

# RISE



UNLV | COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION

*Student Scholars and Fellows*  
VOLUME 1



# Dean's Message

Dear Friends of the **UNLV College of Education**:

Preparing and supporting future generations of educators is the foundation to progress—both for students at the UNLV College of Education and, because of who we prepare, our local and national communities. In essence, having a high-quality, diverse educator workforce is imperative for moving all sectors of our local community and nation forward.

Philanthropy from our community partners enables the UNLV College of Education to award scholarships and fellowships to undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate students pursuing careers that impact the lives of countless youth and families. Gifts help relieve deserving students' financial burdens and allow them to focus on their studies, pursue their research, and complete their fieldwork.

I am pleased to introduce you to this annual showcase of scholarship and fellowship recipients of the UNLV College of Education, **RISE**. In these pages, we celebrate these beneficiaries and highlight the multiple partners who give generously as an investment in education. As the name of the publication suggests, **RISE** is a collective story featuring students with financial need as well as those with exceptional potential to rise to the challenges and opportunities of their profession.

For the inaugural issue of **RISE**, we feature 2020 recipients of UNLV College of Education Scholarships, scholars supported by an endowment from Kitty S. Rodman, educator candidates that are supported by state awards distributed by the Nevada Department of Education, as well as named gifts from generous donors to the College.

Thank you to those who support our students pursuing careers in education. If you are interested in investing in the future generation of educators and those who support students in educational and mental health settings, I invite you to visit the "**Invest in Education**" webpage on the College of Education website and explore scholarship and other giving opportunities.

In community,

**DANICA G. HAYS, PH.D.**

*Interim Dean and Professor*

**UNLV COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

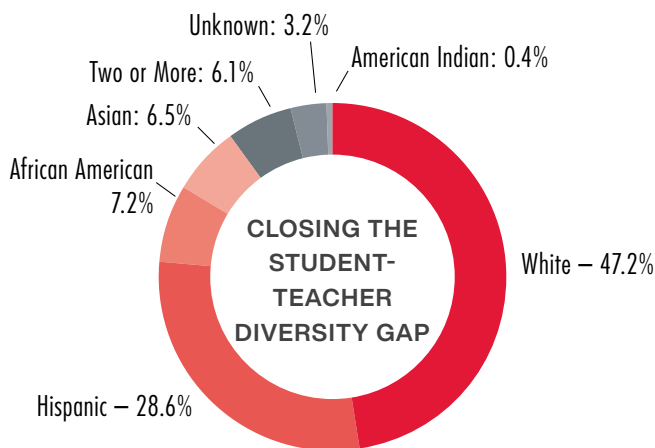
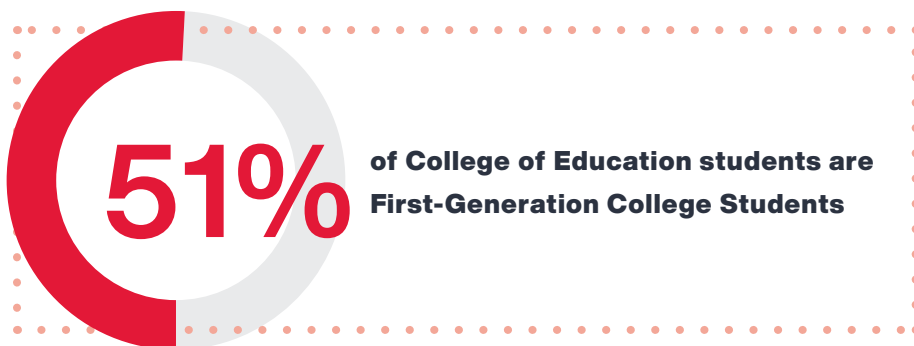
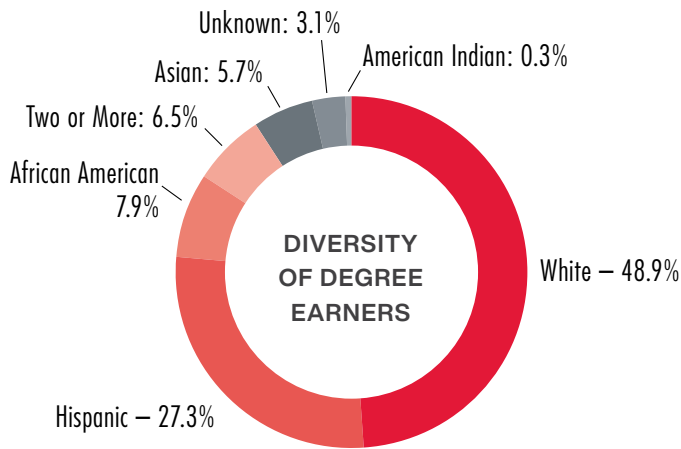
*Las Vegas, Nevada*

*Preparing and  
supporting future  
generations of  
educators is the  
foundation to  
progress*

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**UNLV**  
**COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION**

# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION By the Numbers

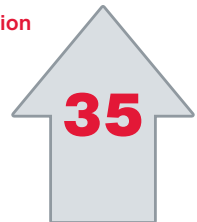


**Nearly half of the College of Education's** students completing teacher preparation programs come from ethnically diverse backgrounds whereas minority enrollment in the Clark County School District—the largest district in the state and the fifth largest in the country—is 76% of the total student body while 65% of K-12 personnel is White.

**2019-20**  
DEGREES CONFERRED

**238**  
BACHELORS  
+  
**452**  
MASTERS  
+  
**27**  
DOCTORAL  
+  
**29**  
CERTIFICATES

The College of Education was ranked 35th in Online Master's Degree programs among all universities nationwide by US News & World Report



# Dynamic Academics to Prepare the Next Generation

With innovative, pedagogically rich undergraduate- and graduate-level programs across a broad range of disciplines, the College of Education is proud to prepare students to serve as educators, researchers, and clinical/service professionals in today's rapidly evolving and diversifying communities.

## Department of Counselor Education, School Psychology, and Human Services (CSH)

Offering bachelor's and master's degree programs as well as graduate certificates, CSH prepares advocates and leaders who apply theoretical, educational, and clinical models to practice and research within a variety of mental health and human service professions.

### Fields of study include:

- Addiction Studies
- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Human Services
- School Counseling
- School Psychology

## Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education (EMS)

Offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs (as well as two dual Ph.D./J.D. degrees), EMS is designed and dedicated to prepare professionals for specialized services in schools, community agencies, and higher education settings. We promote and embrace the concept of cultural diversity and we affirm our commitment to the ethical standards of our respective disciplines.

### Fields of study include:

- Early Childhood Education
- Multilingual Education
- Special Education (across a wide range of subject areas)

## Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education (EPHE)

Offering master's and doctoral degree programs as well as graduate certificates, EPHE provides instruction in and the delivery of innovative research to inform the educational process from early childhood through higher education.

### Fields of study include:

- Educational Policy & Leadership
- Educational Psychology
- Higher Education
- Learning & Technology

## Department of Teaching and Learning (T&L)

Offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs, T&L holds as its central mission educational research and the preparation of educators at all levels. The department ensures that its professional education programs are based on essential knowledge, established and current research findings, and sound professional practice.

### Fields of study include:

- Curriculum & Instruction (across a wide range K-12 subject area)
- Elementary Education
- Global Teaching
- K-8 Integrated STEM Education
- Online Teaching & Training
- Secondary Education
- Teacher Education

*Learn more about our departments and academics on our website.*





# Centers and Labs

*UNLV provides students, faculty and staff and the community with access to research labs on campus.*

*These centers are working with the community to create transformative change across disciplines.*

The **Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD)** conducts community focused research and training on individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other developmental disabilities. Project F.O.C.U.S. (Forming Occupational & Community Understanding for Success) provides young adults with assistance in their academic, independent living, and employment goals.

The **Center for Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education (CMSEE)** is a collaborative venture between the Colleges of Education, Sciences, and Engineering. Aligned with UNLV Top Tier goals, the center strives to (a) strengthen collaborative grant activities in STEM education at UNLV (b) increase capacity to improve undergraduate STEM education at UNLV, and (c) provide leadership in K-12 STEM education regionally and nationally.

The **Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (CREA)** provides evaluation services for decision-makers at the national, state, and local levels. CREA is currently working with the Clark County School District to understand the impact of class sizes on teachers and students at Title I Schools.

The **Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center** built in 2004, was creatively envisioned, innovatively designed, and intentionally built for combining research, educator preparation, and world-class service delivery of high-quality early childhood education. The Center encompasses the Five Star, NAEYC Accredited UNLV/ CSUN Preschool and Early Childhood Assessment and Training Center. This mission supports UNLV's Top Tier Initiative aiming to increase high quality research, scholarship, and creative innovation that continues to strengthen community partnerships.

The **Content Area and Language Learning Lab (CALL)** comprises undergraduate and graduate students, as well as research faculty committed to studying the language across different disciplines. The CALL lab is currently studying the ability of professional development to shift teachers' practices when working with emergent bilinguals in early childhood.

The **Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center's** mission is to support literacy educators, students, and families by providing the UNLV, Southern Nevada, and larger international communities with professional development

through engaged workshops and conferences, tutoring, as well as community-based partnerships. Center faculty and affiliated faculty provide literacy-based instruction and host family learning events to complement and extend school-based instruction.

Established in 2004 by Dr. Porter Troutman and reactivated in 2020, the **Center for Multicultural Education (CME)** facilitates PK-20+ multicultural education-focused scholarship-to-practice endeavors: cultivates collaborative camps-based and community-embedded educational partnerships; and serves the campus and community as a resource for training, professional development on issues of social justice; and produces and disseminates critically-conscious research to inform local, state, national and international education policy.

The **Interaction & Media Sciences Lab (IMS)** focuses on technological research concerning human-computer interaction, video games, game-based models, virtual reality, and simulations. IMS provides graduate students with mentorship opportunities to learn the skills necessary for future vocations from the human perspective of technological innovations.

The **Partnership for Research, Assessment, Counseling, Therapy, and Innovative, Clinical Education (The Practice)** is a community mental health training clinic. The PRACTICE is committed to providing affordable, evidence-based mental health care to the community and the highest quality training to students from various mental health and behavioral healthcare disciplines. Research is both integrated into and generated from all the clinic's functions.

The mission of the **Office of Learning Analytics (OLA)** is to share complex forms of data in ways that can provide useful insights to improve learning and leadership. We combine learning science (educational research, assessment, and technology) and analytics (data science, statistics, visualizations) to provide descriptive, diagnostic, and predictive information to stakeholders.

*Learn more about our Centers  
and Labs on our website.*



# Rodman Scholars

Thanks to a \$12.9 million donation from the late Kitty Rodman, a stalwart supporter of education in the state of Nevada, the College of Education established the Rodman Scholars program in 2014. Designated to support scholarships and graduate fellowships for UNLV students pursuing careers in special education, the specially designed program supports all tuition and fees for participating students. Rodman Scholars participate in an intensive 1-year program where they complete their Bachelor of Science degree (67 credits) and be licensed as a generalist special educator in a single academic year.



## Diana Murcia

**Academic Standing:** Senior, with plans to pursue a Master's degree  
**Hometown:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Praying, spending time with my family, and working out.  
**Career Goals:** Work in education.



## Joseph Castellanos

**Academic Standing:** Junior/Senior  
**Hometown:** South Gate, CA  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Hanging out with my significant other and dogs, and reading.  
**Career Goals:** To become a role model for children, and tackle issues of classism, colorism, and racism in our society and education system.



## Jennifer Hernandez

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Make time for self-care.  
**Career Goals:** To become an elementary School teacher in Las Vegas and then relocate to California to teach near the beach.



## Jessica Kalen

**Academic Standing:** Senior, with plans to pursue a Master's degree  
**Hometown:** Honolulu, HI  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** I love to be outdoors, do DIY projects, read, and watch movies.  
**Career Goals:** To become a special needs educator in the elementary school setting.



## Tiara Parker

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Photography  
**Career Goals:** To become an education specialist for children with Autism.



## Roy Mendez

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Digital art, scenic painting, woodworking.  
**Career Goals:** To become a middle school resource teacher, special education activist, and leader for emergent bilingual students with mild to moderate disabilities.



## Zhi Li

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Shanghai, China  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Badminton and hiking  
**Career Goals:** To become a high school special education teacher.



## Marquelyn Janda

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Henderson, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** I enjoy hiking, overlanding, off-roading, pottery, cooking, yoga, and spending time with my loved ones.  
**Career Goals:** To make a significant impact in the field of special education and in the lives of the students I will be teaching.



**Yvonne Jackson**

**Academic Standing:** Junior, with plans to pursue a Master's degree  
**Hometown:** Pico Rivera, California  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Gardening, photography, and interior design.  
**Career Goals:** To become a student counselor and college instructor.



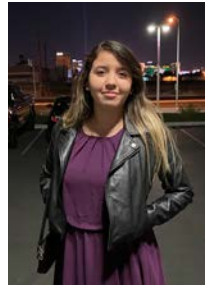
**Kimberly Sturgis**

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Sugarloaf, PA  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Rock climbing, reading, and working out.  
**Career Goals:** To work as a special education teacher for children with Autism or work in Applied Behavior Therapy (ABA).



**Hale Zorlu**

**Academic Standing:** Senior, with plans to pursue a Master's degree  
**Hometown:** Turkey  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** Reading books, exercising/healthcare, community service, and traveling.  
**Career Goals:** To become an efficient teacher with continuous professional growth in special education.



**Esmeralda Lopez**

**Academic Standing:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** I enjoy art and outdoor activities.  
**Career Goals:** To become a teacher for students with Autism.



**Taylor Tesar-Cicci**

**Academic Standing:** Junior  
**Hometown:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Fun Facts/Hobbies:** I love live theatre, making earrings, painting/coloring, and all things related to the arts.  
**Career Goals:** To become a teacher for students with emotional and behavioral disorders and become a behavior mentor.





# Teach Nevada Scholars

The Teach Nevada Scholarship is one of many efforts to address the teacher shortage by increasing the quantity and quality of effective teachers, and ensuring equitable distribution of teachers across all schools. Originally created by the Nevada Legislature in 2015, the purpose of the program is to provide grants to universities, colleges, and providers of alternative route to licensure programs to award scholarship to students entering teaching programs with a special focus on students meeting the following criteria: recent high school graduates who have not yet enrolled in a teacher education program; students who are currently enrolled in a non-education related program and change their academic program to teacher preparation; students who have completed some credits or possess a bachelor's degree in a non-education related field and enroll in a teacher education or ARL program; veterans and spouses of veterans; or students who have some experience working in a classroom as a paraprofessional or substitute teacher.



**Deborah Britton**

**Early Childhood Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2021**

Deborah's son, who has Autism, is her inspiration and the reason why she changed her career path from Interior Design to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). After moving to Las Vegas in

2004, Deborah accepted a position as a Specialized Programs Teacher Assistant (SPTA) in the area of Special Education for the Clark County School District and worked in the school district for 16 years. Her future goals are to eventually continue her education and pursue her Master's in ECSE.



**Kenneth Brown**

**Curriculum & Instruction, Secondary English (M.Ed.)**  
**Expected Graduation 2021**

Kenneth was inspired by his wife to return to school and receiving the Teach Nevada Scholarship and it made graduate school in the

College of Education possible for him. Kenneth has called Nevada home for most of his life, and he is a product of the Clark County School District. With his degree, Kenneth plans on helping make the district better for all students, but especially those students who are POC (people of color) and/or LGBTQ+.



**Katherine Cain '19**

**Curriculum & Instruction, Elementary Education (M.Ed.)**

The Teach Nevada Scholarship helped Katherine believe that anything is possible with hard work. She loves kids and teaching. Her daughter was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 2, and her interest piqued

on how to help teach her and led Katherine to discovering the field of education. With the Teach Nevada Scholarship, she was able to obtain her Master's degree and begin teaching kindergarten in the Clark County School District. Eventually she hopes to become a school administrator or principal.



**Jada Campbell**

**Elementary Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2021**

The Teach Nevada Scholarship has opened doors for Jada and her future as an educator.

Through this scholarship, she has been granted the opportunity to receive guidance, tools, and

academics to pursue her aspirations to teach. There are endless inspirations that led her to become an educator, but inspiration that stands out most is her love of learning. It is the greatest honor to see young children make discoveries and connections about the world around them. As an educator, she is able to walk alongside the students throughout their journey by supplying them with the tools to achieve their goals. She hopes to have these impacts on her students throughout her future years as a teacher and her gratitude goes to this scholarship for making her dreams a reality.



**Sara Del Mastro**

**Early Childhood Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2022**

Sara was inspired by her Mom to pursue teaching. Now, the Teach Nevada Scholarship is making that goal a possibility. Sara is grateful to the Teach Nevada Scholarship and the many other generous

scholarships she received that are giving her the opportunity to attend school without higher costs. Sara plans to pursue a career in this area because she wants to teach little kids and make an impact on the rest of their lives, just like her Mom does.





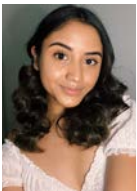
**Jillian Ebrahimi**  
**Master of Education (M.Ed.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2021**

Jillian has always loved school and learning. When she was a kid, she would come home from school, set up her stuffed animals, and read to them or teach them lessons. As she grew older, school became not only a place of intellectual exploration, but a place she found some of her closest friends and mentors. After completing her own education and graduating from the University of Nevada, Reno, she joined City Year, an AmeriCorps program where she served as an mentor and academic coach to middle school students in Sacramento, Calif. She fell in love with the classroom again and it was actually her students who encouraged her to pursue a career in teaching. Thanks to their support and enthusiasm and the Teach Nevada Scholarship, Jillian is now in her second year teaching with Teach for America Las Vegas in the Clark County School District as a 6th grade science teacher. In addition to the financial benefits of the award, she is grateful the Teach Nevada Scholarship has also helped her network and connect with administrators, educators, and other students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. These opportunities have provided her with support and guidance as she advances in her career and education.



**Edith Hall '19**  
**Secondary English Language Arts (M.Ed.)**

After receiving her B.A. from UNLV in Political Science in 2014, Edith was able to return to school and pursue new opportunities with the Teach Nevada Scholarship. She had been contemplating going back to school for a Master's in Education but was hesitant because of the out-of-pocket expense. However, her husband who is a veteran, received a notice that spouses of veterans were eligible for the Teach Nevada Scholarship. Edith entered the program in 2016 with an emphasis on Secondary English Language Arts (ELA). At the beginning of her second year in the program, she was hired to work at the same middle school that she attended as a student. Edith is still teaching ELA concepts in a middle school in the Clark County School District, and for the last two years she has also been able to explore other academic areas by teaching students Forensic Science.



**Mariah Hernandez**  
**Early Childhood Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2023**

Mariah plans to pursue a career in Nevada as a preschool teacher because Nevada has many wonderful opportunities for aspiring educators. Mariah's third grade teacher inspired her to pursue a degree and career in Education. The Teach Nevada Scholarship is helping her realize these goals by relieving the burden of paying for college and allowing her to focus on her studies more. The opportunity came to her at the perfect time and she could not be happier to be a recipient of these funds.



**Alyssa Hilboldt-Sanford '20**  
**Special Education (M.S.)**

Alyssa's passion for helping kids gain the confidence they need to succeed inspired her to pursue a degree and career in Special Education. The Teach Nevada Scholarship made it easier for her to earn her degree and achieve her goals.



**Robert Jones '18**  
**Secondary Education (M.Ed.)**

The Teach Nevada Scholarship made it possible for Robert to pursue his lifelong goal of becoming a classroom teacher. He has always been interested in a career path in education because he has always enjoyed working with kids.



**Heather Locke '18**  
**Elementary Education (M.S.)**

Being awarded the Teach Nevada Scholarship, Heather had the opportunity to spend much more time focusing on her education and work in the classroom without worrying so much about financial strains. Education has been her passion since she was a young child, and she is now a proud kindergarten teacher in the Clark County School District. She loves being a teacher because every day is something new and exciting, and she loves to watch her students grow and fulfill their academic dreams and achieve success.



**Ilyssa McBride**  
**Elementary Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2022**

The Teach Nevada Scholarship is very significant to Ilyssa because education has always been a crucial part of her life. Since kindergarten, she has wanted to be a teacher. Ilyssa loved assisting her teachers throughout her school career, always asking to help and staying after school to help tutor students and grade assignments. When life at home was not the best, school was always a safe haven for her. Teaching will let her help kids, just like her teachers did for her. Ilyssa appreciates the opportunity to take advantage of programs and resources in the College to further cement her teaching dream. While she has dealt with others discouraging her chosen career path, she does not let these comments impact her negatively... Instead, they make her resolve to teach much stronger. She believes that inspiring and helping children is the definition of success and the best use of any talent, and hopes to teach upper elementary grades. Bettering Nevada education is important to Ilyssa because it is where she received most of her education, and she believes that this firsthand experience will allow her to truly have an impact here. Ilyssa is eager to start her job search as she knows earning the Teach Nevada Scholarship will help her land an amazing first teaching job.



**Olusola Oyekale '20**  
**Special Education (M.S.)**

Olusola received the Teach Nevada Scholarship at a critical time in her life and she is grateful for the especially positive impact it had on her. Before attending school at the College of Education, Olusola worked in the field of Education as a support staff for 13 years. She relocated to Nevada to become a teacher and is again grateful for the Teach Nevada Scholarship for helping her get here. Someday, she hopes to become a college professor or a school administrator.



**Salvatore Pantaleo '20**  
**Multidisciplinary Studies (M.Ed.)**

Salvatore hopes that many more students and aspiring teachers have the opportunity to earn the Teach Nevada Scholarship because it was such an essential part of him finishing his degree and pursuing a teaching career. The scholarship made it possible for him to attain his Master's degree after changing careers later in life.



**Shawn Rosen '19**  
**Master of Education (M.Ed.)**

Shawn is grateful for the Teach Nevada Scholarship because it granted him the ability to pursue and earn his degree and work toward his dreams of creating a good name for his family and helping make the world a better place one student at a time. Shawn believes that education is the career where he can make the most difference. He loves the feeling of knowing that someone now knows something because he just taught it to them. Shawn believes it's priceless when students let him know that the knowledge he taught them has helped them in their futures, and, thanks to the Teach Nevada Scholarship, Shawn will continue to make strong impacts on students.



**Nola Smith**  
**Elementary Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2023**

Nola is able to attend the College of Education with the financial support of the Teach Nevada Scholarship and it means the world to her. Nola's drive to become a teacher was both fueled by the inspiration wonderful teachers gave her and wanting to have more of a positive impact on students. Her desire to fix issues and make the education system better is what motivates her the most. She plans to possibly pursue a principal or curriculum specialist position later in her career. Nola decided to begin her career in Nevada because it is where she grew up and she wants to help her home city first.



**Makenzi Solis**  
**Special Education (B.S.)**  
**Expected Graduation: 2022**

Makenzi has wanted to be a teacher since she was young. Because she never really connected to a teacher throughout her education, Makenzi now wants to be that person for her students—a teacher they can rely on and a teacher who makes them feel motivated to learn. She believes she was born to work with the Special Education community and teach and advocate for their beautiful souls. Makenzi is so grateful that she will have the chance to work with them and make an impact in their lives, because they certainly will have an impact on her. Because Makenzi wants to work with adults with special needs, it is important for her to pursue a career in Nevada as there are a very limited number of resources for this age group in Las Vegas. She believes this community needs another person on their side, and she wants to be that person. Thanks to the Teach Nevada Scholarship, Makenzi will be graduating debt free.



**Matthew Wilson '20**  
**Curriculum & Instruction (M.Ed.)**

Matthew was originally working three jobs while attending school full time, but thanks to the support of the Teach Nevada Scholarship, he was able to work significantly less, improve his quality of life and focus on his education more. Matthew has always loved school and learning—he had an amazing math teacher in his middle school years, Mr. Kenneth Steadman, and wanted to follow in his footsteps and inspire students to achieve more than they thought possible. He believes learning is all about pushing oneself to limits unknown. He also wants to thank Lauren Layton, Kristen Dellasala, and Tracy Spies for bringing the scholarship to his attention and working so closely with him. Their hard work and the Teach Nevada Scholarship are heavily responsible for his success during his master's program at the College of Education.

*Learn more about the  
Teach Nevada Scholarship on  
our website.*



# Nevada Institute on Teaching & Educator Preparation (NITEP) Fellows

The Nevada Institute on Teaching & Educator Preparation (NITEP) is an initiative that has a goal to enroll new students and aspiring scholars into teaching, and prepare them for an environment that demands constant innovation. NITEP was created via Senate Bill 548 during the 2017 Nevada Legislative Session. The College of Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas was selected to host NITEP in November 2017. With this unique initiative, that places students in an advanced study program, future educators will gain skills to serve as mentors and leaders in Nevada K-12 school systems.

A central component to NITEP is to provide both financial rewards to student participants (up to \$25,000 over four years) and distinct leadership opportunities for the undergraduate education student. NITEP's goal is to enlist promising scholars into teaching, to prepare them in an environment that demands constant innovation, and to ready them for advanced leadership opportunities throughout their careers.

## Cohort 1 (Fall 2018)



**Sara Del Mastro | Early Childhood**

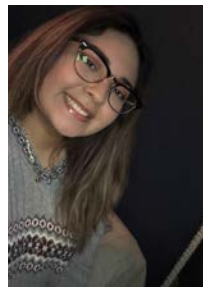
**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My mother is an amazing special education pre-kindergarten teacher, and volunteering in her classroom inspired me.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It allows my tuition to be covered so I can focus on saving my money for the future.



**Olaya Perez | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My experiences learning math in classrooms inspired me to teach material in a more beneficial and engaging way.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It has helped with the stress of tuition costs while also allowing me to meet others who share the same passions.



**Ilyssa McBride | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

School was always a safe haven for me and the teachers I had inspired me to help children.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has helped me afford tuition and supplies while allowing me to spend more time finding ways to be active in the world of education.



**Makenzi Solis | Special Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I have always wanted to be a teacher since I was a little girl. I don't have any specific connections to the special needs community, but I felt drawn to it.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It is allowing me to leave my undergrad debt-free, which is a pretty extraordinary thing.

## Not Pictured:

**Jessica Gonzalez | Special Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

# COHORT 2

## (Fall 2019/Spring 2020)



### **Nayeli Arias | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

When picking my major, I thought about all the wonderful teachers I had throughout the years. I remembered what great role models they were and how impactful they are in my life.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

The NITEP program has made a positive impact on me by providing opportunities for me to grow as a professional.



### **Erin Ayers | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I've always loved school, and when I got my first job watching students after school, I fell in love with working with them too. I decided I wanted to combine these two passions and be able to spread my love for learning to future students.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

The scholarship has been very helpful for me because it has allowed me to not have to take out loans, and it helps pay for my book expenses every semester without worrying about costs.



### **Deborah Britton | Early Childhood Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My son who has Autism was my inspiration in changing my academic path from pursuing a career in Interior Design to a career in Early Childhood Special Education.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

Receiving this scholarship has allowed me to take a leave of absence from my position as a Support Staff for the Clark County School District to complete my pre-student and student teaching assignment for the Fall and Spring 2020-2021 semesters and I am very grateful for that.



### **Jada Campbell | Elementary Education**

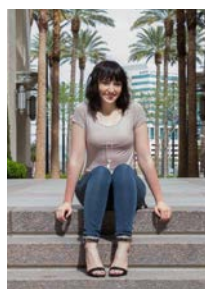
**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

As a teacher, you are given the opportunity to shape the lives of our youth and future generations. Each day I will be able to educate, inspire, and empower my students to reach for the stars.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship impacts my life immensely by granting me the opportunity to receive the best education to achieve my aspiration to become a teacher.



### **Hannah Hudson | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

The teachers that I have had the pleasure of knowing throughout my educational journey greatly impacted my life and gave me a purpose. I chose education because I hope to inspire students to be great.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

The scholarship has helped give me the resources to start my education career before I have even started. This scholarship has also helped give me a better perspective on how to be a researcher, which is a key component of being a successful educator.



### **Sandra Joseph | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I decided that I wanted to be one of the teachers that would help a student work through their problems and build a safe community within my classroom.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has helped support my education by providing the necessary funds to pay for school and supplies that will enhance my learning.



# COHORT 2

## (Fall 2019/Spring 2020)



### **Elizabeth Kniffen | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I've known since I was very young that I loved teaching other people and that one day I wanted to teach and help kids.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship will help me be able to get through college comfortably as well as give me the knowledge and experience needed to be the best teacher I can be.



### **Anali Macias | Music Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I want to be able to inspire hope in my students and I feel that by teaching them music, they will have a broader outlook on their own dreams and aspirations.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

Thanks to this scholarship I am more free to focus on my studies because I no longer need to work a second job during the semester.



### **Alana McCall | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I have known since a young age that teaching was the right career path for me. My mom was a big inspiration for me because she has been teaching since before I was born.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has lifted a huge financial burden off of my shoulders. Without it, I would have a totally different college experience. The NITEP Program has given me new opportunities, new friends, and chances for professional development that I would not have otherwise had.



### **Maryssa Morgan | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

Teaching is my calling, and I want to be a positive role model for the children of the future. I want to teach and develop young minds to dive deeper, be critical thinkers, never give up, and to never stop reaching their goals, no matter how big or small.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship impacted my life by giving me an opportunity to pursue my educational career without a financial burden. It has also introduced me to research topics that helped me observe the customs and behaviors of students more in-depth.



### **Colleen Narayan | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I knew that I wanted my whole to be a witness to lightbulb moments.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It meant that I would be able to attend college with minimal debt! I probably wouldn't have picked UNLV if I didn't have this scholarship.



### **Jannie Nigoza | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

Growing up, I always enjoyed school and learning. I knew that I wanted to help others in my career and I realized throughout the years that teaching would allow me to make an impact in my community.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

As a first-generation college student, this scholarship has helped me fund my college education. In addition to funding, I have been able to meet many great people.

# COHORT 2

## (Fall 2019/Spring 2020)



### **Lauren Patterson | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

The lack of diversity of Nevada school teachers made me want to pursue a degree in elementary education. It is important for students to see people that look like them in academic professions so they realize that their dreams are attainable.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship positively impacted my life by making it possible to go to school without being in debt. This has given me the courage to fully pursue my goals without having money as a hindrance to my success.



### **Sinéad Pelleschi | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I love learning and I want to make a difference in other people's lives. I enjoy working with children. I'm a mom, and I taught dance to children and teenagers for nearly two decades, before returning to education.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

I am a working mom. Financially, this fellowship goes towards my tuition and expenses making it possible for me to attend school. The opportunities, research, and experience I receive as a NITEP Fellow is invaluable as I continue with my education and prepare for a career in education.



### **Nola Smith | Secondary Education**

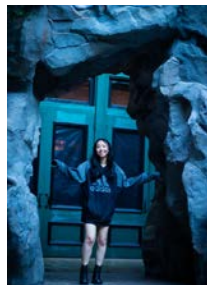
**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

It is a job that I am passionate about. I want to help inspire students to learn but also better prepare them for life.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It enabled me to have the finances to pursue a career in education.



### **Justice Tiguelo | Special Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

As soon as I saw how forming meaningful relationships with students and carefully developed lesson plans can come together to make a beautiful difference in a child's life, I knew I wanted to be a part of education. Students are whole human beings filled with immeasurable potential, and an educator's contribution to their growth and empowerment is essential.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

I've been able to have many opportunities and access to information that defines innovation in education. This gives me and my peers the means to research ways we can reorient and build better ways to connect with students.



### **Allison Thomas | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I have always been passionate about education, but my senior year calculus teacher inspired me to pursue a career in education. She inspired me to be the best version of myself, and helped every student to succeed in her class.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

*This scholarship has given me the opportunity to research topics that I am interested in.*

# COHORT 2

## (Fall 2019/Spring 2020)



**Leilah Torres | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I was inspired to pursue a career and degree in education by my first grade teacher. He always told me I would be a great teacher one day and ever since, teaching just felt right. I want to inspire students like my teachers inspired me.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship impacted my life by providing me opportunities to research ways to make education better, specifically the underrepresentation of teachers of color in schools and how this can be improved. This scholarship also helped me pay for my tuition at UNLV, which is really helpful because I pay for school out of my own pocket.



**April Zangari | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

Becoming a teacher, for me, is about having a platform to make a tangible difference in the lives and futures of bright, capable, and diverse kids.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

I have not only gained a better sense of belonging at UNLV, but I have also felt a part of something bigger than myself and what I'm currently doing academically. Being a NITEP Fellow is like wearing a badge of honor; I have never felt as close and connected to UNLV and the College as I do after being awarded this scholarship.



**Angela Williams | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

What inspired me to pursue a degree in education was a multitude of factors, but it can be boiled down to three important things: good teachers, bad teachers, and oppression because of my financial status as a child.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

With NITEP, I get to engage with a lot of research projects and networking opportunities. I also get to know members of my college a lot better and got to network with staff within the college more in-depth.



**Yongchun Ye | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I want to be a teacher in the United States like I was in China.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It is helping me continue pursuing my dream of becoming a teacher.

## Not Pictured:

**Sebastian Cardenas | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Senior**

**Marlyn Catral | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

# COHORT 3

## (Fall 2020)



### **Claudia Chilson | Elementary Education**

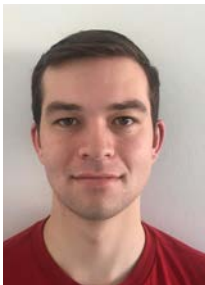
**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I always knew as a little kid I wanted to become a teacher. I enjoyed going to school and learning new things.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has impacted my life by giving me an opportunity to learn more about how to become a teacher.



### **Kameron Cox | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My experience in the education system and the experiences I have had in teaching others.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It has allowed me to further develop my interest in teaching in an affordable and meaningful manner.



### **Kendra Beach | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I was inspired to become a better version of the past teachers that I had in school. I want to be someone that kids enjoy being around and are not afraid to express themselves.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

The NITEP scholarship financially supports me on such a large scale, but also, I am mentally supported by the scholarship because UNLV believed in me so much that I was given a four-year scholarship to achieve the dream of becoming a teacher.



### **Fayth Dean | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Sophomore**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I really want to inspire children at a young age to stay in school, and that's why I chose elementary education in particular.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship is helping to pay for my books and part of my tuition. Because of this scholarship, that is less money I have to pay and I'm getting closer to getting my degree.



### **Destiney Duff | Early Childhood Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I dream of making a positive impact on today's youth and encouraging them to be their best selves.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship helped me with the costs of some of my tuition, which is overall allowing me to further my education.



### **Jackson Ellsworth | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

Bringing passion to education can have such a profound effect on students and truly make their education better. I hope to be able to make that change in students' lives.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It's given me countless opportunities and really reinvigorated my desire to be an educator.



# COHORT 3

## (Fall 2020)



### **MaryKate Enciso | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

Working with children who were behind in English and math is what really inspired me to work with children. I got to make a difference in their lives and help them understand subjects they thought they could never grasp.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship impacted my life by opening up opportunities and relieving a lot of financial burden and stress off of my shoulders.



### **Jaiden Kurz | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My kindergarten teacher inspired my career choice. She was my very first teacher and from the first day I left her class, I wanted to be just like her.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This fellowship along with a few other scholarships made it possible for me to have my tuition and other fees completely covered. Having my funds covered gives me the opportunity to focus on my degree and research.



### **Miranda Garcia | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My teachers pushed me to overcome my circumstances—I want to be that person for students. I want kids to know that no matter what they are going through, they will get through it.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has made a huge impact in my life. It gives me the opportunity to pursue something I love and be able to experience higher education.



### **Kyla Luna | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

The satisfaction of helping others inspires me to be a teacher to better young adults' education and hopefully inspire them to be who and what they want to be.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It is an overall great program. It opens the doors to many opportunities. This scholarship impacts me because paying for college is not easy, but this helps my family and me financially.



### **Skylar Jones Speaber | Elementary Education**

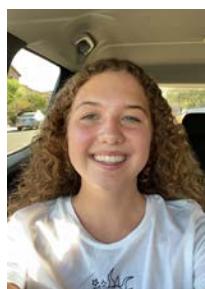
**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

Overall, I think every aspect of my educational journey has motivated me to become an educator that wants to break down class divides, emphasize direct action, and change my little corner of the world.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship impacted my life because it allows me to focus on my studies and try to get the most out of my time at UNLV, instead of having to work my way through college.



### **Alina Oranchak | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I love helping children and have always dreamed of being a teacher.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

It has made paying for college a lot easier and will give me more opportunities in the field of teaching.

# COHORT 3

## (Fall 2020)



### **Sara Pearson | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My previous teachers are what inspired me to pursue a career and degree in Education. I had some teachers that made visible efforts to make sure that everyone could understand the concepts that were taught by teaching the same concepts in different ways.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has allowed me to not have to worry so much about the financial aspects of college which I am extremely grateful for, especially during the pandemic.



### **Frida Perez | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My experiences as a child inspired me to help children as they begin their academic journeys. I want to ensure their spark for learning isn't lost and that they receive the best education, no matter the circumstances.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

I am able to research the minds of the students I will teach in the future, as well as have a community by my side.



### **Kaila Pia | Early Childhood Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I was inspired to pursue my career in education because of the reward of seeing kids become successful.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship impacts my life by allowing me to get a huge opportunity to really make a difference with kids.



### **Frank Schmidt | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I believe that I have a gift for teaching others difficult concepts. That led me to pursue education because I see it as my calling.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

Because of this scholarship, I am able to attend my college of choice without having to worry about how to pay for my textbooks or classes.



### **Samuel Self | Secondary Education**

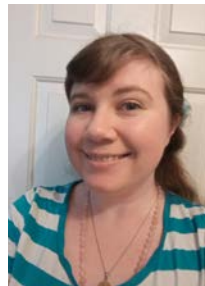
**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My interest in education began at the dinner table, where I learned the complexity and significance of the public education system.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

The NITEP fellowship alleviated the additional stress that comes with the responsibilities of higher education. Not just the financial burden, but the transition to becoming truly independent also poses a challenge.



### **Franchesca Siegfried | Special Education**

**Academic Standing: Junior**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

My grandmother was a Spanish teacher and my mother is a science teacher. Even if my path is a subject different from theirs, I am carrying the family tradition.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

I get to be part of a program that can help me understand working in the education field in Nevada. Through this program, it can help prepare me for the future while I make friendships along the way.

# COHORT 3

## (Fall 2020)



**Fae Ung | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I've always wanted to be a teacher ever since I was in elementary school because I enjoyed the feeling of teaching other people about topics I care about.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship made me realize that I can and will make an impact by choosing this career path.



**Ariana Walcott | Elementary Education**

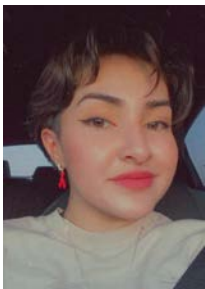
**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I was inspired by all of my teachers that influenced me as a student.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship gave me all the motivation to continue my schooling.



**Azul Ureño-Villalba | Art Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

What has inspired me is experiencing and seeing the hardships students endure.

There have been too many times where I have been looked over and forced into a mold. I believe that there must be a change in the way we teach and view students.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

This scholarship has impacted my life because even though we are amidst a global pandemic, I am being given support, attention, and time.



**Sofia Vieira | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

*What inspired you to pursue a career and degree in Education?*

I enjoy teaching children and helping them grow and understand new things.

*How did this scholarship impact your life?*

Financially, it was difficult for my family to help me pay for my education and this allowed me to attend a four-year university.

## Not Pictured

**Samantha Ortega Nunez | Secondary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

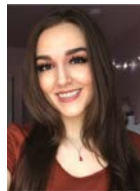
**Victoria Zimmer | Elementary Education**

**Academic Standing: Freshman**

# College of Education Scholarships

Thanks to the sustained support of generous community donors and their families—many of whom are former educators themselves—the College of Education is able to offer scholarships to future practitioners who will make a difference in the field of education and in the lives of children and families for generations to come.

## Barbara L. Lochridge Memorial Scholarship



**Kayla Meyers**  
Elementary Education B.S.

"I have dreamt about becoming a teacher since I was in second grade. Fourteen years later, I am about to enter my senior year at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Thank you for supporting aspiring educators in their pursuit of a higher

education...This donation is not only helping me, but the hundreds of children I may one day have the pleasure of working with as well, and for that I am so appreciative."

## Edward Pierson Memorial Scholarship



**Chengcheng Li**  
Teacher Education Ph.D.

"Thank you for your generosity, which allowed me to cope with challenges and changes due to COVID-19 and continue to be committed to my dissertation and research. Donors like you make life brighter for us. I can only hope that one day, I

too will pay it forward."

## Catherine Vaglio Scholarship



**Leonardo Macias**  
Human Services B.S.

"...with this scholarship I can focus on my studies and continue to give back to the communities that helped me get where I am today."



**Sukhjit Narwal**  
Secondary Education, English Composition B.S.

"Teachers are the start of a strong tidal wave that ignite power within students. Your generous gift has definitely supported my future and has helped me focus more on serving the students that will walk into my classroom."



**LeAndra Thompson**  
Curriculum & Instruction M.Ed.

"I am excited to continue in my studies, and I am grateful for this scholarship as it is helping make it financially possible to do so. This scholarship allows me to focus on my students and my academic goal of receiving my Master's in Education without financial stress."



**Jason Saltzman**  
Curriculum & Instruction M.Ed.

"Your generosity reminds me to continue to do my best even when no one is looking. Energy comes back when we never expect it."

## Chester D. Simms Scholarship



**Eunice Medina**  
Human Services B.S.

"In these insecure and challenging times it is even more appreciated not to have to worry about tuition and be able to concentrate on my studies."



**Christina Molina**  
Higher Education M.Ed.

"The generosity and support will allow me to focus on my studies and alleviate financial burdens during such an unprecedented time. I am grateful to have your support and encouragement throughout this semester."



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EDUCATION

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