

# THE SCOOP

## UCI SCHOLARSHIPS

### MEET OUR SCHOLARS

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ALEXANDER DIAZ  
BRITTANY KESTER

### DONOR HIGHLIGHT

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THE DRAKE GIVES  
BY ALEC GLASSER

### CAMPUS RESOURCE

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UNDERGRADUATE  
RESEARCH  
OPPORTUNITY  
PROGRAM (UROP)

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# Alexander Diaz

## Scholar of UC Irvine

Attending college is an unfamiliar journey for my family. As a first-generation Latino student, I am very proud of myself for attending college and pursuing higher education. When I first began attending UCI, it was challenging because I had to learn things on my own. I come from a single-parent household where my mother shoulders the responsibility not only of maintaining the household but also of funding the education of two college-going children. I can't imagine how challenging that is. Despite the financial challenges that we face, my mom and my family would want my brother and I to break the generational curse of not pursuing higher education.

When I declared my major as Environmental Science and Policy, I looked for ways to get involved on campus that revolved around my field or sustainability-oriented opportunities. One of my initial involvements was with ASUCI where I was an intern with the Sustainability Project Commission. I really enjoyed my time there and a lot of what we did revolved around organizing events on campus such as the Zot N Clothes drive, where students can donate their unwanted clothes. After we gather all the clothes, we host a free clothing drive on campus where students can come and pick a couple of items that they can keep. I was also an Outreach Coordinator for the UCI Sustainability Resource Center and was responsible for being the connection between students' goals and the center's resources. I also helped to recruit students for the different internships and opportunities that the center has.

UCI has done an amazing job at supporting me and my career goals. I've met amazing people and had amazing opportunities on campus. When I was applying to scholarships, the Resilient Family Scholarship spoke to me personally and having been selected for it, was a big surprise. I am very grateful for it and it has helped me be able to afford college especially during my last year here at UCI. All the hardships that I've faced, financially and culturally, has shaped my pursuit of higher education. Seeing how much my family struggled has only inspired me to do better and makes me more motivated to continue my pursuit to provide a better future for not only myself, but for my family and for generations to come.

**Senior Year**  
**Environmental Science & Policy Major**  
**Resilient Family Scholarship**



# Brittany Kester

## Scholar of UC Irvine

I grew up in a low income area in Paramount, on the border of Compton. During my teenage years, my family and I were able to move away from there. My academic performance had never been great, and I had little interest in returning to school after graduating high school, partly due to the financial constraints my family faced.

When COVID struck, I was working 4 jobs and I lost all of them. The few available jobs that were hiring required you to have an Associate of Arts degree to be in management. That is when I re-evaluated my educational journey and went back to school. To finance my return to school, I used the money that I saved from working to enroll at Irvine Valley College (IVC). I also met a professor who was very supportive, and he encouraged me to join the Honors program and to apply for different opportunities. The more I tried, the more I succeeded and started to recognize my own potential. I lived my life thinking I was incapable of really achieving anything. Successfully transferring to UCI using the honors to honors was, and still is, one of my greatest achievements.

During my first week at UCI, I made appointments with UROP because I knew I wanted to do my own research. I also sought assistance from my campus wide honors advisor counselor and explored resources provided by the School of Social Ecology. I joined the ACE program where I had a mentor who had weekly meetings and check ins with me. I was selected to join Psi Chi, an international honor society for psychology majors on campus that offered a ton of resources and mentoring. I also read all my emails recognizing that is where all the opportunities are. I applied to everything possible, knowing full well that I would not get everything, but anything was worth a try. I will do everything I can to continue my education.

Receiving the scholarship has helped a lot. It has relieved a lot of stress and gave me room to breathe. The scholarship has helped me with rent, I do not have to work as many hours as I did before, I can focus on school more, and the biggest thing is that it has provided me support through my educational journey. My goal is to go to graduate school to obtain a Ph.D. in Social Psychology and be a university professor. I want to be able to conduct my own research while teaching. I want to help and advocate for students because it changed my life that a professor was there for me.

**Senior Year**  
**Psychological Science Major**  
**Independent Achiever Scholarship**





DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# THE DRAKE GIVES/ALEC GLASSER UCI MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Click the button below for more information from the School of Social Ecology and watch the interview!

[CLICK HERE](#)

The University of California, Irvine (UCI) is offering scholarships for UCI students who are music enthusiasts, regardless of their major, thanks to a generous \$100,000 pledge from The Drake Gives, a charitable organization founded in 2021 by Alec Glasser, a commercial developer and restaurateur. “I’m very happy and blessed that we are starting this partnership with UCI because the university has so much involvement in the community and I’m happy to be part of it” Alec stated. The scholarships aim to support students who plan to incorporate music into their future careers. Glasser, the owner of The Drake Restaurant in Laguna Beach, believes in the transformative power of music, drawing from his own experience learning to play musical instruments in New York’s public schools. He has also partnered with Save The Music Foundation and has provided funding and support to help many middle and high schools in underserved communities while fostering music education and sustaining music programs. The Drake Gives scholarships are designed to encourage students to apply music in various ways, emphasizing its potential to inspire creativity and bring people together. Glasser envisions expanding these scholarships in the future to support more students and continue promoting the positive impact of music.

# UCI Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program

Launched in 1995, the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) has grown exponentially over the years, becoming a cornerstone of the UCI experience. The program serves UCI undergraduate students from all academic disciplines and provides recognition, mentorship, guidance, and funding in support of embarking on research or creative activities under the expert guidance of UCI faculty members. UROP fosters collaborations and prepares undergraduate students for the challenges of tomorrow while fostering a lifelong passion for discovery and inquiry-based learning.



## WHAT IS UROP?



UROP is your gateway to a world of discovery. They offer a range of opportunities to support your academic and personal growth:

- **Research Discovery Program:** New to UCI? UROP's Research Discovery Program is designed to prepare first-year freshmen and transfer students academically, professionally, and personally for research opportunities during their academic journey at UCI. The program offers programming and graduate student mentorship.
- **Recognition and Funding:** UROP provides financial support for faculty-mentored research projects throughout the year, including the summer through their Calls for Proposals.
- **Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium:** Each May, UCI undergraduate students come together to present their research findings at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. It's a chance to showcase your hard work, learn about research opportunities on campus, and network with fellow students, faculty, and corporate partners.
- **Endless Possibilities:** Your research or creative activity can be in virtually any field. Whether you're joining faculty in their labs, conducting independent research with a faculty member, or creative activities such as choreographing an original performance, UROP supports your passion. Examples of research and creative activity projects can be found [here](#).



## WHY CHOOSE UROP?

Participating in UROP brings numerous benefits to your academic and professional life:

- **Hands-On Experience:** Gain practical, hands-on experience related to your major and future career. This will help you learn more about your field and whether or not to pursue it. You will be able to apply classroom knowledge to real-world challenges, making your education even more meaningful. This will also make you more competitive for future career and graduate school applications.
- **Skill Development:** Beyond research, you'll develop essential skills such as communication, collaboration, and teamwork. These skills are invaluable in any career path you choose.
- **Networking:** Build relationships with faculty, graduate students, and peers. Your professional and personal network will become a valuable resource as you progress in your academic and professional journey.
- **Personalized Education:** Engaging in research and creative activities are ways in which you can personalize and enhance your education by pursuing your interests and passions.



## GETTING STARTED



Current students can start research whenever they feel ready and can find a faculty mentor. While many students start after their freshman year, UROP encourages you to explore opportunities as soon as possible so that you have time to do at least 1-2 years of research as an undergraduate student. It is available any time throughout the year and all you need is good academic standing and a UCI faculty mentor guidance. Please note that some programs may have additional requirements that are noted on UROP's website.

In the upcoming academic year, 2023-2024, UROP will host numerous workshops from topics such as "Get Involved in Research" to "How to Prepare to Present at Symposium." During fall quarter, they will also host a Presentation Pitch Challenge to showcase students' research. In mid-May, UROP will host their huge campuswide undergraduate research symposium at the Bren Event Center. Be sure to check their calendar for dates on upcoming events and workshops. Students can also visit UROP's website to learn more and stay updated with their latest news and opportunities.

## RESOURCE LINKS

- **WEBSITE:** <https://uop.uci.edu/>
- **CALENDAR:** <https://uop.uci.edu/calendar/>
- **CONTACT PAGE:** <https://uop.uci.edu/about-uop/contact-us/>