



# Leaders

2016-2017



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES  
*Center for Undergraduate Research and Academic Engagement*



## 2016-2017 UROP Leaders

Kia Adams  
Natali Andres  
Olivia Bockler  
McKenna Britton  
Alexandra Brockdorf  
Bailey Brogdon  
Andrew Bryant  
Kaelynn Chambliss  
Kirsten Christensen  
Adam Dajani  
Carolyn Dang  
Isabel De Leon  
Jeffrey Edelstein  
Austin Fitzgerald  
Taylor Foor  
Alyssa Frey  
Elora Friar  
Brittany Hernandez

Shannon Hodgson  
Jeanah Kim  
Joseph Leonard  
Sydney Look  
Shelby Lucas  
Nicole MacMillan  
Caitlin Marquis  
Laura Miller  
Matthew Murray  
Melissa Newsome  
Nikki Palenzuela  
Calista Pappas  
Devlin Peck  
Joe Pelt  
Chelsea Pena  
Benjamin Pifer  
Mercedes Puig Kreis  
Jasmine Richardson

Sophie Rottenberg  
Scarlett Roy  
Valentina Saracino  
Savannah Savadel  
Kelly Scandone  
Tashana Shields  
Federico Simon  
Rachel Smith  
Gary Soza  
Alexandra Taggart  
Erin Trumble  
Ellen Waidner  
Alex Whitaker  
Briana Whitehead  
John Wilcox  
Hunter Williams

## KIA ADAMS



**Major:** Psychology

**Minor:** Biology

**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “Before UROP, I always thought of research as an unachievable dream, or as a practice only achieved by those with something to offer, and I was not someone with something to offer. Now, I understand what it means to be involved in research, to be contributing to a discussion in your field, and the importance of undergraduate research.”

**Current research focus:** Honors in the Major about the role of estradiol (E2) in mediating food intake in female rats.

## NATALI ANDRES



**Major:** Creative Writing

**Minor:** Anthropology

**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** “I hope to help guide my students through their experience in UROP so that they can get the most out of this opportunity.”

## OLIVIA BOCKLER



**Major:** Psychology

**Minor:** English, Biology, and Chemistry

**Class of 2018**

**Current research:** “I utilize electroencephalogram (EEG) technology to assess the efficacy of a computerized treatment for anxiety sensitivity, with the goal of providing underserved community members with an inexpensive, easily accessible preventative measure for suicide.”

**Other research involvement:** Student Council for Undergraduate Research and Creativity (SCURC)

## MCKENNA BRITTON



**Major:** History, English, Writing & Media

**Minor:** Museum Studies

**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “I have never been as involved with the undergraduate research community here at FSU as I am currently, during my final year, thanks to UROP. If I did not participate in the UROP program my sophomore year, I would not be on SCURC, or heading The Owl Editorial Board!”

**Current research:** Studying the photographic culture of science history with Professor Ronald Doel

## ALEXANDRA BROCKDORF



**Major:** Psychology

**Minor:** Biology

**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “I was a UROP student during my freshman year at FSU, giving me an integral opportunity to connect with faculty and current research projects as soon as I stepped on campus. Through this program, I discovered a passion for research. Since then, it has become an integral part of my college experience and future aspirations.”

**Current research:** “I’m currently working in the Keel lab, researching eating disorders, and working on my Honors thesis on links between learning style, self-perceptions, and eating attitudes and behaviors.”

## BAILEY BROGDON



**Major:** Biochemistry

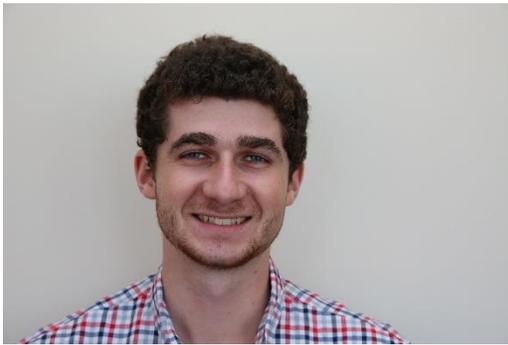
**Minor:** Mathematics

**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** “I hope I can teach my students to encounter problems and questions with an open mind. I want my students to not be afraid of failure but rather encounter adversity with resilience.”

**Current research:** “I’m currently researching in the College of Education. The focus of my project is to understand the obstacles and challenges students with autism face in higher education.”

## ANDREW BRYANT



**Major:** Economics, Statistics

**Minor:** Mathematics

**Class of 2018**

**How did UROP impact your time at FSU?** “The undergraduate research program here helped me learn to research independently, all while being able to receive a push in the right direction from an accomplished professor whenever I needed it.”

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** “I hope to work as an additional source of guidance to students as they embark on their own research journeys into their own fields. I aim to equip them with the tools needed to thoroughly research and analyze their own findings within the context of academic research, all with the overarching goal of helping them become more efficient thinkers.”

## KAELYNN CHAMBLISS



**Major:** Chemical Sciences

**Class of 2018**

## KIRSTEN CHRISTENSEN



**Major:** Psychology & Statistics

**Class of 2018**

**Current research:** “My research focuses on suicide prevention and emotional well-being, particularly among college students. I research how we can recognize students in distress, increase help-seeking for mental health concerns, and decrease distress.”

**Other research involvement:** Student Council for Undergraduate Research and Creativity (SCURC) and Undergraduate Research Ambassadors (URA)

## ADAM DAJANI



**Major:** Biological Sciences

**Minor:** Chemical Sciences

**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** "I hope to pass on knowledge that I have learned through my research experience to my students in order to better prepare them for their own research journey. I also hope to leave them as more open-minded, critical thinkers, which will prove to be valuable traits in both their academic and research careers."

**Current research:** "I am working under Dr. Ken Goldsby to build an x-ray diffractometer in order to replicate experiments such as Rosalind Franklin's x-ray crystallography experiment and demonstrate important scientific concepts. We try use economical materials when building our models so that our experiments can be replicated in middle school and high school shop classes."

## CAROLYN DANG



**Major:** Biological Sciences

**Class of 2018**

## ISABEL DE LEON



**Major:** Psychology

**Class of 2018**

## JEFF EDELSTEIN



**Major:** Management Information Systems & Music  
**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP affected your time at FSU?** “The research opportunities opened by my initial UROP project have also been substantial, allowing me to present at a national and an international conference, become a contributing author on a peer-reviewed journal article, and help my research team earn a \$300,000 National Science Foundation grant. Additionally, as a UROP Leader, I've gotten to work with a variety of students and help them navigate and discover their own research interests, a passion of mine which I have incorporated into my role as the Director of the Student Council for Undergraduate Research and Creativity (SCURC).”

## AUSTIN FITZGERALD



**Major:** Religion

**Minor:** Classics

**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “It has opened the door to amazing opportunities in research that have greatly shaped my time at FSU and will continue to do so as I move forward with my academic career.”

**Current research:** Christian and Islamic political thought

## TAYLOR FOOR



**Major:** Mathematics

**Minor:** Meteorology

**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “As a UROP student I actually worked with a startup company doing hurricane research. After that year I continued to intern with the same company. So basically since I was a freshman I've been doing research and as I've grown, the company has grown with me and I now work with them part time! Research has truly been my biggest extracurricular and I can't imagine what I'd be doing without this experience.”

## ALYSSA FREY



**Major:** Chemical Science  
**Class of 2018**

## ELORA FRIAR



**Major:** Exercise Physiology  
**Minor:** Biology, Chemistry  
**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** "I hope to show my students that this university will present them with more opportunities and encouragement than they have ever known if they are willing to take the first step. Every program will supplement their experience exponentially- if they are willing to pursue it. I hope my students take it upon themselves to chase their goals, ambitions, and interests because it is very possible that they have not had to pursue their goals so actively. A research program may be their first, fifth, or hundredth effort; a bright future must be sought out and chased ceaselessly."

## BRITTANY HERNANDEZ



**Major:** Biology  
**Minor:** Chemistry  
**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** "UROP has impacted my time at FSU by providing me the opportunities to grow professionally and to grow through research. UROP has provided many opportunities to get involved on campus and improve myself academically."

## SHANNON HODGSON



**Major:** Communication Science and Disorders

**Minor:** Spanish and Business

**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** "UROP has been an incredibly important part of my undergraduate experience. As a freshman, I was able to work as a research assistant at Domi Station, a startup business incubator. The design of UROP allowed me to receive just the right amount of guidance and freedom to learn so much about both business and research. After completing UROP, I continued working as a research assistant at Domi. I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunities UROP has given me."

## JEANAH KIM



**Major:** Biology

**Minor:** Chemistry, Computer Science

**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** "UROP has provided with new experiences and opportunities I would not have had otherwise during my time at Florida State. It has also helped me expand my interests in subjects I did not know I had."

**Current research:** "I am currently working in the Kroto lab in the chemistry department. I work with carbon nanotubes and am currently trying to use carbon nanotubes to make multi-layer batteries."

## JOSEPH LEONARD



**Major:** Exercise Science

**Minor:** Chemistry and Biology

**Class of 2017**

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** "I hope to positively impact my students by accomplishing the following 3 objectives.

- 1) Increase their interest and use of critical thinking and research.
- 2) Make it clear to them that with the proper work ethic and time management any goal can be accomplished.
- 3) Decrease their anxiety and increase their self-efficacy."

**Current research:** the effects of protein supplementation on the body composition of post-menopausal breast cancer survivors.

## SYDNEY LOOK



**Major:** Exercise Physiology  
**Minor:** Chemistry and Biology  
**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “UROP has enabled me achieve a level of confidence in myself that I didn't believe was possible. Through this program, I have been challenged to reach my highest potential. By allowing me to discover the accessibility of research in my undergraduate career, UROP has fostered my curiosity and provided the tools I needed to believe in myself.”

**Current research:** Florida Longitudinal Study of Aging, diabetes research

## SHELBY LUCAS



**Major:** Chemical Engineering  
**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “Being a transfer student, UROP has helped me network and become aware of the resources that FSU has to offer. I was able to successfully complete goals that I set out for myself within the first year at Florida State.”

**How do you hope to affect your students as a UROP Leader?** “I hope to given my students the same experience, if not a better experience, that I had. I want them to enjoy their time in the program as well as graduate from FSU knowing that they have impacted the community in some way.”

## NICOLE MACMILLAN



**Major:** Political Science and International Affairs  
**Minor:** English  
**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “UROP has given me some of the most exciting opportunities I have had during my time at Florida State, but most importantly, it has allowed me to believe in my own capabilities. Working with decorated professors and speaking at conferences used to feel like a daunting task, but it has been a stepping stone to bigger accomplishments and paths. I am so grateful to UROP for opening the necessary doors for me to have the most successful time as an undergraduate student.”

**Current research:** intersectionality in American law

## CAITLIN MARQUIS



**Major:** Biological Sciences

**Minor:** Chemistry/Psychology

**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to affect students as a UROP**

**Leader?** "As a freshman or sophomore student, I remember being intimidated by the concept of research and feeling under qualified to participate in it. However, the main theme I took from my time as a UROP student was the understanding that anyone can engage in research, and that research can take on many forms as long as you are contributing knowledge to the community. I am eager to teach my students this same idea. Research is a fundamental aspect to our ever-changing society, and it is so important that today's youth participates in it because this will serve as the foundation of the discoveries of tomorrow."

## LAURA MILLER



**Major:** Studio Art and Editing, Writing, and Media

**Class of 2017**

**How do you hope to affect students as a UROP**

**Leader?** "I hope to be a mentor to UROP students by helping them navigate the assistantship and presentation processes. I want to encourage my students to pursue their passions and build their confidence in their abilities as young scholars."

**Current research:** "I am beginning research into the intersection of art and language through the study of visual rhetoric. While I am still in the planning stages, I would like to focus on propaganda imagery and persuasive design."

## MATTHEW MURRAY



**Major:** Chemistry

**Minor:** Biology and Mathematics

**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to affect students as a UROP**

**Leader?** "UROP has not only given me the confidence to do research, but to really push the boundaries of my limitations, which has augmented my expectations for myself, and what I want not only for my education, but for my life as well."

**Current research:** "I currently work in a lab at FSU that focuses on the proteasome, the garbage can for proteins, and learning more about it to help create therapeutic drugs to combat some neurodegenerative diseases and cancers. I am working on bridging the gap between these two to aid in my own interest in developing anti-cancer drugs."

## MELISSA NEWSOME



**Major:** Biological Sciences and International Affairs  
**Class of 2017**

## NIKKI PALENZUELA



**Major:** Communication Sciences and Disorders  
**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “UROP completely changed my college experience. I never thought that I could be capable of participating in research, let alone present it in front of the FSU community! UROP has certainly made me feel that even as an undergraduate, I can make a difference in my field of study. I have been challenged academically through this program and in return, feel more confident in my abilities. Participating in UROP is definitely the best decision I have made while at FSU!”

**Current research:** “For the past two years I have been working under Dr. MacPherson in the area of Communication Science and Disorders. Her research is focused on speech production in healthy aging and Parkinson's Disease.”

## CALISTA PAPPAS



**Major:** Exercise Science  
**Class of 2018**

DEVLIN PECK



**Major:** Literature and International Affairs  
**Class of 2017**

JOE PELT



**Major:** Biological Science  
**Class of 2018**

CHELSEA PENA



**Major:** Psychology  
**Minor:** Crime Scene Investigation  
**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** "I was a part of a transfer cohort during my time in UROP. When I transferred to FSU, I learned that there are so many different opportunities available to students whether it had to do with research, or any other kind of organization. Being a transfer student, I was worried that I did not have time to get involved, while still graduating on time. My UROP mentors were also transfer students, and they were so involved in many different things, that it really motivated me to seek out different opportunities, such as becoming a UROP leader."

## BENJAMIN PIFER



**Major:** Biology  
**Minor:** Chemistry  
**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP impacted your time at FSU?** “UROP has impacted my time at FSU by showing me what it means to discover something new. Through my research, I've revealed things that no other person has ever observed before. I've found that that feeling of discovery is exhilarating and it has altered how view learning and potential careers after undergraduate.”

**How do you hope to affect students as a UROP Leader?**

“I hope to show the students that research isn't just sitting in a boring lab every day. It is more like an exciting, universal scavenger hunt that has no ending. I want them to be excited about discovering something. My goal is to have my students wanting to continue research beyond UROP.”

## MERCEDES PUIG KREIS



**Major:** Psychology  
**Class of 2017**

## SOPHIE ROTTENBERG



**Major:** Biological Science and International Affairs  
**Minor:** Spanish and Chemistry  
**Class of 2018**

**Current research:** “Currently I am working in the Hammock Lab in the Neuroscience Department on research focusing on neocortical oxytocin. Our investigation focuses on oxytocin and their related receptors as the vehicles for experience- dependent development and growth within mouse models. The research explores the relationship between adolescent neglect emotionally/physically and brain development through extensive tissue analyses.”

**Other research involvement:** Academic Recruitment Organization

## SCARLETT ROY



**Major:** Biological Science  
**Class of 2018**

## VALENTINA SARACINO



**Major:** Psychology and Biology

**Minor:** Chemistry

**Class of 2017**

**How do you hope to impact your students as a UROP Leader?** "I want to be a resource to my students.

During my first year as a UROP leader, I noticed that my students would come to me with any issues they were facing. The classroom environment created a comfortable area where students could talk about anything during their undergraduate education such as if they were struggling in classes to how to balance coursework alongside research."

**Current research:** "I am currently conducting an Honors Thesis focusing on behavioral neuroscience. I am establishing a novel learning paradigm, and will examine the molecular basis of learning and memory using a model organism, *Aplysia californica*."

## SAVANNAH SAVADEL



**Major:** Biological Science

**Minor:** Chemistry

**Class of 2018**

**How has UROP affected your time at FSU?** "UROP helped open my eyes to what undergraduate research could be like at a large, research-oriented university...it made me realize that I was capable of things that at first seemed daunting and out of my league. Since completing UROP, I have continued my research and have accomplished many things, including presenting a poster at a national conference and winning an IDEA Grant."

**Current research:** researching a protein family called Nucleoside Diphosphate Kinase (NDPK) and its localization in various maize tissues in the lab of Dr. Hank Bass

## KELLY SCANDONE



**Major:** Art History and International Affairs

**Minor:** Museum Studies

**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP affected your time at FSU?** "UROP completely changed my undergraduate career. I began UROP thinking I would only participate in research for a year... However, UROP changed how I viewed research, my major, and my undergraduate experience at Florida State...As a result of UROP and my subsequent research projects, I have learned so much about myself, both personally and academically, and it has completely transformed my career aspirations."

**Other research involvement:** Creativity Chair for the Student Council for Undergraduate Research and Creativity (SCURC)

## TASHANA SHIELDS



**Major:** Criminology and Psychology

**Class of 2017**

## FEDERICO REY SIMON



**Major:** Criminology and Psychology

**Class of 2018**

## RACHEL SMITH



**Major:** Industrial Engineering  
**Class of 2018**

## GARY SOZA



**Major:** Chinese and Japanese  
**Class of 2017**

## ALEXANDRA TAGGART



**Major:** Music and International Affairs  
**Class of 2018**

**How do you hope to impact students as a UROP Leader?** "I hope to instill in them the desire to do research and share their research. Through UROP I hope they form an interdisciplinary community where they can connect with other leading undergraduates at Florida State. Lastly, I hope they gain confidence in knowing that they can inspire their peers and make a difference as an undergraduate."

**Current research:** "My research so far has been on different aspects of music and its history, from Mozart's influence to piano literature to Irish music. Next year I want my Honors in the Major thesis to connect my interests in music and international affairs."

## ERIN TRUMBLE



**Major:** History and Anthropology

**Minor:** Japanese, International Affairs, English

**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP affected your time at FSU?** "UROP has drastically affected my course as an undergraduate. As a UROP student, I was not entirely clear on what research in my field was, and I did not believe that I, as an undergraduate, would be able to engage in any meaningful research on campus. Under the guidance of my UROP Leaders and my Research Mentor, though, I discovered a passion. The things that I learned as a UROP student shaped my undergraduate career and now research is a huge part of what I do on campus."

**Current research:** "I am researching female samurai in late Tokugawa Japan."

## ELLEN WAIDNER



**Major:** Spanish

**Minor:** Biology and Chemistry

**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP affected your time at FSU?** "As a UROP student, I worked in the lab of Dr. Amy Ai, studying the effects of different medical issues on psychological disorders. Through this experience, I presented at the FSU Undergraduate Research Symposium and the 35th Annual Society of Behavioral Medicine Meeting and was co-author on a published abstract."

**How do you hope to impact students as a UROP Leader?** "UROP gave me a variety of experiences that I never would have thought possible and taught me a great deal about myself, the university, and research. I hope that I can help my students have a similar experience."

## ALEX WHITAKER



**Major:** Exercise Science

**Class of 2018**

## BRIANA WHITEHEAD



**Major:** Biological Science  
**Class of 2017**

## JOHN WILCOX



**Major:** Biological Science  
**Class of 2018**

## HUNTER WILLIAMS



**Major:** Biology  
**Minor:** Chemistry  
**Class of 2017**

**How has UROP affected your time at FSU?** "UROP has opened my eyes to the diversity and depth of research that occurs every single day, led by world-class faculty and professors. Being an undergraduate and knowing that I had a helping hand in cutting edge research at one of the best universities in the country is something that I will be able to take with me as I proceed to the next part of my life."

**How do you hope to impact students as a UROP Leader?** Studying Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpesvirus in Dr. Fanxiu Zhua's lab