

Higher Education and Student Affairs Masters Program Class of 2015 - Student Bios

Danny Arroyo



Undergrad: Philadelphia University
Major: Law & Society
Hometown: Yonkers, NY
Assistantship: Residence Education

My name is Danny Arroyo, and I am a graduate of Philadelphia University where I majored in Law & Society with a minor in Psychology. I grew up in Yonkers, NY but I split most of my time throughout NYC. At my undergraduate institution, I was involved in Residence Life, Orientation, First Year Experience Programs, and Student Conduct.

Outside of school, I really enjoy going to concerts, watching movies and am a die-hard NY sports fan. I am looking forward to the UConn experience and can't wait to be a part of the Husky community!

Aimee Bishop



Undergrad: Rivier University
Majors: Human Development, minor in Social Work
Hometown: Warwick, RI
Assistantship: Community Standards (SA)

I'm Aimee, pronounced Ah-Me. I get called Amy pretty often but its French, like Mon Amie, my friend. That is the extent of my French. I am originally from Warwick, RI but I have bounced around New England. I am a New England girl at heart and love the changing of the seasons.

My undergraduate degree is from Rivier University, a university with the population of just over 1,000 undergraduate students so you can imagine that UConn will be quite the change of pace but I couldn't be more excited! While at Rivier I worked in Housing, Orientation, Admissions, and Student Activities. I was also involved in a multitude of student organizations. During my time at Rivier, I would often talk with my mentor about how I had no idea what I should do with my life and that I wish I could just stay in college forever, working and learning. She often reminded me that that's what she does; it's called a career in Student Affairs. That's when my journey began. After graduating in May 2012, I worked at Northern Essex Community College in Student Engagement and then at Westfield State University in Residential Life. I have had an amazing journey so far and I look forward to continuing it at UConn!

When I do find spare time, I volunteer with a non-profit student leadership organization. I also love to bake, cupcakes especially. I love being around people and I can't wait to join the HESA family and start at UConn.

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Alex Carrier



Undergrad: University of Richmond
Major: Public Health
Hometown: Falmouth, Maine
Assistantship: Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life

My name is Alex and I am a native New Englander excited to return for HESA! Originally from Maine, I've been a student at the University of Richmond in Richmond, Virginia for the past four years. While at Richmond I created my own major in Public Health and explored everything from biology to education policy. I've done undergraduate research on marine sponges, volunteered as an EMT, and worked as an intern in the admissions office. With such diverse experiences outside of the classroom, I've always been unknowingly invested in student affairs. However, it was my involvement in Greek Life that finally produced that "ah-ha" moment that inevitably led to my pursuit of the HESA program. I am a member of Pi Beta Phi and have served on Panhellenic Council for two years, most recently as President. My experience as a Greek leader has contributed more to my personal development than I could have ever imagined. As a student affairs professional, I hope to inspire the same passion for leadership and integrity that I experienced as an undergraduate. Outside of the classroom and Student Activities office I enjoy running, *The Great Gatsby* (which I listen to while running), and a good cupcake.

Danielle Deweese



Undergrad: University of Arizona
Major: Marketing with a minor in Italian
Hometown: Tucson, Arizona
Assistantship: Leadership Programs

I'm originally from western Pennsylvania, but I spent most of my life in the deserts of Tucson, Arizona. I graduated from The University of Arizona in 2009 with a degree in Marketing and a minor in Italian. During college I was very involved with the UofA's co-curricular Leadership Programs which is where I first became interested in Student Affairs. After graduation I decided I wanted to work a little before pursuing my Master's Degree. Since I had always wanted to live in New York City, I packed my bags and moved to the Big Apple. For the past four years I've been working in Marketing for a Media and Tradeshow company. I love the city, but I'm ready for a change and excited to begin a career in Student Affairs!

As a retired "bunhead" I love to take ballet class in my spare time. I also really enjoy baking and cooking and probably spend too much time reading food blogs and cookbooks. During the fall and into the spring you can also find me cheering on the Pittsburgh Steelers and Penguins and the Arizona Wildcats football and basketball teams (rooting for Husky basketball is definitely going to take some getting used to).

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Stephanie Fleitas



Undergrad: University of Miami
Major: Broadcast Journalism and Spanish
Hometown: Miami, FL
Assistantship: Assistant Residence Hall Director

My name is Stephanie Fleitas and I graduated from the University of Miami in December 2012. Born and raised a 'Cane and a South Florida kid, attending UCONN seems like an amazing adventure to me.

I never would have thought that three years ago, when I put on that lime green orientation staff t-shirt, that student affairs was the career path for me.

With my heavy involvement throughout undergrad with the Department of Orientation and Commuter Student Involvement I learned that colleges and universities are centers of study but also institutions that allow an individual to become just that... a unique person who knows that they are a part of a family and legacy that will never forget them even years after they cross the stage on graduation.

I love traveling, trying new food, being spontaneous and laughing. I am a firm believer that work can be fun and that in this field there is always an opportunity to learn something new and grow as a person.

I AM SO EXCITED FOR THIS FALL! GO HUSKIES!

Monique Golden



Undergrad: Lehigh University
Major: Industrial Engineering with a Minor in Engineering Leadership & Philosophy
Hometown: Elizabeth, NJ
Assistantship: Fraternity & Sorority Life

I am the youngest of six! I have two brothers and three sisters. I am also an auntie to six: one niece and five nephews (we are a pretty large family). My mother is one of ten and my father is one of eleven; our family EXISTS. I love New Jersey, particularly where I am located because there is such richness in the diverse people, language, food and culture. I am just across the bridge from Staten Island, and not far from Brooklyn, Manhattan, Newark and Jersey City.

I came to Lehigh because their engineering program is well known. I knew I wanted an engineering degree, but did not want to go into the workforce as an engineer. I did it simply because I wanted to continue to challenge myself. I still love math, physics and specifically my major because the skills I have learned are transferable to any industry. I found my way to student affairs my sophomore year; starting out working with Lehigh's Dean of Students and a NUFP. Not once did I think about changing my major because I enjoyed it.

Now, I am a HUSKY! Woo hoo! UConn was my top choice and I am glad to be moving on to the next level in my life. P.S. I am a huge basketball fan, and I hope to get tickets!

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Pat Gotham



Undergrad: Salisbury University
Major: Business Management and Marketing
Hometown: Phillipsburg, NJ
Assistantship: Triad Leadership

My name is Pat Gotham, and I graduated from Salisbury University in 2011. During my undergraduate career, I was active in many areas including student government, Greek Life, judicial affairs, town gown relations, facilities planning, new student experience programs, alumni relations, and annual giving campaigns.

After graduation, I moved to New York City and worked for a public relations and social media firm focusing mainly in the technology sector. Although I gained a lot of valuable experience in publicizing events and ideas, there wasn't ever that moment of fulfillment or satisfaction with my work. I knew that I wanted to return to higher education, so I'm very excited to begin my tenure both as a Husky and in the HESA program!

Show me a roller coaster, and I'll be the first in line to ride it. I'm also a big fan of movies, country music, and some good old-fashioned ice breakers.

Shonna Graham



Undergrad: The Pennsylvania State University
Major: Psychology
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
Assistantship: African American Cultural Center

"Believe that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Believe that you may be that light for someone else." Kobi Yamada

One of the greatest joys in life is the power to overcome adversity. I know firsthand! My name is Shonna and I am a graduate of Penn State University, where I received my bachelor's degree in psychology. College had always been a lifelong dream of mine. There were so many obstacles that stood in my way of me obtaining my degree. It was the student affairs professionals that really gave me the support and encouragement that I needed to successfully complete my bachelor's degree. If it were not for these professionals providing me with the extra support that I needed, I would not be where I am today! I am so incredibly grateful to be accepted into UConn's HESA program and I hope that UConn will prepare me to be the light of hope at the end of the tunnel for college students.

My ultimate goal at the University of Connecticut is to pursue knowledge so that I may help prepare the leaders of tomorrow who are morally self-aware and scholars of the world. I am very excited to start my journey at UConn and to create meaningful experiences within my cohort! Go Huskies!

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Caroline Green



Undergrad: Christopher Newport University
Major: Political Science
Hometown: Stafford, VA
Assistantship: Office of Community Standards (OCSS)

As the daughter of an Army officer, I moved a lot growing up-- living both nationally and internationally. After finally settling down for high school in Virginia, I attended a small public liberal arts university, Christopher Newport University, located in between Virginia Beach and Busch Gardens.

I originally planned on going into the Government, utilizing my minors in Leadership Studies and US National Security Studies. However, my involvement in CNU's President's Leadership Program, Orientation, and Honor Council opened my eyes to the realm of Student Affairs. Spoiler alert: I fell in love with Higher Education. I also worked as an Athletic Tutor and was employed in the Government Department office. During my undergrad, I had the opportunity to study abroad for several weeks at Oxford University and in both Israel and the Palestinian territories— sparking an interest to work in Student Affairs at universities abroad. After graduating, I worked in a cohort of 13 as a University Fellow for my alma mater— specifically assigned to our President's Leadership Program.

I love traveling, laughing and watching movies. Truth be told, most of my conversations are littered with movie and pop culture references. I also love watching sports and can't wait to cheer on the Huskies starting in August!

Megan Gunderson



Undergrad: Rollins College
Major: Anthropology
Hometown: Orlando, FL
Assistantship: First Year Programs

My initials are MEG, and I am a native Floridian whose journey to higher education and student affairs has been wonderfully long. I couldn't be more thrilled that it has led me to UConn to work in First Year Programs and Learning Communities!

I attended a local community college for a few years before going overseas for the first time to live in an orphanage in Nepal. This experience changed my views and sparked a passion for anthropology, education, and international exchange. After returning, I finished my AA degree and transferred to Rollins College to complete my Bachelor of Arts. During my time there, I really enjoyed being a part of their mentoring program and studying abroad in China and Spain. There was no doubt that I wanted to work overseas after graduation, and I went on to teach in public schools in both South Korea and Georgia for nearly a year and a half. My experience abroad helped me acquire a position teaching international students at the University of Central Florida. I fell in love with the supportive work atmosphere, discovered this profession, and now I am truly looking forward to the next chapter at the University of Connecticut.

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Addison Hughes



Undergrad: Florida State University
Major: Music
Hometown: Daytona Beach, FL
Assistantship: Residence Education

I am a recent graduate of the Florida State University where I earned a BA in Music and minors in Business, Classics (focused in Latin Language and Literature), and Sociology. If you couldn't tell, I like to know a little bit about a lot of things! I'm a classically trained baritone and I apologize in advance for singing your ear off. Throughout my years as an undergrad I was involved in Orientation, Multicultural Affairs, Housing and every choir I could fit into my schedule. Music has been an important part of my life for years, but I have found something in Higher Education and Student Affairs that has me excited about changing paths.

I'm an INFJ, but like to think of myself as an "outgoing introvert." As a relationship oriented person, the tight cohort model really drew me to UConn. In my spare time I like to dance, watch TV/movies, exercise and just generally stay busy. The beach is my favorite place on earth, so not being able to go year-round will be a big adjustment. Nevertheless, after living in Florida my entire life I am excited to switch things up and experience real seasons! Go Huskies!!

Jacqueline Lee



Undergrad: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Major: Biology
Hometown: Becker, MN
Assistantship: Honors Programming and Events

I grew up in small-town central Minnesota and started my college career at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. After a semester, I transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and have loved my time as a Blugold! I majored in Biology at UWEC and created a minor in Student Affairs. I discovered my passion for Student Affairs late in my college career through my involvement with student organizations, Housing and Residence Life, and coordinating a ten-day immersion experience called the Civil Rights Pilgrimage. I am a proud Minnesotan who loves country music, hugs, and iced coffee. My favorite movie is Remember the Titans and I am a huge fan of pandas. I have a twin sister named Laura and two younger siblings. I am very excited to be a part of the HESA family and to find my passion in the field of Higher Education!

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Cody Lewin



Undergrad: Loyola University Chicago
Major: Psychology
Hometown: Bridgeview, IL
Assistantship: Residence Education

I grew up in Bridgeview, Illinois which is a suburb of the city of Chicago (Note: not from the city, true Chicagoans love to point out that distinction). I graduated from Loyola University Chicago in May with a major in Psychology.

I went in to my undergrad institution with the goal of helping people by being a doctor, but after a few chemistry classes, being a student ambassador, and a resident assistant, I found myself drawn to student affairs. I was drawn to the aspect of being there for students to aid in their development as my supervisors were for me, and I can't wait to listen to students' stories and watch them develop through their college career!

I am excited for the education which awaits me at UConn and can't wait to adapt to a new position within Residence Education!

Em Loisel



Undergrad: University of Vermont
Major: Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies
Hometown: Williston, Vermont
Assistantship: Student Activities Programs Office

Hi all! My name is Em. I was born and raised in Vermont, and love being able to call Vermont my home. I value having new experiences and always enjoy challenging myself to grow and learn by gaining new perspectives. This is why I am a foodie, film/art/music lover, and a person who loves to travel. I am a proud taurus, and have even been known to say that I enjoy long walks on the beach.

I completed my B.A.s in Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Vermont, and I think found student affairs at the intersection of those two things. I love activism and community building, something I saw a lot of in my course of study, and sort of fell into HESA by seeking out leadership positions that would fulfill those interests outside of the classroom. During my time as an Undergrad I worked in the Admissions Office, Conference and Events Services, Leadership and Civic Engagement, the LGBTQA Center, and I was also a NASPA Undergraduate Fellow. I'm so excited to join a cohort of invested and impassioned people, and look forward to the ways that we can support and challenge one another!

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Ty McNamee



Hometown: Shoshoni, Wyoming
Undergrad: University of Wyoming
Major: English and Honors Studies
Assistantship: Career Services

I am a farm and ranch kid from a small town of 635 people. Growing up in rural Wyoming, I learned the values of hard work, determination, and accomplishment and that my friends, family, education, and faith are very important to me. After my time in Shoshoni, I attended the University of Wyoming in Laramie and had the time of my life. It was at UW where I got my first taste for Student Affairs, staying involved on campus as an Orientation Leader, UW's Student Body Vice President, an active member on the United Multicultural Council, and an intern in several Student Affairs and government offices. These experiences led me to UConn, which I quickly learned has an outstanding program, awesome faculty and staff, and great HESA students!

When I do get spare time from my many projects, I love to watch TV and movies, hang out with friends and family, eat lots of food (I hope I can find a great Thai food place in Connecticut!), read, go to the gym, and travel. I am so excited to begin my time at UConn and can't wait to meet everyone on campus! Go Huskies!

Jody Miele



Undergrad: University of Connecticut
Major: Human Development and Family Studies
Hometown: Danbury, CT
Assistantship: Center for Students with Disabilities

I graduated from the University of Connecticut in May 2013 and am honored to continue studying at an institution that I truly believe in. I was introduced to the wonderful world of HESA as a sophomore; my first mentor was a HESA student who inspired me to challenge myself, empowered me to advocate for social justice, and showed me that being a leader was a lifestyle, not a title. During my undergraduate career, I was involved in Residence Life as an RA, Orientation Services, and Student Leadership. My interests include (but are certainly not limited to) identity development, activism and social justice.

In my free time, I love playing the ukulele, photography, and catching up on my favorite show: Parks and Recreation. I identify as an INTJ, though I consider myself a "situational extrovert" who enjoys meeting new people, exploring different cultures, and engaging in thoughtful discussion.

I look forward to continuing my UConn journey as a HESA student. Go Huskies!

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Jack Nguyen



Undergrad: Loyola University Chicago
Major: Advertising and Public Relations
Hometown: Chicago, IL
Assistantship: Asian American Cultural Center

Born and raised in the windy city of Chicago, I attended Loyola University Chicago with a major in Advertising and Public Relations. Through my undergrad, I was introduced to the world of student affairs early on and found ways to navigate my way through the field. My catalysts into student affairs were my involvement with the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program and Loyola's Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. My 'me' time includes cooking, DIY projects, and napping. I am more than excited to begin this new chapter in my life at UCONN!

Eileen Rodriguez



Undergrad: Hofstra University
Major: Public Relations
Hometown: Flushing, NY
Assistantship: Off-Campus Student Services

I attended Hofstra University (Roll Pride!) where I split my free time between being involved on-campus and interning in NYC. Upon graduating in 2011, I began working at a public relations agency for consumer health and wellness products. While it was a great learning experience, my true passion lies in higher education and I am excited to transition back into the student affairs field as a member of the 2015 HESA cohort. As a born and bred New Yorker, I also cannot wait to experience all that New England has to offer.

Throughout my undergraduate years, I worked as a Senior Resident Assistant and Head Orientation Leader, which sparked my interest in a career in student affairs. Just as I was fortunate to have encouraging mentors who greatly shaped my college experience, I hope to learn from my past and pay it forward by empowering future generations of students to succeed. Hofstra truly became my home away from home and I am eager to help create an equally inclusive environment for UConn students as well. Go Huskies!

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Garrett Schlichte



Undergrad: The Florida State University
Major: Editing Writing and Media
Hometown: Hollywood, FL
Assistantship: Orientation Services

My name is Garrett Schlichte, and I am a graduate of The Florida State University with a degree in Editing Writing and Media. After attending private school for thirteen years with the same fifty students the idea of moving to a public institution of 40,000+ seem impossible. However, through my on campus engagement with Orientation, University Housing, the LGBTQ Student Resource Center, and the Student Government Association, I found FSU becoming more and more accessible. This is what sparked my interest in Student Affairs; the idea that through engagement in co-curricular activities on campus a university could become less of a place to house students and more of a place students call home.

Although I was born and raised in the sunshine state, I am ready to trade in my tank tops for a winter coat and experience all the wonderful opportunities that come along with being a Husky! In my spare time I enjoy watching movies from the 90's and early 2000's, working out, and cooking. I often find myself asking WWTBFCD (what would the Barefoot Contessa do?), and I think that food is an excellent way to bring people together.

I am most excited to go into Student Affairs because the professionals I have worked with have helped me discover what I am passionate about, which I hope to do for students in the future. Beyond that, they have helped me to realize that my passion for new student mentorship and my passion for Julia Roberts don't always have to be separate things, and sometimes brining the two together creates a beautiful synergy for all involved.

Brycen Waters



Undergrad: Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)
Major: History and Political Science/Public Policy
Hometown: South Glens Falls, NY
Assistantship: Student Union/Programs Office

My name is Brycen Waters and I'm from South Glens Falls, New York. I am a recent graduate from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), where I studied History and Political Science/Public Policy. As an undergraduate, I was heavily involved in everything my school offers, from Orientation, to Residence Life, and even Student Activities. My desire to help students succeed and find their path in college is what made me realize that Higher Education Student Affairs was the career path for me.

I became very interested in UConn because of the plethora of opportunities they present to their students. From assistantships, to the practicum, to internship possibilities, UConn was exactly what I was looking for. This feeling was solidified upon arrival to UConn for Interview Days. The overwhelming feeling of comfort and acceptance made me realize that this was the place for me! Go Huskies!