



Editor & Staff Biographies

Matt Snyder

Faculty Advisor

Matt Snyder is Lecturer in Writing Studies at UC Merced, where he has taught full-time since 2014. He holds a PhD and MA in English Language and Literatures from the University of Florida, a BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences with a concentration in English Literature from the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University, and an AA from Palm Beach Community College (now Palm Beach State College). In addition to serving as the FA to the URJ, Dr. Snyder, an avid and longtime skateboarder, is also the founding FA of the UC Merced Skate Club. Outside the confines of campus, Matt is the singer and bassist of the post-hardcore band Eye of Aquila. A former professional chef, he enjoys eating and cooking adventurously. Dr. Snyder lives in Merced with his partner Christy, their two young children, and an old, irritable, flatulent hound. He has an almost irrational dislike for the film *Forrest Gump*.

Emilie McCall

Managing Editor

Emilie McCall is a second-year student at the University of California, Merced. Emilie is majoring in psychology and minoring in global arts studies. She comes by her love of writing and theatre due to her loving mentor Erin Beatie and her writing professor Matt Snyder. Emilie has worked hard at the university, being a part of different organizations, including the Bobcat

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Emilie McCall, continued

Managing Editor

Leadership Series were she graduated last semester. After UC Merced, Emilie plans to move further down the coast and attend a theatre school where she will acquire a bachelor's degree in technical theatre and work for Child Protective Services. Emilie has had the same motto since she was young: "Never give up, never surrender."

Xotchitl Garibay

Associate Editor

Xotchitl Marisol Garibay is a senior at the University of California, Merced pursuing a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in creative writing. Originally from the San Fernando Valley, she found her passion in spreading awareness for the natural world through her writing. In conjunction with her studies and having made the dean's list, Xotchitl has been an active member of the community through various extracurricular organizations. Such activities include serving on the *Vernal Pool* literary journal as the Managing and Poetry Editor, President of the Writers' Guild, a graduate of the Yosemite Leadership Program leading to its counterpart internship position as an Interpretation Ranger, and is currently employed at the Writing Center. Xotchitl has been published in a previous editions of the *Vernal Pool* with a creative nonfiction piece and poetry. Her interests in the environment, Native American

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Xotchitl Garibay, continued

Associate Editor

folklore, and Aztec and Greek mythology are the driving inspirations for her future endeavors as park ranger and author. If she could be a sandwich, she would be a chocolate-chip ice-cream sandwich.

Lizbeth Herrera Martinez

Section Editor

Lizbeth Herrera Martinez is a third-year student at the University of California Merced. Lizbeth is majoring in psychology, and hopefully in philosophy as well. Her love for writing began in WRI 010 with Iris Ruiz. Professor Ruiz taught her many writing techniques that Lizbeth was not aware of or able to apply. Through this course, Lizbeth was also able to improve her own writing and better her peer review skills. While studying at UC Merced, Lizbeth has formed part of the Fiat Lux Program and spends a lot of her time focusing on how to become a better student and human being. After UC Merced, Lizbeth plans to find a job while continuing the pursuit of reaching a PhD degree and becoming a forensic psychologist. During her free time, Lizbeth plays video games like *Call of Duty*, loves anime, and holds the motto; love, peace, and happiness. Last but not least, her favorite quote is "Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough" by Og Mandino.

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Alyssa Jacala *Section Editor*

Alyssa Jacala is a fourth-year student majoring in cognitive science at the University of California, Merced. Her love for writing and editing started when she joined Writing 131A. While studying at UC Merced, Alyssa is involved in organizations such as Dr. Kello's Cognitive Mechanics Lab and the Vernal Pools & Grassland Reserve. After she obtains her degree this semester (go class of 2019!), she plans to work in the technological field or build her own startup in San Francisco, where she was born and raised. Her quote for this year is, "Whatever you do, bring something good to the party."

Arby Mariano *Section Co-Editor*

Arby Mariano is a third-year undergraduate at UC Merced pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in natural sciences education. His passion for writing stems from his desire to become a professor of psychology. Arby is highly interested in the exchange of ideas that goes on within the field of psychology and wants to apply the writing skills he's learned to produce high-quality work within the literature. Besides his involvement in the *URJ*, Arby serves as a research assistant in Dr. Alexandra Main's Family Development Lab and Dr. Eric Walle's Interpersonal Development Lab. Apart from being a student, Arby enjoys cooking, discovering new music to listen to, and traveling.

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Chloe Ray *Section Editor*

Chloe Ray is a fourth-year student at the University of California, Merced.

Chloe is majoring in English and minoring in Writing. Her love of writing and reading emerged when she would skip class to read books in high school.

Besides studying at UC Merced, Chloe is currently working her sixth semester as a tutor at the Writing Center, and completing her honors senior thesis. After graduating, Chloe plans to go to graduate school at Washington State University for rhetoric and composition, and hopefully work as a university writing professor or director of a writing center. Drawing her Pomeranian, Suzy, is her favorite pastime.

Anson Nguyen *Co-Art Director*

Anson Nguyen is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in political science. Born and raised in the Bay Area, he comes by his interest in writing through a great amount of early exposure to various fictional works of literature. While at the University of California, Merced, he has participated and been vice-president in multiple organizations, such as Hip Hop Movement and the Fencing Club. After college he plans to apply and become a foreign service officer, preferably in Germany, or find a job as a teacher. He has a quote book that he's owned since junior year of high school and wishes for more people to write quotes in it so that he can finally complete it.

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Teagan Zuniga *Co-Art Director*

Teagan Zuniga is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in political science. She fell in love with writing through many years of writing poetry and prose both inside and outside of the academia realm. While Teagan has been studying at UC Merced, she has taken part in intramural sports and Half Dome Community Council. Teagan plans to attend UC Berkley after graduation to obtain a masters degree in public policy in order to become a political consultant on state campaigns. Her favorite cartoon is SpongeBob Squarepants.

Samantha Villarreal *Layout and Design* *Digital Operations Director* *Editor*

Samantha Villarreal is a second year psychology major and business management and economics minor at the University of California, Merced. She enjoys reading all kinds of literature which is what drew her to the editing realm of writing. At UC Merced, Samantha remains active and involved through many organizations such as the UC Merced Alumni Association and UC Merced Bobcat Martial Arts Team. After graduating in 2021 with her bachelor's in psychology, she hopes to start a career in industrial organization and enjoy her life doing what she loves. Samantha embraces and enjoys the thrill of every challenge she faces. Staring her obstacles down, she smirks, uttering her favorite comeback, "Don't think I can do it? Watch me."

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Jazmin Martir
Secretary/Treasurer
Editor

Jazmin Martir is a third-year student majoring in psychology and minoring in writing. Her passion for writing began by journaling and writing poetry growing up. While studying at UC Merced, Jazmin contributed to organizations such as UC Merced Paws and Claws and the UC Merced Undergraduate Research Journal. In addition to this, Jazmin has worked in the Office of Financial Aid and has volunteered working in the UC Merced Writing Center. After UC Merced, Jazmin plans to attend medical school in order to pursue a career as a licensed therapist or a teacher. Some of her favorite poets include: Rupi Kaur, Morgan Nichols, and Ruby Dhal.

Laurence Morgan
Events Coordinator

The son of an aerospace machinist and a stay-at-home mother, Laurence Morgan is a third-year student at UC Merced majoring in business management and economics. While earning his degree at UC Merced, Laurence has been a part of the *URJ* for two semesters, and has been named the Event Coordinator for both. After his departure from UC Merced, Laurence plans on finding a career in the finance world, and hopefully move into some type of football career. His favorite superhero is Tom Brady, who just recently hoisted his sixth Lombardi Trophy and etched his name into the history book once again. (Also, *Forrest Gump* is a must-watch movie.)



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Subhalakshmi Balaji

Editor

Subhalakshmi Balaji is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in computer science and engineering. She comes by her love of writing and literature due to her favorite hobby of reading books and writing poems. While studying at UC Merced, Subhalakshmi has worked hard and became the vice president of two organizations/clubs, the Society of Women Engineers and South Asian Student Association. After UC Merced, she plans to intern at a good company and learn more about artificial intelligence. Her favorite quote is "Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure."

Jeffery Mai

Editor

Jeffrey Mai is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in psychology. Coming from the Bay Area, his interest in research and the research article writing process stems from his senior year in high school. During his time in UC Merced, Jeffrey has brought back the Fencing Club and is currently working as their president. After undergrad at UC Merced, he intends to pursue graduate school and proceed to conduct research in neuropsychology or social psychology. His favorite champion in League of Legends is currently Jhin.



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Alexis Pacheco

Editor

Alexis Pacheco is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in sociology. Alexis is from Los Angeles, California; she attended Montebello High School and was placed in honors English and Spanish since her freshman year, which later turned to Advanced Placement. Alexis was a cheerleader for ten years and plans to try out for the UC Merced team; however, for now, she is going to the gym Monday through Saturday. Since being at the university, Alexis has improved on her writing and drawing skills and plans to improve even more. After UC Merced, Alexis plans to attend graduate school at the University of Southern California to later become a clinical social worker, and hopefully, work at Kaiser Permanente. Alexis has the biggest sweet—tooth she loves chocolate.

Alexander Ramirez

Editor

Alexander Ramirez is a third-year student at the University of California, Merced. Alexander is majoring in management and business economics. He was introduced to a broader spectrum of writing in his Writing 010 class and was introduced to editing while taking Writing 131A and 131C at the university. Alexander quickly learned to appreciate and enjoy both the writing and editing process. Alexander is currently pursuing a role in the Business Society of UC Merced and is also looking to become a Student Ambassador for the Career



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Alexander Ramirez, continued

Editor

Center. After graduating, Alexander is hoping to stay on the West Coast and land a marketing job at a thriving business that could use his skills to better the company. Alex has been a barista at Starbucks for over three years and is also a very big fan of all of his Bay Area sports teams. Alex hopes he can maneuver his way into an occupation with any of them.

Jesus Ramirez Pineda

Editor

Jesus Pineda is a third-year student at the University of California, Merced pursuing a major in public health and minor in professional writing. His interest in writing developed as a means of effectively communicating his ideas and thoughts with others around him. Jesus is currently employed at the Early Childhood Education Center and is dedicated to making make a difference in the lives of young children. After graduating from UC Merced, his ultimate goal is to make an impact in the lives of children who are not given means or opportunities to strive and make a difference while developing ways to serve low-income communities. He hopes to one day marry Selena Gomez and become the next Food Network prodigy.

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Cosette Rosales

Editor

Cosette Rosales is a second-year student at UC Merced that is still considering her major and minor. Cosette wants to declare a double major in cognitive science and psychology with a minor in writing. Meanwhile, she has been working and training to become a volunteer for children. Cosette hopes to work in the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU). Her favorite quote is from her mother: "Go against the currents and always listen to your heart."

Julie Vang

Editor

Julie Vang is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in psychology. She is also considering to minor in global arts studies. After getting her bachelor's degree, she will continue with her educational career to become a therapist in family marriage and counseling, as well as focus on the mental and emotional health of others. Since she was young, Julie has been very passionate in fine arts. She drew everyday in her journal to practice her skills, eventually leading her to enroll in AP Studio Art in high school and earned a perfect score on the AP exam. To her, drawing and painting is a stress reliever. She hopes to open up her own studio one day to continue her love and appreciation for the fine arts. Her favorite quote is: "I have come to love myself for who I am, for who I was, and for who I hope to become."



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Victoria Zuniga

Editor

Victoria Zuniga is a second-year student at UC Merced majoring in political science and minoring in Spanish. Victoria grew her passion for writing during her childhood doing summer reading competitions. While studying at UC Merced, Victoria has worked on the executive board of Ballet Folklórico de UCM as the Public Relations Officer and played intramural volleyball. After UC Merced, Victoria plans to attend Santa Clara University Law School and become a probation officer or divorce attorney. Her favorite books are *Number the Stars* and *The Outsiders*.