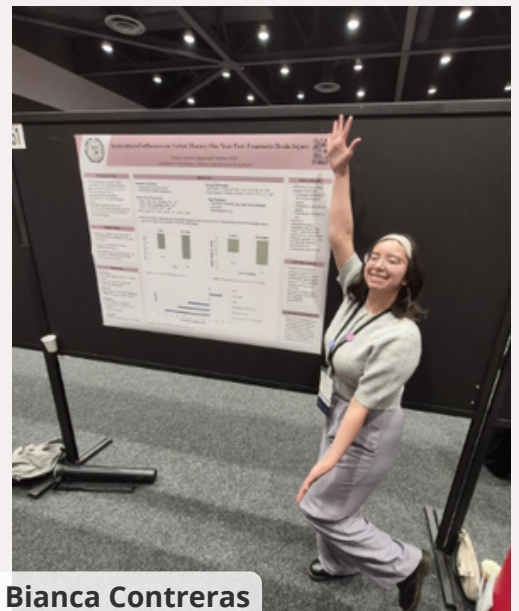


Ismael Ortega Salazar

BIANCA CONTRERAS' RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Bianca is a 3rd year BUILD student majoring in Psychology. "This April I had the opportunity to host the Psychology Department's biggest event in our academic calendar-Psych Day, which included both an undergraduate and graduate level research competition.

I also had the opportunity to present two separate projects titled "Therapist Characteristics & Caregiver Coaching Practices in Early Intervention" and "Sociocultural Influences on Verbal Fluency One Year Post-Traumatic Brain Injury" at the Annual Western Psychological Association Conference in Tacoma Washington. As the WPA student council member for my department and university at large, I got to connect and share insights from our vibrant research community and bring new ideas that I hope to implement in the future."



Bianca Contreras



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

PAULINA NOLASCO'S RESEARCH JOURNEY

“By my third year as a biomedical engineering student, I had no research experience. Encouraged by Dr. Siavash Ahrar and other students engaged in research, I decided to apply to the BUILD program in Spring 2025 to gain hands-on experience and mentorship. After joining BUILD, I received mentorship, became part of a diverse community of like-minded researchers, and worked in a wet lab.

Through BUILD, I had the opportunity to join Dr. Maricela Maldonado's Stem Cell and Biomaterials laboratory, where I received training in mammalian cell culture and the electrospinning of polymer biomaterials, such as polycaprolactone. In addition to these technical skills, the BUILD program has enabled me to acquire essential soft skills and knowledge that I will use when applying to graduate programs next semester. For instance, we learned how to write an effective Statement of Purpose and a Curriculum Vitae for graduate programs and summer research experiences.



Paulina Nolasco

In fact, thanks to the BUILD program and my mentor, Dr. Maldonado, I have the exciting opportunity to engage in a summer research experience for undergraduates (REU) at UC Berkeley. Ultimately, these experiences have enabled me to explore my interest in biomedical research, acquire essential technical and soft skills, and grow more confident in my abilities as a biomedical engineer and researcher. I highly recommend students who are even slightly curious about health-related research to apply and take full advantage of this wonderful program. “



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT- RISHIK SHINH

Rishik is a UROP alumni and former UROP Peer Advisor. He was awarded the Top Senior Capstone Project for his project titled “Grey-to-Green Rooftop Retrofit: An Automated Stormwater Harvest and Reuse Feasibility Study” with faculty Dr. Jin Gi Hong.

Project Description: Grey-to-Green Rooftop Retrofit: An Automated Stormwater Harvest and Reuse Feasibility Study aimed to evaluate how underutilized spaces at California State University, Long Beach, particularly the bridge rooftop connecting the VEC Building, Engineering and Computer Science Building (ECS), and Engineering 2 Building (EN2), could be transformed into multifunctional green spaces that capture and reuse stormwater. The project integrated California native plants, rainwater harvesting, and an Arduino Uno R4 WiFi-based smart irrigation system that monitored soil moisture and automatically delivered water when needed. The study demonstrated how blue-green infrastructure can reduce runoff, improve energy efficiency, support biodiversity, and create educational spaces that advance long-term campus sustainability and climate resilience.



Rishik Shinh



Rishik Shinh and Co-Presenters

Rishik will be joining Arcadis as a full-time Environmental Engineer. This employment will support environmental assessment and remediation projects by conducting field sampling, analyzing data, preparing technical reports, and assisting with treatment system design and regulatory compliance under the guidance of senior engineers and scientists. In the future, he hopes to go back to graduate school to continue research and experience in water quality analysis.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT- WYATT PIERCE**

“Last December, I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Molecular Cell Biology and Physiology. At the beginning of the year, I presented a poster at the Southern Regional CSUBIOTECH Symposium titled “Innate Immune Protein C1q Induces Autophagy in Macrophage Foam Cells” from the Fraser Lab. Around the same time, I began my position as a technician at a biorobotics company. I am also thrilled to share that I will be attending the University of Utah this fall to begin my PhD in Microbiology and Immunology!”



Wyatt Pierce

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT- ANDEE GONZALEZ

Andee Gonzalez

Andee Gonzalez, a former UROP peer advisor, UROP student, McNair scholar, and Sally Casanova scholar, graduated in Spring 2024 with her bachelor's degree in business. This fall, Andee will begin her Communication MA/PhD program at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). Congratulations Andee!



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT- ROBERT GARCIA**

“After graduating in Fall 2025 with my degree in Molecular Cell Biology, I got a full-time position at Antech diagnostics as a lab assistant in the Molecular Genetics department. In this role, I work with DNA-based testing to provide pet health and ancestry insights for veterinarians and pet owners. Around the same time I applied to U-GROW, a summer internship at Cedar Sinai Medical Center focused on cancer research. I am excited to share that I have been selected as a member of Cohort 5! I will be joining Anthony Nguyen’s lab, where the research focuses on understanding and overcoming immune resistance to cancer therapies, particularly in solid tumors.

**Robert Garcia**

Following U-GROW I will begin the CSULB CIRM stem cell program where I’ll be returning to Cedar Sinai. During my time as a CIRM intern I’ll be working in Shaomei Wang’s lab, focusing on cellular treatments for retinal degeneration. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities to conduct research that can directly impact human lives, and I look forward to being part of these teams later this year.”



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (UROP)

WHAT IS UROP

The [Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program \(UROP\)](#) is a one-year program that offers first- and second-year students the chance to participate in the research and creative process with faculty.

UROP SYMPOSIUM

UROP students presented their research projects from the past academic year at the annual UROP Symposium! Student projects were in collaboration with faculty mentors and ranged across various disciplines.



UROP Symposium at the Anatol Center



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (UROP)**APPLY FOR THE 2026-2027 UROP COHORT**

Are you a first or second year student interested in research? Apply to the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP)!

UROP students are provided with the opportunity to learn:

- How research is conducted in your area of interest and in other fields
- Research skills that will benefit you not only in research, but also in your courses
- How to interact and communicate with faculty and other researchers
- What you like and may not like in terms of future academic and career directions
- How to become an inquisitive and independent learner

The UROP application for the 2026-2027 academic year will open on **June 15, 2026**.

To get started, visit <https://www.csulb.edu/undergraduate-research-opportunity-program-urop/student-application-process> to review the application process.

For more information about the UROP Program, please visit the CSULB UROP website: www.csulb.edu/urop. Stay tuned for upcoming workshops and info sessions in Fall 2026

If you have any questions about the program or application, feel free to email urop@csulb.edu!

For more information on Undergraduate Research Program Info Sessions, see our [Fall 2026 Research Info Sessions page!](#)



urop

OURS CONNECTS

WHAT IS OURS CONNECTS

[OURS Connects](#) is a semi-structured research program that pairs undergraduate students with faculty research mentors so that students may contribute to the advancement of faculty research, scholarly, and creative activities.

APPLY FOR OURS CONNECTS

OURS Connects is an undergraduate research experience open to CSULB students of all colleges and disciplines.

- Pairs undergraduate students with faculty research mentors
- Students will also be paired with a seasoned Peer Advisor who will guide them through the project search process and the overall research experience.
- In addition to receiving resume and cover letter help, you will attend monthly research workshops to gain foundational research skills.
- Compensation may include volunteer hours, course credit or pay via grant funds.

All undergraduate students are invited to apply to OURS Connects. No prior research experience needed. Additionally, faculty interested in providing mentorship to undergraduate researchers are encouraged to participate as a faculty sponsor.

[Applications for OURS Connects are open year-round.](#)

For more information about OURS Connects, please visit the CSULB OURS website: www.csulb.edu/ours. Stay tuned for upcoming workshops and info sessions in Fall 2026

If you have any questions about the program or application, feel free to email [aa-ours@csulb.edu!](mailto:aa-ours@csulb.edu)



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (URA)

WHAT IS URA

The Undergraduate Research Association (URA) is an organization open to all CSULB students. URA is dedicated to providing undergraduate students who are interested in research with a community to connect with, learn from, and network with! Find out more on [Instagram!](#)

URA continues to support students by bridging the gap between undergraduate students and research opportunities, helping make research accessible to all majors. Students interested in getting involved in research are encouraged to attend our upcoming meetings and events! Examples of past events include on-campus lab tours, faculty and alumni panels, and graduate school workshops.

URA RESEARCH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The URA research mentorship program was developed in Spring 2026 to help bridge the gap between aspiring student scientists and on/off-campus research. The program consists of 20+ experienced student researchers across disciplines who offer personalized advice and guidance for students. We aim to create a space where students feel comfortable seeking mentorship, and can connect with students who have been in their shoes.



**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
RESEARCH MENTORSHIP
PROGRAM**

**RECEIVE PERSONALIZED GUIDANCE
FROM OUR EXPERIENCED STUDENT
MENTORS!**

- Finding research labs/programs
- Applying to graduate schools
- Professional development skills
- Scientific writing skills
- Presentations/publications advice



Research Mentorship Program



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (URA)

URA SPRING RESEARCH MIXER

The Undergraduate Research Association (URA) hosted their Spring Research Mixer, where students participated in speed networking and mixer activities! Students and club officers shared the steps they are taking to reach their career and academic goals, exchanged resources, and discussing what additional skills or experiences they are seeking.

Several clubs attended the URA Spring Research Mixer, including the CSULB Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES), CSULB Biotechnology Club, CSULB Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society (SAACS), CSULB Society of Women in Science (SWIS), American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), Researchers for Diverse Scientists (RDS), CSULB Society of Physics Students (SPS)



CONGRATULATIONS! THE URA IS BEING HONORED!

The URA is being honored at the Student Organizations Recognition Awards Ceremony for their outstanding commitment and meaningful contributions to our campus community. Through their collective leadership, collaboration, and dedication to student engagement, the URA has made a lasting impact and continues to exemplify excellence in student involvement.



URA Student Officers



MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP (MMUF)

WHAT IS MMUF

The [Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program \(MMUF\)](#) is committed to broadening the range of scholarly perspectives in the US academy, with focus on the humanities and the humanistic social sciences. Its name honors Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, the noted African American educator, statesman, minister, and former president of Morehouse College. Through a pipeline process that emphasizes mentoring, research support, programming, and student cohort building, MMUF identifies and supports students of great promise to help them become scholars and professionals of the highest distinction.

MMUF STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Nicole Gregg, Senior, BA Anthropology, BA Human Development, Minor in Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Stacy Macías

- Presented "Latina Lesbian Lineages" at the Center for the Study of Genders and Sexualities 22nd Annual Conference on April 23-24, 2026
- Awarded 4 awards in the Spring 2026 semester
 - Outstanding Graduate in Human Development
 - Academic Excellence in Anthropology
 - Distinguished Undergraduate Honor in Anthropology
 - Cultural Anthropology Award
- Following graduation, Nicole will be taking a gap year prior to applying to graduate school



MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP (MMUF)**MMUF STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Charlotte Hamilton, Senior, History major and Anthropology minor

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jane Dabel

- Published “Cowhides, Fire, and Death”: The 1881 Atlanta Washerwoman Strike in the Pages of the Atlanta Constitution
- In the fall, Charlotte will be continuing at CSULB as an M.A. student in History
- Research Description: The 1881 Atlanta Washerwoman Strike demonstrated a highly coordinated labor effort by ordinary laundresses in the urban South. Hundreds of African American women organized through church and neighborhood networks, leveraged an industry by withholding their work, and challenged municipal authorities and employers to secure fair wages. At a time when Black women lacked formal political rights, their “unskilled” labor was their power. This research examines how White-controlled media sought to suppress that power in post-Reconstruction Atlanta.



Charlotte Hamilton

Maya Escalante, Senior, Sociology major

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Martha Franco

- Presented “The Lived Experiences of Second Generation U.S Born Latinos” at the Pacific Sociological Association Conference on April 1-4, 2026
- Maya will be taking a gap year and is applying to MA and PhD programs in Sociology in hopes of becoming a community college professor in the future



Maya Escalante



MMUF

MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP (MMUF)**MMUF STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Minh Nguyen, Senior, BA History, BA German

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Eileen Luhr

"This upcoming fall I will be attending CSULB's History MA program where I will be expanding my historical research on Vietnamese language education (and diasporic identities broadly) in Orange County. I hope to be writing my master's thesis on the topic and extending the scope of the project beyond Orange County and into other geographic frameworks. I am pleased to be graduating with honors for both my departments in History and German Studies.



Minh Nguyen

It has been an amazing four years at the beach, and I owe it to the outstanding experiences in making it so. I have grown so much thanks to the Mellon Mays and I could not have had this kind of adventure without help from fellow peers, faculty, staff, and the Mellon Mays. I cannot wait to get back to the beach, and to take my studies and experiences to the next level!"

Melanie Sandoval, Senior, Anthropology & Chicano and Latino Studies major

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Steven Osuna

- Awarded Outstanding Baccalaureate for the College of Liberal Arts
- Melanie will be attending the Chicana/o and Central American Studies PhD program at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the fall



Melanie Sandoval



MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP (MMUF)**MMUF STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Darya Jafarinejad, Senior, English major

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Azza Basarudin

- Awarded Outstanding Baccalaureate for the College of Liberal Arts
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow since March 2024
- Her research from MMUF won 2nd place prize in the Humanities category at the 37th annual Student Research Competition (2025)
- Founder and Editor-In-Chief of [Wild Tongues Arts and Literary Journal](#), an intersectional feminist journal at CSULB within the WGSS Department
- Awardee of the Gerald Locklin Endowed Scholarship by the English department.
- Co-organized and helped plan two women of color feminist conferences at CSULB (Womxn of Color; Transnational Feminist Solidarities).
- Editor-In-Chief of Honor Code Magazine which recently won the award for first place student magazine at the National Collegiate Honors Council for the Spring 2025 edition
- Darya will be continuing at CSULB in the Fall for an MFA in Creative Writing



Darya Jafarinejad



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

WHAT IS MCNAIR

The [Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program](#) is a TRIO program funded by the U.S. Department of Education and designed to prepare and support underrepresented undergraduate students in their pursuit of doctoral studies.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

Maylia Brown, B.A Psychology

Maryna Marzeena , B.A Psychology

Danny Sarmiento, B.S Mechanical Engineering

Mika Muyango, B.A Africana Studies

Andrew Arroyo, B.A Psychology

Aileen Perez, B.A Sociology

Samyah Bryant- Taylor, B.A Psychology

Maria Romero Hernandez, B.A Psychology

Natalie Flores, B.A Psychology

Makana Woods, B.S Kinesiology

Melissa Marie Gandara, B.S Computer Science

Ashely Rector, B.A Speech-Language Pathology

Adriana Gonzalez Azucar, B.A Psychology

Sally Vo, B.A Psychology

GRADUATE SCHOOL ACCEPTANCES (SO FAR)

Student Name	Graduate School Acceptance	Program
Natalie Flores	University of Southern California	Masters of Family Therapy
Andrew Arroyo	California State University Fullerton	Masters in Psychology
Adriana Gonzalez Azucar	California State University San Marcos	Masters in Psychology
Maryna Marzeena	Azusa Pacific University	Psy D in Clinical Psychology
Mika Muyango	University of Southern California, Los Angeles	Masters in Public Health Masters in Africana Studies



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND NATIONAL MCNAIRS SCHOLARS AND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

- **Aileen Perez** presented “Youth Criminalization and the Impact on Black and Latine Adults”
- **Mika Muyango** presented “The Effects of Heritage on Cultural and Social Development”



Aileen Perez



Mika Muyango

WESTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

- **Natalie Flores** presented “Caregiver Engagement in Early Intervention Services by Siblings Disability Status”
- **Maryna Marzeena** presented “Anxiety’s Link to Drinking and Employment in Post- TBI Patients”

CSULB STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION

- **Mika Muyango** presented “The Effects of Heritage on Cultural and Social Development”



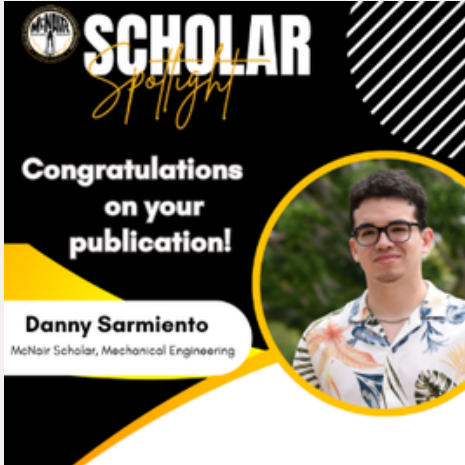
Mika Muyango



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

PUBLICATIONS

- **Danny Sarmiento** published “Valuating Simple Vibrotactile Feedback for Manual Glideslope Landings in Urban Air Mobility Simulation”



WELCOMING OUR NEW MCNAIR SCHOLARS THIS SUMMER 2026!

Student Name	Major	Faculty Mentor
Augustin Cortez	Design	Dave Teubner
Harmony Panameno	Psychology	Dr. Arturo Zavala
Nancy Santana	Psychology	Dr. Halim
Grace Solis	Chemistry	Dr. Derakshan
Jade Valenica	History	Dr. Jane Dabel
Evelin Zavala	Psychology	Dr. Crystal Yin Lie
Naomi Terron	Microbiology	Dr. Lee



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH INITIATIVE FOR SCIENTIFIC ENHANCEMENT (U-RISE)

WHAT IS U-RISE

The [Undergraduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement \(U-RISE\)](#) program is funded through a grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The program aims to broaden perspectives in future scientific and biomedical research by identifying students interested in pursuing research as a career and by providing training opportunities to be competitive for entering graduate programs. This two-year training program includes mentored research, an off-campus summer research experience (8-12 weeks), professional development workshops, graduate school preparation, and conference support.

OUR 2ND YEAR U-RISE SCHOLARS ARE GRADUATING!

- **Angelica Cristobal** (Molecular Cell Biology and Physiology, CNSM)
- **Abby Gregorio** (Molecular Cell Biology and Physiology, CNSM)
- **Amaris Guevara** (Biomedical Engineering, COE)
- **Nicholas Hoa** (Psychology, CLA)
- **Christina Nguyen** (Psychology, CLA)
- **Catherine Palm** (Biochemistry, CNSM)
- **Oshiana Schenkelberg** (Molecular Cell Biology and Physiology, CNSM)

WHERE ARE OUR SCHOLARS HEADED?

- **Amaris Guevara** (2nd Year U-RISE Scholar and 2026 Grad) is starting her Mechanical Engineering Master's Program at Johns Hopkins University this fall
- **Catherine Palm** (2nd Year U-RISE Scholar and 2026 Grad) will complete the CSULB CIRM Stem Cell Internship
- **Oshiana Schenkelberg** (2nd Year U-RISE Scholar and 2026 Grad) will complete the CSULB CIRM Stem Cell Internship
- **Diego De Luna** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) was accepted to the 2026 Boldy Forward Summer Research Fellowship Program at the University of California, Merced
- **Bethany Emmersen** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) was accepted to UCSB-CSU Summer Research Institute
- **Adelynn Everitt** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) was offered a position in the research training program REU Site: Translating Research in the Psychological Sciences to the Real World at Rice University



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH INITIATIVE FOR SCIENTIFIC ENHANCEMENT (U-RISE)

WHERE ARE OUR SCHOLARS HEADED?

- **Claire Karr** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) was admitted to the Irvine Summer Institute in Neuroscience at UC Irvine as a National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) scholar
- **Siena Giddens** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) was accepted to UC Irvine's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program
- **David Tran** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) was accepted to the UCSD-CSULB DDI Program and participate in the UCSD MRSEC RIMSE summer program
- **Julia Vicente** (1st Year U-RISE Scholar) will join Dr. Nicholas's lab at UC Irvine this summer 2026

CSU-SPARA AY 25-26 FELLOWS

- **Joshua Luna** presented a poster titled Fabrication of a PtTe₂ / α -RuCl₃ van-der-Waals at the APS Global Summit (March 15-20 in Denver, CO)

COMPETITION PARTICIPATION

The CSU-SPaRA Fellows and U-RISE Scholars participated in the programs' annual infographics competition on March 27, 2026. Students submitted infographics spanning lab protocols and safety, to outreach posters, graphical abstracts, and journal cover art. 3 students wowed the judges with their clear communication and creativity. Congratulations to **Adelynn Everitt** (U-RISE 1st Year Scholar), **Nicholas Hoa** (U-RISE 2nd Year Scholar) and **Claire Karr** (U-RISE 1st Year Scholar).



Infographic Comp.

DAY AT THE BEACH: CNSM SHOWCASE RESEARCH PANEL

During the annual Day at the Beach event for prospective students and families, the following students shared their research journeys in a panel discussion:

- **Alexi Anaya** (CSU-SPaRA AY 25-26 Fellow, Applied Mathematics)
- **Audrianna Downard** (U-RISE 1st Year Scholar, Chemistry)
- **Bethany Emmersen** (U-RISE 1st Year Scholar, Chemistry)
- **Joshua Luna** (CSU-SPaRA AY 25-26 Fellow, Physics)



CNSM Research Panel



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

WHAT IS BUILD

The CSULB [BUILD Program](#) offers intensive, hands-on research and training opportunities for undergraduate students designed to prepare them to excel in doctoral programs, as well as health-related research careers. The program was originally funded by the NIH BUILD Initiative (2014-2025) and has been institutionalized under the CSULB Office of Undergraduate Research Services

BUILD/U-RISE APPLICATION WILL OPEN FALL 2026!

Enter your name on our [Interest Form](#) and we will contact you for upcoming info sessions, workshops, and when our application is open! Learn more about the program here: [CSULB Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity \(BUILD\) Program](#).

Our application will open in Fall 2026 (for Summer 2027 start). If you have any questions, we are here to help! Contact us at: build@csulb.edu. Follow us on social media [@csulbbuild](#) for updates and to follow along the BUILD Scholars' and Fellows' journeys!

GRADUATING SENIORS - SPRING 2026

Congratulations to our graduating seniors!

Name	Division	Major
Maro Aziz	Fellow	Biomedical Engineering
Austin Esparza	Year 2 Scholar	Molecular Cell Biology and Physiology
Teresa Falcon	Fellow	Psychology
Gabriel Lopez	Year 2 Scholar	Aerospace Engineering
Antonio (Vincent) Miramontes-Andrade	Year 2 Scholar	Speech-Language Pathology



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)**GRADUATING SENIORS - SPRING 2026**

Congratulations to our graduating seniors!

Name	Division	Major
Tran (Sarah) Nguyen	Year 2 Scholar	Healthcare Administration
J. Ortega	Fellow	Healthcare Administration
Isabella Rodriguez	Year 2 Scholar	Statistics & Psychology
Nicole Sternlieb	Fellow	Nutrition & Food Science

AWARDS/HONORS

- **Vincent Miramontes-Andrade** (Year 2 Scholar)
 - 2026 Outstanding Undergraduate Award from the CSULB Gerontology Program
 - 2026 Outstanding Undergraduate Award from the Speech-Language Pathology Department
- **Nikki Sternlieb** (Fellow)
 - 2026 Student Excellence Award

PUBLICATIONS

Yang, L., Qin, Y., **Lopez, G.**, Hagen, E., & Zachariah, M. R. (2026). Interface Reaction in Core–Shell Boron–FeF₃: Direct Observation of Gas Release and Oxide Removal during Combustion. *ACS Applied Materials and Interfaces*, 18(2), 3772-3780.

<https://doi.org/10.1021/acsami.5c18742>



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

GRADUATE PROGRAM ACCEPTANCES

Kudos to all our BUILD students who were accepted to graduate programs!

Name	Institution (i.e. university name)	Degree and Program (i.e., master's/PhD in discipline)
Vincent Miramontes-Andrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Purdue University (Top #3 Ranked) • University of Wisconsin-Madison (#1 Top Ranked SLP Program in the Nation) 	Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology
Alexander Uy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California State University, Long Beach 	Master of Science in Electrical Engineering
Isabella Rodrigues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of California Los Angeles 	Master of Science in Statistics
Teresa Falcon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California State University, Long Beach 	Master of Arts in Psychological Research
Tran (Sarah) Nguyen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Brown University • Yale University 	Master of Public Health
Wyatt Pierce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Utah 	PhD in Microbiology and Immunology
J. Ortega	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Emory University • University of California San Diego 	Master of Public Health
Gabriel Lopez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California State University, Long Beach 	Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering
Maro Aziz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of California, Los Angeles 	Master of Science in Bioengineering



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM ACCEPTANCES

Kudos to all our BUILD students who were accepted to summer research programs!

Name	Institution	Program
Matthew Choi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wake Forest University Johns Hopkins University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine (WFIRM) Summer Scholars Program in Regenerative Medicine JHU Nanotechnology for Biology and Bioengineering Research Experience for Undergraduates (NanoBio REU)
Miranda Arnold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of California Los Angeles 	UC-HSI Superior Opportunities for Maximizing Access (SOMA) to Neuroscience
Andy Linden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Nebraska – Lincoln 	2026 Nebraska Summer research Program (SRP)
Paulina Nolasco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of California San Diego *University of California Berkeley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane Teranes – Scripps undergraduate Research Fellowship Program (JT-SURF) UC Berkeley NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF REU)
Janell Nuñez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of California San Diego 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UC San Diego Research Immersion in Materials Science and Engineering (RIMSE) Program

*Indicates institution/program intended on attending



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Kudos to all our BUILD trainees who presented at/attended conferences this spring!

Conference	Build Trainee(s)	Major, Year in School	Presentation Title
<i>Southern Regional CSU Biotechnology Symposium Jan. 24, Los Angeles, CA</i>	Jennifer Ramirez, Year 1 BUILD Scholar	Biochemistry , senior	“Cognitive Dysfunction Parallels Astrocyte Reactivity in the SOD1G93A Mouse Model for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis” - poster presentation
<i>Southern Regional CSU Biotechnology Symposium Jan. 24, Los Angeles, CA</i>	Teresa Falcon, BUILD Fellow	Psychology, senior	“A novel naturalistic assay for measuring aversive responses in Sprague-Dawley rats” - poster presentation
<i>CSULB Student Research Competition (SRC) Feb. 27, CSULB</i>	Miranda Arnold, Year 1 BUILD Scholar	Psychology, junior	“Cognitive Functioning Partially Mediates the Relationship between Special Education Status and Elevated Anxiety Post-TBI” - oral presentation
<i>CSULB Student Research Competition (SRC) Feb. 27, CSULB</i>	Maro Aziz, BUILD Fellow	Biomedical Engineering, senior	“Hydra in Flow- Investigating the Flow Response of Hydra via Microfluidics Systems” – oral presentation



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

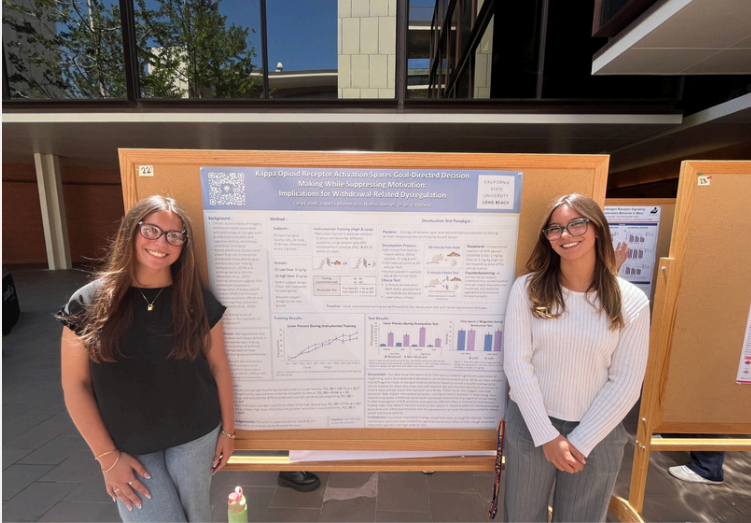
Kudos to all our BUILD trainees who presented at/attended conferences this spring!

Conference	Build Trainee(s)	Major, Year in School	Presentation Title
Western States Section Combustion Institute Spring Technical Meeting Mar. 23, Portland, OR	Gabriel Lopez , Year 2 BUILD Scholar	Aerospace Engineering, senior	"Particle Size Effects of B4C-CuO Burning Rates" - oral presentation
Western Psychological Association (WPA) May 1, Tacoma, WA	Miranda Arnold , Year 1 BUILD Scholar	Psychology, junior	"Comparing Observer and Caregiver Ratings of Therapists' Use of Engagement Strategies in Autism Early Intervention Services" - poster presentation
Western Psychological Association (WPA) May 1, Tacoma, WA	Bianca Contreras , Year 1 BUILD Scholar	Psychology, junior	"Therapist Level Predictors of Caregiver Coaching Practices in Early Intervention" - poster presentation
CSULB Spring 2026 Honors Symposium May 2nd, CSULB	Matthew Choi , Year 1 BUILD Scholar	Biomedical Engineering, senior	"Optimization of GelMA Hydrogels for 3D Tissue Engineering Models" - oral presentation

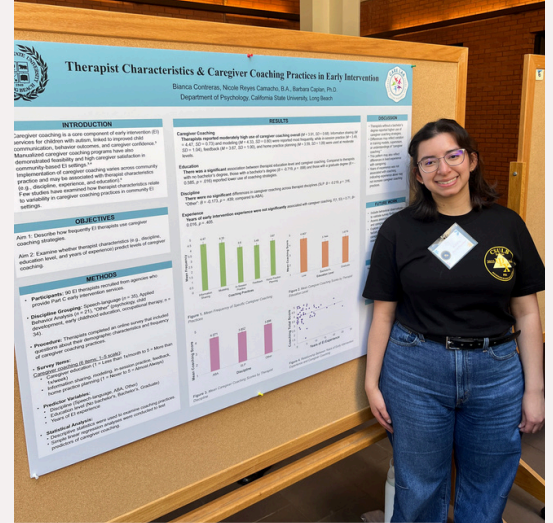


BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

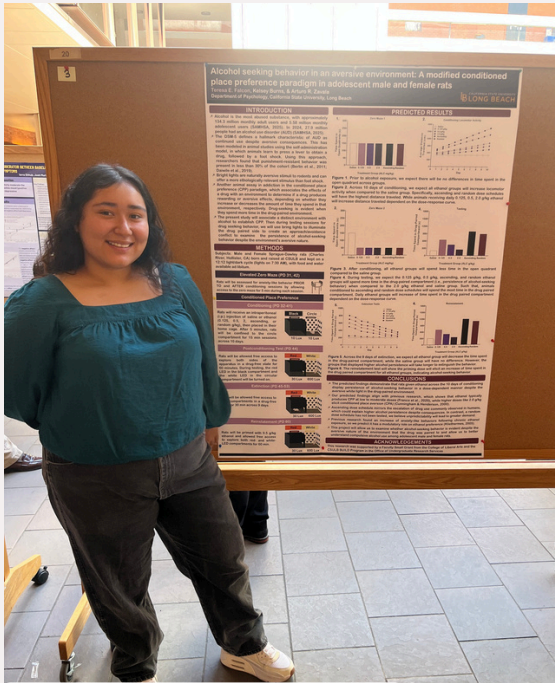
BUILD STUDENT PSYCH DAY PRESENTATIONS



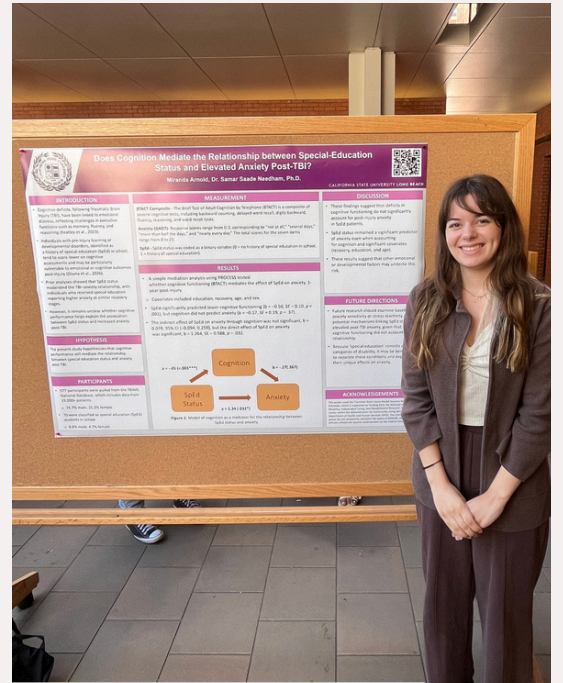
Isabella Monterosso and Cece Fanelli at Psych Day



Bianca Contreras at Psych Day



Teresa Falcon at Psych Day

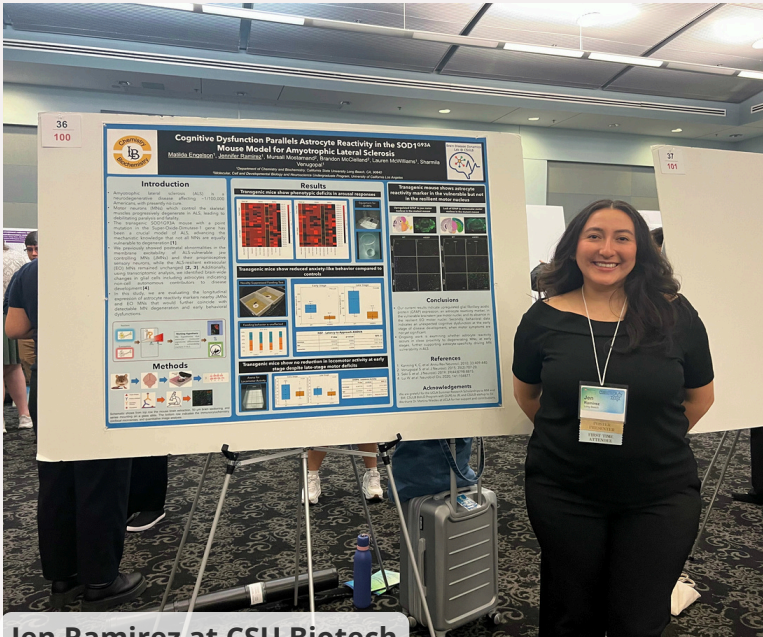


Miranda Arnold at Psych Day



BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO DIVERSITY (BUILD)

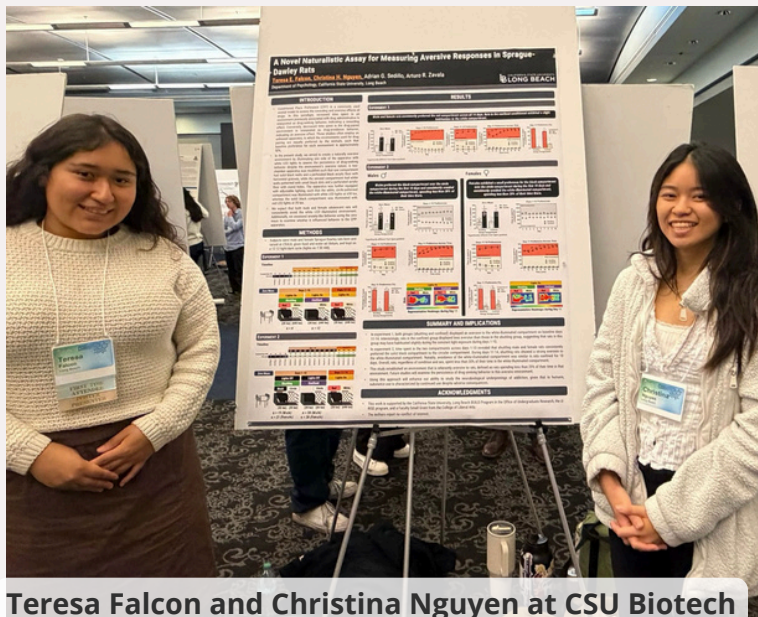
BUILD STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AT CSU BIOTECH CONFERENCE



Jen Ramirez at CSU Biotech



Zavala Lab at CSU Biotech



Teresa Falcon and Christina Nguyen at CSU Biotech



FALL 2026 RESEARCH INFO SESSIONS**WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

We are excited to invite you to the Fall 2026 Research Program Info Sessions to learn more about opportunities on campus that can prepare you for your career. At CSULB we have undergraduate programs that are designed to help students get hands on research experiences and be mentored by professors in your major.

You will hear from program representatives and current undergraduate researchers about the benefits, requirements, and application process as well as their research experience. Time is allotted at the end for questions from the audience. [Find out more on the OURS website.](#)

• Undergraduate Research Programs - Virtual Info Session #1

- Tentative Date: 9/17/2026
- Time: 5-6pm (PST)
- Location: Virtual

• Undergraduate Research Programs - Virtual Info Session #2

- Tentative Date: 9/30/2026
- Time: 5-6pm (PST)
- Location: Virtual



ours

38TH ANNUAL STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION (SRC)

WHAT IS SRC

The purpose of the [38th Annual Student Research Competition \(SRC\)](#) is to showcase excellence in scholarly research and highlight creative activity conducted by CSULB undergraduate and graduate students.

The Student Research Competition features oral presentations to an audience of fellow students, university community members, and a jury of distinguished faculty. Each year, the Office of Undergraduate Research Services (OURS) and Graduate Studies at CSULB collaborate to host this event, showcasing student innovation and fostering collaborations.

CSULB WINNERS

1st Place Winners

- **Sophia Saldaña** - Behavioral and Social Sciences
- **Amber Peek** - Biological and Agricultural Sciences
- **Keira Spiller** - Biological and Agricultural Sciences
- **Shakhzoda Khodjakhonova & Ngan Nguyen** - Business, Economics, and Public Administration
- **Alexander Homami** - Creative Arts and Design
- **Jenna Ersheid** - Education
- **Shibi Rahul Senthilkumar** - Engineering and Computer Science
- **Olivia Amalfitano** - Health, Nutrition, and Clinical Sciences
- **Samuel King** - Humanities and Letters
- **Coryn Bray** - Interdisciplinary
- **David Morales-Zapien** - Physical and Mathematical Sciences

SYSTEMWIDE AT SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

1st Place Winner: Amber Peek (CSULB) - Biological and Agricultural Sciences



Amber Peek at CSU Systemwide



Group Photo at CSU Systemwide



38TH ANNUAL STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION (SRC)

PHOTOS FROM THE SRC



Group Photo at CSU Systemwide



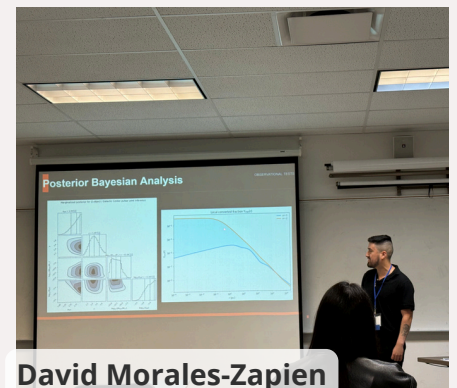
Traveling to the CSU Systemwide



Olivia Amalfitano



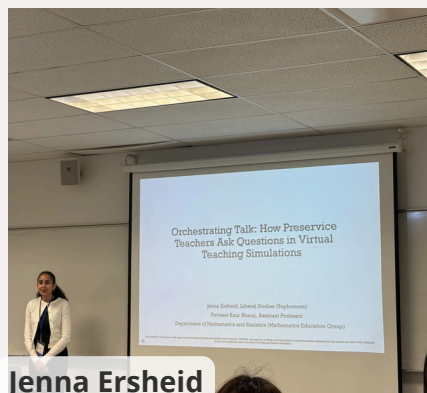
Shibi Rahul Senthilkumar



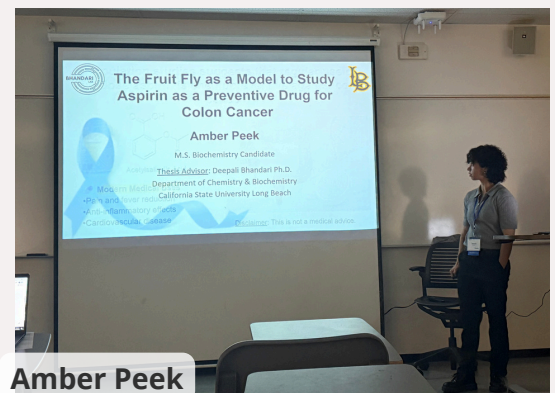
David Morales-Zapien



Sophia Saldaña



Jenna Ersheid



Amber Peek



Samuel King



Shakhzoda Khodjakhonova & Ngan Nguyen



CSU Systemwide



WEEK OF RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RSCA)

WHAT IS WEEK OF RSCA

The [Week of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity \(RSCA\)](#), 6th annual event took place on **April 20-24, 2026**. This event focused on highlighting some of the amazing work currently being done across the CSULB campus by students, staff, and faculty. We hope to show the immense value and importance that the projects have not only on the campus but also within local communities.

There were various opportunities to meet with presenters, have dialogues regarding various scientific and social topics, and network with members from various disciplines across CSULB. This year's event took place at CSULB. The Week of RSCA encourages everyone to not only engage with the sessions that are related to their own disciplines but also attend and engage with those that are outside of their own disciplines.

Check out the [2026 Week of RSCA Event Schedule!](#)

PHOTOS FROM PSYCH DAY



RSCA
2026



WEEK OF RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RSCA)

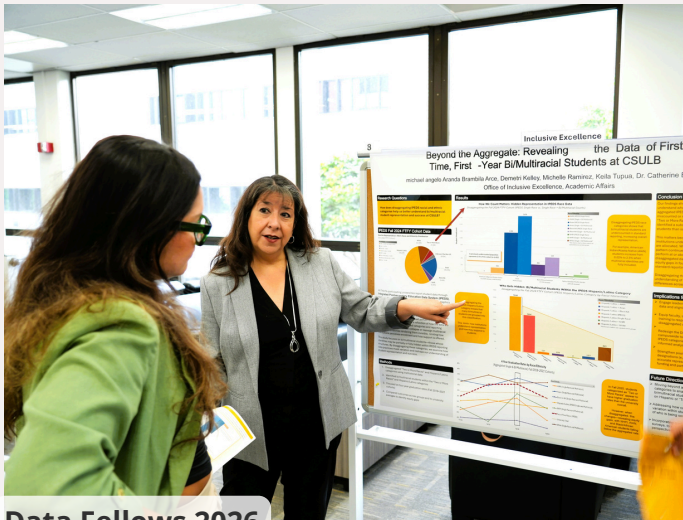
PHOTOS FROM THE DATA FELLOWS SYMPOSIUM



Data Fellows 2026



Data Fellows 2026



Data Fellows 2026



Data Fellows 2026

RSCA
2026

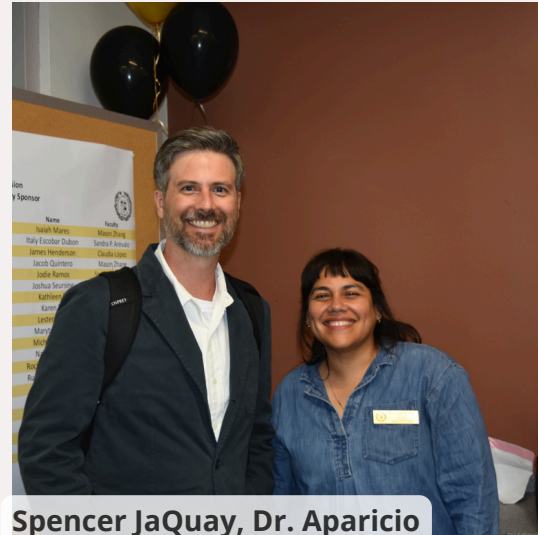


WEEK OF RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RSCA)

PHOTOS FROM THE UROP SYMPOSIUM



UROP Students



Spencer JaQuay, Dr. Aparicio



Izzy Castro-Lopez, 2026 UROP Symposium



UROP Peer Advisors

RSCA 2026



WEEK OF RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RSCA)

PHOTOS FROM THE GREEN GENERATION SHOWCASE



RSCA 2026



WEEK OF RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RSCA)

PHOTOS FROM THE SUNSTONE INNOVATION CHALLENGE



Sunstone Innovation Challenge Winners



PHOTOS FROM THE GRAD SLAM VIEWING PARTY



RSCA 2026



**SEE YOU IN
FALL 2026!**

