

A photograph of three graduates in black academic regalia with teal stoles and gold tassels, smiling and looking to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor campus scene with trees and buildings.

# COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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# DEAN'S WELCOME

## Friends,

This past year was a trying one, with COVID-19 upending a lot of our lives and creating new challenges. Graduate school is tough enough for students without adding a worldwide pandemic to the mix. It became even more apparent to me that we need to do more to protect the health and wellness of our graduate students.

We can do that in many ways by providing greater access for our students to connect, with each other and mentors. We can also communicate some of the many excellent resources on campus and create new ones when needed.

We began online Town Hall meetings during the pandemic so that students could connect directly with the college leadership, and we could address new problems unique to COVID. I found these virtual meets with no agenda a great way to connect with students and I've decided to continue them quarterly in 2022. I also launched UCF's first Graduate Student Advisory Council. We had our first meeting in November 2021, and I can tell you I'm excited to work with these volunteers to help address some challenges and capitalize on some opportunities to create a great graduate experience at UCF.

The group of student advisors, who represent colleges across the university, identified some key areas they'd like to see improved in, and health and wellness were on the top of the list.

To that end, we'll be rolling out a new Health and Wellness online module for students to take this spring. It provides some practical tips and resources that we think will help our students through their graduate student journey.

I want to thank our graduate faculty across the university and the staff in our colleges and here in the College of Graduate Studies for your time, patience, and commitment to our Graduate Knights. For a long time, our undergraduate community has been center stage at UCF. I anticipate that 2022 will be the year our graduate students step out of the shadows, and we work together to make sure no student feels invisible.



Liz

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Klonoff'.

**Elizabeth Klonoff**

Vice President for the Office of Research  
Dean of the College of Graduate Studies





# MISSION AND VISION

The UCF College of Graduate Studies provides leadership and services to create quality learning environments for graduate students. The college provides the support services necessary for the university to achieve its goal of international prominence in selected areas of graduate studies and research. The college is a leader in defining the image for graduate education at UCF as one of quality, programs of excellence, and focused on community partnerships.

- **Integrity** – We exercise the highest standards of integrity in everything we do. We practice and defend academic and personal honesty. Our job performance is characterized by truthfulness, dependability, and responsibility. We seek to be known by our clients as trustworthy and dependable.
- **Excellence** – We strive toward the highest standards of performance in all aspects of our operation. We perform every task at an exemplary level of quality. We seek to exceed the expectations of those we serve, always delivering more than we promise and setting a high standard for our hard work, knowledge, and problem-solving skills.
- **Respect** – We respect the rights of others to promote an open and supportive campus environment. Students will always be treated with respect and courtesy. Staff members are valued for the diverse contributions that they make to the College of Graduate Studies and the university. Diversity is celebrated. We treat everyone with respect and civility.
- **Service** – We are primarily a service organization. As such we recognize the importance of “customer relations” and meeting the needs of our clients. We strive for quality and prompt service.
- **Continuous Improvement** – We continuously evaluate existing policies and practices searching for ways to improve our operations. All operational initiatives are routinely examined as a basis for refining, replacing, or eliminating less-effective strategies. We review and implement new technologies that will enhance our operations and service. We seek to be a leader in the application of advanced practices and technologies.





# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



# Sam Majumder

As a child growing up without siblings, Sam Majumder took advantage of his imagination to keep him occupied. The broad range of toys he had, helped him to critically think through how to make all the toys work together in a cohesive story. “In other words, I was ‘Joining the Dots’ to get/create a full picture,” he says. He imagined the dots as action figures and the picture as the stage with its own background. The way he imagined his toys helped him integrate his courses during his undergraduate experience to better understand how biotechnology works.

Majumder earned a bachelor of Technology degree in Biotechnology from the West Bengal University of Technology. Hired as an intern, he worked for the Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, a national cancer research institute in his hometown. From there, he decided to study at the University of Giessen, Germany to earn his master’s degree in Agro-Biotechnology. He continued to conduct research there working at the Leibniz Institute for Plant Genetics and Crop Science Research.

Impressed by the wide variety of research done at UCF, Majumder decided to pursue his third degree in yet another country. Although he can use these diverse experiences and knowledge to his benefit, the experience of living in three different countries while pursuing an educational career has shaped him into who he is today in more ways than one. He says, “Living in different parts of the world for about six years now, I did encounter my share of microaggression stereotype and discrimination. I want to contribute and do whatever I can to help create a system which is more inclusive and accessible to all sections of society.”

He is currently pursuing an Integrative and Conservative Biology PhD and considers himself fortunate to be part of the university.

“It makes me feel really happy to see in real-time the various research projects blossoming into something amazing right in front of our eyes,” he says. “I like how the Biology Department and UCF, in general, provide a platform for young scientists like me to evolve.”

Majumder’s research is focused on three different topics including understanding how 28 species of wild sunflowers have evolved. He aims to look at the life history and evolutionary timeline to discover how these species might have interacted differently with the environment and now have subtle differences. His other research includes understanding how biosynthetic pathways have evolved in terrestrial plant species and in using machine learning to forecast and understand global agricultural output for specific crops.

His passion for science isn’t just reflected through his research at the college level. Majumder participates in the “Skype a Scientist” program where he is given the opportunity to volunteer at three public schools in Utah, Wisconsin, and Ohio answering questions and speaking on what it means to be a scientist.

“We have the responsibility of making knowledge accessible to everyone.,” he says. “A well-informed population can make sensible decisions.”

After graduation, Majumder plans on working in basic and applied science through the pursuit of Data Scientist positions for agricultural industries. He would also like to continue pursuing research projects in academia and working for a government agency to solve real-world problems.





# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity and inclusion create a truly enriching graduate student experience socially, academically, and in research. Together these values can create a truly enriching graduate student’s experience socially, academically, and in research.

UCF is a Hispanic Serving Institution, and more than 46 percent of students are from underrepresented communities. About **58** percent of graduate students are women compared to **42** percent men.

The college is invested in creating a thriving graduate student community, that reflects our community. To help serve all our students and support those from underrepresented groups, the college offers a variety of programs and services.



## Ethnicity

Academic Term	Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020	
Student Demographics	Student Count	% of Students	Student Count	% of Students	Student Count	% of Students
American Indian / Alaska Native	18	0.20	13	0.14	10	0.10
Asian	489	5.34	480	5.03	501	5.02
Black / African American	1,008	11.00	1,052	11.02	1122	11.24
Hispanic / Latino	1,598	17.44	1,702	17.82	1881	18.84
International	1,136	12.40	1,167	12.22	1079	10.81
Multi-racial	175	1.91	243	2.54	306	3.07
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	3	0.03	4	0.04	7	0.07
Not Specified	147	1.60	119	1.25	107	1.07
White	4,590	50.09	4769	49.94	4969	49.78
Grand Total	9,164	100%	9549	100%	9982	100%



# DIVERSE ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The UCF Diverse Academic Opportunities Program (traditionally a two-day, in-person on-campus event) transformed into a virtual visit this past year for prospective doctoral applicants from underrepresented populations. The goal is to give highly qualified students to learn more about programs at UCF and encourage them to apply.

CGS shifted to a virtual format because of the pandemic but worked to make sure candidates were able to:

- Meet with leading and renowned faculty in their field of interest
- Learn from current graduate students about how to be successful as a doctoral student
- Attend workshops on how to submit a competitive application to graduate school
- Virtually tour the campus

Twenty-six candidates participated and about half were first-generation students. They were from across the nation, **58 percent** were women and the group was interested in a variety of programs from clinical psychology to engineering. Fifteen of those who participated applied for 2021 admission and three planned to join a graduate program at UCF this fall.







# FELLOWSHIPS

The College of Graduate Studies offers a variety of fellowships to support outstanding underrepresented graduate students.

They include:

- Delores A. Auzenne Fellowships that provide \$5,000 for one year to new or continuing underrepresented graduate students
- FAMU Feeder Doctoral (\$12,000 per year for 4 years) and Master's (\$10,000 per year for 2 years) Fellowships for newly admitted graduate students who completed the Florida A&M University Feeder program as undergraduates
- McKnight Doctoral Fellowships (\$15,000 per year) that provide 5 years of funding from UCF and the Florida Education Fund (FEF)
- McNair Doctoral (\$25,000 per year for 4 years) and Master's (\$10,000 per year for 2 years) Fellowships for incoming McNair Scholars
- Professional Doctoral Diversity Fellowships (\$3,000 per year for 3 years) for students who are newly enrolling in one of UCF's Professional Doctoral programs
- RAMP Doctoral (\$12,000 per year for 4 years) and Master's (\$10,000 per year for 2 years) Fellowships awarded to new graduate students who completed the UCF Research and Mentoring Program (RAMP) as undergraduates
- The Summer Mentoring Fellowship (\$4,500 in summer) is available to incoming underrepresented graduate students working with a faculty mentor on a summer research project. Students are required to participate in a series of professional development workshops and give a final research presentation at the end of the summer semester.





# **GRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT**

Building on Excellence





Hometown

Hyderabad, India

Degree Program

Computer Science PhD

College

College of Engineering and  
Computer Science

Research Focus

Developing intelligence  
systems to curb  
misinformation/unhealthy  
conversations on social media.

Ramya Akula

Technology has always piqued Ramya Akula’s interest because of how quickly people adopt and showcase the constant change of their lifestyle. Social media is just one example. The ever-increasing demand on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are evidence of the evolution of businesses over time. The focus of Akula’s research is a sarcasm detector, as showcased on The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon. A development of intelligent systems to curb misinformation and unhealthy conversations on social media. “In a face-to-face conversation, it’s easy. You can look at each other and with gestures and the way people talk it’s easy to identify sarcasm. But when it comes to the online content, we don’t know who is behind it making it hard to detect,” she says.



Adapt the life-long learning culture. It is okay if your mind changes now and then. Do what you like the most, you are the ultimate owner of your career.



Computer Science doctoral candidate, Akula’s interest in the field began in India when she chose to pursue a bachelor’s degree in computer science from the Jawaharlal Nehru Technology University. Akula grew up without exposure to social networks and was introduced to these platforms in college. She watched people migrate from face-to-face interaction to conversing mainly on their phones, which is what encouraged her to study these relationships.

Akula’s research is accomplished by developing an algorithm that looks at patterns found in social media posts. Through the team’s work, she helped create a deep learning-based model for sarcasm detection, by selecting cue words in sequence with one another.

Akula advises her fellow students, “Adapt the life-long learning culture. It is okay if your mind changes now and then. Do what you like the most, you are the ultimate owner of your career.” After she graduates, she plans on working in research and development.





# WHO WE SERVE

UCF College of Graduate Studies is an advocate for graduate education, working to mobilize and arrange the resources needed for enrollment and program growth. We track and analyze emerging trends and changes in graduate education, both nationally and with our peer institutions, and provide support and guidance for interdisciplinary and cooperative programs. We are mindful of the need to retain the academic values of the graduate programs while acting as a partner in the social and economic wellbeing of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

The college is also cognizant of our role in both maintaining and creating a diverse graduate community at UCF. These efforts span from attracting diverse candidates to our graduate programs to ensuring the successful completion of degree programs.

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### Fall 2020 Graduate Student Data

- Total Grad Students 10,002 (13.9% of total UCF students)
- 490 Medical Students
- 2,281 Doctoral Students (23% of total)
- 6,969 Master's Students (70% of total)

### Part-Time

- 60.8% of Graduate Students
- 62.9% of Master's Students

### Full-Time

- 39.2% of Graduate Students
- 52.3% of Doctoral Students
- 2,970 Graduate Students are studying fully online
- 39% of Graduate Students are male
- 61% of Graduate Students are female
- 12.1% of Graduate Students are international representing 112 different countries
- Average age of Doctoral Students is 32
- Average age of Master's Students is 30
- UCF Graduate Students represent every state in the U.S.





# VIRTUAL GRAD FAIR SERIES

Searching for the right graduate school looked a little different this year. The coronavirus pandemic put a halt to one-on-one visits at many universities and colleges around the country; making it difficult for students to learn more about an institution and specific programs of interest.

That's why this past year, the UCF College of Graduate Studies hosted the first Virtual Grad Fair Series from September to October 2020. The free online event replaced the Graduate Studies annual on-campus fair. The Virtual Grad Fair Series consisted of **61 unique** program/discipline-specific events. Nearly **1,400 prospective students** attended from across the nation during the entirety of the series.

# GRAD FAIR





# RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Success and Achievements



# RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

UCF sponsors several awards for graduate students and faculty recognizing excellence in research, teaching, and mentoring.

Acknowledging graduate students for their accomplishments is an important part of providing a rewarding academic experience. The college offers these awards every year to recognize our outstanding graduate students in a variety of categories.

It is also important to recognize faculty members who have gone above and beyond in mentoring our graduate students. The college encourages all recent alumni or current faculty to nominate those faculty members who exemplify being a great mentor to graduate students in their academic and professional development.







# NATIONAL AWARDS

Five UCF National Science Foundation CAREER grant recipients are finding innovative and bold new ways to solve challenges that could be game-changers in healthcare and engineering. These faculty work very closely with graduate students to conduct their research.

For example, one researcher is tracking down what triggers harmless microorganisms into going rogue and turning into deadly pathogens such as flesh-eating bacteria. Another faculty member is working to make artificial intelligence systems street smart, so they can make sound real-time decisions that could avert disasters such as a national blackout when the electrical grid system is overloaded.

The recipients will share about **\$3 million over five years.**

The awardees:

- **Salvador Almagro-Moreno**, College of Medicine
- **Samik Bhattacharya**, College of Engineering and Computer Science
- **Yanjie Fu**, College of Engineering and Computer Science
- **Lorraine Leon**, College of Engineering and Computer Science
- **Robert Steward Jr.**, College of Engineering and Computer Science

NSF uses the awards to recognize early career professionals with promising researchers who have the potential to serve as academic role models and lead their respective fields. This year's recipients bring the total of UCF awardees to **46 in the past 10 years.** This year's recipients share a relentless drive, infinite curiosity, and a real desire to help students succeed. They all said they are eager to ensure the next generation of scientists and engineers are well equipped to confront challenges we haven't even imagined yet.



# Luis Rabelo

After taking his first courses in simulation and artificial intelligence in 1986, Luis Rabelo, PhD became enamored with digital systems and simulation. He knew the place to go to be on the cutting edge in this field was UCF.

“Distributed simulation and artificial intelligence are hot topics right now,” he says. “Orlando is the simulation capital of the world.” As Co-Director of the Simulation Interoperability Lab, he provides collaborative computing environments for students working in simulation.



The most rewarding part of my job is observing the success of our students.



“The most rewarding part of my job is observing the success of our students,” Rabelo says.

This passion for student success earned him the 2020 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Doctoral Students award, for the second time. This year was a challenging year because of COVID-19—mentoring was more personal, more intense due to the restrictions and more creative.

Charles Davis, PhD is one of Rabelo’s fans. He heard a lot of good things about the professor and when he needed a mentor. He sought him out.

“This doctoral experience was a journey that has marked my life and encouraged me to keep growing,” Davis says. “My interactions with Dr. Rabelo and his group, represent the essential element of this journey. Reaching out to Dr. Rabelo has paid high dividends and I have proof of it with successfully completing my PhD,” Davis says.

Many of Rabelo’s students, including Davis, have gone on to accomplish significant undertakings including publishing journal articles and books. They work for places such as NASA’s Kennedy Space Center, NASA’s John Glenn Space Research Center, Lockheed Martin, Disney, Duke Energy, and more.

Rabelo’s research in distributed simulation and artificial intelligence is focused on understanding the industry process, simulating deep learning design, and creating next-generation systems. Through this research, he plans to continue helping companies become more efficient and profitable. He has published more than 75 peer-reviewed journal articles and more than 250 conference proceeding articles with the majority of these articles co-authored with his doctoral students. Rabelo’s awards and recognitions include the 2019 Fulbright Specialist Program, 2018 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Doctoral Students, 2013 Society of Automotive Engineers Forest R. McFarland Award, 2012 Engineers’ Council Distinguished Engineer Educator Award, 2011 Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation Education Award, and the 2011 NASA Group Achievement Award.



Hometown

David, Chiriquí, Republic of Panama

College

College of Engineering and Computer Science

Title

Co-Director of the Simulation Interoperability Lab

Professor, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management

Research Focus

Distributed simulation and artificial intelligence, technology management.



# STUDENT AND FACULTY AWARDS

Of the thousands of students pursuing their graduate education at UCF each year, students are selected from a group of nominees in each college as the university winners in the areas of Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching, Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant, Outstanding Master's Thesis, and Outstanding Dissertation. Each award recipient is recognized throughout the university community as having shown truly exceptional work. UCF also recognizes two faculty members for their dedication and guidance in the mentorship of doctoral students. Outstanding faculty are nominated for the award by graduate faculty or doctoral students who graduated in the past year.

## Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching

**David Boffey**, *Education PhD, Exercise Physiology Track, College of Health Professions and Sciences*

## Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant

**Brandy King**, *Computer Science MS, College of Engineering and Computer Science*

## Award for Outstanding Dissertation

**Engineering, Physical Sciences, and Life Sciences Division**

**Lin Hu, PhD**, *Materials Science and Engineering PhD, College of Engineering and Computer Science*

Dissertation: *Designing Metal Nanocatalysts and Tuning their Microenvironment for Gas-Involving Electrocatalysis.*

Mentored by Xiaongfeng Feng, PhD

**Social Science, Humanities, Education, Business, Fine Art and Health Sciences Division**

**Jasara Hines, PhD**, *Texts and Technology PhD, College of Arts and Humanities*

Dissertation: *The Ecology of "Sites" of Collective Memory" An Examination of Emergent Literacies and National Identity at Geographical and Virtual Site of Memory.*

Mentored by Scot French, PhD





# STUDENT AND FACULTY AWARDS

## Award for Outstanding Master's Thesis

### Engineering, Physical Sciences, and Life Sciences Division

**Daniela Diaz**, *Environmental Engineering MA, College of Engineering and Computer Science*

Thesis: *Emulsion Characterization Study for Improved Bilgewater Treatment and Management.*

Mentored by Woo Hyoung Lee, PhD, PE

### Social Science, Humanities, Education, Business, Fine Art, and Health Sciences Division

**America Edwards**, *Communication MA, College of Sciences*

Thesis: *Instructional Communication as a Primary Function of Communities of Practice During Crises.*

Mentored by Timothy Sellnow, PhD.

## Faculty Mentoring Award

### Engineering, Physical Sciences, and Life Sciences Faculty Mentoring Award

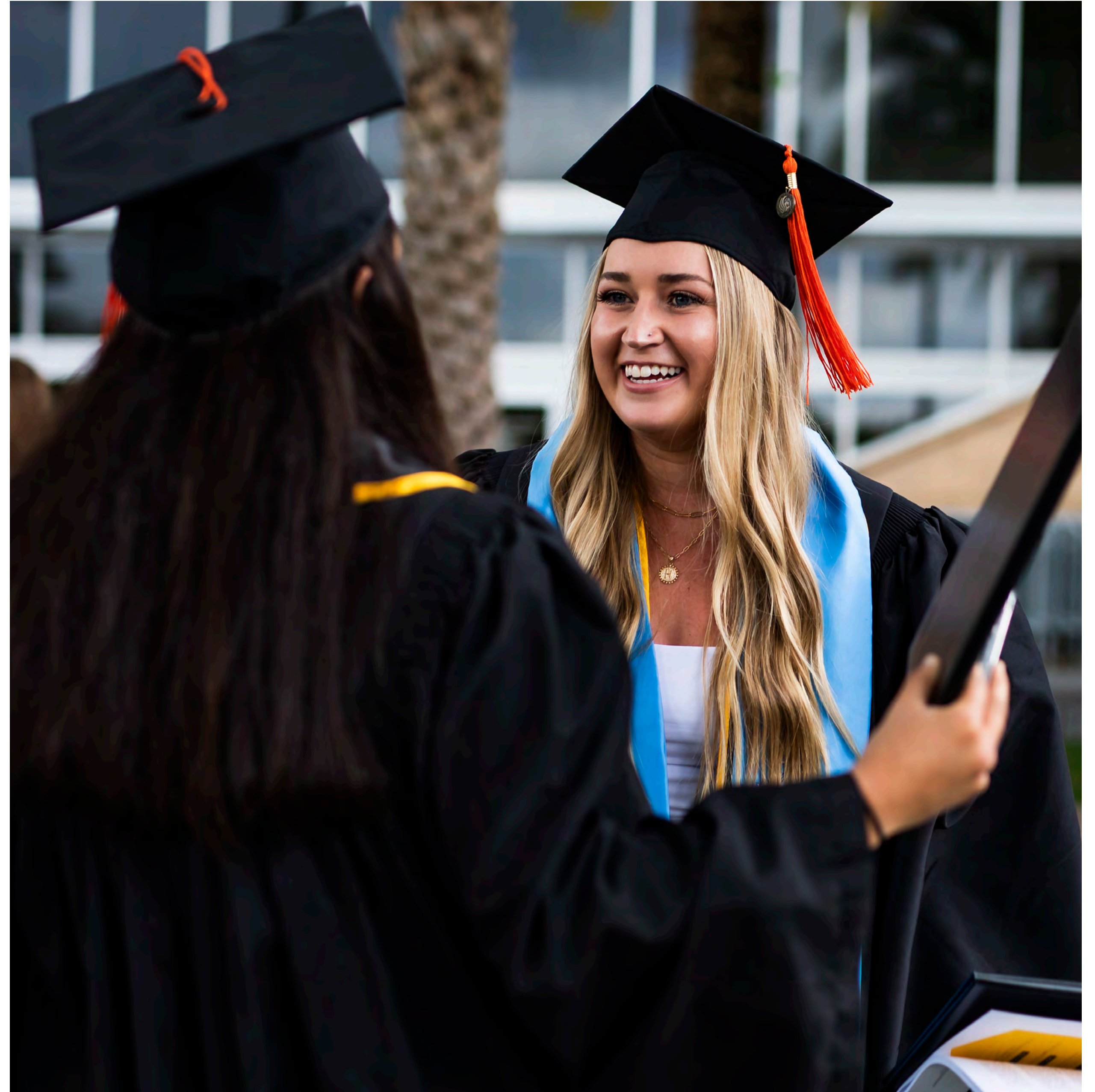
**Luis Rabelo**, Associate Professor, *Department of Industrial Engineering, College of Engineering and Computer Science*

### Social Sciences, Humanities, Education, Business, Fine Arts and Health Sciences Faculty Mentoring Award

**Xin He, PhD**, Associate Professor, *Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration*

## Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching

**Matthew Stock PhD**, Associate Professor, *School of Kinesiology and Physical Therapy, College of Health Professions and Sciences*





# PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Colleges, Clusters, and Community





**Hometown**

Albania

**College**

Rosen College of Hospitality

**Degree Program**

Hospitality Management PhD

**Research Focus**

The impacts of disasters on tourism networks.

## Frida Bahja

When deciding where to pursue a doctoral degree, the Rosen College of Hospitality Management interested Bahja for the many benefits the college offers including faculty publishing in top-tier journals, opportunities to join cluster teams, and support for graduate students via workshops.

“At Rosen, graduate students are mostly professional (working full time), with diverse cultures and backgrounds who have a lot of passion for the hospitality and tourism industry,” she says.



**At Rosen, graduate students are mostly professional (working full time), with diverse cultures and backgrounds who have a lot of passion for the hospitality and tourism industry.**



To help connect students on campus, she has started the process of creating a Rosen College Graduates Student Association. “Having an association at Rosen will help to get us closer so we can learn, network, and socialize with each other,” she says. Currently, the association is in the process of being established with the support of the graduate coordinator and students.

Along with establishing a new Rosen student club, Bahja is also involved in research focused on the resilience of tourism despite disruptive events. With the current pandemic affecting the hospitality and tourism industry, Bahja said she believes it is a new opportunity to rethink what it takes to make tourism more sustainable for the future.

After graduation, Bahja plans on pursuing a career in academia while serving on journal editorial boards and continuing her research. She is also planning on paying it forward. She said her advisor, Dr. Sergio Alvarez was amazing.

“Our professors are very supportive, dedicated, and committed to making us successful,” she says. “I see how they impact our lives and I would like to do the same in the future.”

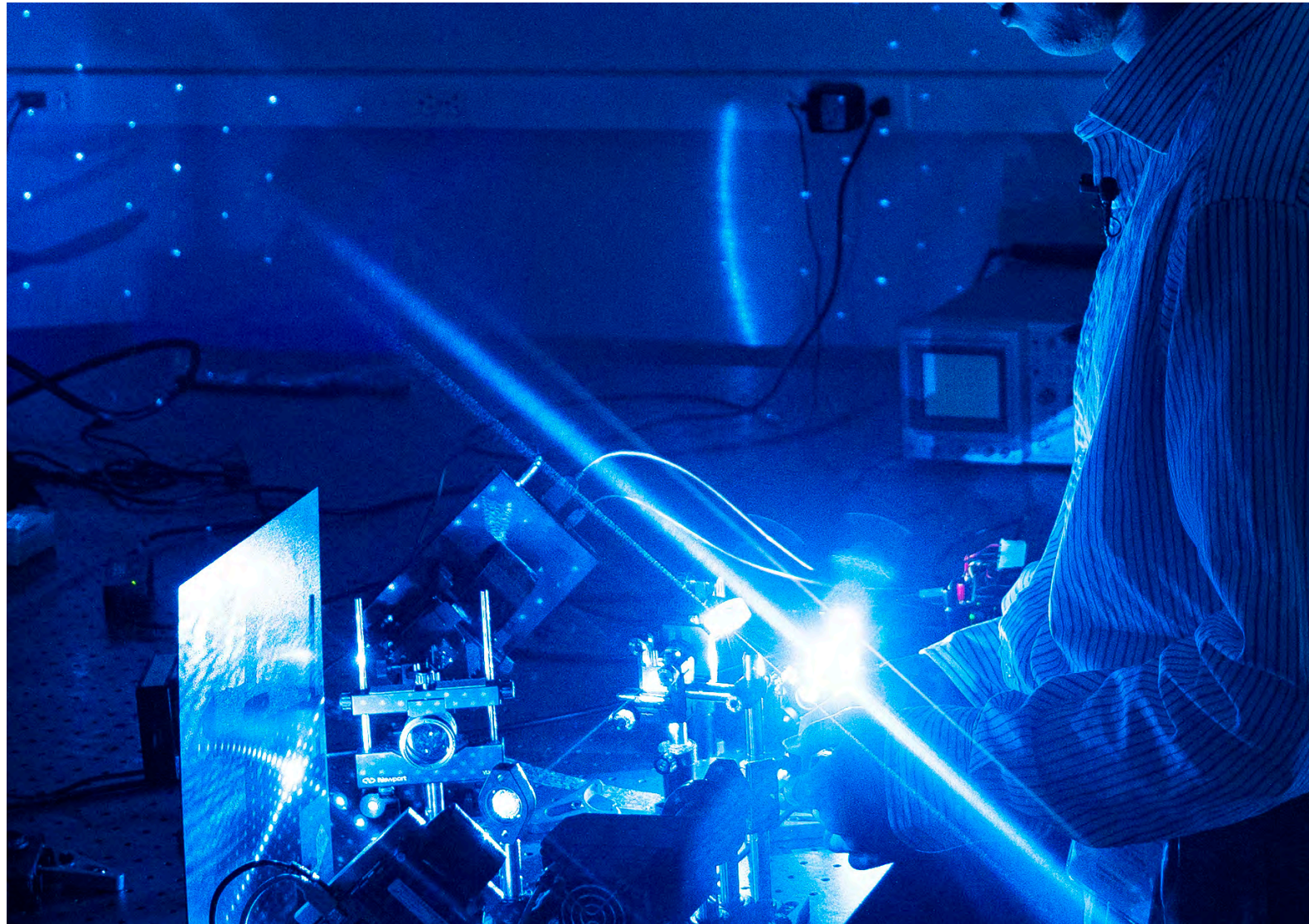




# PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

UCF is a prominent player in graduate education nationwide, offering innovative community partnerships, world-renowned faculty, and cutting-edge research opportunities. As one of the fastest-growing research universities in the country—located in one of the most dynamic metropolitan areas in the United States—Orlando, Florida—UCF assists in the economic development of the central Florida region. UCF attracts and supports industries vital to the region's future while providing students with real-world experiences that help them succeed after graduation.

UCF aligns its teaching, research, and services with the needs of our local economy, such as simulation and training, optics and lasers, hospitality management, video game production, business, education, and health care. We believe innovation comes from the meeting of diverse viewpoints and we will be successful when working together and to our full potential.





# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The interdisciplinary nature of graduate study and research has a longstanding presence in UCF graduate education. Faculty and students reach beyond organizational structures to engage with others who share similar research interests yet can provide complementary expertise and perspective to the research work. The College of Graduate Studies houses **seven graduate programs** ranging from Interdisciplinary Studies, Modeling and Simulation, Nanotechnology, and Geographic Information Systems. The Interdisciplinary Studies master's program includes an incubator model that supports the testing of student interest in new degree programs or those that cross multiple colleges and departments.





# GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Graduate education plays a prominent role at UCF with more than 10,000 students and over 200 graduate degree programs and certificates. The reputation of any educational institution is best reflected in the accomplishments of its students, faculty, and alumni—our graduates become leaders in their professional fields and enhance the quality of life for all through their innovative research and creative scholarship.

### University Graduate Accomplishments

- For the fifth time, UCF has been recognized as one of the Most Innovative Schools by *U.S. News & World Report's Best Graduate Schools of 2021*.
- Twenty-five UCF graduate programs were ranked in the top 100 in their respective fields by *U.S. News & World Report's Best Graduate Schools of 2021*.
- UCF's Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy was named the No. 1 graduate-level video game design school in North America by *The Princeton Review* and *PC Gamer Magazine* (2021 rankings).
- The Rosen College of Hospitality Management is ranked No. 2 in the world and No. 1 in the nation as best hospitality school according to *ShanghaiRankings*, for the second year in a row.
- A record-breaking 16 students and alumni were named National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) students, with an additional seven singled out for honorable mentions.
- Twelve Fulbright Scholars from around the world chose UCF graduate programs to do their research.

### TOP Doctoral Programs\*

1. Nursing Practice DNP
2. Physical Therapy DPT
3. Electrical Engineering PhD
4. Computer Science PhD
5. Education PhD

### TOP Master's Programs\*

1. Business Administration MBA
2. Social Work MSW
3. Health Administration MHA
4. Public Administration MPA
5. Criminal Justice MS

### TOP Graduate Certificate Programs\*

1. Autism Spectrum Disorders Graduate Certificate
2. Initial Teacher Professional Prep Graduate Certificate
3. Event Management Graduate Certificate
4. Dual Language Graduate Certificate
5. Public Administration Graduate Certificate

### TOP Feeder Schools in Florida

1. University of Central Florida
2. University of South Florida
3. Florida State University
4. University of Florida
5. Florida International University

### TOP Feeder States

1. New York
2. Pennsylvania
3. Georgia
4. Arizona
5. Ohio

\*Data is for Fall 2020 newly admitted students



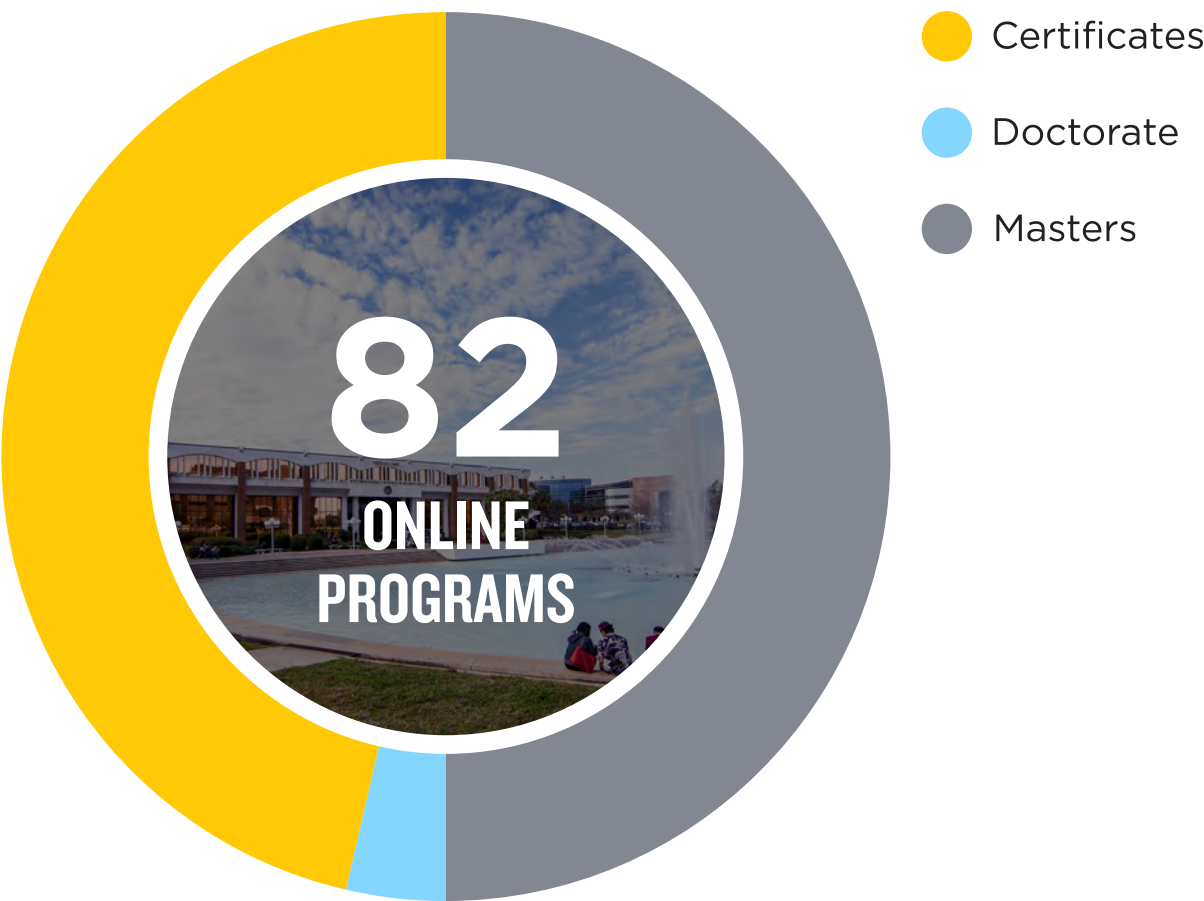




# UCF ONLINE

UCF offers high-quality online graduate programs for those students who are unable to physically attend our main or regional campuses. Currently, nine of the **13 colleges** offer a total of **82** online graduate programs: 3 doctoral programs, 41 master's programs, and 38 graduate certificates.

The College of Graduate Studies informs colleges and programs about state and national developments in online graduate programs, assists graduate programs with program and curriculum development to expand online offerings at UCF, and works with the Center for Distributed Learning to ensure academic policies are followed for these programs and to identify potential areas for development.



## Top Ten Online Graduate Degrees

- Social Work Online, MSW
- Public Administration, MPA
- Hospitality and Tourism Management, MS
- Criminal Justice, MS
- Nursing, MSN
- Educational Leadership, MA
- Health Administration, MHA
- Non Profit Management, MNM
- Nursing Practice, DNP
- Health Care Informatics PSM, MS





# REGIONAL CAMPUSES

## Main Campus

As UCF's home since 1968, our **1,415-acre** main campus in east Orlando is impressive in size and even bigger in potential. Modern facilities and state-of-the-art technology keep students connected to classwork and social communities, while **800 acres** of woodlands, lakes, and an arboretum help students reconnect with nature. Whether you're inside a classroom or outside exploring, our campus is an exciting place to learn — and an easy place to love.

## Rosen College of Hospitality Management

Located in the heart of Orlando's hospitality corridor next to world-famous attractions, resorts, restaurants, and convention spaces, our 159,000-square-foot building is the largest and most advanced facility ever built for hospitality management education.

## Academic Health Sciences Campus

UCF Academic Health Sciences is educating future doctors, nurses, healthcare providers, and scientists in a new and better way for the 21st century. Plus, cancer patients from around Orlando and surrounding areas will soon benefit from a one-stop research and treatment center. The new center will house cancer researchers, clinical trials, and treatment for patients.

Located in Lake Nona's Medical City, with esteemed neighbors including Nemours Children's Hospital, the University of Florida Research and Academic Center, the VA Medical Center, and the forthcoming UCF Lake Nona Medical Center is unrivaled and ensures we'll continue to epitomize innovation and transform healthcare for generations to come. The campus is home to the UCF College of Medicine Medical Education Program and Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences.





# REGIONAL CAMPUSES

## Connect Campuses

UCF Connect centers provide the same programs and services as UCF's main campus, in addition to smaller class sizes, personalized advising, and expert faculty. There are 11 centers strategically located throughout Central Florida within an 80-mile radius of the main campus.

## Downtown Campus

UCF Downtown in partnership with Valencia College is a 15-acre campus located in Orlando's Creative Village. Made up of several buildings, the new shared campus incorporates innovative technology to create a 21st-century learning environment for digital media, communication, public service, and health-related programs. The campus' proximity to Orlando's Central Business District places students within walking distance of job and internship opportunities and makes it easy for faculty to invite guest speakers to campus or collaborate with professionals in their field of study.





# INTERNATIONAL

UCF is home to students from more than **130** countries, and UCF welcomes the perspective and diversity that international students bring to our campus.

UCF has more than **200** study and research agreements with institutions in more than 60 countries—providing learning and research opportunities for students and faculty in countries ranging from the Udmurt Republic to South Africa. The university’s Florida Eastern Europe Linkage Institute alone maintains educational and research partnerships with 20 institutions in nine countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Poland, and the United States. The student experience abroad does not stop in the classroom with opportunities available for students to travel internationally.



## Top 10 Feeder Countries to Graduate Education

- 1. China
- 2. India
- 3. Iran, Islamic Republic of
- 4. Bangladesh
- 5. Saudi Arabia
- 6. Pakistan
- 7. Brazil
- 8. Turkey
- 9. Egypt
- 10. Republic of Korea

## Top 10 Online Graduate Programs

- 1. Computer Science MS
- 2. Computer Science PhD
- 3. Data Analytics MS
- 4. Mechanical Engineering PhD
- 5. Electrical Engineering PhD
- 6. Optics and Photonics PhD
- 7. Physics PhD
- 8. Civil Engineering PhD
- 9. Education PhD
- 10. Materials Science and Engineering PhD



The background of the slide features a faded image of a university campus. On the left, there is a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent tower. In the center-right, a large, ornate fountain with multiple water jets is visible. The scene is set against a sky with soft, white clouds. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow rectangle that frames the text.

# GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Providing a Graduate Community





Hometown

Orlando, FL

College

College of Arts and Humanities

Degree Program

Texts and Technology PhD

Research Focus

Formation of American art museums throughout the interwar period.

David Matteson

David Matteson has been enamored by museums since he was seven years old when his father took him to the National Air and Space Museum for the first time. As a child, he recalls looking up and seeing the Bell X-1 aircraft hanging from the ceiling and learning about the history of the aircraft. It broke the sound barrier and eventually led to space travel. From this moment on, he learned to appreciate objects and the history behind them.

“Since that moment, I’ve found museums to be really important cultural spaces. Spaces where we fall in love with objects; fall in love with art,” Matteson says. “ I am so driven by that. Museums are spaces where we need to be introspective. We need to be looking back at our histories, our identities.”



**I’ve found museums to be really important cultural spaces... Museums are spaces where we need to be introspective.**



Matteson is currently working on research that involves the study of the formation of American art museums throughout the interwar period. Specifically, Matteson is focused on three administrators who graduated from Harvard’s museum training course and their contributions to museums we know today. This historical period is significant because it is here that many museums were newly established and professionalized by the first generation of curators and directors formally educated in museum methods.

“Each of my case studies not only considers how these men established the model for the modern museum we know today, but also through analyzing little studies exhibitions or programs, how they deviated, queered, and opened the identity of the museums to new, divergent possibilities,” he says.

Matteson chose to pursue a Texts and Technology PhD at UCF because he was in search of programs that fit his interdisciplinary background. After receiving his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from a small liberal arts college, he was amazed by the level of research support that only a large university like UCF can offer its graduate students.

“There have been many moments in the classroom where another student’s shared perspective has caused me to reconsider an idea from a new vantage point,” he says. “Texts and Technology students, graduates, and faculty represent a community with a wide base of knowledge—our strength is this network of scholars working across various fields.”

Matteson has been awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities with a scholarship to participate in a summer institute focused on museums in Washington D.C where he was allowed to hone his research interests.

Matteson also received a scholarship at the 2021 UCF Student Scholar Symposium for a presentation of one of his case studies on the analysis of the curatorial decisions of the first director of the John and Mabel Ringling Art Museum in Sarasota. After graduation, he plans on continuing to conduct research in the field of museology to build more inclusive institutions that reflect the interests of the diverse communities they serve.



# PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

The College of Graduate Studies Pathways to Success program provides free workshops in academic integrity, graduate teaching, research, and professional and personal development to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

Workshops are presented by Graduate Studies staff members, UCF faculty, and facilitators from offices across UCF's campus, including the UCF Libraries, Career Services, Office of Research, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Counseling and Psychological Services, and more.

These offerings are not only important for students to build skills needed for their graduate education, but also serve an important part in the retention of graduate students and preparing them for success after graduation.

During the 2020-2021 year (summer, fall, spring) **160** Pathways to Success workshop sessions were held and there were **2,478** attendees.





# THESIS AND DISSERTATION

The college directs all format reviews and final submission processes of all graduate theses and dissertations at UCF. Additionally, staff coordinate workshops, manage two non-credit thesis and dissertation webcourses (one for faculty/staff and one for students), and partner with the UCF Libraries to provide research training for faculty and students.

Staff also work with the UCF Libraries to provide worldwide access to electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) through UCF’s institutional repository, STARS (Showcase of Text, Archives, Research & Scholarship). In 2020-2021 (May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021) graduate ETDs were downloaded **969,827** times through STARS.

In the 2020-2021 year, CGS staff completed **1,127** format reviews and oversaw the submission of **481** final theses and dissertations.

ETD Submissions 2020 - 2021 Academic Year

Academic Term	Thesis and Dissertations Submitted			
	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Totals for Year
Master’s	59	43	63	165
Doctoral	128	95	93	316
Totals by Term	187	138	156	481





# GRADUATE STUDENT CENTER

Since Fall 2012 the Graduate Student Center (GSC) has helped build a strong graduate community at UCF. The GSC is staffed by graduate assistants who foster a welcoming environment while hosting events, providing knowledge of campus resources, and managing day-to-day activities. Located on the second floor of Trevor Colbourn Hall, the GSC features four distinct spaces allowing the College of Graduate Studies to provide a variety of events and programs tailored to graduate student needs.

In the GSC, students can:

- Hold meetings, defend their thesis or dissertation, and study in the conference room featuring video and audio-conferencing equipment
- Use two data analysis rooms each featuring five computers with software not widely available at other campus labs
- Gather before or after classes, work individually or in groups, or have a cup of coffee in the multipurpose area
- Reserve the 48-seat presentation room for larger meetings or events and attend Pathways to Success workshops

Although the GSC physical space was closed in 2020–2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, support and information on resources was still provided to graduate students through email, social media, and several virtual events including a Cultural Competency Roundtable Discussion and a Graduate Trivia Night. The Center reopened





# ORIENTATION

The New Graduate Student Orientation and Welcome event usually held in August before the start of fall classes is a half-day event that helps guide new students to get the most out of their graduate education experience and acclimates them to UCF.

Since the Fall 2019 term, the College of Graduate Studies has offered the New Graduate Student Online Orientation through Webcourses. This optional, non-credit course is provided for free to all incoming and current UCF students to familiarize them with the resources and services available to UCF graduate students. The course also explains student behavior expectations.

The 2020 – 2021 New Graduate Student Online Orientation webcourse has 2,128 people enrolled, which is a **56** percent increase over the number of individuals enrolled in the 2019 – 2020 course (first year of the course).

The 2021 – 2022 New Graduate Student Online Orientation webcourse will serve as the main College of Graduate Studies orientation, as COVID-19 prevented planning for a face-to-face event.





# STUDENT RESEARCH WEEK

Student Research Week held in late spring typically begins with a Kickoff celebration featuring a UCF Pegasus Professor as keynote speaker, continues with the Student Scholar Symposium, and concludes with an awards ceremony.

The premier event of the week is the Student Scholar Symposium, which combined two signature events for 2021, the Graduate Research Forum and the Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence. Held virtually this year, the Symposium provided an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research and creative scholarship to the UCF community during six sessions held over three days via Webcourses and Zoom.

In 2021, **181** graduate students presented at the Student Scholar Symposium, and **51** UCF representatives served as graduate judges.



## 2021 Student Scholar Symposium Graduate Winners

### Business Administration and Hospitality Management

- Sydney Teft

### Education

- Yuting Chen
- Melissa Mitchell

### Engineering, Computer Science, and Modeling and Simulation

- Renoa Choudhury
- Sumana Ghosh
- Udit Kumar
- Ahmed Nasr
- Shraddha Nehate
- Megan Wiedbusch

### Fine Arts and Humanities

- Bonnie Cross
- David Matteson

### Health Sciences

- Fareesa Aftab
- David Boffey
- Kylie Harmon
- Valeria Flores Malavet
- Sai Preethi Nakkina
- Paola Rivera
- Jenna Wheeler

### Life Sciences

- Erij Elkamel
- Kavya Ganapathy
- Pavlo Kravchuk
- Danielle Worrell

### Mathematics, Optics, and Physical Sciences

- Christopher Botelho
- David Guinovart Sanjuan
- Swarnadeep Seth
- Brett Young

### Social Sciences

- Luca Alward
- Elizabeth Cloude
- Marin Deevers
- Jennifer Hudson
- Jessica Oldham
- Dylan Smith
- Niko Wilson





# 3MT

The 3MT (Three Minute Thesis) competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by doctoral students. Originally developed by the University of Queensland, the event cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills. 3MT competitions are held in over 600 universities across more than 59 countries worldwide.

Participants are judged on the ability to effectively convey the essence and importance of their research in an engaging way to a non-specialist panel of judges in just three minutes, with one PowerPoint slide.

The research of ten doctoral student finalists was presented virtually through Zoom in 2020. Videos of all participants can be found on the UCF College of Graduate Studies YouTube playlist.

## Fall 2020 3MT Event Winners

- First Place: **Lauren Thomas**, Curriculum and Instruction EdD
- Second Place: **Khan Mohammad Rabbi**, Mechanical Engineering PhD
- Third Place: **Anicia Arredondo**, Physics PhD, Planetary Sciences Track

## Fall 2020 3MT Event Judges

- **Michael Aldarondo-Jeffries**  
Director, Academic Advancement Programs  
UCF Division of Student Learning and Academic Research
- **Corinne Bishop**  
Social Sciences and Graduate Engagement Librarian  
UCF Libraries Research and Information Services
- **Brian Creel**  
Assistant Director  
UCF Career Services







# GRADUATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Funding Our Graduates





**Hometown**  
Orlando, FL

**College**  
College of Graduate Studies

**Degree Program**  
Modeling and Simulation PhD

**Research Focus**  
Human-computer interaction and human systems.

# Karla Badillo-Urquiola

Karla Badillo-Urquiola, a doctoral student in Modeling and Simulation, chose to continue her education at UCF because of the flexibility and interdisciplinary nature of the program. She shares, “The opportunity to combine coursework from across departments allowed me to take a more holistic approach to my development as a research scholar.” This is key in her studies as she has a background in psychology, instructional systems design, and human-computer interaction.

Badillo-Urquiola does not credit her success to the nature of



Everything I do is in honor of my family.



her research but rather to being a mom. She says her inspiration comes from her family. Being a mom requires her to step outside of her comfort zone, take risks, and never give up, especially knowing that nearly 50 percent of women leave full-time science careers after their first child. As Badillo-Urquiola says, “Everything I do is in honor of my family.”

Her research focuses on marginalized and vulnerable youth populations, specifically teens in foster care. She investigates the connection between foster teen use of technology; and the risks the use of that technology can lead to, such as sex trafficking. Her goal is to develop educational and technological interventions that can help promote a more teen-centric approach to online safety and reduce the digital inequalities that teens in foster care

face. “My motivation to ensure the online safety of our youth stems from overcoming several adversities during my childhood, as well as being a mom of two girls. Children and teens must thrive both on and offline, especially those that may not have equal opportunities as others. Youth in foster care are among the most vulnerable to online risks,” she says. Currently, Badillo-Urquiola is a graduate research assistant in the Socio-Technical Interaction Research (STIR) Lab.

Badillo-Urquiola has been recognized for her many outstanding achievements, including one of the highest UCF honors as a student, the 2020 Order of Pegasus. This award recognizes students based on academic achievement, professional or community service, leadership, and publication or research experiences. She is a McKnight Doctoral Fellow and former McNair Scholar and was also nominated and recognized as an outstanding student leader during Women’s History Month in 2017. Among all these awards and recognitions, she is thankful for the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship awarding support to African-American and Hispanic individuals working on dissertations in STEM disciplines committed to teaching and research at the university level.

After graduating, Badillo-Urquiola hopes to become a tenured professor, a status that, she points out, is shared by less than one percent of Latinas in the computing workforce.



# GRADUATE FUNDING

The Office of Graduate Funding, Professional Development, and Scholarship oversees the administration of graduate fellowships, graduate assistantship hiring, graduate student teaching, and details related to the health insurance and tuition remission associated with the graduate funding opportunities.

Each year the College of Graduate Studies allocates tuition waivers for graduate assistantship students and university fellows. College/department budgets and faculty grants and contracts fund assistantship stipends and resident tuition for those who do not receive a tuition waiver.

Early admission decisions enable early fellowship and assistantship funding offers that help UCF graduate programs compete for top-ranked applicants. The college coordinates all university funding offers and uses a Graduate Financial System to help track offers to support more complete and effective resource use.







# GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

UCF has more than **1,600 full-time enrolled graduate students** supported by assistantships (GTAs, GRAs, and GAs) each year. These appointments provide students with academic or professional development experience while at UCF that will help prepare them for their future work in research, teaching, or other activities. Graduate assistantship students receive a stipend for the duties that they perform, and UCF provides tuition remission and health insurance coverage for all qualifying assistantship appointments totaling 20 hours per week. While some graduate assistantships are available in non-academic units on campus, most assistantships are offered by a student's graduate program or department Parental Leave for Graduate Assistants.

The College of Graduate Studies offers a Parental Leave program for graduate students on existing assistantship agreements during pregnancy or immediately after the birth or adoption of their infant child. Approved parental leave is paid leave for up to six weeks but maybe a shorter period, depending on the student's graduate assistantship agreement(s).





# GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

In 2020-2021, UCF supported over **170 graduate students** on competitive graduate fellowships that included a stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance. An additional **26 students** received one-year Graduate Dean's Fellowships of \$5,000 as supplements to their graduate assistantship funding.

The Office of Research and College of Graduate Studies Doctoral Fellowship supports up to **102 new students** each year and includes a one-year fellowship of \$25,000 and a three-year commitment of GRA or GTA funding from the supporting program. Funding for the fellowship comes from the Office of Research (\$11,000), the supporting program or college (\$9,000), and the College of Graduate Studies (\$5,000).

Each year the university's Doctoral Fellowships Committee selects recipients of the Trustees (\$25,000 per year) and Presidential (\$20,000 per year) Doctoral Fellowships that provide 4 years of competitive support to incoming doctoral students. In 2020-2021, UCF supported **28 new and continuing doctoral students** on these awards (20 Trustees and 8 Presidential Fellows).

The college also offers some discipline-specific fellowships. These awards include the Boyd Lyon Memorial Fellowship (\$19,000 each year for two years) awarded to a student in the Conservation Biology PhD program every other year and the MFA Provost Fellowship that is awarded to up to eight new MFA students each year.

The Multidisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship (\$20,000 per year), which provides three years of support to an outstanding doctoral student engaged in innovative multidisciplinary research, is offered to a current doctoral student each year with a total of three students supported on the fellowship in 2020-2021.





The background of the slide features a faded, light-colored image of several graduates in academic regalia. They are wearing black caps with gold tassels and blue or grey gowns. One graduate in the foreground is smiling and has their hands clasped in a prayer-like gesture. The overall tone is celebratory and academic.

# **ACADEMIC SERVICES, PROGRESS, AND GRADUATION**

From Beginning to Beyond



# ACADEMIC SERVICES, ACADEMIC PROGRESS, AND GRADUATION

This office is focused on supporting students as they complete their graduate degree programs. That means assisting them from matriculation through graduation. Their team also works with every unit on campus that impacts a student's academic journey including college departments, financial services, UCF Global, and student conduct, as necessary. They develop and update graduate policies and work closely with various departments to enhance the graduate student experience. In 2020-2021, 10,000 plus graduate students at UCF, faculty, and graduate support staff were impacted by the work of this team.

The pandemic certainly challenged the office with more requests than ever before. They included nearly **4,000 forms** to help students with Special Leave of Absences, Administrative Records Changes, Thesis/Dissertation Committees, Annual Reviews, Completion Plans, and 7-year rule Appeals. This team converted many paper forms into digital versions through the adoption of Dynamic Forms, which made their process easier at the peak of the pandemic. This group is also responsible for diplomas and certificates. Another new initiative was the launch of an Online Graduate Student Success series. Students are automatically enrolled in their first semester. The series provides an array of information to set them up for success and helping them build a plan to support their well-being during graduate school.

## Academic Services

Academic Services covers all academic-related areas and helps students and programs navigate unexpected circumstances that may require special consideration.

Among the many topics this area handles:

- Special Leave of Absence
- Administrative Record Changes
- Medical Withdrawals
- Petitions for Exceptions to Policies
- Grade Change Appeals
- Graduate Faculty Nomination Process
- Thesis and Dissertation Hour Verification
- Thesis and Dissertation Committee Approval Review





# David Boffey

Exercise Physiology PhD graduate, David Boffey, chose to pursue a degree in Kinesiology after a career as a personal trainer and fitness director to continue learning about the science.

Boffey was drawn to UCF because of its faculty, research reputation, equipment and resources, and the opportunity to teach courses as a graduate teaching associate.

“I like working on communication skills and there’s nothing better than working with class sizes ranging from 30-100 students and learning how to navigate what and how you’re teaching,” he says. This year, he was awarded the university award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching.



**Creating a working relationship with the ROTC cadre and cadets enabled me to continue applying evidence-based practices in strength and conditioning.**



Along with teaching, Boffey is also passionate about his research with the Army ROTC at UCF which began in 2019 when he was invited to give a talk to the group. As a volunteer tactical strength and conditioning consultant, he works with cadets to help guide them in how to train and eat for optimal performance.

“Creating a working relationship with the ROTC cadre and cadets enabled me to continue applying evidence-based practices in strength and conditioning,” he says. Boffey also studies the relationship between force/load velocity profiles of the hex bar deadlift and loaded squat jump, body composition, and ROTC cadet scores on the new Army Combat Fitness Test .

Boffey’s advice to students interested in the field of Kinesiology is to read the research.

“Keep up with current research coming out from journals of topics that you’re interested in and Kinesiology-related,” he says. “Try to understand them and break them down. That’s tough to do and takes a lot of time but it’s a skill and what graduate school is about.”

After graduation, Boffey will be an Assistant Professor of Exercise Science at Pittsburg State University in Kansas. While at UCF, he was published in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, is a scholarship recipient of the 2021 UCF Student Scholar Symposium, and recipient of the Challenge Scholarship from the National Strength and Conditioning Association.



**Hometown**  
Walnut Creek, CA

**College**  
College of Health Professions  
and Sciences

**Degree Program**  
Education PhD, Exercise  
Physiology Track

**Research Focus**  
Assessing the utility of force-  
velocity profiles with the Army  
ROTC at UCF.



# COMMENCEMENT

## Commencement

The team completes the journey with each student by verifying all program and UCF requirements are met. Team members from this office coordinate the hooding portion of commencement for doctoral students. Finally, this group that certifies degrees and mails out diplomas. The college saw an increase this year of **3,613** degrees, which is **478 more** than the previous year.

	2020 - 2021 Degrees Awarded			
Academic Term	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Total
Bachelor	2,985	5,008	1,359	9,352
Master's	635	819	1,124	2,578
Specialist	2	3	10	15
Doctoral Research Scholar	134	93	83	310
Doctoral Professional	27	7	159	193
Total	3,783	5,930	2,735	12,448

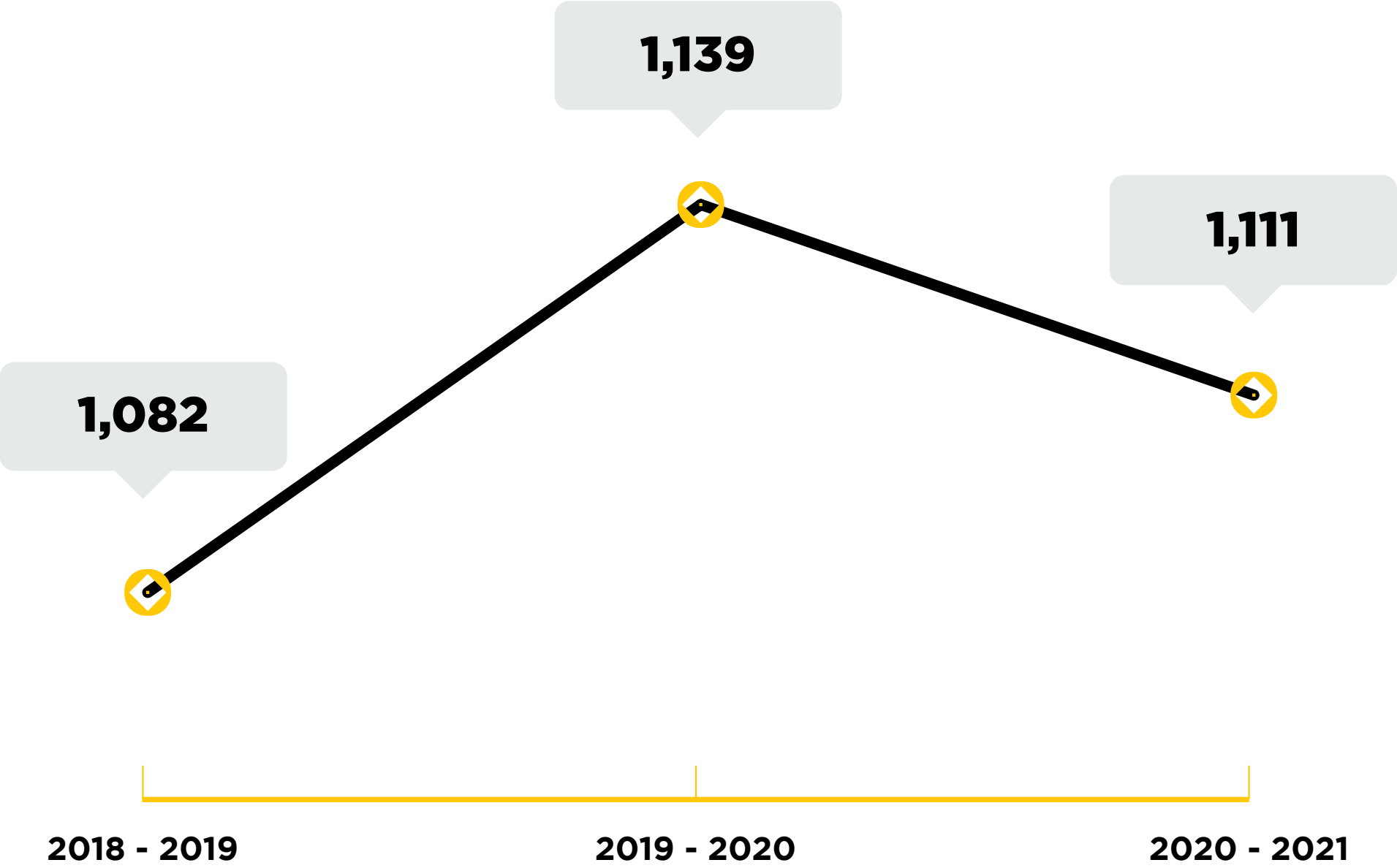




# FACULTY IDENTIFIED AS TEACHING GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES

## Graduate Faculty

Graduate faculty are an integral component of graduate education. Distinguished faculty with specialized skills and knowledge are appointed to serve. These faculty teach graduate courses, serve as members of thesis and dissertation committees, and serve as faculty advisers for thesis and dissertation students as well as chair thesis and dissertation committees. They are committed to working with graduate students and keeping their knowledge and skills current to ensure students get the best experience possible. In 2020-2021, there were more than **1,300** graduate faculty and graduate faculty scholars appointed.



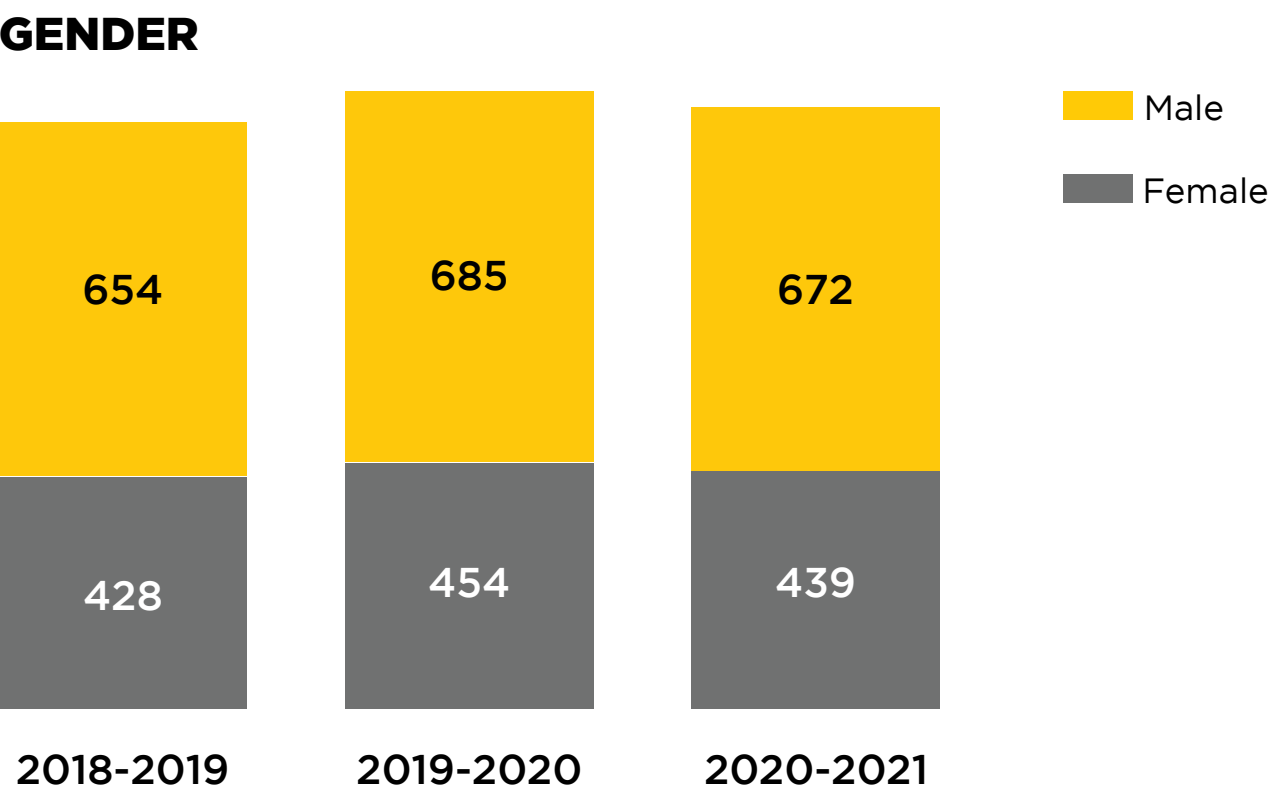
NUMBER OF FACULTY IN EACH COLLEGE OR DIVISION OF FACULTY			
COLLEGE OR DIVISION OF FACULTY	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
Academic Affairs	34	39	36
Administration and Finance	1	1	-
College of Arts and Humanities	138	152	150
College of Business Administration	73	75	71
College of Community Innovation and Education	173	173	171
College of Engineering and Computer Science	172	179	177
College of Graduate Studies	2	3	3
College of Health Professions and Sciences	73	80	76
College of Medicine	51	47	40
College of Nursing	32	42	29
College of Optics and Photonics	30	30	29
College of Sciences	262	74	263
College of Undergraduate Studies	5	6	5
President's Division	1	1	1
Rosen College of Hospitality Management	35	37	53
Totals	1,082	1,139	1,111



# FACULTY IDENTIFIED AS TEACHING GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES

AVERAGE YEARS SINCE TENURE			
College Or Division Of Faculty	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
Academic Affairs	9.4	10.3	9.9
Administration and Finance	8.0	9.0	-
College of Arts and Humanities	11.5	11.2	11.9
College of Business Administration	12.1	12.5	11.2
College of Community Innovation and Education	10.6	10.3	10.2
College of Engineering and Computer Science	13.9	12.9	13.5
College of Graduate Studies	19.5	16.7	17.7
College of Health Professions and Sciences	9.1	10.6	9.4
College of Medicine	8.1	9.4	9.8
College of Nursing	5.2	5.3	5.7
College of Optics and Photonics	8.7	8.9	9.9
College of Sciences	11.9	11.6	11.2
College of Undergraduate Studies	13.0	14.0	15.0
President's Division	3.0	5.0	6.0
Rosen College of Hospitality Management	5.1	7.6	7.6
Totals	11.1	11.1	11.1

DIVERSITY			
Race / Ethnicity	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020-2021
American Indian / Alaska Native	2	3	4
Asian	184	195	227
Black / African American	49	55	49
Hispanic / Latino	67	73	74
International	50	49	45
Multi-racial	8	7	8
White	722	757	734
Totals	1082	1139	1111



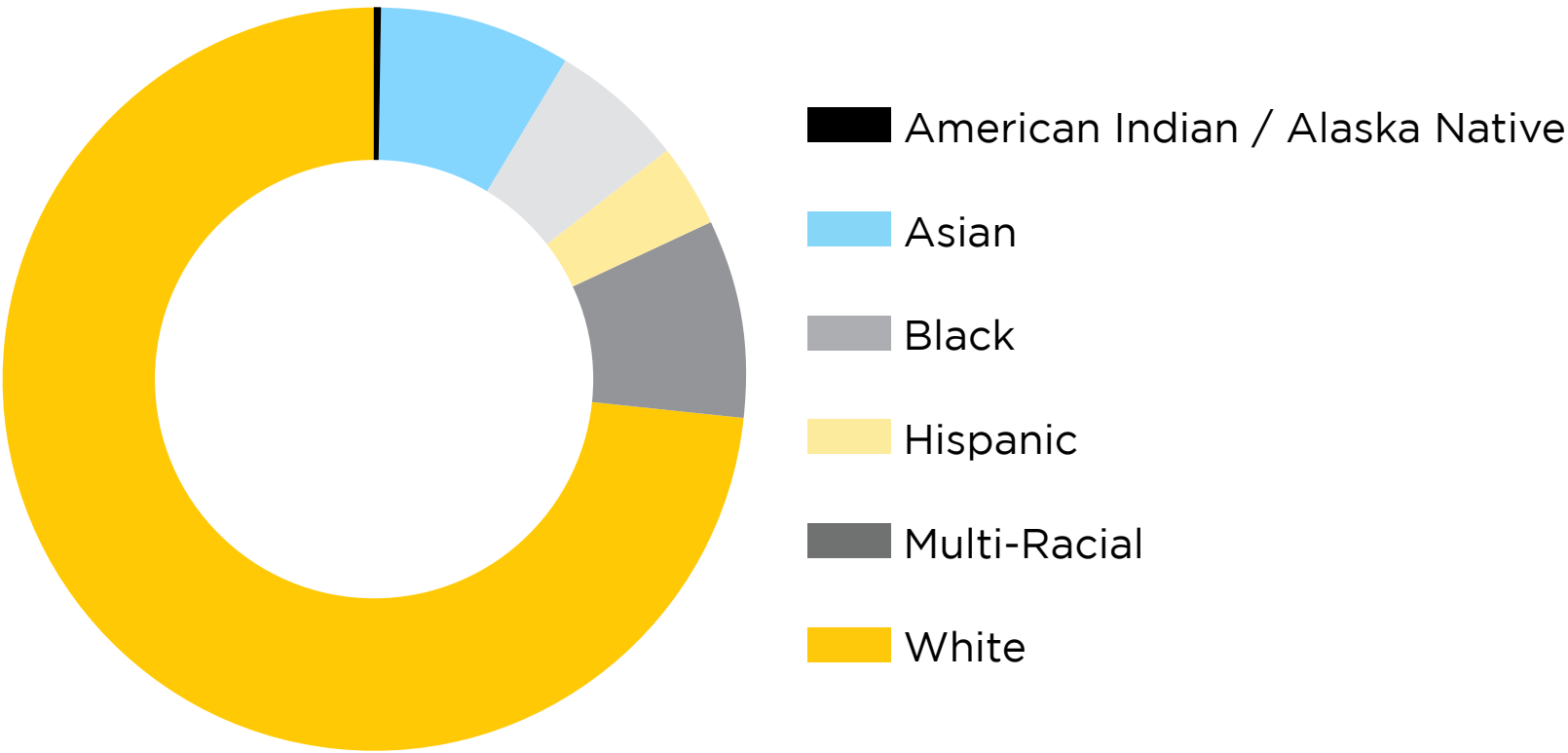


# EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATING AS FACULTY SCHOLARS

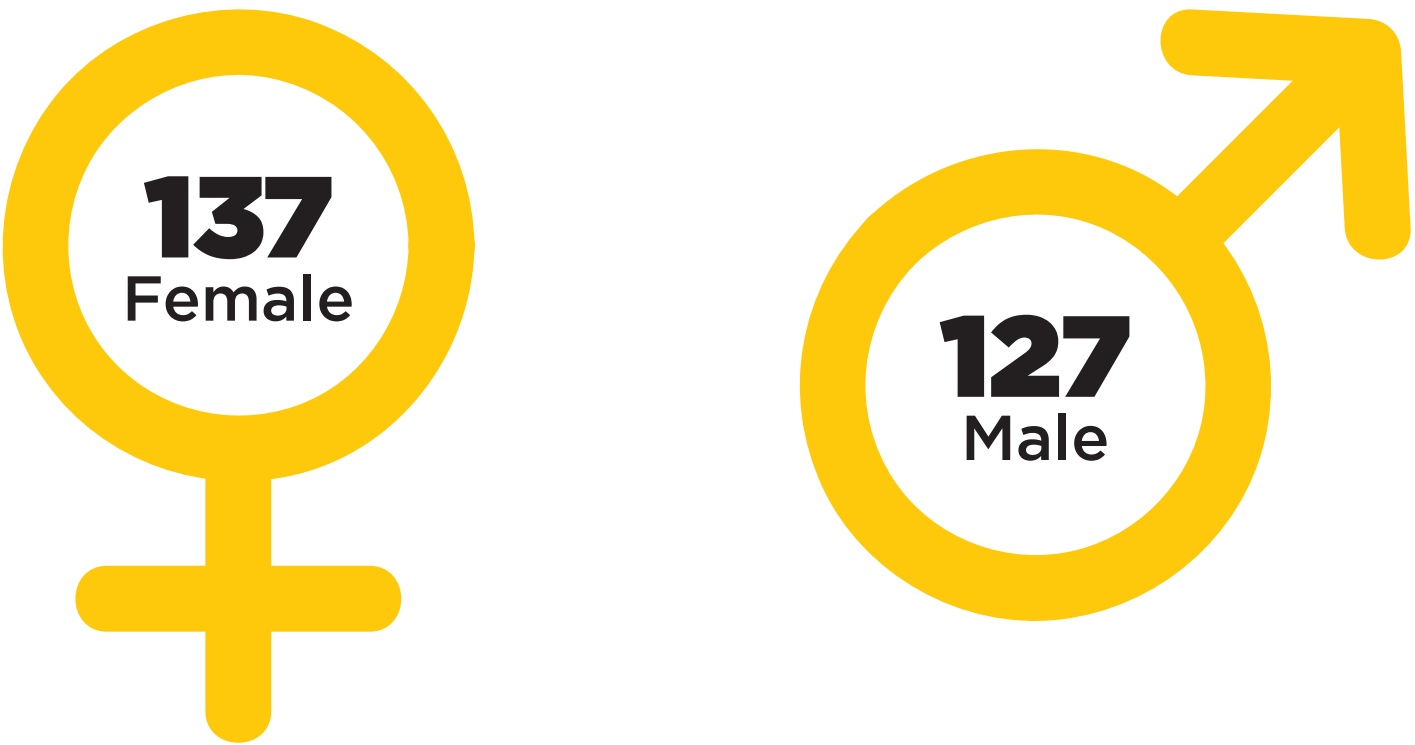
IN EACH COLLEGE OR DIVISION OF FACULTY	
COLLEGE OR DIVISION	NUMBER
Academic Affairs	48
College of Arts and Humanities	15
College of Business Administration	8
College of Community Innovation and Education	45
College of Engineering and Computer Science	33
College of Graduate Studies	3
College of Health Professions and Sciences	35
College of Medicine	19
College of Nursing	3
College of Optics and Photonics	2
College of Sciences	46
College of Undergraduate Studies	2
President's Division	1
Rosen College of Hospitality Management	4
Totals	264

\*Graduate faculty scholars may be designated as “Teaching-Only” if their responsibilities will be restricted solely to teaching graduate courses.

RACE/ETHNICITY



GENDER







# **POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS**

Research, Education and Experience



## Stephanie Carnell

Stephanie Carnell, PhD is captivated by stories—how they are told, how they’re shared, and what people share. Inspired by her love of stories and language, she applied it to her work in the area of virtual reality for communication skills education. When earning her doctoral degree in Human-Centered Computing at the University of Florida, she was amazed by UCF’s Dr. Carolina Cruz-Neira, an expert in virtual reality. The professor was at UF to give a talk about virtual reality technology and experiences. When Carnell graduated she sought a post-doctoral position in Cruz-Neira’s lab, where she works today.

“

**Initially, I became interested in working with virtual humans because they provided an opportunity to combine my interests in two fields: computer science and language.**

”

Carnell’s first task – to create simulations with virtual humans that healthcare students could use to practice interviewing skills. These virtual humans are computer characters that can be programmed to respond in specific ways based on how someone interacts with them.

“Virtual humans work very well for communication skills practice because they can provide the same training experience to a large number of learners and can potentially introduce the learners to situations that would be hard to replicate in the real world,” she says. These health care virtual humans have been used by hundreds of students around the world and she continues to be motivated by the ability to create virtual experiences that help people grow in real life.

Now Carnell is creating new simulations to support individuals who are learning a new language.

“Initially, I became interested in working with virtual humans because they provided an opportunity to combine my interests in two fields: computer science and language,” Carnell says. “After working in this field, I’ve also come to realize how impactful working on these kinds of communication skills applications can be,” she says.

Currently, she is working alongside a fellow postdoctoral scholar to create the UCF Postdocs Association. Inspired by her curiosity, Carnell plans to continue working on virtual reality that improves people’s lives at her research lab after graduation.

Carnell’s advice to students and researchers:

“Don’t be afraid to discuss and share your ideas and interests, no matter how ‘out there’ they may seem. You never know what opportunities might arise that need your exact perspective!”



**Field of Study**  
Computer Science

**Research Focus**  
Virtual reality for  
communication skills  
education.



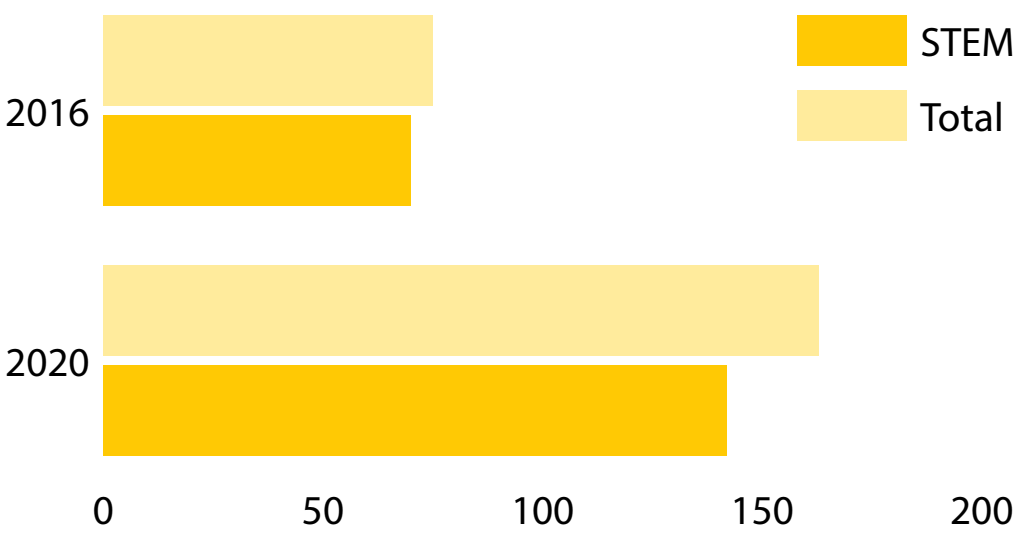


# POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

Postdoctoral scholars are a very important part of the UCF research community. Often called postdocs, these individuals are here for a limited time to conduct advanced research and obtain scholarly training in preparation for academic positions.

To help grow the postdoctoral community at UCF, the College of Graduate Studies offers the Preeminent Postdoctoral Program (P3). The program offers faculty researchers an opportunity to bring new scholars to UCF by providing up to a 50 percent funding match towards the P3 postdoctoral scholar's salary and benefits for two years, worth up to \$66,000 in support. In addition, there is a one-time \$5,000 award provided to the postdoctoral scholars for professional development.

The P3 program launched in 2017, to increase the number of postdoctoral scholars, seeking to reach a STEM count of 200, a key performance metric. To date, the program has been highly successful, leading to a significant increase in the postdoctoral count at UCF in the past four years, rising from 75 (70 STEM) in 2016 to **163** (142 STEM) in Fall 2020.



In 2020, we initiated an extension program funded by the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II) for those postdocs who were not able to complete their training because of COVID-related issues. This permitted **46** postdocs to extend their tenure at UCF for up to nine months with an assistance of \$990,00 from HEERF II.

In a continuing effort to support our graduate studies community, a UCF Postdoctoral Association Group was established in 2020. It aims to create a representative group that will work with UCF administrators to build a robust and supportive ecosystem for postdoctoral researchers at UCF.



# PREEMINENT POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM

Year	Total Number of Scholars		
	Postdoctoral	STEM Postdoctoral	P3 Supported Postdoctoral
2016	75	70	-
2017	104	92	17
2018	159	146	87
2019	188	170	142
2020	163	142	128

\*P3 Program not active until 2017

\*COVID disrupted postdoctoral activity in 2019-2020.





# COMMUNICATIONS

Stories of Impact and Innovation

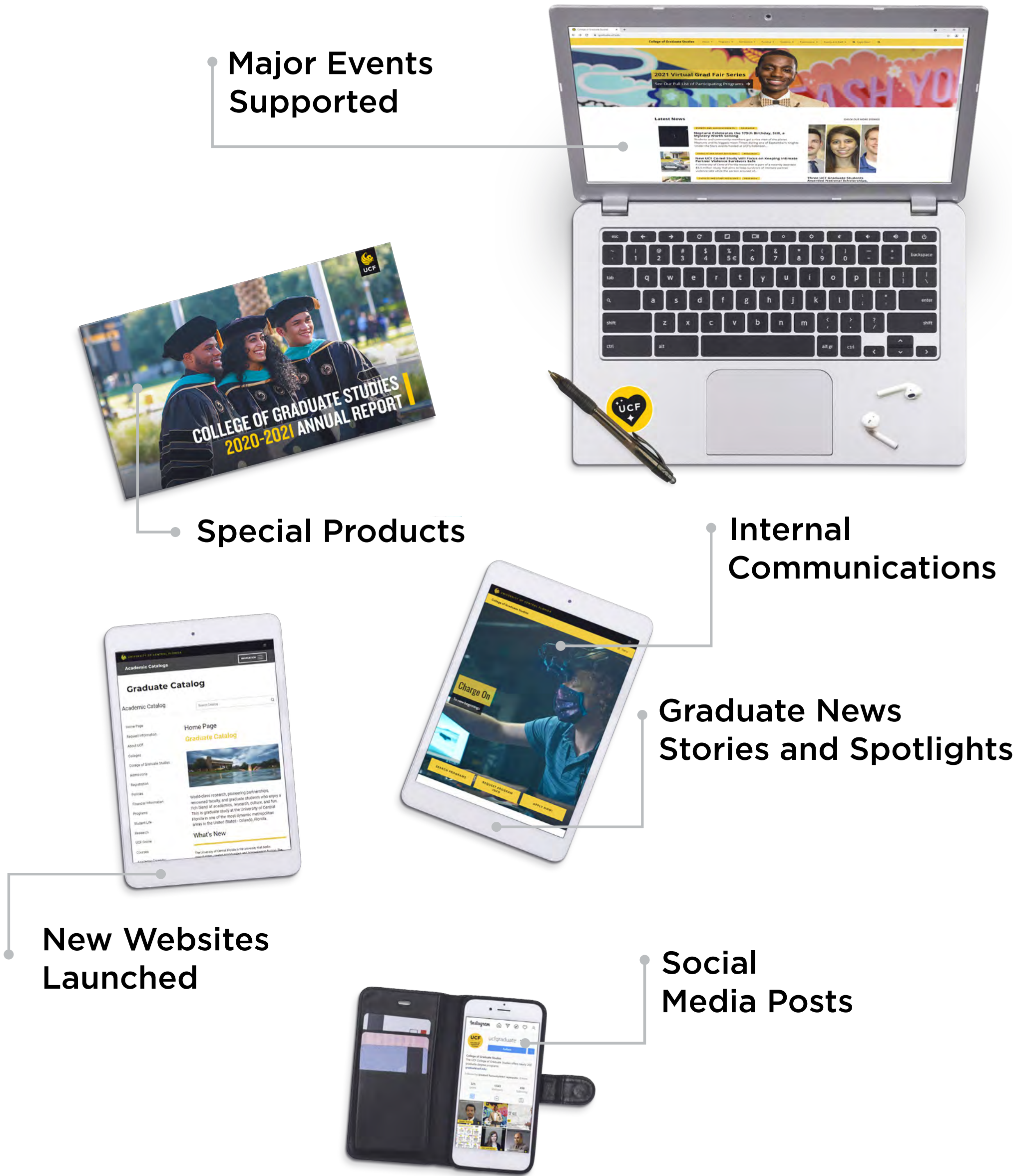


# COMMUNICATIONS BY THE NUMBERS



## Project Examples

Special Projects	Annual Report, Information Sheets for Legislative Purposes, Research Week Video, Faculty Orientation, Climate survey
New Websites	School of Modeling Simulation and Training, Coronavirus 2, 1.5 College of Graduate Studies, Foreign Influence
Graduate News Stories/Spotlights	7 spotlights from the Office of Research, 30 news stories that quoted graduate students or post-docs, College of Graduate Studies - 23 student and faculty profiles, 15 College of Graduate Studies news stories
Social Media Posts	Office of Research: 13, College of Graduate Studies: 1,115 Total, Facebook — 471, Twitter — 504, Instagram — 104, LinkedIn — 36
Events	3 Minute Thesis (3MT), Research Week, Virtual Grad Fair, Diverse Academic Opportunities Program (DAOP), Town Halls (4)





# CGS TEAMS

Meet UCF Graduate Studies



# ADMINISTRATION

## Team Responsibilities:

- Graduate Education Leadership
- Support Graduate Council
- Admissions and Recruitment
- Academic Progress
- Graduation
- Graduate Funding
- Program Development
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Internalization
- Promote Scholarship and Development
- Postdoctoral Scholar Support
- Strategic Initiatives and Communications
- Graduate Annual Budget
- Create a Graduate Student Experience
- Build a Graduate Community

## Impact:

To provide leadership and services and to create high-quality learning environments for graduate students.



Elizabeth Klonoff, PhD



John Weishampel, PhD



Devon Jensen, PhD



Barbara Fritzsche, PhD



Jennifer Parham, EdD



Zenaida Gonzalez Kotala



# ADMINISTRATION

## Team Responsibilities:

- Administration leadership support
- Budget and financial management
- Program management and events
- Human resources and benefits
- Interdisciplinary studies



Melanie Warren



Kelli Marini



Shelley Pozdoll



Elizabeth Smock





# ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITING

## Team Responsibilities:

- Manage overall graduate recruitment and admissions infrastructure from policy to technology
- Manage all applications submitted to UCF graduate programs
- Communicate to all applicants regarding the status of their application and any admission decisions
- Ensure all applications meet program admission requirements and contain relevant supporting materials
- Monitor program level review of applications leading to an admission's decision
- Conduct all relevant residency classifications
- Verify the accuracy of all international applications, transcripts, and language test requirements
- Collaborate, coordinate, and provide training/support to graduate program admissions staff and faculty relevant to UCF graduate admissions strategies, business practices, and enrollment goals
- Verify the accuracy of all admission decisions to university policy and regulation
- Establish and maintain a recruitment strategy for UCF graduate programs
- Host, sponsor and attend graduate events, fairs, and conferences to recruit new graduate students to UCF
- Track and report on all relevant data on graduate recruitment, admissions, and enrollment at UCF

## Impact:

We process over 24,000 applications, 11,500 offers of admission, and 4,300 new graduate students per academic year. By maintaining a centralized admissions process, each program is relieved of the staff needed for this process and students are able to determine the status of their application in one place.



Devon Jensen, PhD



Brandy Pieper



Leben Goldman



Emily Stettner



Jessica Sublette



Juliette Slonka



Khue Duong-Rymer



Adam Springer



# ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITING



Christine Mucha



Anthony Tufano



Lawrence Lipe



Brandon Ruff



Jaylin Hudgen



Catherine Tompkins



Kaitlyn Pilarsh



# ACADEMIC SERVICES, PROGRESS AND GRADUATION

## Team Responsibilities:

- Monitor probation and dismissal
- Update student program status
- Review and approve transfer coursework, course substitutions, and course waivers
- Coordinate commencement for graduate students
- Certify graduate degrees
- Process late adds/drops/withdrawals and medical withdrawals
- Review and approve grade changes requests and thesis/dissertation committee membership
- Admit students to candidacy

## Impact:

This team processes all transactions that affect a student through graduation.



Barbara Fritzsche, PhD



Natasha Stubbs, PhD



Elsa Nieves



Jamie Kosnosky



Cayla Williams



Melissa Hall



# FUNDING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND SCHOLARSHIP

## Team Responsibilities:

- Oversees the administration of graduate fellowships
- Graduate assistantship hiring
- Graduate student teaching
- Health insurance
- Tuition remission
- Oversees the format review and final submission process for electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs)
- Administers the Pathways to Success workshops
- Manages the Graduate Student Center
- Provides support of graduate community events, including the Graduate Orientation, Student Research Week, Student Scholar Symposium, and 3MT.

## Impact:

This team coordinates all funding offers and promotes and supports a graduate community.



Jennifer Parham, EdD



Joy Kittredge



Lindsiaann Taylor



Tiffany Chestnut



Shajira El Masri



Nathalia Bauer



Tyler Campbell



Wendy Cartier



# COMMUNICATIONS

## Team Responsibilities:

- Develop new publications and materials to support college initiatives
- Produce brochures and other materials for annual events
- Promote events
- Manage the Graduate Student Program Handbooks
- Develop graphics, renderings, and design for a variety of projects and initiatives
- Write and publish faculty and student profiles
- Write press releases about college initiatives, students, or events
- Work with media to generate positive news coverage
- Support recruitment efforts
- Support the Dean of the College
- Support Board of Trustee presentations about the college
- Produce videos for special projects
- Work with other colleges to promote graduate studies services and campaigns

## Impact:

Communication is a critical tool in helping our students succeed. The team not only helps directly communicate with students, but members also ensure colleges, and the community at large are aware of our programs and resources and our student successes to help build UCF’s local and national reputation as a thriving graduate community.



Zenaida Gonzalez Kotala



Carreen Krapf



Andy Torres



Micaela Reyes



Thalia Torres



Mila Chial



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The College of Graduate Studies Communications Team compiled the 2020 Annual Report.

## **Your 2020 Office of Research and Graduate Studies Team**

Zenaida Gonzalez Kotala

Carreen Krapf

Andres Torres

Micaela Reyes

Thalia Torres

