

California State University, San Bernardino

**CSUSB ScholarWorks**

---

Graduate Studies Newsletter

Arthur E. Nelson University Archives

---

Fall 2022

## Graduate Studies Newsletter (Fall 2022)

CSUSB - Office of Graduate Studies

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/ogs-newsletter>

---

### Recommended Citation

CSUSB - Office of Graduate Studies, "Graduate Studies Newsletter (Fall 2022)" (2022). *Graduate Studies Newsletter*. 16.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/ogs-newsletter/16>

This Newsletters is brought to you for free and open access by the Arthur E. Nelson University Archives at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Studies Newsletter by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@csusb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@csusb.edu).



# Graduate Studies Newsletter

---

Fall 2022



# Message from the Dean & Interim Associate Dean

**H**appy Holidays from Graduate Studies! We hope your fall semester was productive and that you had the opportunity to participate in some of the activities held here on campus. As a graduate student, your studies are understandably at the forefront of your education, but please don't underestimate the importance of taking time to connect with others, especially after our long hiatus from in-person events. Building connections improves mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing, while decreasing feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation – so take time to safely socialize!

With that in mind, we hope you were able to join us at one of our Graduate Education Week events. Our graduate student mixer was one of the highlights, with opportunity drawings, karaoke, a 3-D photo booth, games, and good food. Held in the new

conference center in SMSU North, we welcomed 115 participants this year. Throughout the week we also hosted informative workshop panels, and a program information session. You can read more about Graduate Education Week in this issue; upcoming events are listed on the back page calendar.

Our fall issue also recognizes many of our outstanding graduate students, including our Sally Casanova Scholars, our Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program awardees, and our outstanding thesis and project award winners. We also feature graduate student Ivette Jimenez, whose rise to academic excellence as a first generation college student is sure to inspire your own academic journeys.

*Best wishes,  
Dorota Huizinga & Caroline Vickers*

## Table of Contents

Message from the Dean .....	i	Writing Programs for Graduate Students: Space for	
Graduate Education Week has Something for Everyone.....	1	Productivity & Community.....	9
Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholars Announced.....	2	2021-2022 Outstanding Thesis/Project Award Recipients	
You Could be the next CDIP or Pre-Doc Scholar!.....	3	Continue Tradition of Excellence.....	10
Congratulations to our CDIP Awardees.....	4	Calendar.....	12
The Wellness Connection.....	5		
Student Spotlight: Graduate Student Ivette Jimenez.....	6		
Awards & Accolades.....	8		



# Graduate Education Week has Something for Everyone

by Megan Kinnally

The Office of Graduate Studies was happy to host our 5th annual Graduate Education Week! Held from November 14th through November 18th, this year's agenda was brimming with exciting new programming, including an introduction to our new SMSU North with a kick-off mixer, complete with a karaoke contest, a 360-selfie station, and the opportunity to get to know fellow students with dinner and conversational games.

This year's event also welcomed back an entourage of alumni as well as current faculty and graduate students to discuss the origins of their professional stories and research projects. The panels gave students the opportunity to see how different opportunities and mentorships could lead to unexpected career and research paths.

Our Program Information Session was a doorway to exploring CSUSB's many master's degrees and credentials. Future graduate students had the opportunity to meet virtually with faculty to learn more

about what each program had to offer.

We also took time to both honor and recognize the faculty members that take on the monumental task of chairing our student's theses, dissertations, and research projects, and to announce the 2021-2022 Outstanding Thesis/Project Award Recipients! Congratulations to Diana Ramirez, Master of Social Work, for her project, *Barriers to the Use of Palliative and Hospice Care among the Latino Population*, and to Chelsea Schweer, M.A. in Mathematics, for her thesis, *Verifying Sudoku Puzzles*. Graduate Studies extends its hardy congratulations to our most recent winners!

The Office of Graduate Studies is thrilled to continue offering this programming and hopes you will join us for our spring event, the Grad Slam! Come support your fellow graduate students as they present their research projects, in three minutes or less, for a chance to win some awesome prize money! Interested in competing yourself? Join us for our information sessions, happening now until January 31st.



# Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholars Announced

**F**ive CSUSB graduate students were named 2022-2023 Sally Casanova Scholars, an outstanding achievement for our Coyote family. Sally Casanova Scholars are awarded through the CSU's California Pre-Doctoral Program. The Pre-Doctoral Program was created to increase the pool of potential California State University faculty by supporting the doctoral aspirations of CSU students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages. Sally Casanova Scholars receive funding for educational activities and one-on-one guidance from a CSU faculty mentor. Funds may be used to visit U.S. doctoral-granting institutions, obtain membership in professional organizations, subscribe to academic journals, GRE preparation, and to cover the cost of graduate school application and test fees. The program also provides an opportunity to participate in a funded summer internship opportunity.

## 2022-23 Sally Casanova Scholars

**Awardee: Viviana Alvarez Rodriguez**

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Pedro Santoni,  
Department of History**

Viviana Alvarez Rodriguez is a rising senior pursuing a B.A. in history with a minor in political science. Viviana is interested in researching the historiography of Latin American social and political movements and how this has been translated or received by contemporary communities in the formation of their collective memory. She is also interested in learning about how and to what end particular groups and communities are active in formulating their own historical narratives.



**Awardee: Estevan Hernandez**

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maria Santos, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

Estevan Hernandez is in his second year of the Master of Science in Clinical/Counseling Psychology. He earned his bachelors from CSUSB with a dual major in psychology and human development. He chose to pursue a graduate degree in clinical psychology to further his academic and professional career and continue his path to becoming a clinical psychologist and university professor. Estevan hopes to utilize what he has learned throughout his time at CSUSB to further educate and assist individuals from diverse backgrounds and who share a similar passion.



**Awardee: Jaime Castro**

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Daisy Ocampo, Department of History**

Jaime Castro is an undergraduate student majoring in Anthropology. His academic interests include the preservation of culture and language in Indigenous communities. He is particularly interested in researching how language and culture have been preserved through times of hardship and colonization. Through the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, He is currently carrying out a two-year research project that focuses on how Native communities cope with the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing cultural practices.



**Awardee: Megan Haynes**  
**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kate Simonian, Department of English**

Megan Haynes is an undergraduate student majoring in English Literature and Creative Writing with a Philosophy minor.

As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow she focused her research on how folklore and fairy tales are adapted, readapted, and appropriated by various cultures. She uses the critical lens of evolutionary psychology to determine which aspects of human behavior may be accurately represented and which may be social fictions, both of which can be used to enforce oppressive systems of power. Megan's research traces the lineage of these systems, seeks to identify how problematic and regressive narratives are perpetuated, and understand how dangerous narratives rife with misinformation have spread so quickly and are so widely accepted as gospel truth.



**Awardee: Jennifer Perretti**  
**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Douglas Weiss, Criminal Justice Department**

Jennifer is enrolled in the Master of Arts in Criminal Justice program and is collecting data for her thesis, "Supporting Reentry at the Egocentric Level: A Mixed Method Approach Investigating the Role Social Support Networks Play Post Incarceration." Her research is dedicated to helping reentrants successfully reenter their communities. Due to high incarceration and recidivism rates, it is essential to highlight ways to reduce the flow of offenders into the criminal justice system and understand how to foster desistance. Jennifer hopes to continue this research by earning a doctorate degree in criminal justice and becoming a professor at a university.



## You Could be the next CDIP or Pre-Doc Scholar!

Imagine earning a Ph.D. and pursuing a career as a researcher or university professor. Both the California Pre-Doctoral Program and the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) offer opportunities and financial assistance to help promising scholars explore and pursue a career in academia. (See page 4 for our list of CDIP Scholars.)

### Apply Now

- Pre-Doc Program Application Deadline: January 20
- CDIP Application Deadline: 9th, 2023

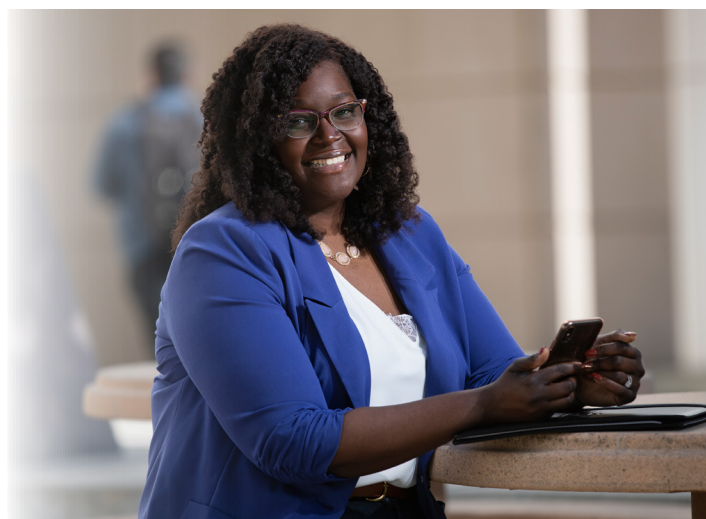
### Learn More

Visit the Office of Graduate Studies Website:

[www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies/financial-support](http://www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies/financial-support)

Contact Graduate Resource Coordinator April Lane at [alane@csusb.edu](mailto:alane@csusb.edu) or (909) 537-7381

Attend an Information Session: See the newsletter back page calendar for dates and times.





# Congratulations to our CDIP Awardees

Offered by the California State University, the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) provides professional and academic support to doctoral students aspiring to teach the diverse students of the CSU system. The program provides mentorship, opportunities for professional development, social connection, grant and research support, as well as financial assistance in the form of a forgivable loan. The program is open to new or continuing full-time doctoral students, undergraduate, master's level, and doctoral students. We are proud to announce the 2022-23 CDIP Awardees:

## **Xavier Resendez**

**Ph.D. Program:** History of the U.S. Borderlands, University of California, Riverside

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Ryan

Keating, Department of History

Xavier Resendez is CSUSB alumni, a Mellon Mays Fellow, and Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Recipient. Xavier is now attending University of California, Riverside to pursue a Ph.D. in US Borderlands History. His research focuses on themes of unfree labor and laws passed within late 19th Century California designed to indenture previously established communities of Native Americans, Mexican, and immigrants located within the region. He hopes to document the experiences of victims of unfree labor and how they dealt with these laws and to better educate future generations of students about the origins of systemic laws and how we can identify these themes and combat them. Xavier plans to pursue a teaching career at a Cal State or UC campus.

## **Monica Carbajal**

**Ph.D. Program:** Experimental Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Memphis

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Dionisio Amodeo, Department of Psychology

Monica is a first-generation Latina who received



two Bachelor of Arts degrees at CSUSB. During her undergraduate years, Monica conducted studies under the mentorship of Dr. Cynthia Crawford and Dr. Dionisio Amodeo in research related to biopsychology and neuroscience. Monica is currently attending the University of Memphis to pursue a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience. She has presented at the Society of Neuroscience and recently at the Developmental Neurotoxicology Society (DNTS), where she received DNTS Conference Presentation Award 2022. After completing her Ph.D., Monica plans to continue her training in a post-doctoral position with the goal of obtaining a faculty position that has a strong emphasis on training underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students in neuroscience research.



## **Isabella Cantu**

**Ph.D. Program:** Sociology, University California, Davis

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. José Muñoz, Department of Sociology

Isabella graduated from CSUSB in Spring 2022



Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Sociology - Social Service and Community Research concentration with a minor in Ethnic Studies, focusing on Latino/a Studies. Her involvement with research includes a two-year membership with the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, the Office of Student Research Undergraduate Summer Research Program, and the University Honors Program. With the mentorship of Dr. José Muñoz, Monica has flourished in the field of research, and she is excited to continue her education in Sociology at the University of California, Davis.

# The Wellness Connection

## Burnout – A Growing Concern: In and Out of the Workplace

**W**ork, school, and family, oh my! Do you ever feel like the contents of your metaphorical plate are overflowing and burying you? Well, you're not alone. Coined in the 1970's, "burnout" is now a ubiquitous term related to feelings of overwhelming stress and emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion. Sufferers report feeling drained and unable to meet the demands of work, school, family, or other obligations. Over time, this can result in feelings of hopelessness, cynicism, and resentment. If left untreated, burnout can have severe consequences to your health.

While burnout is most often associated with work, it can happen in any environment where an individual feels a lack of autonomy or support, an unmanageable workload, or when tasks conflict with personal values. Work-related burnout may come from a lack of recognition for good work, work that is monotonous, or a chaotic or high-pressure work environment. Lifestyle caused burnout may result from an imbalance in work and personal life, lack of supportive relationships, not getting enough sleep, and irregular physical activity. Personality traits such as perfectionism, pessimism, and not asking for help can contribute to burnout.

How do you know if you are suffering from burnout? It depends on how long you've been feeling the symptoms, or if your stress is related to a specific goal. For example, working towards your master's degree is exciting, but there will likely be some stressors involved. However, there is an end point associated with completing your degree. Short-term stress, or goal related stress, is most likely not too harmful. Alternatively, if you feel like every day is a bad day, feel exhausted, or have feelings of low self-esteem, hopelessness, or other prolonged symptoms it is important to take steps to care for yourself.

Before I move on, I want to address the topic of depression. If you are having the above-mentioned symptoms, have lost interest in the things that bring you joy, are harming yourself in any way, or are considering suicide, please call or text: 988, 24/7, for confidential support through the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Also, the Counseling & Psychological Services center offers services to support you.

If you feel you may be on the road to burnout, or have already arrived, here are a few tips to help you manage:

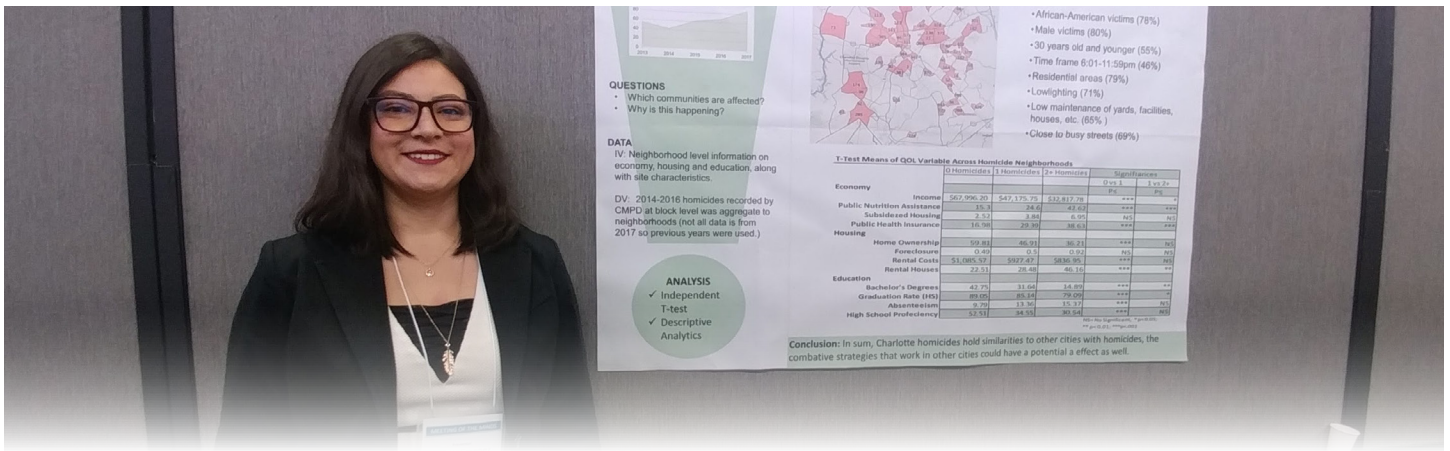
1. Reach out to the people who care about you. Spend time with loved ones in positive and enjoyable ways.
2. If your burnout is work-related, consider developing friendships and participating in social activities with your coworkers. This builds a sense of community and a "we're all in this together" camaraderie.
3. Spend less time interacting with negative people (online and in-person).
4. Find more balance in your life. Have you neglected your friends, family, hobbies, or volunteer work?
5. Re-evaluate your priorities. Do you set appropriate boundaries? If not, begin exploring how to set them. Start small and remember, "no" is a complete sentence.
6. Get adequate sleep, eat healthfully, and make daily physical activity a top priority.

For additional information, visit HelpGuide or listen to NPR's "Burnout Isn't Just Exhaustion. Here's How to Deal With It".



By April Lane,  
MPH, CHES





Ivette Jimenez presents at the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association

# Student Spotlight:

## Graduate Student Ivette Jimenez

A natural researcher and academic, M.A. in Criminal Justice student Ivette Jimenez never stops asking questions. If something doesn't sound quite right to her, she investigates. And something was not quite right about the drug trafficking narrative she heard regularly on the news and social media. Ivette wondered if drug trafficking was really as bad as presented, and why only a few countries were portrayed. "They take one piece of the story," Ivette said, "but it's not the whole picture."

When Ivette was invited to work on a project with Dr. Bichler analyzing drug trafficking networks in the U.S., she jumped at the opportunity to learn more. The project unexpectedly grew into a world-wide analysis of trafficking networks.

"We know drug trafficking is a problem within the United States," Ivette said. "We wanted to see where the drugs are coming from, where they are going, and during our search we came up with this data from the UN. We went from just looking at the United States to worldwide."

Their research found that the problem extends beyond just a few countries. By mapping data in drug trafficking networks, they were able to recreate complex connections between countries and fill in gaps

of missing data. They published their findings, titled "Drug Smuggling Seizures: The Effects of Reporting Consistency and Quality on the Observed Transnational Structure" in Journal of Drug Issues. Ivette also gave two conference presentations on her research.

"I was grateful to be able to present at two conferences: The American Society of Criminology in 2021 in Chicago, and virtually at Sunbelt in Australia this year," she said.

### Ivette's Academic Journey

Despite Ivette's talent for research and inquisitive nature, academic success has not always come easy. Her academic journey began when she moved to the U.S. from Mexico at age 18. After spending a year improving her English language skills, she attended community college and initially planned to enter the workforce and help pay the bills after earning an associate degree. However, with the encouragement of her school counselor, she decided to continue her education, determined to earn a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. She chose CSUSB.

"I was visiting the campus, walking around the Criminal Justice department when I met one of the faculty,"

she said. "He told me about the criminal justice crime analysis program. I realized that at this school students get to do research, attend conferences, get exposed to the academic aspect of criminal analysis. I went back home and applied."

Determined to get as much as she could out of her undergraduate program, Ivette literally started knocking on doors.

"As an undergrad, I told myself, 'You cannot just come to classes and go home. You need to get experience.' So that's how I started getting closer to my professors because I would go knock on their doors and ask, 'Hey, do you know how I can get experience in this?' It's a very intimidating step to take to randomly go to their office hours and ask a question that's not even related to the class. You just must get past that and send that email or knock on the door. It's true, every professor is here to help you."

As an undergrad, Ivette built her research skills on small projects from Dr. Bichler; she also received help and advice from others in the department. When it came time to graduate, she once again set her sights on joining the workforce but soon found that positions in her field required a master's degree. She decided to continue her studies at CSUSB.

There were challenges: Balancing work, school, finances, and family life was difficult. But Ivette's main challenge was writing in English at the graduate level. Although she received high grades in her undergraduate courses, learning to write at a graduate level required different set of skills. Her faculty helped her research writing courses, finally settling on a remote course at CSU East Bay. The course worked; her professors were impressed with her enhanced writing skills. Thanks to her determination and the support she received from her program, Ivette is now a published author, experienced conference presenter, and is making plans to pursue a Ph.D.

### A Role Model to Others

Ivette's success is due to many factors: her insatiable curiosity, her determination, and strong work ethic. She also takes advantage of every opportunity that comes her way, making sure to get the most out of her education. Refusing to be defeated by obstacles in her path.

Now her cousins and family members approach her for advice about college and career. "It is one of those happy moments where I feel, 'okay, so I am making a difference in my family.' I am changing the path from 'let's do a quick career and work, work, work,' to 'let's do something different.'"

**QUESTIONS**

- Which communities are affected?
- Why is this happening?

**DATA**

IV: Neighborhood level information on economy, housing and education, along with site characteristics.

DV: 2014-2016 homicides recorded by CMPD at block level was aggregate to neighborhoods (not all data is from 2017 so previous years were used.)

**ANALYSIS**

- Independent T-test
- Descriptive Analytics

**T-Test Means of QOL Variable Across Homicide Neighborhoods**

	0 Homicides	1 Homicides	2+ Homicides	Significance
				0 vs 1 P< .05 1 vs 2+ P< .05
<b>Economy</b>				
Income	\$67,996.20	\$47,175.75	\$32,817.78	***
Public Nutrition Assistance	15.3	24.6	42.62	***
Subsidized Housing	2.52	3.84	6.95	NS
Public Health Insurance	16.98	29.39	38.63	***
<b>Housing</b>				
Home Ownership	59.81	46.91	36.21	***
Foreclosure	0.49	0.5	0.92	NS
Rental Costs	\$1,085.57	\$927.47	\$836.95	***
Rental Houses	22.51	28.48	46.16	***
<b>Education</b>				
Bachelor's Degrees	42.75	31.64	14.89	***
Graduation Rate (HS)	89.05	85.14	79.09	***
Absenteeism	9.79	13.36	15.37	***
High School Proficiency	52.51	34.55	30.54	***

Conclusion: In sum, Charlotte homicides hold similarities to other cities with homicide. Combative strategies that work in other cities could have a potential effect as well.

**Victim Demographics:**

- African-American victims (78%)
- Male victims (80%)
- 30 years old and younger (55%)
- Time frame 6:01-11:59pm (46%)
- Residential areas (79%)
- Lowlighting (71%)
- Low maintenance of yards, facilities, houses, etc. (65%)
- Close to busy streets (69%)

**Other Research Notes:**

- Immigration Holding Centres (IHCs) in Canada
- Immigration, Refugees and Protection Act (IRPA, 2001)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 2009)
- Children who are immigrating are often faced with mental health
- Statistics are used by the media to attract readers (Jamieson
- Journal of Social Problems (Best, 2009)
- on the processes by which people designate some
- conditions as social problems" (Best, 2009, p. 3)
- examines, connects, policies
- analyze how the media creates discourse and
- relations for policies
- igrant Populations (Schneider & Ingram, 1990)
- Statistics among a certain group of people
- symbols, values, and images of the shared
- enders, dependents, deviants
- ending the discourse of migrants in the
- igrant families in
- changed over time
- recommendations
- in HMC?
- to be
- discourse centering on

**Ivette Jimenez** presents at the Western Society of Criminology

# Awards & Accolades

## **Professor Enrique Murillo Jr. named to White House Advisory Commission**

President Joe Biden appointed Dr. Murillo, Professor of Education and Executive Director and founder of Latino Education & Advocacy Days (LEAD), to the President's Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics.

"It is my distinct honor to have been appointed as an adviser to the White House by President Joe Biden," Murillo said. "I look forward to working closely with the Secretary of Education to help make up for lost ground at a time when we had been losing the battle to keep our focus on educational and economic equity, opportunity, and achievement, including attending college and beyond. The competitive strengths of our nation will continue to depend, to a large extent, on the positive educational outcomes of Latino students."

Graduate Studies extends its hearty congratulations to Dr. Murillo and his outstanding work advocating for equity in education.

## **CSUSB's Online MBA Ranked in Top 10 in California**

Cal State San Bernardino's online Master of Business Administration (MBA) program ranked in the top 10 on Online MBA Report's list of the top online MBA programs in California for 2022. Online MBA Report evaluated more than 400 U.S.-based online MBA programs. The program placed CSUSB at No. 6, another incredible achievement for the Jack H. Brown College of Business.

## **School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Receives \$250,000 Contract**

The Riverside County Probation Department has agreed to contract with CSUSB's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice to evaluate the Riverside Systemic Racism Project. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors in 2020 took the step of declaring systemic racism as a public health crisis, vowing to take steps



*Dr. Murillo speaks at 2018 LEAD event.*

to combat it. This project is part of that work, and the contract with CSUSB was a decision RCPD made because of the university's shared values and work in the criminal justice field. Read more about this project at [Inside CSUSB](#).

## **Three-time CSUSB Student Earns Prestigious CSU Trustees' Award**

Misealle "Ellie" Tolliver has been selected for the 2022-23 California State University Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement, the CSU's highest recognition of success. A three-time Coyote, Tolliver holds a bachelor's degree in English Literature and an MBA in Management from CSUSB, and is now working toward another master's in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program.

Tolliver has been named the Steinhauser Family Scholar for the donor-funded CSU Trustees' Award and will receive a \$7,000 scholarship.

"What can I say, I love CSUSB, and I am a Coyote for life!" she affirms. "The reason why CSUSB was and is my university of choice is because of the unwavering support I received throughout my college career." [Read the full story](#) of Tolliver's achievements in Inside CSUSB.



# Writing Programs for Graduate Students: Space for Productivity & Community

by Caroline Vickers

**H**eld on September 16th, 25 graduate students attended the Fall 2022 Thesis Retreat, which provided support for graduate students working on theses, projects, and dissertations. In one full day, the retreat focused on goal setting, intensive writing, and community building. Participants enjoyed coffee and pastry breakfast and pizza lunch. The Thesis Retreat provided motivation and space for students to be creative and productive to find enjoyment in their thesis, project, and dissertation work. Additionally, students engaged in enriching conversations about the writing process, anxieties around writing, and ways to stay motivated. **The next Thesis Retreat will be on Saturday, January 14, 2023.**

The Office of Graduate Studies has also connected graduate students in fall 2022 to create small writing accountability groups to encourage their progress on major writing projects, such as term papers, conference papers, theses, projects, and dissertations. Writing accountability groups encourage students to develop a support network and to reach their writing and research

goals. Eighteen graduate students participated in fall 2022 writing accountability groups, which met for two hours each week from October 3 to December 9, 2022. Writing accountability groups allow students to set and achieve writing goals and to form a community of writers.

All participants in writing accountability groups also have the option of working with a writing coach from the Graduate Writing Center. The writing coach encourages and supports graduate student writing while also providing crucial feedback and strategies on the writing process.

The Office of Graduate Studies will run writing accountability groups for graduate students in the spring 2023 semester.

We look forward to supporting graduate students as they complete major writing projects through our graduate student writing programs.



# 2021-2022 Outstanding Thesis/Project Award Recipients Continue Tradition of Excellence

The Office of Graduate Studies is proud to announce the winners of the 2021-2022 Outstanding Thesis/Project Awards! At the end of the academic year, graduate programs nominate one thesis or project for consideration; the submissions are judged by a panel of faculty for their originality, significance, quality, and outcomes.

After careful consideration, the winners are:

- Diana Ramirez, Master of Social Work, for her project, Barriers to the Use of Palliative and Hospice Care among the Latino Population
- Chelsea Schweer, M.A. in Mathematics, for her thesis, Verifying Sudoku Puzzles

In recognition of their achievements, each recipient received a check for \$500 and an engraved glass award and was honored during Graduate Education Week. Graduate Studies extends its hearty congratulations to Diana and Chelsea! Read on to learn more about our awardees and their work.

## **Diana Ramirez, MSW**

Diana's social work project explores the language and cultural barriers that inhibit access to palliative care among Spanish-speaking patients and their families. Research shows that hospice and palliative care services are underutilized in the Latino community; Diana theorized that the services were literally misinterpreted when explained to Spanish speakers. In her role as an interpreter for the UCLA palliative care program, she suspected that the word 'hospice' in particular was often interpreted wrongly by those less knowledgeable about the nuances of the language and culture.

"It is hard to interpret the word 'hospice' in Spanish," Diana said. "My literature and my participants proved my theory. The word is often translated wrongly and has a very negative connotation. My research also showed that there is a lack

of bilingual providers and interpreters who are native speakers. It is important because end-of-life care is a very delicate conversation to have."



*Diana Ramirez.*

It was during one of these conversations that Diana decided to go back to school to become a social worker. "While serving as an interpreter in the school's palliative care program, I realized that I wanted to be the one in the social work role. It became my inspiration to go back to school."

Diana juggled working full-time at UCLA Health as an administrative assistant while pursuing her master's in social work. Since she needed a program that fit her busy schedule, she enrolled in CSUSB's online Social Work Pathways Distance Education program.

"It worked out beautifully. I am a full-time employee, so this was the only way I could pursue my master's. I am beyond grateful for the Pathways program."

Diana has recently landed a part-time position at a hospice. After gaining more experience in the social work field, she plans to continue her education.

"My next goal is to pursue a Ph.D.," she said. "While doing my research, I realized that Latinas are not represented in the research field. I also feel there is a lot more I can continue with my topic."

Diana encourages others to take the next step in their education: "I came to the U.S. at age 13 and English is my second language. I was scared of writing a thesis, but I now have my master's and won the outstanding thesis/project award. I have also presented at national conferences. My advice: Don't be afraid, and do your best. If I can do it, anyone can do it."

### **Chelsea Schweer, M.A. in Mathematics**

Chelsea Schweer's enthusiasm for mathematics is apparent the moment the topic comes up. As a math teacher at Alta Vista Innovation High School, she loves to find instances of how mathematics is part of our everyday lives and incorporate them into her lessons. But her curiosity leads her to delve deeper into mathematics theory, the questions that lurk beneath the surface of seemingly simple problems. Her thesis topic, Verifying Sudoku Puzzles, suited her perfectly.

Chelsea's topic addresses the question of how to verify solutions to Sudoku puzzles with the minimum number of checks, a deceptively simple question.

"My advisor, Dr. Aiken, gave me the question," Chelsea said. "It was something he had come across in an online math forum and felt there was more to it beneath the surface. I like to think that he was waiting for the right person to come along and solve this puzzle."

While answering the original question was relatively simple (for a mathematician), Chelsea's thesis digs deeper; she explores matroid theory and develops a detailed proof to support her solution.

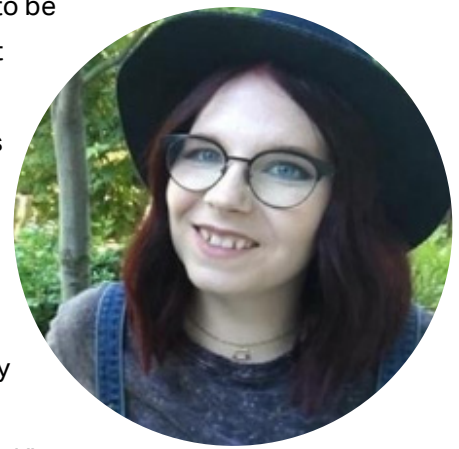
"The answer we were trying to prove was that this was a matroid," Chelsea said. "This would mean that there's a larger type of matroid out there that hasn't been

discovered."

There were many challenges to exploring this new territory, and Chelsea said the search for the right solution took her on a two-year journey into matroid theory and weekly meetings with Dr. Aiken to review solutions.

"In math you have to come up with a theory, then prove it based on what others have done. In this case there were no resources to refer to. We had to come up with the names, definitions, and structure. It gave the whole thing an interesting twist."

Chelsea's M.A. in Mathematics has landed her a position at CSUSB as a part-time lecturer teaching Intro to Mathematics courses; she also continues to teach at Alta Vista. Her goal is to be a professor or lecturer at a community college or university. She credits the success of her thesis topic to the dedication of her thesis adviser: "I'd like to give a shout-out to Dr. Jeremy Aiken – without him, it wouldn't have happened."



*Chelsea Schweer*

Congratulations to both of our Outstanding Thesis/Project Awardees, as well as all those who were nominated by their programs. Graduate theses, projects, and dissertations are available on CSUSB Scholarworks: [scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/](https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/)



# Calendar

## December

- 13** Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program Information Session: 12:00 pm
- 15** California Pre-Doctoral Program Information Session: 12:00 pm
- 16** Grad Slam Information Session: 12:00 pm

## January

- 14** Thesis Retreat – all day
- 20** California Pre-Doctoral Program application draft deadline: 5:00 p.m.
- 23** Grad Slam Information Session: 4:00 pm
- 24** Grad Slam Information Session: 12:00 pm
- 30** Grad Slam Information Session: 4:00 pm
- 31** Grad Slam Information Session: 12:00 pm

## February

- 9** Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive application draft deadline: 5:00 p.m.
- 17** California Pre-Doctoral Program application online submission deadline: 11:59 p.m.

## March

- 2** Graduate Equity Fellowship Application Deadline
- 17** CDIP Application Deadline
- 21** Thesis Formatting Workshop
- 22** Thesis Formatting Workshops
- 28** Thesis Formatting Workshops
- 29** Thesis Submission Workshops

## April

- 10** Grad Slam Competition: Time TBD
- 14** Thesis Consultation Deadline 4:30 pm
- 17** Thesis Submission Deadline 5:00 pm

## May

- 12** Thesis Scholarworks Publication Deadline 5:00 pm

College of Education, 356  
(909) 537-5058  
gradstud@csusb.edu  
csusb.edu/graduate-studies