UC SANTA BARBARA

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Rewarding Research

Two graduating seniors and two graduate students have been recognized for their outstanding contributions to undergraduate research at UC Santa Barbara.

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research for 2015 has been awarded to Nathan Alamillo, of Oxnard, who has earned a bachelor's degree in sociology, and to Daniel Chu, of San Diego, who has completed a bachelor's degree in biology.

Alamillo, a McNair Scholar, first distinguished himself as an undergraduate researcher with an extensive project examining the ways in which young Latino men in the local community perceived drug use, as well as how their social identity and lifestyle was stigmatized, criminalized and punished. His paper was published in the 2014 McNair Scholars Research Journal.

Following his graduation from UCSB, Alamillo, who in 2013 interned for the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, will continue his education at the graduate level. Pursuing a doctoral degree in public health from a joint program of San Diego State University and UC San Diego, he plans to examine sexual risk behaviors among drug-using populations along the US-Mexico border.

Alamillo is also the recipient of the 2015 Louise A. and Stephen D. Pahl "Making a Difference" Award and a Dean of Undergraduate Education Award.

In his time an undergraduate, Chu performed graduate-level research with Irene Chen, a UCSB professor of chemistry and biochemistry. His independent project,

which involved “characterizing phage diversity in microbial infections in order to understand their role in the disease course of chronic infections,” was deemed so important that a postdoctoral student was assigned to work with Chu so the research can continue after he graduates.

After graduating from UCSB, Chu will begin a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. His long-term goal is to earn a medical degree and a Ph.D.

Chu is also the recipient of the 2015 Thomas More Storke Award for Excellence, the campus’s highest student honor, for outstanding scholarship and extraordinary service to the university, its students and the community.

Stacy Copp and William Ryan each have received a Fiona Goodchild Award for Excellence as a Graduate Student Mentor of Undergraduate Research.

A doctoral candidate in the Department of Physics, Copp studies the optical properties of few-atom silver clusters stabilized by DNA, the mechanisms that select their fluorescence wavelengths and methods to incorporate these unique optical materials into larger optically functional nanostructures. Her general interests include interactions of light and matter in both artificial and biological systems and how studying these interactions can enable better understanding of physics on the nanoscale.

Ryan is a graduate student in psychological and brain sciences, where his research interests center on threat in relation to homophobia, gender stereotypes and disclosure and concealment of stigmatized identities. His research employs diverse methods, including cardiovascular reactivity measures and neuroimaging techniques, and addresses methodological questions related to such approaches.

Both are recognized for their exceptional contributions to the scholarly development of undergraduate students.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society.

All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.