LEADR Staff

Tanya Whitlow
Director
- From Sacramento, CA
- B.A. Psychology from UC Davis
- M.A. Higher Education Leadership from Sacramento State
- Professional Experience:
  - Success Through Collaboration: MESA's American Indian Program
  - UC Berkeley Upward Bound Program/Math & Science Program
  - Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement Program (MESA) Minority Engineering Program
  - UC Davis College of Engineering Undergraduate Advising Office
  - Design, Develop, Direct Leadership in Engineering Advancement, Diversity and Retention (LEADR)
- Fun fact: Loves music

Abraham Arellano
Program Coordinator
- From El Monte, CA
- B.S. Mechanical Engineering from UC Davis ‘19
- LEADR Experience
  - LEADR Center Safety Monitor
  - LEADR Summer Bridge Resident Mentor (2017) and Lead Resident Mentor (2018)
  - Summer Transitional Enrichment Program (STEP) 2014
  - Joined LEADR Team to assist with LEADR Summer Bridge and STEP Coordination
- Fun fact: Outdoor enthusiast
LEADR Staff

Ashley Pelham
Program Advisor
- From Fresno, CA
- B.A. Psychology from Fresno State
- M.Ed. Counselor Education from North Carolina State University
- Professional Experience:
  - Universal Healthcare
  - Graduate Career Services Intern College of Computer Science, North Carolina State University
  - Career Specialist, Wake Technical Community College
  - LEADR Advisor (Joined us in January 2020!)
- Fun fact: Avid DIYer

Laura Hackett
Program Advisor
- From Gridley, CA
- B.S. Biology & Society, education minor from Cornell University
- M.S. Counseling from Fresno State
- Professional Experience:
  - Rising Farmworker Dream Fund–nonprofit scholarship fund
  - School Counseling Group– educational consulting
  - Fresno State SupportNet Early Alert Program
  - LEADR Advisor
- Fun fact: Sports fanatic– Go Giants!!
LEADR Mission

To recruit, retain, and graduate, a diverse population of undergraduate students in the College of Engineering and develop high standards of academic achievement and professional skills in these students to ensure their success upon graduation.
Who is eligible for LEADR?

- All first year and first-generation and/or EOP engineering students
- Students who have participated in high school enrichment programs (i.e. MESA, Puente, AVID, High School Engineering Programs)
- Students with potential for leadership in increasing the participation of students in engineering from historically underrepresented groups
LEADR Components

- LEADR Summer Bridge
- LEADR Living-Learning Community
- Academic Advising
- Student Study Center
- LEADR Courses: Engineering 11A & ENG 11B
- Tutoring
- Professional Development
- Leadership Development
Access to quality advising

- Quarterly advising holds and progress checks with LEADR Program Advisors through the beginning of the junior year and beyond

- Participation Portfolio (keep track of academic, personal, professional goals; establish action plans)
Professional Development & Career Readiness

- Resume Prep
- Career Fair Prep
- Job Search Assistance
- Alumni Mentoring
LEADRship Development

- LEADR Ambassadors

Engineering Multi-Cultural Club Support:
  - Black Engineers Association
  - Chicano and Latino Engineers & Scientists Society
Our Partnerships

- Special Transition Enrichment Program (STEP)
- Academic Assistance and Tutoring Center (AA&TC)
- Internship and Career Center (ICC)
- Center for Leadership and Learning (CLL)
- Education Opportunity Program (EOP)
- UC LEADS & McNair Scholars Programs
- Industry – Chevron and AT&T
Next: LEADR Student Testimonials
Hello! My name is Andrew Ramirez and I am a current 4th year student studying chemical engineering. I am from a small town called Beaumont in Riverside county. My first introduction to UC Davis was my visit during the Aggie Senior Weekend trip. I absolutely fell in love with the friendliness, compassion, and strong community that Davis cultivated at campus in every single resource I looked for.

As a first-generation college student and child of Mexican immigrants, I found myself interested in multiple engineering fields but still unsure what to pursue. Due to my unfamiliarity with engineering, I decided to choose chemical engineering which gave me the opportunity to dabble in various subjects. This major allowed me to conduct research in diverse fields, from renewable energy to diabetic foot ulcers. I even had the opportunity to work on catalytic converters at the University of Minnesota for a summer internship!

As a result of the lack of mentors I obtained throughout my K-12 education, I was afraid about how I could make the most of my time at college. Through workshops and informative meetings with advisors and my cohort, I learned how to flourish and be self-sufficient at the university level. I would not have known “how to college” if it wasn’t for LEADR. LEADR provided me with the first steps to succeed and boost my confidence. LEADR is my home away from home and they are the support group I can always lean on.
Hello! My name is Naveena Ujagar and I am a LEADR student and a graduating Biomedical Engineer. I am originally from Sacramento, CA and am a first generation college student, as well as the oldest of two younger sisters. I chose to come to UCD because it was close enough to home, yet far enough for me to be independent, and for the extensive research opportunities available here. Besides academics, the city of Davis is beautiful and it is refreshing to be among the greenery and kindness of Davis residents.

Growing up I always gravitated towards science and math, but was especially interested and in awe of human biology, and in high school I became particularly fascinated with physics. It was also in high school when I heard of the field of Biomedical Engineering, and learned that it combined my love for physics and biology to modulate and synthesize the human body. So as college applications came around I decided to major in Biomedical Engineering, and have truly found my calling in the field.

Once I was accepted into UCD, I got a recruitment email from a program called LEADR. I decided to join because they offered resources, support and community especially for first-generation and marginalized communities, which I was seeking out because as the oldest, first-generation sibling I was scared of failing and being unsupported throughout my college career. However, the LEADR program has offered me so much more than I expected. I have made life-long friends here, was provided a safe space to study and stay focused, and received advising from people who truly care about me as a person and as a student.

Overall, LEADR has helped me succeed and thrive in my transition from high school to college, and throughout my college experience. Some other activities that helped my transition and success/learning in college was joining clubs, going to tutoring, conducting research in a lab, asking for help (even outside of academics), and taking part in special Aggie activities (like sporting events, dorm events, picnic day, etc.).
Hello, I am Sarahi Granados and I am a 4th year undergraduate student majoring in Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering. I was born and raised in Riverside, California so coming to UC Davis was a pretty big change for me. Thankfully, I was able to learn about the amazing programs offered on campus that convinced me to attend.

Growing up, I was extremely fascinated with spacecraft and aircraft so, I aimed to pursue a career in the space industry. I knew UC Davis was going to help me achieve my dreams as I learned about its great engineering department and the programs in it. That is exactly what the Leadership in Engineering Advancement, Diversity and Retention (LEADR) Program did. I received individual tutoring for courses I was struggling with, one-on-one advising, connections with alumni who are currently working at NASA and Lockheed Martin, a job as a Safety Monitor for the study space LEADR provides, and most importantly, long-lasting friendships.

Through the LEADR Program, I also received guidance on how to get involved with research and internships. I learned about California Alliance for Minority Participation (CAMP), which gave me funding to conduct research during the summer. LEADR also introduced me to Chicano and Latino Engineers & Scientists Society (CALESS), which taught me how to network and build a strong resume. Through this organization, I was able to receive an internship with Northrop Grumman because of the connections I made.

Overall, my experience at UC Davis has been great and I am extremely thankful for what LEADR has done!
Hello, my name is Tijesuni Oyeyemi. I’m a UC Davis Freshman, a member of the LEADR community and an Electrical Engineering major. I’m from Nigeria, but I immigrated to Sacramento in 2018. I am passionate about solving problems and interested in renewable energy, so I decided to study Electrical Engineering. I aim to pursue entrepreneurship, after graduation.

The decision to come to UC Davis was not easy. For me, it was either here or the University of Michigan. I decided to come here because of the beautiful campus, the warm and friendly atmosphere, and Davis's proximity to not only California’s capital, Sacramento but also to the global tech capital, “Silicon Valley”.

I deferred my enrollment for the fall and began in Winter Quarter 2020. My transition to college was challenging, but with assistance from the wonderful people at the Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS) and LEADR, I obtained all the advice and information that I needed to get going.

College is what you make it be, and at UC Davis there are lots of ways to get socially involved. I joined an intramural soccer team and the Guitar Club. If you’re passionate about making an impact, there are lots of opportunities for you here. The Student Startup Center holds impactful events and gives you opportunities to bring your ideas to life. I also attended two hack-a-thons in the Winter Quarter: Tree Hacks at Stanford and Hack Davis at UC Davis. So far, I’ve made new friends, expanded my network and had fun. I think you will too.
Hello, I am Lay Heng Teng and I am currently a 4th year biomedical engineering major that is specializing in cell and tissue engineering. My hometown is Lake Elsinore, California, a small city in Riverside County. I am studying biomedical engineering because my ultimate dream is to protect and increase the quality life of the most vulnerable individuals by engineering new medicines and therapies. I am currently working as an undergraduate researcher in a biomedical engineering lab studying neutrophils, a type of white blood cell. I am also apart of University of California's Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees (UC LEADS) program, which is a two-year program that prepares students for scientific research and graduate school.

I first came to visit UC Davis on Decision Day when I was accepted in 2016. I thought the university was beautiful and welcoming. I met Laura and Tanya from the Leadership in Engineering Advancement, Diversity and Retention (LEADR) Program for the first time on Decision Day. They both became part of the reason why I chose to attend UC Davis. As a first generation engineering student that would be the first in her family to leave for university, I knew that I was going to be up for a challenge. I wanted to go where I knew I would be supported every step of the way. I saw how much Laura and Tanya cared about their students, so I knew that I would thrive at UC Davis.
Hi my name is Kevin Phan and I am a second-year Electrical Engineering student here at UC Davis. I am from Stockton, California and I chose UC Davis originally for practical reasons. I wanted to attend somewhere that was near home but not home. This being said, I have really grown to love UC Davis because of the community and students who have created such a friendly and inviting culture. Thus, because of them, I can call Davis my home away from home!

I chose to study engineering because of my mentors and experiences in high school, especially with the program MESA. Working with my hands on STEM projects became my passion and drove me to where I am today! For example, some of my college involvements other than being a LEADR Ambassador, include being IEEE Secretary, a College Ambassador for DigiKey and All About Circuits, and a MESA Student Assistant. All this, however, couldn’t have been achieved without the help I received from the LEADR program.

I was very scared and nervous coming to college and I had many fears about if I could do it, but joining LEADR changed all that and it was the best thing I could have ever done. From the amazing advisors who really care about your education and your well being, to the countless friends I made because of the program, LEADR has given me not only an abundance of resources to support and give me the confidence I need, but a family that has truly helped me get to where I am today.