



College of Letters,  
Arts & Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
**COLORADO SPRINGS**

**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO OUR FALL 2025  
OUTSTANDING  
STUDENTS!**

EL POMAR CENTER



# INTERDEPARTMENTAL STUDIES



## **Lauren Boyd** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Lauren pursued an Interdisciplinary Studies degree because she wanted a holistic plan that incorporated courses from anthropology, language, and sociology disciplines, among others. Her coursework was based on other universities' International Studies programs with emphases in Japanese and Linguistics. She not only had the opportunity of a freeform capstone internship with a local nonprofit, but also studied abroad in Kyoto, Japan at Ritsumeikan University. Her time in Japan was the culmination of her studies, integrating all of her work for the experiences abroad. Moving forward, Lauren wants to continue her multidisciplinary approach and explore careers that encourages intercultural compassion and understanding.

# MILITARY SCIENCE

## Kaden Dwyer, DMG LAS Top Graduating Senior

Cadet Kaden Dwyer stands as an exceptional example of the scholar-athlete-leader, embodying the values that the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) and the United States Army strive to cultivate. CDT Dwyer has consistently demonstrated the character, commitment, and capability that set him apart from his peers. CDT Kaden Dwyer is fully deserving of the LAS Top Graduating Senior Award. His professionalism, intellectual capability, athletic dedication, and genuine commitment to others exemplify the highest ideals of both UCCS and the United States Army. He is undoubtedly a future leader who will bring honor to his alma mater and the profession of arms.





# ANTHROPOLOGY



## **Sarah Krueger** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Biological Anthropology

Sarah Krueger is a first generation student graduating with a dual major in Anthropology and Women and Ethnic Studies, as well as a minor in Religious Studies. Throughout her time at UCCS, she has found a passion for understanding and learning about social constructs, injustices, and the ways in which humanity has developed into what it is today. Upon graduation she hopes to follow her goals of making influential change, as well as teaching and learning all she can to support and explore the many fascinating and integral aspects of humanity and society. She extends her immense gratitude to the Department of Anthropology as well as the Kane Scholarship foundation for their continuous support and aid.



# ANTHROPOLOGY



## **Catherine Matte** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Archaeology

Catherine became interested in anthropology and archaeology through her childhood exploring museums and historical sites with her family. While earning her bachelor's degree in Anthropology with a minor in museum studies, she took the opportunity to complete two archaeological field schools with Drs. Church and Larkin. Catherine has also competed in a student academic poster competition at the CCPA as well as at Colorado College for student research projects with her team. Catherine plans on coming back to UCCS to complete her master's degree in collections management. Her long term goal is to work within collections management, hopefully within the museum domain to help spread education to others in a fun way.



# ANTHROPOLOGY

## Maria Katerina Ortega Outstanding Undergraduate Student Cultural Anthropology



Maria Katerina Ortega is graduating with a degree in Anthropology with a minor in Museum Studies and Gallery Management. Kat has always loved museums and was inspired to change majors during their associates at PPSC after taking a Cultural Anthropology course. They are focused on gender studies, social structures, and textile preservation. Kat's main hobby is sewing and has a deep appreciation for historical clothing and how women's craft is viewed in comparison to art. The program at UCCS has greatly inspired them to pursue a career in museums and one day, a career as a textile conservator for extant garments and artifacts. They plan to pursue an internship with a conservator next year and potentially further their education. Kat would like to thank the professors in the Anthropology department for their incredible support and encouragement.

# BIOLOGY

## **Ashlin Leo** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Ashlin earned the highest GPA of all Biology graduating seniors= 4.0!



# BIOLOGY



## **Mallory Nightshade** Outstanding Graduate Student

Recognized for her completion of her MS thesis, poster presentations and manuscripts in-progress





# CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY



## **Hanford Miller** Outstanding Student Biochemistry, BS

Hanford earned the highest GPA of our graduating BS Biochemistry majors. Some quotes from faculty: "Hanford is a stellar student", "He's an awesome student", "Hanford is well deserving of this recognition".



# COMMUNICATION



## **Demii Trujillo** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Media Studies/Online Communication

For the past seven years, Demii has been serving her community through her local library district, helping patrons navigate technology, connecting people with books and resources, and supporting community programs and outreach. This experience, along with her background in healthcare and other community-focused roles, sparked her curiosity about people, human behavior, and the ways communication shapes our interactions. Balancing work, family, and school hasn't always been easy, but the online Communication program has made it possible for Demii to keep learning while staying present for her family and her community. She is passionate about social sciences and plans to pursue a master's degree in psychology after graduation. She is also drawn to public relations, particularly in building meaningful connections and strengthening communities. Outside of work and school, you'll find her reading, writing creatively, studying human behavior, and cherishing time with her family, all of which act as a reminder of why the work she does matters.





# COMMUNICATION



## **William Leech** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Digital Filmmaking and Media

William Von Leech is an emerging documentary filmmaker whose work is driven by a deep curiosity for people, place, and the stories that give life meaning. His hands-on creative skills enhance his filmmaking, adding depth, precision, and material sensibility to his work. He works in documentary film and design while studying at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, focusing on topical, narrative-driven moments that capture human connection. He has traveled internationally, working on documentaries and several award-winning short films. Coming from a creative household, William learned early to observe closely and take risks. Film became the medium through which he makes sense of the world, allowing him to explore its stories.

# COMMUNICATION



## **Caleb Ellis** Outstanding Undergraduate Student General Communication

Caleb is a General Communication major who has applied the skills he has learned in class to lead teams, organize events, and excel both personally and professionally. He views communication as an invaluable skill that will always remain relevant. He believes that the ability to communicate and lead is essential and influential. Throughout his time in the communication program, he has explored various aspects, particularly focusing on film and video skills to create future opportunities. At UCCS, he has emceed events, worked in Orientation and Clyde's Cupboard, and excelled in his coursework. Caleb plans to pursue a career in management, where he can further develop his leadership and team-building skills. Additionally, he is a creative writing minor and aspires to be a writer in the future.



# ENGLISH



## **Jessie Caldwell** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

According to English department faculty who have worked with Jessie, she is a champion for marginalized perspectives in her research. In addition, she is also a “prolific writer and performer across multiple genres and routinely inspires her classmates to speak up for what is right and to push themselves to take risks as writers.” Another professor wrote that Jessie’s grammatical analysis of the mission statement of a literary magazine was among the best papers he has received in multiple years of teaching Advanced Grammar.

# ENGLISH



## Reagan Hall Outstanding Undergraduate Student

According to English department faculty who have worked with Reagan, it is immediately apparent in each class that he is a sensitive and thoughtful reader whose engagement with his readings is genuine. Noting that Reagan's course readings are seriously annotated, one faculty member elaborated, "In a world where every time we open online documents a feeble-minded AI is offering to 'summarize,' Reagan's engagement with texts stood out." Likewise, Reagan's research project in a course on American women's writing in the 1800s zeroed in on "a key issue: what he called 'The Strategic Anonymity of Women Writers.' He discussed the anonymity of famous writers such as Louisa May Alcott, who had a secret career publishing gothic stories as A.M. Barnard before she published *Little Women*." Finally, in a senior seminar on literary theory and criticism, Reagan produced some of the strongest written work the professor had seen in multiple years of teaching the course, while his contributions to class discussions, both in-person and through online discussion boards, were consistently and impressively insightful.





# ENGLISH



## **Tecara Moyer Outstanding Undergraduate Student**

According to English department faculty who have worked with her, Tecara Moyer is a deft reader and a wonderfully creative writer. She is entering a master's of education program at UCCS in the spring and, as a future teacher, supports her classmates with thoughtful questions about and encouragement of their writing. One professor commented that Tecara “excelled as a student in Advanced Grammar” and that she “now uses that knowledge to serve the UCCS Multiliteracy Center as a consultant.” Another elaborated on that latter role, noting that as part of Tecara’s work as a writing tutor she was embedded in an English 1410 class for a semester; this professor continued: “She is incredible. Something I admire so much about her is her genuine interest in my students and their ideas ... She has a natural curiosity about her that is going to make her successful in any career path she chooses, but especially if she ever becomes a teacher.” Likewise, a third professor expressed that Tecara’s “interpretations of the subtleties of Harriet Jacobs’ writing moved our class forward. Her research project was risky and ambitious in that she focused on an important writer who has been ignored by scholars: Mary Abigail Dodge, who published under the name Gail Hamilton. ... Tecara’s work brings an understudied woman writer into the larger scholarly conversation.” Finally, in a senior seminar on traditions of detective fiction, Tecara’s work ethic and commitment to clear comprehension and strong quality in her writing was striking, while her contributions to class discussion demonstrated a range of keen insights and a laudably open, inquisitive approach to her coursework.

# GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



**Logan Cole**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate Student  
Sustainability

Outstanding Undergrad  
Involved in Research

Graduating senior at UCCS pursuing a career in wildland firefighting. Conducted undergraduate research alongside Dr. Curt Holder on the effects of urban development on bird song acoustics. Member of the UCCS cross country and track teams.



# GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



## **Patricia Ann Favila** Outstanding Undergraduate Student GIScience

I'm a Geography and Environmental Studies major and pursuing a GIS certification. I've worked as a nursing assistant for over 10 years, which shaped my passion for helping people and protecting the environment ever since I can remember. I was born in Manila, Philippines and raised in a small town called Bloomington-Normal, Illinois 18 years ago. I'm very grateful for this scholarship opportunity as I continue to work towards my goals in life.

# GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



**Grace Long**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate Student  
GES

Outstanding Leadership  
Award - GES Peak  
Ambassador

Grace Long is a senior undergraduate student at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS), graduating with a BA in Geography & certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). She is continuing her graduate studies here at UCSS and recently defended her honors thesis titled 'Sustainability of Game Ranching in South Africa'. Grace is especially passionate about environmental research and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa.



# GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**Addison Partin**

Outstanding Undergraduate Student  
GIScience

Outstanding Undergrad Involved  
in Research



My name is Addison Partin, and I am currently a student at UCCS pursuing a degree in Geography and Environmental Studies with a certificate in GIScience, graduating in December 2025. I am passionate about using geospatial technology to understand environmental systems and support informed decision-making. My research experience, leadership background, and passion for environmental stewardship have shaped my focus on environmental management and emergency response. After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in the U.S. Coast Guard as an officer, where I hope to make a meaningful impact through leadership, service, and problem-solving. Long term, I hope to return to higher education to study hydrogeology and continue advancing water security for generations. I am grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from the entire GES department during my time at UCCS. The guidance and mentorship from my professors have been instrumental in helping me discover my path and grow as a scholar and leader.

# GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**Trey Cate  
Marie Dahlberg  
Laura Mimm  
Aaron Riley**




## Graduate Research Fellowship Recipients

The Graduate Research Fellowship at UCCS is a merit-based award designed to recruit and retain outstanding graduate students.



# **GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**



**Jacob Abbott  
Kimberley Clough  
Brody Dickson  
MJ Johnson  
Grace Long**

## **Jacquelyn Beyer Fellowship Recipients**

The Jacquelyn Beyer Fellowship is a highly competitive merit-based award. Professor Jackie Beyer founded GES. A bit of her spirit now lives with the Fellowship award winners.

# GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**Jacob Abbott  
Chase Ingersoll  
Grace Long**

**Dane Vogel  
Fellowship Recipients**

The Dane Vogel Memorial Scholarship is a highly competitive merit-based award. Dane Vogel was a GES major who passed in 2012. Dane's parents, who provide this award, want the winners to 'go out and live their dreams and be the best they can be!'



# HISTORY



## **Zachary Lawson** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Zach Lawson, from Miami, Oklahoma, served a decade in the United States Army, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, before moving into a civilian career in IT. In time, he sought a path that aligned more closely with his personal interests and family priorities, leading him to study history at UCCS. Here, he discovered a strong academic foundation and a community that supported his growth and ambitions. He plans to continue in the History graduate program and ultimately pursue a career as a historian for a military installation.

# HISTORY



## Will Queen Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Will Queen's journey starts long before his arrival at UCCS. He spent most of his life putting in underground utility services, mains, garage doors, building houses, decks, tiling, and appliance work throughout Pikes Peak Region (though his talents brought him to over 50 other locations throughout the U.S.). He also spent 13 ½ years building his own business maintaining the infrastructure of a host of local stores, malls, and restaurants. He arrived at UCCS as an award-winning transfer student from PPSC. Obviously winning this award is testament to Will's academic abilities as a student, but his service to the university and community sets him apart even further. While completing his degree in the History Department, he's substitute teaching, interned at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry, and currently serving as secretary for the Civil War and Reconstruction Research Society. The common theme throughout his life is his humility, happy to work behind the scenes, performing all the work most may not even realize takes place to keep their lives running smoothly. In his own words, "I have simply done my best, tried to be good and do good for all, and kept a quiet, calm faith that someday it would pay off."





# HISTORY



## **Brian Rooney** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Brian Rooney's outstanding academic career in the History Department is marked by multiple awards for Academic Excellence as well as a major GPA of 3.775. Brian has also served the department and his peers admirably through his position of Secretary as well as Vice President of the UCCS History Club. Tying together his studies and passions—in this case for aviation, he received an additional undergraduate award from the department for drafting, writing, compiling research, and recording a script recounting the events of the Schweinfurt-Regensburg Raid and how massed bombing formations were formed while on mission. Moreover, he's also completed two internships with the National Museum of World War Two Aviation, working on projects that connect the presentation of history with accurate simulations and exhibits. Further, he revealed his eye towards the evolution of the discipline through the compilation and collection of 3D computer models for use by the Museum's Simulations Department.



# LANGUAGES & CULTURES



**Devon White**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate  
Student German

Devon White is graduating from UCCS with a degree in Computer Science with an emphasis in Cybersecurity. His academic journey has been marked not only by impressive technical achievements but also by a genuine passion for the German language and culture. Since becoming President of the German Club in 2024, he has helped build a supportive and enthusiastic community, encouraging students to explore language learning with confidence and curiosity.

As a mentor and tutor at the Excel Languages Center, he has guided students, always bringing patience, dedication, and an infectious love for language learning. His professor and fellow students alike know him as someone who leads with kindness, diligence, humor and authenticity.

Looking ahead, he plans to pursue a career in Computer Science in Germany, where he hopes to continue strengthening both his professional skills and his connection to the language, he has worked so hard to master. Reflecting on what comes next, he shares: “Although the future is never certain, I do feel it will be a bright one.”

He is honored to receive the Outstanding Student Award and grateful for the community that helped shape his time at UCCS.



# LANGUAGES & CULTURES



**Aili Gibson**  
**Outstanding**  
**Undergraduate**  
**Student**  
**Japanese**

The Languages & Cultures Department selected Aili Gibson who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to both International Business and Japanese studies, for the Outstanding Japanese Student Award. From a young age, Aili frequently visited Japan and developed a genuine love for its language and culture. Upon joining UCCS, she set a clear goal for herself: to study abroad in Japan. She not only achieved this goal but excelled while studying at Waseda University in Tokyo during her junior year.

During her time at Waseda, she gained meaningful insight into the unique ways commerce operates across different countries, strengthening her understanding of international business practices. As she graduates this month, she carries with her a strong aspiration to work for an international Japanese company, where she hopes to help bridge linguistic and cultural gaps in the global marketplace.

It is with great pride that the Department of Languages & Cultures recognize her accomplishments and present her with the Outstanding Japanese Student Award.

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It is with great pride that I recognize her accomplishments and present her with the Outstanding Japanese Student Award.

# LANGUAGES & CULTURES



**Fernando  
Hernandez**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate  
Student  
Spanish (Native  
Speaking)

My name is Fernando Hernandez, and my family and I are originally from El Salvador. I moved to the United States when I was seven years old and have lived here ever since. Spanish was my first language, spoken daily at home, while English became the language I learned and developed through school. Growing up, I always set ambitious goals for myself, whether that meant enrolling in challenging courses, stepping outside my comfort zone, or committing to personal growth. One of those goals was completing my Spanish minor at UCCS. Even though I did not consider myself the strongest writer, speaker, or reader in Spanish when I began, I was determined to strengthen those skills and finish what I started.

Throughout my time at UCCS and within the Spanish program, I have gained more than academic knowledge. I have learned the value of community, the importance of cultural connection, and the power of education in shaping future opportunities. My professors and peers have supported my belief that persistence and curiosity are essential to achieving long-term goals.

As my journey at UCCS comes to an end, I am ready to pursue my next ambitious goal: becoming an attorney. I plan to attend law school next fall, where I hope to continue growing academically and personally. Earning my Juris Doctor degree is the next major step in my educational path, and I am committed to working hard to reach it. My experiences have prepared me for this next chapter, and I am excited for what lies ahead.



# LANGUAGES & CULTURES



## **Luis Lewis** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Spanish (Non-native Speaking)

Luis Lewis is a Spanish major at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and a self-taught Spanish speaker. On campus he is a Spanish peer tutor and Vice President of the Hispanic Honor Society. He is passionate about helping others and wants to use his own journey to inspire and uplift other language learners even when resources are limited.

After graduation, Luis plans to leave the United States for the first time and continue growing through language, teaching, and new experiences. He plans to pursue a career in education, teaching Spanish and English while supporting immigrant communities. He is grateful for everyone who has believed in him and helped him reach this moment.

# MATHEMATICS



## **Ben Lawson** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Ben earned the highest GPA among the graduating students at 3.9.



# MATHEMATICS



## **Tori Royall** Outstanding Graduate Student

Tori is recognized for her xcellent course work during her degree and the highest GPA of the graduating students at 3.86.

# PHILOSOPHY



## **Jeffrey Baker** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Jeff Baker is a senior at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, completing a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy with a minor in Psychology, graduating this fall. He was drawn to philosophy and psychology to strengthen his thinking and writing skills and to better understand human behavior. Outside his studies, Jeff balances school with family life as a husband and father to two young boys. Together, they enjoy hiking, fishing, and exploring the natural landscapes of Colorado.



# PHILOSOPHY

## Lucian Ensell Outstanding Undergraduate Student

That is why I write, and why I publish. My goal is to reach one, to make one person think differently, to make one reader pause. If each time I write or speak, one person truly listens, then I have succeeded.

As for what's next: I will graduate in December 2025 and pursue a JD/M1 US and French law degree and a Doctorate of Philosophy at Columbia Law School, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and the Sorbonne School of Law in Paris. From there, I hope to join the United Nations as a human rights attorney. My aim is to make people in power stop and listen, to change lives in real, tangible ways, and, selfishly, to keep traveling the world, because that is where I have always found my greatest teachers.

# PHILOSOPHY



## **Dorothy Key** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Dorothy Key is a philosophy student with an emphasis in religious epistemology and philosophy of language with a minor in visual arts.



# PHILOSOPHY



## **Sarah Krueger** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Religious Studies Minor

Sarah Krueger is a first generation student graduating with a dual major in Anthropology and Women and Ethnic Studies, as well as a minor in Religious Studies. Throughout her time at UCCS, she has found a passion for understanding and learning about social constructs, injustices, and the ways in which humanity has developed into what it is today. Upon graduation she hopes to follow her goals of making influential change, as well as teaching and learning all she can to support and explore the many fascinating and integral aspects of humanity and society. She extends her immense gratitude to the Department of Anthropology as well as the Kane Scholarship foundation for their continuous support and aid.

# PHILOSOPHY



## **Justin Seyfarth** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Double Major

Justin Seyfarth was born and raised in Colorado Springs, and has traveled the world while obtaining his bachelor's degree. He is deeply interested in the human experience, both on individual and societal levels, with respect to how we both create and experience social phenomena, and how these things affect our individual lives. Philosophy is truly a passion of his, and he has enjoyed working with every professor he has had while at UCCS. After graduation, he hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Sociology and eventually a PhD, and to use the skills he has learned in higher education in concert with the skills he learned in the Army (remote sensing, geospatial intelligence, spatial computing and analysis) to effect positive changes on society.



# PHILOSOPHY



**Hudson Spurlock**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate  
Student  
Philosophy Minor

A Georgia native, Hudson (Hud) Spurlock is a student at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs whose academic work spans Communication, Marketing, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences. He gravitates toward projects that push him to think deeply—whether he’s studying leadership and organizational trust, nonverbal communication in team settings, or bigger questions about technology, consciousness, and culture. His work is known for being thoughtful, grounded, and creative, often connecting classroom ideas to real situations. Hudson’s academic work is notable for its depth and variety. He has completed major research projects on topics such as Indigenous sovereignty, nonverbal communication in organizational teams, leadership theory—specifically how mixed messaging damages trust—and critical analyses of technology, consciousness, and aesthetics.

Hudson has also been heavily involved in campus life, especially through Pi Kappa Phi, where he previously served in leadership and helped run events, strengthen chapter operations, and work with members, alumni, and university partners. These experiences shaped his ability to communicate, organize, and guide others, even as he transitions into new roles.

Beyond academics and campus involvement, Hudson enjoys building projects that let him be creative—whether that’s designing visual content, developing podcast ideas, or tackling research topics that interest him. His faith and personal growth play a steady role in his life, influencing the way he works, studies, and interacts with people around him.

Overall, Hudson is someone who blends curiosity, leadership experience, and a genuine desire to connect with others as he continues shaping his path forward.

# PHILOSOPHY



## **Veronique Henry** Eldon Stevens Award for Best Senior Thesis

Veronique Henry, a U.S veteran, will graduate with a Bachelor's in Philosophy and a minor in Mathematics. She is drawn to both fields for the analytical rigor and critical thinking that they require. Veronique plans to combine her college education with her military experience to continue serving her community in meaningful and impactful ways.



# PHYSICS & ENERGY SCIENCE



**Brianne McGrath**  
Outstanding Student  
Physics PhD



# PHYSICS & ENERGY SCIENCE



**Connor Wood**  
Outstanding Student  
Physics PhD





**PSYCHOLOGY**

**Annabel Dorsz**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate Student



# PSYCHOLOGY



## **Alba D Parra Duran** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Alba is graduating with her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, earning the distinction of Summa Cum Laude. Since transferring to UCCS, she has consistently achieved academic excellence, being named to either the Dean's List or President's List every regular semester. Alba has been an active member of the SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society and the National Society of Leadership and Success. She plans to begin a Master's program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling this coming spring. Alba has already been accepted to Prescott College in Arizona and is currently awaiting decisions from additional universities.



# PSYCHOLOGY



## **Amanda Lee** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Amanda is graduating this fall with a double Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Women's and Ethnic Studies. She earned a place on the President's List in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. Amanda also presented her research, Feminism in Afghanistan: Beyond the Western Lens, at CSURF. She plans to pursue a Master's in Mental Health Counseling with the goal of becoming a trauma therapist.



# PSYCHOLOGY



## **Lauren Suiter** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Lauren is graduating with a major in Psychology and a minor in Counseling/Human Services. She has received several honors, including the Chancellor's Award, Dean's List and President's List. Her practical experience includes a service-learning internship with Lutheran Family Services and a paid internship with Health Healing Hope Ministries. She has served as a mentor with UCCS Campus Connections. Lauren has worked as a research assistant in the PERCH Lab and completed her undergraduate thesis titled The Impact of Religious Upbringing on the Sexuality of College Students through the Psychology Honors Program. She presented her research at several conferences, including the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association. Lauren collaborated with Dr. Kristen Rudd on a project funded by the Undergraduate Research Academy, examining the relationship between risk-taking behaviors and physiological regulation in adolescents. After graduation, Lauren plans to pursue a master's degree in school counseling beginning in Summer or Fall 2026 and aims to earn AASECT certification to teach sex education at the high school level while working as a school counselor.



# PSYCHOLOGY



## **Lisa Kujawa-Levine** **David Nichols Award**

This undergraduate award was established in the name of Professor David Nichols, the founding member of the UCCS Psychology Department, and it is awarded based on academic excellence. Professor Nichols always heartily encouraged and supported the Department's students, especially those who had successfully overcome adversity or achieved success under non-traditional circumstances.

Lisa has a BS in Biology and will graduate with a BA in Psychology in May 2026. She has earned recognition on the Dean's List, President's List and receiving the Outstanding Student Award for her performance in CHEM 3001. Lisa is an active member of the UCCS Psychology Honors Program. She serves as a research assistant for PhD candidate Chris Griffith, while also contributing to Dr. Feliciano's research lab. Her research interests lie at the intersection of neuropsychology, biopsychology, and sleep science. After graduation, Lisa plans to pursue an MA in Clinical Psychology, followed by a PhD in Clinical or Geropsychology. Her long-term research goals focus on understanding sleep disruption related to traumatic brain injury (TBI), exploring sex differences, and investigating gut-brain mechanisms such as microbiome and inflammation across diverse populations—including athletes, service members, veterans, and individuals with brain tumors.

# SOCIOLOGY



## **Tyler Driscoll** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Tyler Driscoll is an activist, a woodworker, and an intellectual of the highest caliber. After taking some years to work and develop himself following high school, Tyler began a journey at PPSC that led him to the Sociology Department at UCCS. His intellectual curiosity is radical like his politics, which allows him to understand the profoundly exploitative and violent world that we live in. This has taken many forms and followed many directions but has centered in his senior honors thesis "Peaking Profits: Gentrification in Colorado Springs" on housing justice. Specifically, he is concerned with how current urban development strategies in Colorado Springs transform public money into private profits for developers as the cost of housing soars for regular people. Following graduation, Tyler is considering whether to teach in high schools, pursue a Ph.D., or engage in local politics.



# SOCIOLOGY



## **Justin Seyfarth** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Justin Seyfarth is a native of Colorado Springs. He has worked in four countries while earning a dual BA in Sociology and Philosophy. His experiences with diverse cultures and his interest in human experience, at both the individual and societal levels, sparked his passion for Sociology. Justin enjoyed taking a wide range of Sociology classes and valued the knowledge he gained from the department's faculty. He applies his sociological perspective in almost every aspect of his life. He has an impressive 3.9 cumulative GPA and plans to pursue a master's degree in Sociology. After earning an MA, he aims to pursue a Ph.D., where he can teach and conduct research while combining his academic and military skills to promote positive social change.

# SOCIOLOGY



## **Samantha Woodard** Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Samantha Woodard was born and raised in Southern California before moving to Colorado Springs in 2022 to pursue her undergraduate degree. During her Marine Corps enlistment, she discovered her passion for sociology and human services. This passion shaped her goal of becoming a counselor dedicated to supporting service members, veterans, and their families. Following her enlistment in the United States Marine Corps, Samantha was honored to continue her educational journey at UCCS. She will graduate this December with her bachelor's degree in Sociology and Human Services and plans to continue her academic path by pursuing a Master's degree in Counseling at UCCS. Her UCCS coursework combined with her involvement in Campus Connections, has strengthened her understanding of how environment and systemic issues shape youth behavior and reinforced her commitment to supporting the academic growth and well-being of "At Promise" youth. She aims to continue mentoring local students while serving the military community through her future work at Mt. Carmel with veterans and service members. Samantha gratefully acknowledges the support, encouragement, and confidence her family, friends, and mentors have shown her along the way.



# SOCIOLOGY



## Joseph Bono Outstanding Graduate Student

Joseph Bono knew pursuing graduate school in Sociology was what he wanted when he became eager to learn more from his undergraduate capstone studies and classes. Growing up in punk and hardcore, he wasn't always a fan of school or the institution of education. He learned how to find a place for his individuality and interests in sociological inquiry about gender, sexuality, media, medicine, and culture, so he set off in the program to learn more on these areas. They grew into his research interests, which he thoroughly enjoyed unpacking with peers and faculty both in this program and at conferences like WSSA. He also enjoyed furthering his understanding of statistics and grappling with social theory since he entered the program with some ambivalence about them. Some of his most valuable takeaways from the program come from discussing his experience peers and faculty. He looks forward to taking these lessons to pursue working in higher education in student engagement, advising, project management, and event coordinating. With 6 years of experience in this area now, Joe plans to work with and advocating for students, staff, and faculty in higher education. He also plans to teach part-time so he can continue to bring fruitful experiences to future generations of sociology students, the same way the faculty in this program did for him.



# TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DESIGN



## David Rose Outstanding Undergraduate Student

David Rose is a healthcare professional and Technical Communication student based in Colorado Springs. With 15 years of patient-care experience as a CNA, he brings a grounded, empathy-driven perspective to communication challenges in clinical environments. He is completing his bachelor's degree in Technical Communication & Information Design at UCCS, where his work focuses on intercultural communication, user-centered writing, and experience design. David is especially interested in how clear, ethical communication can improve patient care and organizational workflows. He is currently building a portfolio that bridges healthcare experience with communication, design, and content strategy.



# TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DESIGN



**Dominick de Waal**  
Outstanding  
Undergraduate Student



# VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS



## **Antonio Candler** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Film Studies

In addition to excellent grades and standing in Film Studies across the past six semesters, Antonio is a veteran and very recently became a father. He has been involved in numerous film and video productions on campus, such as the Bluffs, UCCS' own TV show, and several other major UCCS student productions and industry work as well.



# VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS



## **Keely Dibb** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Music

Keely Dibb (B.A. Music) is an accomplished vocalist and model student in the UCCS Music program. She has demonstrated strong leadership in critical inquiry both in the classroom and through her Capstone research project on vocal pedagogies. After studying voice in Italy, she transferred to UCCS and has given two stellar recitals here, featuring classical music, musical theatre, and rock and pop songs, including her original songwriting and vibrant musical collaborations. While being a student, Keely has also been honing her teaching skills as an instructor of voice and piano at Silversound Guitar and will no doubt continue to rise as a leader and pedagogue in music!

# VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS



## **Jorden Gershon** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Music

Jorden Gershon (B.I. Music) is a guitarist, multi-instrumentalist, improviser, and composer, who has distinguished herself through her tireless work ethic and courageous growth across numerous areas of music. Initially set on not performing music, she dedicated herself to learning classical guitar in 2024 and not only became a key member of the Sagitta Guitar Ensemble but also the president of the Colorado Springs Guitar Society. Her senior recital reflected strong musicality across instruments in addition to her skills in fostering deep and meaningful collaborations with a variety of musicians. We also celebrate Jorden's whole-hearted dedication to the music community at UCCS, where she was a founding member of the Music Student Committee. We look forward to Jorden's future endeavors as entrepreneur and music therapist!



# VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS



## **McLain Murphy** Outstanding Undergraduate Student Film Studies

A sampling of McLain's achievements at UCCS include a place on the President's Academic Excellence List in 2023 and 2024, and The Dean's Academic Excellence List in Spring 2024. She received the highest GPA in Film Studies for each consecutive semester leading to her graduation this year.

# WOMEN'S & ETHNIC STUDIES



## **Bria Abeyta** Outstanding Undergraduate Student WEST Minor

Bria Abeyta is our outstanding minor in Women's and Ethnic Studies. Bria exemplifies academic excellence and intellectual curiosity. In all of her classes, she demonstrates thoughtfulness, consistency, and deep insight, engaging meaningfully with peers and faculty alike. Her commitment to learning and her ability to connect ideas with clarity and purpose have made her an inspiring presence.





# WOMEN'S & ETHNIC STUDIES



## **Sarah Krueger** Outstanding Undergraduate Student WEST Double Major

Sarah Krueger is a first generation student graduating with a dual major in Anthropology and Women and Ethnic Studies, as well as a minor in Religious Studies. Throughout her time at UCCS, she has found a passion for understanding and learning about social constructs, injustices, and the ways in which humanity has developed into what it is today. Upon graduation she hopes to follow her goals of making influential change, as well as teaching and learning all she can to support and explore the many fascinating and integral aspects of humanity and society. She extends her immense gratitude to the Department of Anthropology as well as the Kane Scholarship foundation for their continuous support and aid.

# WOMEN'S & ETHNIC STUDIES



## **Amanda Lee** Outstanding Undergraduate Student WEST Major

Amanda Lee is an outstanding student both inside and outside the classroom. She is graduating with a dual major in Women's and Ethnic Studies and Psychology. She is a stellar student whose contributions in class not only demonstrate a deep level of insight and engagement, but also pushes her classmates to excel. Taking her learning beyond the classroom, she actively contributes to building an inclusive culture at UCCS. She has served on the campus Pride committee and also volunteers with Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention Partnership to provide crisis intervention and community resources. She aspires to attend graduate school with the goal of becoming a trauma therapist serving queer youth and young adults. As a non-traditional age student, she wants others to know that it's never too late to change the trajectory of your life and follow your dreams!





College of Letters,  
Arts & Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
**COLORADO SPRINGS**

**THANK YOU!**

**See You at Commencement!**

December 19, 2025

