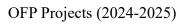# List of Approved OFP Project

This document contains a summary of the 67 projects that have been approved as OFP host sites for the 2024-2025 academic year. <mark>The OFP projects included in this document are organized by department/unit.</mark> **Overall, there are OFP projects available within 34 different department/units at UC Merced.**

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OFP Projects (2024-2025)

Anthropology & Heritage Studies

Project Name	**Exploring the Barker Hypothesis through Osteological, Chemical, and Histological Analysis of Deciduous Teeth**
Mentor (s)	Beth K. Scaffidi
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	The Barker Hypothesis suggests that maternal-fetal/infant health and nutrition can contribute to adult chronic disease and metabolic disorders. Students working with Dr. Scaffidi in the Skeletal & Environmental Isotope Laboratory, Anthropology & Heritage Studies (also first generation) will inventory and digitize deciduous (shed) teeth, diagnose dental pathologies, compile metric and non-metric data, and complete stable isotope, histological, and X-ray analyses that provide tell-tale signatures of malnutrition and systemic physiological stress. Hands-on experience analyzing ancient and modern teeth with known biological sex, age-at-death, health, and diet prepares students for advanced study in anthropological/archaeological sciences, biology, public health, medicine, and dental school.
Deliverables	• Student first-authored research poster at either: American Association of Biological Anthropology meeting (Baltimore, Spring 2025) or Society of American Archaeology (Denver, Spring 2025), depending on student preference. • 3D scan/X-ray repository of teeth. • Osteological/dental inventory of teeth. • Publishable stable isotope data (C/N/ICP-OES data from tooth dentin) and C/O/ICO-OES data from tooth enamel). • Undergraduate research article submission OR annotated bibliography of relevant literature, depending on student interest and abilities.

Applied Mathematics

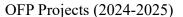| Project Name	Creating Math Dance Moves
Mentor (s)	Changho Kim
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	Math Dance is a way of expressing a graph of a function (e.g. $y = \exp(x)$) using your body. Several math dance moves have been created and used in the Math 024 course of Prof. Changho Kim. This project will 1) create more math dance moves and explore 2) various options on including multimedia (e.g. beats, music, or video) to math dance moves to create cool active learning segments; 3) possible ways to get both instructors and students on board with using Math Dance in the classroom.
Deliverables	- Collection of math dance moves. - Example videos of math dance: a few example math dance videos will be created. These videos can be used to promote Math Dance to other math classes. - Suggestion guideline on how to use Math Dance in math classes for best buy in by students.

Basic Needs

Project Name	Nourish to Flourish Initiative
Mentor (s)	Bavneet Kaur & Heather French
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	According to the 2022 UCUES report, UC Merced has the highest undergraduate food insecurity rates within the UC system. Research finds that food insecurity can negatively affect students' health and academic performance. The Nourish to Flourish Pilot program will focus on providing food assistance to a cohort of undocumented students who face barriers to accessing paid work and federal supplemental nutrition assistance programs.
Deliverables	• Communication/Outreach: Collaborate with Services for Undocumented Student Center to build awareness of on-campus food pantry (Bobcat Pantry) and community food support services. • Program Management Support: Assist program coordinator with scheduling follow-up with program participants, troubleshoot support, etc. • Advocacy and Report: Assist program coordinator with preparation of program materials and reports. Advocate for changes that may help address service gaps to expand support to critical student populations.

Project Name	Diversity and Inclusion in Professional Attire - A Marketing Campaign
Mentor (s)	Destinee Baker
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	This internship aims to enhance the Professional Clothing Closet Program and Basic Needs initiatives by creating educational media. The intern will produce engaging print and video content on measuring, tailoring, and styling professional attire for a diverse student body, with a strong emphasis on promoting inclusivity and individual style expression. Responsibilities include establishing and nurturing partnerships, developing and producing media that reflects the varied backgrounds and identities within the student community, and promoting content via the Basic Needs website, social media, and print. The goal is to empower students with essential professional skills, foster inclusivity, and strengthen community support while providing hands-on media production experience and contributing to diversity initiatives.
Deliverables	• Engaging educational videos: Produce a series of videos demonstrating professional attire measuring, tailoring techniques, and styling tips. Ensure content celebrates and reflects the varied backgrounds and identities within the student community.

	- Practical guides: Create written guides or infographics to accompany videos, providing additional styling tips and professional attire advice. - Content promotion: Promote videos and media through the Basic Needs website and social media accounts. - Partnerships: Establish and maintain effective partnerships with campus and community collaborators to support the professional attire needs of a diverse student population.

Bright Success Center

Project Name	Programmatic Data Tracking and Analysis
Mentor (s)	Clarissa Correa
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The learning project would consist of using Qualtrics and Excel to view and assess data for program usage. Additionally, I would train the student(s) how to utilize Qualtrics, how to download data, clean data, and then how to assess results of collected data, so it is not required that they have prior experience. Part of the role will also include using learned Qualtrics skills to create surveys for end of semester assessments. This role will require the student(s) to be prepared for guided independent work, excellent with communication, and eager to expand their research and data analysis skills.
Deliverables	• Frequent data collection and efficient updates of data. • More reliable and frequently updated records of student activity and enrollment. • Streamlined semester assessments.

Project Name	Enhancing University Engagement: Empowering Support Services for Community Partners
Mentor (s)	Jose Medina III
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The Community Partners Program Fellow will work under the strategic direction of the Associate Director for Educational Equity and Access assisting in restructuring, researching, and cultivating partnerships with existing community partners. This role will focus on identifying key areas where increased collaboration with community partners can enhance existing support structures. The Fellow aims to create and enhance communication with the UCM scholars represented by the different Community Partners (i.e. College Track, OneGoal, Wonderful, etc.) as well as creating and maintaining reports of contact with students, academic records, and areas for growth and development to increase service standards and collaboration opportunities for scholars. Additionally, the Fellow will assist in the development of comprehensive strategies that align community needs with university resources.
Deliverables	• Enhanced access to specialized resources and expertise for community partners. • Strengthened communication checkpoints and methods with scholars represented by UCM Community Partners. • Strengthened collaboration between university and community organizations.

•	Increased sustainability and scalability of support programs through strategic partnerships.

Project Name	**Bridging Success: Empowering Incoming UC Merced Scholars**
Mentor (s)	Jose Medina III
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The Summer Bridge Program Fellow will lead efforts to enhance the transition experience for incoming UC Merced students through targeted programming and increased support initiatives. This role is dedicated to developing comprehensive strategies that foster academic success, personal growth, and a sense of belonging among scholars during their critical transition to university life.
Deliverables	• Improved retention and graduation rates among incoming scholars through enhanced transition support and academic preparation. • Increased sense of community and belonging among scholars, contributing to overall student satisfaction and engagement. • Enhanced academic performance and achievement by providing tailored support and resources during critical transition periods. • Strengthened institutional commitment to supporting the success of all students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups.

Project Name	**Student Legal Intern**
Mentor (s)	Paloma Contreras
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Assist UC Merced immigration attorney with conducting background checks, completing case investigation requests, completing legal forms and translating legal documents, and preparing flyers and outreach materials as needed regarding our services and related events. This experiential learning project will allow students to learn about the legal field, observe court hearings, prepare legal documents and learn the ins and outs of managing an immigration case from beginning to end. The student should also be fluent in Spanish, in reading, writing and speaking.
Deliverables	• Case Investigations: Complete the legal forms needed to request records from various government agencies, including learning how to roll fingerprints for purposes of background checks. • Document Translations: Translate legal documents such as birth certificates, death certificates and court orders from English to Spanish.

- Legal Form Preparation: Drafts and prepare legal forms for immigration purposes.
- Marketing Materials: Create flyers and outreach materials for campus events and to help promote the on-campus legal services.

Project Name	Assessment & Outreach Fellow
Mentor (s)	Victoria Ordaz Garcia
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	This fellowship offers the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in data analysis, assessment, and outreach within the Monarch Center. Assist in collecting, organizing, and analyzing data related to various projects and initiatives. Support the development and implementation of assessment tools and methodologies. Contribute to the maintenance and improvement of databases and data systems. Participate in meetings and discussions to provide insights and recommendations based on data analysis. Assist in conducting literature reviews and research to inform assessment practices. Support the evaluation of program effectiveness and impact. Create and execute outreach and communication strategies to enhance the visibility of Services for Undocumented Students and promote UC Merced's presence at community gatherings. Collaborate with community partner program personnel to exchange resources and foster the adoption of best practices. Engage with members, providing attentive guidance and fostering empowerment while adeptly identifying their unique needs.
Deliverables	• Assess Data from iCatcard and Qualtrics. • Create Assessment for various projects. • Schedule Tabling Dates. • Table during Bobcat Day and tabling fairs. • Provide best practices for outreach.

Center for Analytic Political Engagement

Project Name	Center for Analytic Political Engagement Professionalization Program Fellowship
Mentor (s)	Nathan Monroe
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	The student would provide support to programs that both provide professional skillset in terms of media development as well as build the profile of programs that expand the professional offerings of CAPE and the political science program. Support would include providing media coverage and creating promotional packages for a series of programs such as a Professionalization podcast series interviewing individuals with political science advanced degrees in their careers, recruitment event with valley high school students encouraging them to attend UC Merced, election watch party event for campus community with interactive coverage and launching CAPE's podcast covering San Joaquin Valley political issues.
Deliverables	• Promotional materials, photos, videos (coverage and editing), social media content and audience engagement assessment and website content promoting these programs building on the profile of professionalization for undergraduate students interested in experiential learning in CAPE and political science. • On-site support for the programs listed. • Assist CAPE in assessing program effectiveness and developing planning guides and outcomes for future programs, especially in how to make programs more engaging from a student's perspective.

Cognitive & Information Sciences

Project Name	Read, Speak, Thrive: Bilingual Family Biliteracy Program
Mentor (s)	Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	3
Project Overview	This experiential learning opportunity will involve parents productively by engaging Merced County emergent bilinguals (EBs) in dynamic Spanish/English literacy activities after school and at home. Given that parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's health and learning, guiding their children successfully through school processes, and advocating for their children and for the effectiveness of schools, we hope to engage families in literacy activities with their children after school and/or at home. Merced scholars will be trained to support families with informal instructional conversations and interactive book reading. These strategies can positively affect reading achievement and language development as well as expressive and receptive language skills. Scholars will provide families with a wide range of free eBooks (developed by early childhood EBs in Houston Texas) and track family engagement throughout the year. We hope to have multiple scholars participate.
Deliverables	• Family Literacy Training: Four trainings will take place at elementary schools and/or UCM community centers (DCC). The goal is to have families use digital resources at home. But they will be welcome to use the training sites to minimize internet access disparities. • Family Literacy Survey: A survey of family use of the UH-D eBook Library will be created and administered. Participating families will be asked to report weekly on the amount of time they participate in instructional conversations and interactive book reading with their EBs. Families will also be asked to share their experiences with the stories and rate them so recommendations can be made to other participating families. • Family Literacy Activity Report: Participation and survey results will be summarized and shared with partner school districts and non-profit organizations.

Community Engagement Center (CEC)

Project Name	Supporting Program Review in the Community Engagement Center
Mentor (s)	Andrea Tafolla
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The Community Engagement Center (CEC) will be completing their Program Review for Fall 2023 – Fall 2024 during the 24-25 Academic Year. The final report is due August 5, 2025. The Program Review happens every 7 years and is enforced by the university's Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC) to ensure that university programs are accomplishing their learning outcomes and aligning with the University's strategic plan. This project aims to collect, assess, and report on data that will be used for Program Review and evaluate program effectiveness and identify areas of opportunity for growth for the CEC.
Deliverables	• Database: A comprehensive database containing information of all service events and programs hosted by the CEC that occurred between August 2023 – November 2024. • Data Report: A detailed report summarizing data findings of one-time service projects and long-term service programs. • Recommendations: Practical recommendations on how the CEC can enhance their reciprocal partnerships with the community while focusing on increasing the high impact learning of participating students in the programs.

Dean of Students

Project Name	Promoting Services for Student Advocacy and Support
Mentor (s)	Heather French & Brenda Ortiz
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	This position will work with the Dean of Students Office to highlight and market key services for student support within the department. The aim of this position is to further educate students on the resources and services available to them in the Dean of Students office and Case Management Services. This may be done through tabling at campus events, presentations to student groups, classroom presentations, collaborating with campus partners, and supporting the department social media efforts. In this position, one may develop valuable communication skills, connect broadly with campus partners, and engage students with support services.
Deliverables	• Create presentation with campus partners to highlight key campus services. • Develop short script for selected student groups and classroom presentations. • Network and collaborate with campus partners and student groups. • Table at campus events to promote DOS services. • Contribute content to support an engaging social media presence.

Division of Equity, Justice & Inclusive Excellence

Project Name	**Towards HSI-Servingness at UC Merced**
Mentor (s)	Zulema Valdez
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	UC Merced, with its majority Latinx, first-generation, and Pell Grant-eligible student population, is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). Garcia (2021) distinguishes between this designation and active "servingness," which involves intentional policies and practices to serve Latinx students. She conceptualizes servingness through "indicators of serving" (measurable outcomes) and "structures for serving" (institutional transformations centering equity for Latinx and other racialized groups). This project aims to assess UC Merced's servingness by developing a resource repository and identifying programs focused on HSI servingness across academic units. The goal is to track progress, streamline activities, and foster collaborations to intentionally serve Latinx students effectively.
Deliverables	- Snapshot of Latino student demographics. - HSI Servingness Resource Repository. - Inventory of current UC Merced HSI Servingness initiatives. - Recommendations for new initiatives to help identify and close equity gaps among our Latino population to ensure UC Merced is intentionally moving towards HSI Servingness.

Division of Undergraduate Education

Project Name	General Education Program Social Media Communications and Template Design Project
Mentor (s)	Jeannie Lee
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Scholars will learn web and social media design, content creation and marketing. Building upon and refining a year-round communication manual and plan for social media, scholars will create a repository of Canva templates for each communication, laying the foundation for future communications. Scholars will gain practical skills in Canva, web-editing platforms, limited HTML and valuable communication competencies. Scholar will have their own design portfolio by the end of the year.
Deliverables	• Create a repository of social media templates that may be used as a portfolio for future. • Revise and refine a GE communication manual and year-round communication plan for social media. • Learn Canva, editing and designing presentations and flyers. • Learn website maintenance (editing text, adding content, images, attachments to websites).

Project Name	Scholar Coordinator for Membership and Community Building
Mentor (s)	Liana Williams
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The AFRO (Afrikans for Retention and Outreach) Hall Living Learning Community invites first- and second-year students from the African diaspora to explore their African and Black identities. This community enhances their college experience through networking, mentorship, academic support, and community engagement. The Scholar Coordinator for Membership and Community Building will manage communication and community building in the mentor/mentee program, and handle marketing and event scheduling. At the end of the mentorship cycle, the fellow will collaborate with the AFRO Hall Coordinator to gather assessments from mentors and mentees.
Deliverables	• Development of technical skills, soft skills, and communication skills. • Produce a brief report that included highlights from the program and future recommendations. • Develop a portfolio of marketing and outreach items used during the fellowship duration.

Economics

Project Name	Rent and the City: Housing Affordability in New York City
Mentor (s)	Rowena Gray
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The Rent and the City project will involve providing research assistance on a book project on New York City's housing affordability over the long. Duties may include library book and newspaper searches for relevant news articles and real stories relevant to the book and its promotion; fact checking of various aspects of draft chapters of the book; data compilation and analysis; proof reading, with a view to creating a book for a general audience; planning and visualization of information.
Deliverables	- Fact checking book chapters. - Finding real stories relevant to housing affordability. - Proof-reading for a lay audience.

Economics & Business Management

Project Name	Disseminating Labor Economics Research by Organizing Conference Sessions and Building the Foundation for a Research Society
Mentor (s)	Todd Sorensen
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	Are you interested in learning how professors share research? I plan to co-organize several sessions at least one economics conference on imperfect competition in labor markets. In the fall, the fellow would facilitate planning, advertising, management of papers submitted for consideration of sessions. Throughout the year, the fellow would focus on laying foundations for growing this academic community, including studying the creation of an official society and possibly organizing a virtual seminar series. The project is open to anyone who is interested, specifically with an interest in pursuing a career in academic research. Preference given to economics majors.
Deliverables	• Call for Papers (end of September). • Advertising Strategy (end of October). • Submission of Sessions (middle of December). • Report on Feasibility of Creating Society (April).

Project Name	Promoting Undergraduate Engagement in Economics with Re-Launch of UCM's Economics Honor Society
Mentor (s)	Todd Sorensen
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Would you like to help me re-launch a chapter of a national honors society to help fellow UCM students' network? I am the Faculty Advisor for UCM's chapter of the ODE Economics Honors Society, which became effectively inactive during COVID. I would like to work with a student to re-launch the chapter. The selected fellow would help with recruitment, promotion, and planning. While not required, I would prefer someone who can also become a member and an officer of ODE; this means having taken three econ courses and has an Econ and overall GPA of 3.0.
Deliverables	• Creation of a website and/or social media accounts. • New or updated chapter bylaws. • Two page report on success of recruitment strategy. • Completion of chapter annual report to ODE in April, 2025.

Electrical Engineering

Project Name	Advancing Post-Quantum Cryptographic (PQC) Algorithms for Modern Computing Platform
Mentor (s)	Qian Wang
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	As quantum computing advances, classical cryptographic systems are at risk from algorithms like Shor's. This project aims to develop post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) solutions to ensure security in the quantum era. We will advance NIST-standardized PQC algorithms and address integration with classical computing for a smooth transition to quantum readiness. Additionally, we will enhance the performance of hash-based and lattice-based PQC algorithms by optimizing and designing parallel execution. Our goal is to make PQC algorithms efficient and practical for real-world applications, including embedded systems.
Deliverables	• Design and implement optimized hash-based and lattice-based post-quantum cryptographic algorithms suitable for real-world applications. • Integration framework for classical and quantum systems. • Prototype implementation for embedded systems.

Project Name	Trojan Attacks on Quantum Compilers and Machine Learning Defenses
Mentor (s)	Qian Wang
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	In this project, we will investigate and discuss the impact of a single qubit Trojan, specifically a Hadamard gate and a NOT gate, inserted one at a time at various locations in benchmark quantum circuits without changing the circuit's depth. Quantum computing leverages the principles of quantum mechanics to process information, offering significant computational advantages over classical computing. However, the introduction of Trojans, or malicious alterations, poses a significant threat to the integrity and security of quantum circuits. By analyzing the effects of these gate insertions, we aim to understand the vulnerabilities and develop strategies to mitigate potential risks in quantum computing systems.
Deliverables	• Data and analysis from simulations showing the impact of inserting Hadamard and NOT gates at various locations in the quantum circuits. • An evaluation of the vulnerabilities identified through the insertion of qubit Trojans. • Recommendations for detecting and preventing the insertion of qubit Trojans in quantum circuits.

	• Presentations summarizing the project's findings, methodologies, and conclusions.

Project Name	**Demo of Spectra/Meltdown Attacks on Modern CPUs**
Mentor (s)	Qian Wang
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	This project investigates exploiting speculative execution vulnerabilities through Spectre and Meltdown attacks. Spectre attacks induce speculative operations in a victim's process, leading to the leakage of confidential information via side channels. We will demonstrate practical attacks combining side channel attacks, fault attacks, and return-oriented programming to read arbitrary memory from the victim's process. Meltdown, on the other hand, exploits out-of-order execution on modern processors to read arbitrary kernel memory, exposing personal data and passwords. By analyzing these vulnerabilities, the project aims to develop a deeper understanding of speculative execution risks and propose mitigations to enhance system security.
Deliverables	• Attack demonstration and code repository. • Mitigation strategies and recommendations. • Technical presentation and final project report.

Global Arts, Media, & Writing Studies

Project Name	Mastering Business and Technical Writing with Generative AI: Smart and Ethical Techniques for Success
Mentor (s)	Estee Beck
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	This experiential learning project aims to teach UC Merced students to use ChatGPT and other generative AI programs for effective professional and technical writing, enhancing their skills in drafting proposals, reports, emails, and presentations. Students will gain practical experience and critical insights into the ethical uses of AI in written communications, which will contribute to intellectual growth in business contexts. Additionally, this project will help students build confidence in leveraging a range of AI tools, preparing them for the dynamic demands of the modern workplace.
Deliverables	- Comprehensive Virtual Portfolio of Written Work: Each student will compile an online portfolio that includes various business and technical documents such as proposals, reports, emails, and presentations, all created with the assistance of generative AI. This portfolio will demonstrate their ability to effectively integrate AI tools into professional writing tasks. - Ethical AI Use Case Study: Students will develop a case study exploring the ethical implications of using AI in business communications. This document will highlight best practices, potential pitfalls, and recommendations for ethical AI usage, providing valuable insights for future applications. - Final Presentation and Reflection Report: At the end of the project, students will present their key learnings and experiences using ChatGPT for business writing. This presentation will be accompanied by a reflection report that assesses their growth, challenges faced, and the overall impact of AI on their writing skills and professional development.

Graduate Division

Project Name	**Supporting Undocumented Students Navigating the Graduate School Process**
Mentor (s)	Jesus Cisneros
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Undocumented college students often face unique challenges in navigating the graduate school admissions process. To address this issue, this project aims to develop and update resource materials for undergraduate students nearing the completion of their undergraduate degree. It will be focused on providing support for students coming from undocumented communities.
Deliverables	• Develop and update website resource page. • Develop and update Undocumented Grad Student Handbook. • Develop and update database of fellowship/funding resources. • Assist with coordinating 3 webinars focused on supporting students through applying to graduate school. • Develop report and presentation of recommendations for improving support of undocumented students navigating the graduate school process.

Human Resources

Project Name	Website User Interface, User Experience and Accessibility Enhancements
Mentor (s)	Emanuel Alfaro & Kevin Reyes
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Human Resources (HR) is keenly interested in making resources more inclusive, accessible and intuitive. In this role you'll work with HR's Talent Development team to review user analytics, accessibility reports, and fulfill the unit vision to provide a greater experience and connection to resources, tools, and programs. Join a diverse and dynamic team to work on graphic design, web layout, data analysis, and refine the site function and tools for UC Merced personnel (current, past and future). This project will include marketing, design, layout, and data work and skill development.
Deliverables	• User interface/use analysis – report, summary, and action plan. • Website wireframe. • Graphic imagery and layout. • Website (pre and post) with portfolio of work for the selected fellow. • Site user guides (job aid, screencast, marketing resources on UCM Connect).

Project Name	Training and Development Workshop Event Planning
Mentor (s)	Kelli Breland & Kevin Reyes
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	UC Merced Talent Development supplies training, workshops, and facilitation support for the greater personnel. This role will serve a critical function as the coordination support for logistics, marketing, preparation, implementation, and follow-up on no less than 15 workshops, courses, or program offerings during the semester term. This includes electronic marketing campaigns, communications support, materials preparation, event logistics (room scheduling, catering, day-of support, participant support, etc.), post-event outreach and team collaboration. You'll work with and learn from training and development specialists as you increase skills in these areas – AND the subject matter areas (communication, conflict management, self-awareness, coaching, career development, etc.).
Deliverables	• Communication plans, templates and marketing messages. • Event logistic plans (BEOs, schedules, agendas, and sign-in tracking). • Event assessment and analysis reports. • Administrative work – room scheduling, purchase prep, materials lists and kits.

Life & Environmental Sciences

Project Name	The Secret Lives of African Wildlife: Using Automated Cameras to Study Animal Behavior
Mentor (s)	Matthew Hutchinson & Luca Kuziel
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Motion-sensing cameras and drones enable us to observe animals from afar without disturbing their behavior. We used these technologies in Mozambique to test the hypothesis that some antelope only use the open grasslands during the nighttime. The student will help us to extract data from these images and apply machine-learning algorithms to automate animal identification. The results will improve conservation science and will be published, with the student as an author. As a member of our research group, the student will have the opportunity to join lab meetings and access regular one-on-one mentorship. Best suited to BIO and CSE majors.
Deliverables	• Database Management: Development of a storage and sorting system for all the images after planning session withs mentors. • Motion-Sensing Camera Analysis: Images classified by the date, time, and species present in the image with guidance from mentors. • Drone Images Analyzed: Animals detected, identified, and counted in each set of drone images with guidance from mentors. • Initial Data Analysis: Exploration of how species diversity and abundance change through the day based on distance to the woodland; analysis guided by mentors.

Project Name	All Fluffed Up: Can Feather Structure Help Birds Adapt to Climate Change?
Mentor (s)	Matthew Hutchinson & Sean Lyon
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	We are studying changes birds' feathers between cold and warm environments to investigate how small changes to feathers might help birds adapt to climate change. The student will accompany us to UC Berkeley's Museum to photograph birds and will use computational tools to measure feather structure. This data will contribute to the planned scientific paper, on which the student will be an author, gaining skills in data science and scientific writing. As a member of our research group, the student will have the opportunity to join lab meetings and access regular one-on-one mentorship. Best suited to CSE and BIO majors.
Deliverables	• Photographs Collected: Visit to UC Berkeley with mentors completed and all photos taken of the bird specimens.

- Measurement Protocol Developed: Procedures for extracting feather measurements from photographs developed in collaboration with mentors.
- Measurements Taken: Measurement protocol applied to all feather photos and data recorded.
- Data Analysis: Initial exploration of feather structure changes between cold and warm environments undertaken with guidance from mentors. Results presented to lab group and at the OFP showcase.

Margo F Souza Student Leadership Center

Project Name	**Building A Bobcat Leader: A Personal Leadership Development Plan for UCM Students**
Mentor (s)	Stephany Barrera
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Design a guidebook to direct UC Merced students through a structured process of reflection & analysis of their leadership experiences. This comprehensive guidebook includes sections on self-assessment, goal setting, skill development, implementation, reflection, & documentation. Students will be able to engage in activities such as completing leadership style assessments, creating action plans, & maintaining reflection exercises. The Personal Leadership Development Guide will support students from the start of their leadership journey & will help them identify transferable skills for interviews and post-graduation opportunities. By recognizing leadership as a high-impact practice, students can effectively showcase their experiential learning on resumes & in professional settings.
Deliverables	- A step-by-step leadership development guidebook to be completed in the Fall semester. - Pilot the Personal Leadership Development Guide in the Spring 2025 cohort of Bobcat Leadership Seminar. - Online tools and resources for self-assessment and skill development. - Workshops on leadership skills and goal setting to introduce the guidebook to the campus community. - Personal leadership portfolios documenting student's leadership journeys Regular reflection and feedback sessions to track progress and make adjustments.

Materials Science & Engineering

Project Name	Role of Tip-Specific Endothelial Cells in Vasculogenesis and Angiogensis
Mentor (s)	Kara McCloskey
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	Vascular and cardiovascular diseases, including limb ischemia and ischemic heart disease, contribute to significant health problems with high rates of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) leads to critical limb ischemia (CLI) in its most severe stage. Clinical trials of revascularization procedures and medical therapies, including angioplasty or bypass surgery, are associated with some improvement in subsequent amputation-free survival by about 6 months, but the quality-of-life assessments remain extremely low compared with normal population values. Alternative treatment strategies include the injection of peripheral blood or bone marrow mononuclear cells (PB-MNCs or BM-MNCs), endothelial progenitor cells (EPCs), or mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) have seen some success. However, we know that tip-specific endothelial cells (ECs) lead the way in directing the growth of new blood vessels and that angiogenic subpopulations of circulating ECs (CECs) are superior in promoting new blood vessel growth and rescuing ischemic tissue. Here, we propose the BOLD hypothesis that angiogenic tip ECs will be the most therapeutically effective cell type in revascularizing the ischemic limb. To date, no one has examined the ability of tip-specific ECs derived in vitro from stem cells to promote revasculazation of ischemic limbs.
Deliverables	• Generate tip-specific endothelial cells from primary human endothelial cells. • Quantify tip-specific endothelial cell migration rates. • Quantify tip-specific endothelial cell matrix degradation rates. • Incorporate tip-specific endothelial cells into microfluidic device for enhancing angiogenesis in tissue. • Cell characterization.

Mechanical Engineering

Project Name	Enabling Green Hydrogen Through Fuel Cell and Electrolysis Technologies
Mentor (s)	Abel Chuang
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	The project aims to train students in areas related to renewable energy through applications of electrochemical cells. Specifically, the research focuses on energy storage and conversion technologies using fuel cells and water electrolysis cells. Due to its highly interdisciplinary nature, electrochemical research encompasses topics including heat transfer, fluid flow, electrochemical reaction, and materials. The preliminary tasks and timeline are listed below: 1. Training and orientation (1 months) 2. Literature review (2 months) 3. Preparation of novel materials and/or designs (2 months) 4. Characterization of the new material and/or design (2 months) 5. Summarizing learning and documentation (1 month)
Deliverables	• Literature summary. • Proposed study. • Testing results. • Project report.

Project Name	Facilitating Collaboration and Instrument Sharing in Mechanical Engineering
Mentor (s)	Ashlie Martini
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Research groups in the Department of Mechanical Engineering have access to various instruments and capabilities that are housed within individual faculty laboratories. There is currently no central list of these instruments, their locations, or the research they could enable, which impedes collaboration and leveraging of resources in the department. To address this issue, this project aims to compile and document information about the available instruments, disseminate the information to faculty in Mechanical Engineering, and develop a plan for updating the information going forward.
Deliverables	• Database: A comprehensive database containing information about Mechanical Engineering instruments including their faculty owner, location, and capabilities. • Research Report: A detailed report summarizing the instruments available in the department that identifies overlaps, gaps, and complementary capabilities. • Recommendations: A plan for where to house the instrument database and how it can be updated going forward as faculty obtain new capabilities.

Project Name	Evaluating and Demonstrating a Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrometer
Mentor (s)	Ashlie Martini
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	A Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometer enables measurement of the distribution of chemical species within a solid, liquid or gas. This is useful for various research projects where the compositions of samples need to be determined. An FTIR spectrometer was donated to the Mechanical Engineering department here at UC Merced but is not yet in use. The goal of this project is to learn how an FTIR functions, identify any supplies that are needed for functionality, demonstrate the use of the instrument for reference samples, and write a report describing how to use and maintain the instrument going forward.
Deliverables	• Demonstration: Demonstrate the use of the FTIR to measure the composition of a reference. • Research Report: Write a detailed report summarizing the instrument's uses, features, capabilities, and limitations. • Recommendations: Create a user manual and training video for the instrument and identify potential opportunities to expand the capabilities of the instrument to benefit more UCM researchers.

Project Name	Developing Spanish Language Wildfire Communications Materials for the US Latinx Community
Mentor (s)	Jeanette Cobian
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	While nearly 30% of California residents speak Spanish as their primary language at home, there is limited linguistic and cultural engagement by fire science communicators, educators, and emergency responders with Latinx communities. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensuring wildfire safety and preparedness amongst Spanish-speaking communities. Thus, this project focuses on developing Spanish-language wildfire communications materials for US-based communities. Due to the vast amount of wildfire education and outreach materials generated for English-speaking audiences, we will focus on translating preexisting materials into Spanish. Materials will be obtained from partnering stakeholders for translation and delivered back to partners for public dissemination.
Deliverables	• Translations: Translations of wildfire education and outreach materials from English to Spanish. These materials will be delivered to stakeholders including local, state and federal agencies as well as non-profits for their free dissemination to the public.

• Glossary: A glossary of commonly used wildfire terms in academic and non-academic Spanish for use in translations and new Spanish language wildfire outreach and education materials.
• Research Report: A research report documenting lessons learned on effectively translating wildfire-related materials from English to Spanish for academic and non-academic audiences. This report will include recommendations for using effective Spanish public-facing terminology when communicating on wildfire-related issues.

Project Name	Battery Workforce Challenge
Mentor (s)	Ricardo de Castro
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	The Battery Workforce Challenge provides an immersive hands-on learning experience for university students to gain critical battery design and integration experience and build engineering skills well beyond traditional engineering curriculum. The students will follow real-world industry milestones focused on battery design, simulation, controls development, testing, and vehicle integration and performance demonstration. Student team members will also learn valuable project management, communications, teamwork and problem-solving skills that will provide them an unparalleled educational experience and ready them for future careers throughout the battery industry.
Deliverables	• Final report of participation. • Final presentation.

Project Name	Interactive Rod Model Simulation Tool Development
Mentor (s)	Sachin Goyal & Muhammad Hassaan Ahmed
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	This project aims to create an interactive simulation tool to understand the deformation of biological filaments using rod model equations. The purpose is to provide a practical application of mechanics of materials concepts, enhancing student comprehension and skills in computational biomechanics. Students will design a user-friendly MATLAB GUI (graphical user interface) for inputting parameters and visualizing filament behavior. This project will enable students to apply theoretical principles, develop programming skills, and engage in real-world applications of biomechanics. Additionally, the tool will serve as an educational resource for studying beam mechanics (bending, torsion, buckling) and as a research tool for exploring advanced mechanics, thereby broadening the impact on research and education.

Deliverables	• Graphical user interface (GUI) design. • Implementation of rod model equations. • Testing and validation reports. • User manual and tutorial videos. • Dissemination by publishing and other means.

Project Name	Validation of Constitutive Laws in Biological Filaments
Mentor (s)	Sachin Goyal & Muhammad Hassaan Ahmed
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	This project aims to validate the constitutive laws derived from molecular dynamics (MD) simulations of biological filaments. Students will design virtual experiments using Hyperworks MotionView to generate synthetic data, which will be compared with MD simulation results. The project may also involve using machine learning techniques to estimate constitutive laws from atomistic-level simulations. This provides practical experience with advanced CAE tools and AI, reinforcing principles from mechanics of materials such as stress-strain relationships and deformation analysis. The purpose is to enhance student skills in computational mechanics and AI applications, preparing them for careers in these fields. The motivation is to bridge the gap between theoretical models and practical applications, significantly impacting the understanding of filament mechanics.
Deliverables	• Virtual experimental setups in Hyperworks MotionView. • Synthetic data from simulations. • Analysis reports comparing synthetic data with MD simulation results. • Machine learning models for estimating constitutive laws. • Dissemination by publishing and other means.

NSF-CREST Center for Cellular & Biomolecular Machines (CCBM)

Project Name	**Research Development, Administration, and Support in the NSF-CREST Center at UC Merced**
Mentor (s)	Carrie Kouadio
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	3
Project Overview	The OFP Scholar will gain valuable experience in a UC Merced scientific center in the areas of Research Support, Research Development, and Research Administration. This experience will be useful to any undergraduate student who is considering working at UC Merced or another university following their undergraduate degree. Some of the skills to be developed include: informational research, organization and refinement of information and documentation, and more. This project will be useful to the CREST CCBM as it seeks funding for new federally funded projects to begin in 2025 / 2026, and as it aims to acquire UC Organized Research Unit (ORU) status.
Deliverables	- Develop a database of all publications and presentations associated with the CREST Center. - Develop a database of active and inactive NSF-funded centers, focusing on 3-5 funding types. - Develop a database of all Organized Research Units in the UC system. - Be trained on various components of grant proposal development and submission, including research administration and research development activities. - Contribute to research support, including the compilation and organization of information for NSF Annual Reporting.

Office of Information Technology

Project Name	The Alumni IT Experience: Mapping the Service Journey After Commencement
Mentor (s)	Christian Ortiz
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The journey of a bobcat with UC Merced doesn't end after they walk the stage and go home after their hot commencement day ceremony. In the backend the systems they've used knowingly or unknowingly are hard at work and updating to meet these bobcat's new needs as Alumni. This complex journey of technology is not mapped out in a way our bobcats can easily identify next steps for their data stored with the university, and to give them an assist this project is seeking a motivated and curious student who wants to learn about IT systems and how to communicate them to their peers in order to give bobcat alums a smooth transition.
Deliverables	• Learn and practice process and workflow mapping (visualization) for IT systems and services. • Plan out effective documentation and outreach methods and strategies.

Project Name	Computer Labs Websites UI/UX Redesign
Mentor (s)	Emily Hernandez & James Cha
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The purpose of this project is to improve the interface and experience of our computer labs pages. Dispel confusion on services OIT provides and improve engagement with the computer labs. This project will incorporate research and web design to complete the deliverables.
Deliverables	• Research and gather feedback on the websites pain points. • Redesign the OIT computer labs page. • Redesign the software list hosted on Airtable. • Redesign the OIT remote lab page. • Provide recommendations on changes to websites moving forward.

Project Name	Cyber Security Awareness Campaign
Mentor (s)	James McKinzie
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar	1

placement spots	
Project Overview	The individuals will contribute to the development and presentation of cyber security initiatives for the campus, including the creation of videos and other media for publication or use. They will collaborate with existing team members to implement the campaign and support media efforts for cyber security. The objective of this work is to enhance overall awareness of cyber security within the campus community, communicate the team's offerings, and address questions that individuals may be hesitant to ask.
Deliverables	• Cyber training. • Videos and media. • Cyber security campaigns.

Project Name	Preparing First-Generation College Students in ServiceNow Administration.
Mentor (s)	Chuck Aby
Modality	Virtual
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Preparing First-Generation College Students in ServiceNow Administration. This is a great opportunity as OIT looks to expand ServiceNow's Catalog Builder capabilities as a campus request management self-service. With Catalog Builder, UC Merced departments can now build and manage their request forms without needing to engage with the ServiceNow team and accelerate onboarding into ServiceNow. Our OFP hire will experience ServiceNow administration and learn to manage the Catalog Builder solution. **Key outcomes:** - Learn how to administer ServiceNow - Experience how Catalog Builder works - Onboard new departments using ServiceNow - Help create and modify Catalog Builder documentation - Manage ticket requests - Experience first-hand the digitization of services There is a lot of demand across the campus to help departments digitize request management. Our OFP hire will be at the leading edge in expanding ServiceNow in transforming how departments handle request management.
Deliverables	• Learn the basics of ServiceNow Administration. • Build out the framework in ServiceNow allowing a department to build their own forms. • Create and maintain support documentation. • Interact with campus departments in understanding business requirements.

Project Name	SlurmFin Integration
Mentor (s)	Robert Romero
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Join the SlurmFin Integration project to gain hands-on experience developing and integrating a Slurm billing system similar to AWS. This project automates CPU hour consumption billing for the HPC Cluster on campus and integrates with Oracle financials to streamline service recharge processes for the UC Merced campus. Scholars will enhance their software development skills, integrate with financial systems, and develop automation skills by working on real-world applications directly impacting university operations. This is an exceptional opportunity to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, preparing you for advanced roles in the technology and finance sectors.
Deliverables	- Slurm Billing System: Develop and implement a comprehensive Slurm billing system to track and bill CPU hour consumption. This will include user-friendly interfaces for tracking usage and costs. - Oracle Financial Integration: Create seamless integration with Oracle financials to automate the recharge billing process. Ensure accurate and timely billing of services to the campus. - Automated Reporting Tools: Design and develop automated reporting tools to generate detailed usage and billing reports. These reports will provide insights for users and administrators. - User Training and Documentation: Provide comprehensive training sessions and detailed documentation for system users and administrators. This will ensure smooth adoption and ongoing use of the new system. - System Testing and Quality Assurance: Conduct rigorous testing to ensure the system is reliable, accurate, and efficient. Project Evaluation and Feedback: Gather feedback from stakeholders and users to evaluate the project's success and identify areas for improvement. Ongoing Support Plan: Develop a plan for ongoing support and maintenance of the billing system to ensure long-term functionality and user satisfaction.

Project Name	Reimagining CatCourses Guides
Mentor (s)	James Cha & Rae Anne Tamayo
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The project aims to revamp our CatCourses webpages, enhancing their accessibility for students and instructors. The redesign will focus on improving information discoverability and optimizing searchability on Google, thereby facilitating a more efficient and user-

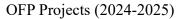|	
	friendly experience. This initiative is expected to significantly streamline the process of finding relevant information.
Deliverables	• Resources Review: Identify student and instructor needs for CatCourses and website content that can be removed or revised. • Accessibility: Improve navigation and user experience of OIT CatCourses-related pages. • Application: Conduct application of identified changes to the OIT CatCourses-related pages. • Recommendations: Student will provide a recommendation if unable to complete for next project iteration.

Project Name	CENVAL-ARC Marketing and Outreach
Mentor (s)	Sarvani Chadalapaka
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	In the CENVAL-ARC Marketing and Outreach experiential learning project, the student(s) will spearhead the development of a dynamic website for the CENVAL-ARC Symposium and contribute to marketing efforts for this annual event. The project offers valuable hands-on experience in web development, digital marketing strategies, and event promotion within a research-centric context. This project aims to enhance the student's proficiency in communication, technical skills, and project management, preparing them to effectively support research promotion and outreach initiatives.
Deliverables	• Dynamic website development. • Digital marketing plan. • Develop project management plan for Research Computing Symposium. • Event promotion and training materials.

Project Name	A New Identity Management Administration Panel for UC Merced
Mentor (s)	Vladimir Jimenez
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Newly graduated computer science students often struggle to land their first job because they lack relevant experience in building production-level applications. College courses often focus heavily on theory and one-off assignments, which do not provide students guidance about how projects are built in the real world. To address this issue, the Enterprise Applications team is looking for students to help build a new Identity Management administration panel that will be used to manage user accounts, roles, and permissions for

the university's network and applications. By having students help build this project under the supervision of staff, students will gain valuable experience in building an interactive website using best practices that are seen in the real world.

Minimum Requirements
-Must be a Computer Science and Engineering major
-Must have taken at least CSE 022: Introduction to Programming; CSE 024 and CSE 030 preferred but not required

 OR
-Has previous coding experience and can provide code samples of projects they've written

Bonuses
-Have experience with JavaScript/TypeScript

Deliverables	• Student developers will learn to use modern technologies (React, Jest, Next.js, React Testing Library) that are being used by major companies. • Students will learn how to use Git and GitHub; a code collaboration software that is used universally by developers. • Collaborate with remote team members by using async practices and tools to gain hands-on experience with remote work. • A web-based administration panel built in React and hosted on AWS S3 that allows users to manage user accounts, roles, and permissions for the university's network and applications. • New components contributed to internal component library that can be reused by other teams and applications. Unit and integration tests for pages and components developed as part of this project.

Project Name	Beyond Boundaries: HPC Training Course Development and Website Design
Mentor (s)	Yue Yu
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The project seeks to create a comprehensive training program focusing on High-Performance Computing (HPC) and parallel computing techniques. This initiative involves developing a structured curriculum and designing an interactive website to deliver course content effectively. This project also aims to offer an engaging learning experience, empowering participant to leverage HPC resources effectively for their research and academic endeavors.
Deliverables	• Course Materials Development: Development of interactive tutorials, demonstrations, and code examples. • Training Workshops: Provision of technical support and assistance during the training sessions.

	• Interactive Training Website Design: Interactive website features such as quizzes, forums, and discussion boards for student learning engagement.

Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities

Project Name	Speech, Expression, and Advocacy Fellow (SEA Fellow)
Mentor (s)	Le'Trice Curl
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	This position aims to promote a basic understanding of the First Amendment and its implications in an academic environment. Responsibilities include developing educational materials, organizing feedback/discussion events, collaborating with university staff and faculty, promoting awareness of free speech issues, and tracking and reporting on workshop attendance and feedback to improve future sessions. The Fellow will also serve as a resource for students seeking guidance on free speech matters.
Deliverables	- Develop and organize workshops on free speech and free expression for the student body. Educate students on their rights and responsibilities under the First Amendment. - Assist in creating educational materials and resources related to the First Amendment. - Collaborate with university staff and faculty to ensure accurate and comprehensive workshop content. - Facilitate discussions and provide guidance on free expression matters. Promote awareness of free speech issues and events across campus. - Track and report on workshop attendance and feedback to improve future sessions.

Office of the Chancellor

Project Name	**Events to Foster Nurturing and Belonging at the University**
Mentor (s)	Suzanna Bezyan
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	The Office of the Chancellor is excited to announce events aimed at fostering a sense of nurturing and belonging among students, faculty, and staff at our university. This initiative is designed to create engaging and fun experiences that unite our campus community, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment for all. Be a part of the action and join the amazing team dedicated to making our campus a more nurturing and inclusive place. This is a unique opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to the vibrant campus life. By participating in this year-long series of events, you'll not only contribute to the well-being and happiness of the campus community but also develop valuable skills and experiences that will benefit you in your academic and professional journey. **Participants involved in the planning and execution of these events will gain:** -Practical experience in marketing and communications. -Skills in event logistics and administration. -Insight into the operational aspects of campus events. -Enhanced ability to work as part of a team and manage responsibilities.
Deliverables	• Community Engagement: To create opportunities for meaningful interactions among students, faculty, and staff. • Inclusivity: To ensure all events are accessible and welcoming to the diverse campus community. • Campus Unity: To strengthen the sense of belonging and togetherness on campus.

Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost

Project Name	Diversity, equity, and Inclusion in Faculty Careers
Mentor (s)	Christiane Spitzmueller
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	Hispanic and Black faculty are significantly underrepresented in the faculty positions. Through this project, the research team is working to better understand advancement barriers for faculty of color, as well as mitigation mechanisms. We are seeking a student interested in developing their research, writing, presentation, analytical, and problem-solving skills. This project will provide the student with experience in understanding the broader literature on diversity, equity, and inclusion in Higher Education.
Deliverables	• Literature search summaries. • Data coding and summary of data coding results. • Results of simple statistical analyses, write-ups and contributions to presentation/paper development. • Development of a poster for an undergraduate research conference.

Project Name	Instructional Costs of Delivering an Undergraduate Degree
Mentor (s)	Jose Lopez Arriaza
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	Understanding the factors that drive instructional costs on our campus is a critical part of the path to financial sustainability. To aid in this goal, this project aims to estimate the instructional costs associated with delivering an undergraduate degree at UC Merced in various majors. We are seeking a student interested in developing their analytical and problem-solving skills. This project will provide the student with experience in: - Data Analysis - Data visualization - Analysis interpretation
Deliverables	• Determine the course taking patterns for students in different majors. • Estimate the instructional cost for a "typical" student in a major. • Create a set of recommendations/insights for improving fiscal sustainability based on results of data analysis. • Create a Tableau dashboard that clearly conveys the evidence/insights that have guided the interpretation and recommendations.

Project Name	Dream Jobs and Dream Majors: Listening to Student Voices for UCM's Future
Mentor (s)	Naoko Kada
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	One measure of student success is that graduates get the jobs they want. We are looking for a curious, open-minded, and detail-oriented scholar who will research job titles and industries for each major at UC Merced and ask juniors and seniors to rank them, and how well prepared they feel for each job and industry. You will also ask if there is a different major from their current one that they wished UCM offered, and the reasons why. In addition to survey methods, you will likely advance your knowledge and skills in data preparation, analysis, and presentation.
Deliverables	• Identify the best venues for conducting the surveys. • Create a list of job titles and industries for each of UCM majors. • Design a Qualtrics survey for each major. • Conduct the survey and summarize the results. • Prepare a report and/or power point presentation about the findings.

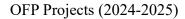| Project Name	Workflow Modeling 101
Mentor (s)	Sandra Cuevas-Lezama
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	We are seeking a detail-oriented student to work on a project on campuses processes, including identifying a task, the steps and individuals involved, analyzing its efficiency, etc. -Research: Use our materials and relevant online resources to learn about workflow modelling. -Analyze: Evaluate a campus process and see if there's room for improvement in the way it's being completed. -Communications: Create flyers to share key messages and ideas based on research and findings. We expect the student to likely develop problem solving skills, learn how to communicate their research in an effective and efficient manner, and work collaboratively with the team.
Deliverables	• Reviewing our materials to create a clear understanding of what workflows are, including what are subprocesses and triggers. • Mapping out the steps involved from start to end on a campus process. • Brainstorming ways how UCM can improve the process and/or any other findings. • Create flyers using Canva showing key takeaways from the process mapping/ findings.

Political Science

Project Name	Americas Conflict Database
Mentor (s)	Anil Menon
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	Students involved in this project will help build a database of all battles in recorded history across the Americas. Each student will choose a set of countries to work on in consultation with the faculty member. They will be responsible for capturing information on all battles for these countries. The list of battles will be provided. Through their participation in this project, students will gain significant experience with a number of research skills, among them, accessing primary and secondary sources for triangulation, database management, data validation, and visualization.
Deliverables	• Conflict database data. • Research report. • Research presentation.

Psychological Sciences

Project Name	Research Coordinator-Parent as Teachers Home Visiting Study
Mentor (s)	Alexandra Main
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	I am the research coordinator for the Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Study conducted by Dr. Alexandra Main (Psychological Sciences). This study is in collaboration with the Child & Family Development Group at UC Merced and the Merced County Office of Education. The study investigates whether the Parents as Teachers home visiting intervention reduces parental stress, improves the quality of parent-child interactions, and predicts positive child development in children 0-5. My role in the project is to coordinate study appointments between home visitors, UC Merced researchers, and participating families. The study is expected to continue through Fall 2026.
Deliverables	• Research Report: Data suggesting whether the Parents as Teachers intervention does reduce parental stress, improves quality of parent-child interactions, and predicts positive child development. • Recommendations: Highlighting aspects of these types of interventions that do have a positive effect, as well as suggestions for areas of improvement or new strategies.

Project Name	Infant and Child Socio-emotional Development
Mentor (s)	Eric Walle
Modality	In-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	This project investigates how toddlers utilize their understanding of others' emotions, goals, and belief states to guide their interactions with them. Students will serve as experimenters, administering tasks, managing participant contact, scheduling, and handling video recordings. This hands-on experience in developmental psychology research will enable students to gain valuable insights into cognitive and emotional development in early childhood.
Deliverables	• Participant Recruitment and Scheduling: Contacting potential participants, coordinating schedules, and ensuring a diverse and representative sample of toddlers for the study. • Data Collection: Collaboratively working with other students to administer research tasks to toddlers, following standardized procedures to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection.

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OFP Projects (2024-2025)

	• Managing video recordings of these sessions. Maintaining detailed and accurate records of all interactions, and data collected.

Public Health

Project Name	Sense of Belonging in the Central Valley
Mentor (s)	Lindsay Crawford
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	The purpose of this project is to develop a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the sense of belonging among college students in California's Central Valley. The findings will provide insights into the unique challenges faced by underrepresented and underserved student populations and their implications for retention. This research aims to produce actionable recommendations for enhancing the sense of belonging and retention rates among underrepresented college students in the Central Valley of California.
Deliverables	• Interviews: Interviews will be conducted on Zoom with students across the Central Valley. • Transcripts: Interview transcripts will be cleaned and organized. • Recommendations: Based on the interviews, we will provide actionable recommendations to campuses across the Central Valley.

Project Name	Public Health Research Advisory Group
Mentor (s)	Irene Yen & Maria-Elena Young
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	Scholar will support the development of a Public Health Research Advisory Group that provides research consultation to low-resource community-based organizations in the San Joaquin Valley. The project will involve conducting research in partnership with a street medicine program for unhoused individuals, including conducting literature reviews, developing data extraction procedures, and conducting descriptive analyses.
Deliverables	• Conduct literature review on health benefits of street medicine for unhoused populations. • Create a data extraction tool for medical chart data collection. • Assist with data analyses of medical chart data.

Project Name	School District Suicide Prevention Policies & Youth Mental Health in California
Mentor (s)	Sidra Goldman-Mellor
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar	2

placement spots	
Project Overview	Between 2017 and 2020, California passed statewide legislation requiring school districts serving high school and middle school students to adopt suicide prevention policies. This project aims to understand the roll-out of these suicide prevention policies across school districts in California, and their impact on youth mental health, through a survey and in-depth interviews. UC Merced students involved in this project would collect information about school districts from online sources and assist with coding and analyzing survey data, as well as miscellaneous other tasks.
Deliverables	• Database 1: A comprehensive database containing information about 900+ school districts in California. • Database 2: A cleaned survey database with survey responses coded and ready for analysis. • Research report: A detailed report providing an overview of the survey findings, as well as themes from in-depth interviews.

Project Name	**Assessing the Capacity and Quality of Organizations Serving Victims of Intimate Partner Violence in California**
Mentor (s)	Sharon Tafolla & Maria-Elena Young
Modality	Virtual
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	There are programs and organizations that intend to support victims of gender-based violence, which includes intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV victims can encounter a wide spectrum of challenges to access safety net programs and organizations that facilitate housing, health care, and legal support. These challenges are compounded for undocumented victims due to their legal status. This project aims to learn more about the organizations that provide safety net services to IPV victims.
Deliverables	• Data cleaning: Producing written transcripts of audio-recorded interviews with organizations who serve victims of IPV. • Database: Compiling a repository of public data on organizations and organization characteristics across California counties that serve victims of intimate partner violence.

School of Engineering Instructional Labs

Project Name	UCM Campus Model
Mentor (s)	Jesus Perez
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	In this project, the student will capture land and building data on campus to create visual models. By doing so, the student will learn about surveying fundamentals and gain ample experience using surveying equipment. The student will also be responsible for hosting several workshops to teach other students while also giving them the opportunity to get more hands-on experience with the equipment. The student will be expected to attend in-person and online trainings, as well as execute self-guided learning.
Deliverables	• Create a topographical map of upper UCM Campus. • Use photogrammetry to create 3D models of buildings. • Host workshops to include hands-on experience for attendees. • 3D print a model of the obtained data.

Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs

Project Name	I Think You're Wrong But...Learning to Disagree
Mentor (s)	Destany Charles
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	This experiential learning initiative is dedicated to crafting a comprehensive program aimed at equipping students with the essential skills to navigate crucial conversations, even amidst differing viewpoints. The appointed OFP fellow will spearhead the design, promotion, and facilitation of numerous in-person events centered on this imperative topic. Against the backdrop of an increasingly divisive political climate, this initiative seeks to empower students with effective strategies for conflict resolution and respectful disagreement. Emphasizing empathy-driven dialogue, the program will foster an environment where students actively engage in listening and understanding, irrespective of their stance, without the pressure of altering perspectives.
Deliverables	• Needs Assessment: Conduct a survey or focus group to understand students' current perspectives on crucial conversations and conflict management. Identify common challenges or areas where students feel unprepared or uncomfortable. • Program Design: Develop a curriculum that combines theory and practical skills for engaging in crucial conversations. Include topics such as active listening, empathy building, managing emotions, and finding common ground. Consider interactive activities, role-playing scenarios, and case studies to make the learning experience engaging and applicable. • Marketing Strategy: Create promotional materials that highlight the benefits of participating in the program, such as improved communication skills, increased empathy, and better conflict resolution abilities. Utilize social media platforms, campus newsletters, and posters to reach the student population. • Event Facilitation: Plan and facilitate in-person events, workshops, or discussion groups on crucial conversations. Provide opportunities for students to practice the skills they've learned in a safe and supportive environment. Encourage respectful dialogue and active participation from all attendees. • Follow-Up and Evaluation: Gather feedback from participants after each event to assess the effectiveness of the program and identify areas for improvement. Consider implementing pre- and post-event surveys to measure changes in students' attitudes and behaviors related to crucial conversations.

SSHA Academic Advising

Project Name	Supporting Academic at Notice (Formerly Academic Probation) Students to Victory
Mentor (s)	Lauren Brackett
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	College students face a variety of stressors that have potential impact on their academic growth. However, each student's story is unique, that may include non-academic issues. Because of this, intervention practices and engagement must be ready to address the unique challenges. This project aims to identify programs and intervention models from the other Land Grant, minority serving institutions that specifically support students on academic notice (academic probation).
Deliverables	• An extensive database of minority serving institutions that have specific support programming for students on academic notice (academic probation), including (if available) frameworks, models, and intervention methods, and technologies used. • Conduct focus group sessions and/or survey approach to gather information/ data from students who have previously were on academic notice and gather personal perspectives of they feel contributed to the academic standing and support they needed to achieve academic success. • An in-depth research report that summarizes the findings of support available to students at the identified campuses. • Provide practical recommendations for UC Merced and system wide stakeholders to expand and/or enhance upon its current services and support for students on academic notice.

Student Career Center

Project Name	Leveraging AI for Enhanced Career Services at UC Merced
Mentor (s)	Alejandra Diaz
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The OFP student fellow will conduct research on AI technologies for career services, identifying effective tools and best practices from other institutions. Based on that research, they will recommend tools to the Student Career Center and create a guide for using platforms including but not limited to ChatGPT and Gemini for job search preparation. This hands-on project will enhance the fellow's skills in research, project management, and technology. The project will culminate in a comprehensive report, and presentation detailing the findings, recommendations, and guide development.
Deliverables	• A comprehensive report that documents the entire project from start to finish. It should include a literature review, analysis of best practices from other institutions, and evaluations of various AI tools. Additionally, the report should conclude with a set of recommendations for future implementation of AI integration within the Student Career Center. • Develop a comprehensive guide focused on helping students effectively use AI platforms like ChatGPT, Gemini, and others to enhance their job search. It should include practical tips, detailed instructions, and resources on prompt engineering. It should guide students on using these tools for tasks such as updating resumes, preparing for interviews, and conducting general job searches. The guide should include links to additional resources, tutorials, and best practices for using AI in the job search process. • Final presentation: The student fellow will create a final presentation for the OFP showcase on their project, research findings and guide development.

Project Name	Research and Create a Digital Portfolio of Transferable Skills (Reflective Journaling Tool) for UC Merced Scholars
Mentor (s)	Xue Lee
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	1
Project Overview	The primary goal of researching and creating a Digital Portfolio of Transferable Skills is to promote proactive career path management. Employers want to hire candidates with career readiness competencies ("transferable skills") which will add value to organizational goals. As a Higher Education institution, we want to not only educate our scholars and enable them to develop transferable skills, but also empower them to define their success stories. Using resources including the Digital Portfolio and active campus engagement provides

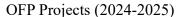|	
	scholars the opportunities to put their skills and experiential learning into practical action as exemplary evidence of their resilience and personal successes.
Deliverables	- Research Report: A detailed report summarizing findings of research regarding established paid/unpaid internship programs at other Higher Education institutions and/or Workforce Development organizations coupled with reflective journaling exercises as part of Student Success Initiatives. The research findings will be used to support the creation of a Digital Success Portfolio (Reflective Journaling tool) as identified in. - Create Digital Success Portfolio (Reflective Journal Tool): Research current available resources at UC Merced and other Higher Education institutions to create/re-design a former Digital Success Portfolio, a fillable PDF document and convert it into website/digital resource tool which can be marketed and proposed to campus partners for piloting academic year 2025-2026. This tool provides safe space for students to journal their experiences as a means of articulating their development of transferable skills as well as teach them how to set goals, and effectively communicate their personal stories of resiliency and Growth Mindset. - Recommendations: As part of the completed Research Report, OFP Fellow will also provide practical recommendations for Student Career Center and Campus Partners regarding piloting strategies for the Digital Success Portfolio specifically for first-year students and for specific majors i.e. Management and Business Economics students based on the compiled data and research findings.

UC Merced Library

Project Name	Back to the Beginning: Creating Content to Celebrate UC Merced Library's 20th Anniversary
Mentor (s)	Sara Davidson Squibb & Jerrold Shiroma
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	In this project students will find and prepare materials about the UC Merced Library and its founding to create outward-facing communications for a 20-Year UC Merced Library Anniversary celebration in fall 2025. Students are expected to have interests and/or strengths in research & writing and a willingness to learn new skills. If you are interested in early campus history and how to communicate this to others, this project is for you!
Deliverables	- Identifies materials & captions to use for a physical exhibit marking UC Merced Library's 20-year anniversary. - Creates a digital timeline of images and captions marking key milestones in UC Merced Library's history. - Prepares two oral histories with former UC Merced Library founders. - Writes a news article highlighting UC Merced Library's beginning. - Recommends social media strategies to promote engagement with UC Merced Library anniversary materials.

University Extension, Division of Professional & Continuing Education

Project Name	Regional Engagement and Industry Insights: Empowering Communities Through Professional Development
Mentor (s)	Michael Pierick
Modality	Both virtual and in-person
# of available OFP scholar placement spots	2
Project Overview	UC Merced Extension Division of Professional and Continuing Education aims to provide current undergraduate students with valuable experiential learning opportunities within marketing, analysis, and database management. Through this initiative, students will engage in a comprehensive market analysis of regional agencies, community-based organizations, and companies. This analysis will highlight the priority areas and industry focus of each entity, providing crucial insights to bolster UC Merced Extension's targeted outreach and partnership efforts. By participating in this project, students will gain hands-on experience in market research, data analysis, and strategic communication, positioning them for future career success while contributing to the university's mission of fostering community and industry collaboration. This opportunity will provide learning and development on market research, communication development, customer-relationship management (CRM) tools, among other identified areas. The student(s) will work closely with the Director of Strategic Initiatives, Marketing Specialist, Graphic Designer, and the Dean of Extension. Through this project, UC Merced students will not only develop practical skills but also contribute significantly to the university's outreach and engagement efforts, laying the groundwork for future collaborations that benefit both the institution and the regional community.
Deliverables	• Comprehensive Market Analysis Report: A detailed report that identifies and categorizes key regional organizations, their industry focus, and priority areas. This report will serve as a foundational document for UC Merced Extension's outreach and partnership strategies. • Organizational Profiles Database: A structured and searchable database containing detailed profiles of each organization, including contact information, mission statements, key projects, and areas of interest. This database will be a valuable resource for ongoing engagement and relationship management. • Industry Trends and Insights Presentation: A presentation summarizing the latest industry trends and insights relevant to the identified organizations. This presentation will be used to inform UC Merced Extension's strategic decisions and to engage potential partners through compelling, data-driven storytelling.

- Targeted Outreach Campaign Plan: A strategic plan outlining a targeted outreach campaign to build brand awareness for UC Merced Extension and to propose partnership opportunities for professional development training. The plan will include key messages, communication channels, and a timeline for execution.
- Partnership Proposal Templates: Professionally designed proposal templates tailored to different types of organizations (e.g., non-profits, private companies, government agencies) that can be used to pitch partnership opportunities. These templates will be customizable and will include sections for outlining mutual benefits, potential training programs, and collaboration frameworks.