



## Academic Biography of Lauryn Guerrissi

I am attending the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) to pursue an Associate of Science in the Physical Sciences and to ultimately transfer to a four-year university to earn a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering. Spring of 2016 was my first semester back at CSN in about five years; I am a returning student. When I attended CSN just after high school, I felt I was going through the motions and not quite sure what college meant. As a result, I withdrew from many classes and failed a few as well. I entered the job market and worked various industry jobs in Las Vegas over the past few years. In 2016, I decided it was time to go back to school and to work toward a career instead of just working various jobs.

Since returning to CSN, I have excelled in my classes; earning all A's since starting back. In the spring of 2017, I was awarded the Outstanding Physical Science student and have made the President's List three semesters in a row. I have become involved with three research projects; the NASA Space Grant Consortium during the spring of 2017, the NV IMBRE in the summer of 2017, and the NASA Community of Practice in the fall of 2017; these research projects granted scholarship awards to the winning participants. Each project teaches hands-on research practices such as field sample collection, data analysis methods, advanced laboratory techniques, and data interpretation. These projects also involve writing results and findings and presenting posters at science conferences.

I have also become involved in some leadership opportunities since returning to CSN. I have volunteered at the spring 2017 CSN Science and Technology Expo running a hands-on chemistry demonstration for school aged children, I have started tutoring all levels of chemistry through CSN's Tutorial Services, I volunteered at St. Rose Hospitals, where I earned the Act of Human Kindness Award, and joined CSN's Chemistry Club to participate in more community outreach volunteer opportunities.



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## **Brandon Walls Biography**

Brandon was raised during his childhood years in the city of Oakland, California. It was only his mother and himself throughout his life, and she is responsible for many of the opportunities he has had both as a child, as well as an adult. In Oakland, around the time he was born, she ran a small USDA meat processing plant which was ran by herself and his grandmother. For years they were the only employees and kept the business going mainly by themselves. From his childhood years his mom would have him working in plant performing little tasks that he was capable of. Brandon's work ethic is a product of being handed such responsibilities from an early age. As a child, he also had debilitating allergies as well as asthma. At around the age of 11 years old, the exacerbations were becoming life threatening. At the recommendation of the community physician, Brandon and his mother moved to an area with a drier climate, Las Vegas, Nevada, in order for him to live a normal life. They were forced to start over, and in order to alleviate the cost of living, and aid in re-starting the business, he maintained an official working position in the business from the age of roughly 12-21. From ages 12-18, he worked about 3-4 days a week after school, and weekends when needed, and the first few years of college, from 18-21, he worked roughly 34 hours a week as manager of operations. Past the age of 21 the business had effectively grown to where his mother could hire a couple of employees, and support him as a full-time student.

Brandon had never truly contemplated a collegiate career until the final semester of his senior year of high school. He did not take the SAT, or ACT, exams, nor had any idea what a higher education may bring in the future. But, at the age of 18, felt he had the potential to be successful, had a good support system, and therefore, took the risk. Initially he decided to become a respiratory therapist, and obtained an associate in respiratory therapy from PIMA Medical Institute. But, while on his clinical rotations, he became enamored with the physicians and started to desire the education, and training to become the leader of the healthcare team. At the age of 21, he received his associates, but, right when he found a job as a therapist, he had discussion with his mother regarding his future. She knew of his aspirations, and was able to support him as a full-time student for the first time. Because she was closing in on retirement age she let it be made clear this is his only time to be a full-time student and accomplish his goals in the most time efficient manner. So, with her support, he embarked upon the journey to medical school by obtaining a bachelor's in biology, with a minor in chemistry from Nevada State College. At NSC, he gained a passion for research in synthetic organic chemistry. He has been researching in this area for almost 1.5 years under the guidance of Dr. Zachary Woydziak, and has excelled due to his tutelage, receiving both the INBRE, and EPSCoR grants. Currently, he is applying to medical schools in hopes of enrolling into an MD/PhD program in order to learn the skills to become both a physician, as well as an independent researcher. Brandon's field of interest will be drug development and discovery, and currently he has 8 interviews scheduled. He has reached excellence due to the support system provided by his family, both blood and academic and it is an honor for him to be nominated for such an award.



Kimberly Tran Biography Letter

NSHE Regents' Scholar Award

October 19, 2017

Thinking about how I got to where I am today, I can't help but think about how so much has changed. In 2009, my family and I moved to Reno after my father lost his job and we lost our house. Throughout my childhood, my father taught me certain core principles: support family, work hard, be kind, and adapt quickly to change. Immigrating from Vietnam, my father worked hard to give me opportunities that he didn't have, so I work hard to make the most out of my opportunities.

With 49 credits completed, I am now in my third year at TMCC. I've been on the TMCC Dean's List and am currently on track to be valedictorian at TMCC High School. On top of being enrolled in 17 credits, I work 25 hours per week as the Student Government Association President and 15 hours per week as an intern at the Desert Research Institute. Among other things, I am the founder of the TMCC High School Academic Olympics Team, a library volunteer, and a peer math tutor. In collaboration with another Washoe County high school, I am the telemetry division leader for a rover team, which received 2<sup>nd</sup> place at our NASA Human Rover Competition last year. On the weekends, I like to volunteer at community events, such as the Alzheimer's Association Walk, the spelling bee at Rollen Melton Elementary School, and the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful clean-up. Thinking back, I am far from the shy, stay-at-home girl that I was two years ago.

After graduating from TMCC, my plan is to earn a master's degree in computer engineering and a Master of Business Administration. During my educational endeavors, I will continue to volunteer in the community and work within the STEM field. After building up my experience and network, my goal is to create my own technology business.

**UNLV 2018 Regents' Scholar, Undergraduate Nominee: Ms. Jessa R. A. Li**

Jessa Li is an undergraduate student majoring in Biological Sciences with a minor in Psychology. Jessa is an accomplished student who has demonstrated excellence in research, academics, leadership, and service at UNLV and within the Las Vegas community. As an undergraduate student, she has conducted extensive research projects on drugs for Alzheimer's disease and anticancer therapy in Dr. Bhowmik's lab, and her research has led to co-authorship on one peer-reviewed publication in *Liquid Crystals*, with two more papers that are being prepared for submission to peer-reviewed journals. In addition to this research, Jessa also conducted research on solar cells for sustainable energy as a recipient of National Science Foundation Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program funding. She shared this work with the UNLV campus and Las Vegas community by presenting at the OUR Summer Research Symposium. Jessa has been the recipient of several awards and scholarships while studying at UNLV, has been on the Dean's Honor list for the College of Sciences since 2014, and placed in the 100<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally on the American Cancer Society Organic Chemistry Exam. In addition to her achievements in research and academics, Jessa has shown leadership through her academic and community service activities. She has served as a course grader and laboratory assistant in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, as a teaching assistant for a biology lab course, and as a volunteer tutor with the Academic Success Center. Outside of UNLV, Jessa has helped raise funds for several programs that benefit the community such as Toys 4 Smiles, Ronald McDonald House, and the Pediatric Trauma Program, among other work for charity organizations. She is also a member of the American Medical Student Association and Circle K International where she holds a leadership position and engages in community service activities. Jessa has demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in academics, research, and leadership, and we are confident that she will have continued success in the medical field. We are pleased to nominate Jessa Li for this prestigious award.

[Nominated by Dr. Pradip Bhowmik, Professor, UNLV Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry]





### **UNLV 2018 Regent Scholar, Graduate Nominee: Mr. Moinak Bhaduri**

Mr. Moinak Bhaduri will graduate in Spring 2018 with a Ph.D. in Statistics from the Department of Mathematical Sciences, College of Sciences, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His dissertation titled "Bidirectional Testing for Change Point Identification in Repairable Systems" focuses around change-point detections for Point Processes (especially the Poissonian-type) in repairable systems. Through the lens of novel statistics and tests proposed in his dissertation, he weeds out non-stationarity and detects anomaly (broadly construed) in a continuous incoming stream of data. Applications are plentiful in computer science, geology, oceanography, bioinformatics, finance, etc. He has published with several theoretical and applied journals and has presented at numerous conferences.

An active researcher and an enthusiastic educator, Moinak holds a 3.9 graduate GPA and has received several academic and teaching awards (*notably the Wolzinger Family Research Scholarship, a \$10,000 award for demonstrated excellence in Mathematical Science; the UNLV GPSA Merit Award; the UNLV Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award, 2nd place, a \$2,000 stipend*), and professional certifications (*notably the UNLV Graduate College Mentorship and Rebel Research and Mentorship programs*). He also holds membership in different organizations (GradStat Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society in London, UK; American Statistical Association; Bernoulli Society; and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics). He has shouldered many service responsibilities as well, including serving on UNLV's Top Tier Graduate Policies, Procedures, and Mentorship Committee, acting as an invited panelist on workshops and discussions, etc.

Moinak has a strong ambition for teaching. He has taught courses in Precalculus, Trigonometry, Introduction to Statistics, and Applied Statistics with positive student evaluations. He spends many hours conducting study groups and tutoring students in their studies. In fact, one student in his Precalc class shared that due to his teaching, she was changing her major to math! He is currently applying for positions as an assistant professor of mathematics, to fulfill a lifelong dream to work in academia. He aspires to one day earn the rank of professor. Moinak is a true scholar that UNLV is proud to put forward for this recognition.

[Nominated by Chih-Hsiang Ho, Ph.D., Professor and Advisor, Department of Mathematical Sciences, College of Sciences]

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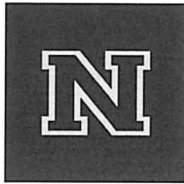
College of Science  
University of Nevada, Reno

Shahil Pema, is a senior at UNR, pursuing degrees in Biochemistry as well as Molecular Microbiology and Immunology. As an undergraduate, he has discovered and cultivated a passion for genetics, research, and healthcare with the goal of becoming a physician scientist. His research has focused on the ecoimmunology of agricultural pests (Mentor A. Smilanich) and more recently the use of genomics to discern a retroviral cause of the Fallon, NV leukemia cluster (Mentor D. Aucoin). University and statewide grants have supported his research, and this year, he was named a Goldwater Scholar. This past summer (2017), he performed independent research to improve live-single cell imaging and study gene expression at New York University Langone Medical Center as part of a competitive internship.

Outside of his research, Shahil enjoys getting to know the needs of the community. He has been a volunteer at the UNRSOM Student Outreach Clinic, a free teaching clinic that provides basic healthcare to the uninsured and underinsured in Reno, and he now serves as a Volunteer Clinic Assistant to help run the clinic and direct the new volunteer class. He volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada supporting and encouraging his little. Additionally, Shahil's work as a medical scribe in the Northern Nevada Emergency Department has shown him yet another facet of the community and has given him a glimpse into the exciting field of medicine. Another one of Shahil's passions is teaching. He has been a Discussion Group Leader for Principles of Genetics for two years and has most recently begun teaching an anatomy and physiology lab.

Shahil plans to pursue a residency in medical genetics and work at a university hospital where he can pursue research studying metabolic diseases while practicing medicine and mentor the next generation of physicians and scientists.

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Carrie Branch is a doctoral candidate in the Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology graduate program at UNR. Under the advisement of Dr. Vladimir Pravosudov, Carrie studies the behavioral ecology and cognition of mountain chickadees, a small songbird found in western North America. Throughout her dissertation, she has investigated potential premating mechanisms involved in the hypothesized separation between chickadees at high and low elevations in the Sierra Nevada. Currently, she has published four of the five chapters of her dissertation work in peer-reviewed journals. In total, Carrie has authored or co-authored 19 peer-reviewed articles based on her research at the undergraduate and graduate level, demonstrating her commitment to disseminating her work to the scientific community. Her research has also been recognized by national and global media outlets, including the BBC and Science Magazine. In addition to her research, she is also committed to sharing science with the public and frequently volunteers with local organizations, including Nevada Bugs and Butterflies, Big Brother Big Sisters, and the Sagehen Outdoor Education Program, as well as the Sanford Center for Aging and the Museum of Natural History on the UNR campus.

Carrie has previously been recognized as a COS Dean's Graduate Scholar (2012) and Graduate Student Researcher of the year (Honor the Best, 2017). She has also received numerous Biology Department scholarships (2012-2016), a Graduate Dean's merit scholarship (2017), and a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant to continue her work at UNR. Ultimately, Carrie aims to pursue a career in academia and continue to contribute to research and teaching at the university level. Through her work in behavioral ecology, Carrie hopes to inspire students and the community to pursue lifestyles that not only involve appreciating animals, but understanding their roles and importance in our ecosystems.

My name Daniel Lear, I am a second-year nursing student at Western Nevada College. I was born and raised in South Lake Tahoe, California. Growing up I played many sports and was particularly passionate about ski racing. During my skiing career I traveled to, and competed in many countries. My ski racing accomplishments include a first-place finish in a Federation of International (FIS) downhill event and domestically I competed in and won a gold medal in the U.S Junior Olympics. At the age of 23 I joined the Army as an infantryman paratrooper. I was stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne. While in the Army I competed in the Special Forces selection process and won a selection spot to train as a 18 Delta special forces medic. For the next 2 years I trained in military leadership, small unit tactics and intensive Spanish language emersion as well as many others, and often volunteered my time to help train other soldiers. I left the military in 2012 through a med board process and am now a disabled veteran and a lifetime member of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Association. After leaving the military and the birth of my son Jackson, I knew that I now needed to find a new purpose and direction for my life. With my military background I feel as though helping others is who I am at my core and a career as a Registered Nurse would be both beneficial to my community and give me a purposeful life worth living. My time training to become a nurse has been the most rewarding period of my life. In my short time as a nursing student I have been able to care for the sick and touch their lives in ways I never could before. This is especially true in the care I have been able to give to my father Ron. He was placed on hospice end of life care back in June of 2017. I have worked closely with the kind people at hospice and assisted my father with his passing on October 18, 2017. I will be forever grateful that I had the skill and knowledge to help and consider myself very privileged to have been a part of Ron's end of life transition. I am also forever thankful to the amazing people that work and volunteer at Hospice. It is these past months that have shown me that I truly enjoy helping others. When people are at their worst, I want to be the person they can count on. I want to be their candle in the darkness. A year ago, I could not have told you exactly what kind of nurse I wanted to be. Today I can happily say that I will be pursuing a career as an emergency room nurse in the Emergency Department. My goals include getting my BSN and eventually becoming a Nurse Practitioner. Once I become a Registered Nurse I will also be volunteering my time with hospice so that I can pay forward the kindness and generosity they have given me. With hard work and the loving support of my wife Christy I have maintained a 3.88 GPA and have become a certified Nursing Assistant. I am an active participant in WNC's 2<sup>nd</sup> year nursing club and have assisted them fund raising activities as well as assisting in the planning and coordinating of our graduating class' pinning ceremony. I am also an active member in the National Student Nurses Association as well as a member of the Emergency Nurses Association.