

Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's Program Class of 2018 - Student Bios

Julia Anderson



Undergrad: University of Georgia
Major: English
Hometown: Woodstock, GA
Assistantship: Rainbow Center

My name is Julia Anderson, and I'm from Woodstock, Georgia. I graduated from the University of Georgia with a major in English and a minor in Swahili. My interest in student affairs was sparked by my participation in a campus ambassador program called The Arch Society, where 36 students give tours, work events, and serve our university. Also at UGA, I became a Delta Gamma, participated in LeaderShape, and started to work on my student affairs journey!

I became a NASPA Undergraduate Fellow this year, and I will spend the summer of 2016 in College Station, Texas at Texas A&M University in their New Students and Family Programs Office (an internship through the program)! Some other fun facts about me include: I love reading, teambuilding activities, coffee, dessert, and podcasts! I am absolutely thrilled about my assistantship with The Rainbow Center, and I can't wait to get to Storrs, CT! Go Huskies!

McHenold Aurelien



Undergrad: Providence College
Major: Health Policy & Management
Hometown: Hartford, CT
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

My name is McHenold Aurelien, but most call me Marco. I live in Hartford, CT but I am originally from the Island of Haiti. I am a graduate of Providence College with a major in Health Policy and Management with a double minor in Business and Black Studies. At PC I was involved in a plethora of different clubs and organizations. I dedicated most of my time to Residence life as a 3 year RA, and my senior year as a Head RA, was a tour guide for Friars Club which is a Christian service organization, a Orientation Coordinator, and I was a member and founder of two multicultural clubs on campus. It wasn't until NASPA undergraduate Fellows Program that I knew I wanted to continue a career in Student Affairs.

All in all I love having fun with friends and just hanging out. I am really into music with my top artists being J. Cole, Kanye West, Drake and Coldplay. I am a very personable person who loves doing adventurous and spontaneous things, I am always "For the Story" so I never say no to going out and doing weird things. I am also a big movie buff, love to cook and eat and very excited for this next chapter in my life!

One love!

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Danielle Berkman



Undergrad: Stonehill College
Major: Criminology, Spanish
Hometown: White Plains, NY
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

My name is Danielle Berkman and I am a New Yorker through and through. I love the hustle and bustle of living in a city, so moving to Storrs, CT is going to be quite the transition for me. I attended undergrad at Stonehill College in MA, which is where I discovered my passion for Higher Education and Student Affairs. While I was initially on a path to pursue a career in law, I soon realized I had a talent and a passion for student affairs work.

During my time as an undergrad I've held positions in residence life, career services, intercultural affairs, student conduct, admissions, and the president's office. Gaining experience in each of these areas has provided me with a well-rounded perspective of the profession and has also allowed me to better understand the importance of student affairs within higher education institutions. One of my personal goals as I enter the profession is to pay it forward by helping those students, like myself, who come from underrepresented backgrounds by providing them with the same access to opportunities and experiences as their peers.

In my free time I enjoy traveling, listening to R&B hits of the 90s, following more food and travel accounts on Instagram than people, binge watching shows on Netflix, and volunteering. My travels have taken me to Mexico, Peru, Spain, Italy, France, and Morocco. I hope to keep adding to that list in the future and do some more traveling within the U.S. as well. I'm thrilled to be joining the UConn HESA family this fall and soon call myself a Husky!

April Cano



Undergrad: Colorado State University
Major: Psychology, Human Development and Family Studies
Hometown: Gypsum, CO
Assistantship: Student Union/Student Activities

Hey there! My name is April Cano and I graduated from Colorado State University in May 2016 with degrees in Psychology and Human Development & Family Studies. While I have loved people my whole life, it wasn't until my second year at Colorado State that I realized how much I loved college students. When my supervisor introduced me to the field of Student Affairs, I knew that I had found the perfect career field! I find college to be such a critical time for personal growth and development, so I am beyond excited that I will be able to positively impact the lives of college students at UConn!

During my time at Colorado State, I was a Resident Assistant for two years. This experience taught me the importance of building a support network while in college, and is another contributing factor to why I chose to pursue a career in Student Affairs. Beyond being an RA, I also served as a peer educator and was a part of Psi Chi National Honor Society. Being involved at my undergraduate institution played an instrumental role in my success as a college student, and I hope to inspire students at UConn to make the best of their college experience.

I am the youngest of two children and absolutely love spending my time with my family. I was born and raised in the Vail Valley in Colorado. As a true Coloradoan, I love hiking, boating, and camping. I also love going to museums! I am excited to move to Connecticut and explore the New England area. I am honored to be a part of the HESA program! Go Huskies!

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Cristina Carpentier



Undergrad: Stonehill College
Major: Psychology
Hometown: Cranston, RI
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

I'm from Cranston, RI and went to Stonehill College in Massachusetts where my passion for people pushed me to study psychology. While there, I was an orientation leader, dance club member, and avid Netflix watcher (amongst other things) but was most interested in community service. I volunteered regularly with Best Buddies – an organization that provides social opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities – and was a participant, leader, and then intern for Stonehill's service immersion trip program. I grew to really appreciate service experiences because they challenged my perspective and pushed me out of my comfort zone; they created space for me to critically examine social justice, solidarity, privilege, and diversity. I'm excited to learn more about creating such an atmosphere for future college students.

After graduating, I moved across the country to beautiful Juneau, Alaska for a year of service with Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest/AmeriCorps. Since August I have been volunteering full time in an art studio that doubles as a day habilitation space for adults experiencing disabilities with an interest in creating art and it has been beyond amazing.

In my free time I love cooking, eating, listening to music, crafting, drawing, dancing, and being outside. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and starting my next adventure at UConn!

Jen Cheng



Undergrad: Northeastern University
Major: Biology
Hometown: Islip, NY
Assistantship: Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center

My name is Jen Cheng. I grew up on Long Island, NY, graduated from Northeastern University in Boston, and stayed here ever since. When I graduated, I tried looking for research jobs, but realized that the biology field was not for me. Thankfully, I was offered an interim position at the Asian American Center at Northeastern, which was my first steps into Student Affairs. I worked closely with their peer mentoring program and supervised office assistants.

After six months, I landed the Office Coordinator position at Wentworth Institute of Technology, and was promoted to the Coordinator of Engagement after a year and a half. Since then, I have been advising all of our student organizations on campus. I am so grateful for my (almost) five years at WIT! It's been an unforgettable and rewarding experience to see students' leadership and self-confidence growth because it is reflective of my own development in my college years. I wanted to continue on my journey as a Student Affairs professional, so I applied to graduate schools and received the happy news about getting into UConn!

In my free time, I enjoy taking walks around the city, capturing moments through photography, playing video games, watching Netflix, and eating delicious food! I can't wait until our cohort gets together soon! Yay Huskies and yay us!

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Alyssa Clift



Undergrad: Texas A&M University
Major: Human Resource Development
Hometown: Highlands, TX
Assistantship: Student Activities – Student Union Board of Governors

I am originally from small town Highlands, Texas which is about 45 minutes outside of Houston. I have spent the last four years at Texas A&M University pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Development with minors in Communication and Business Administration.

I mostly stumbled into higher education because I spent more time in our Student Activities office than in a classroom. My undergrad involvement on campus spans across Extended Orientation, Student Government, and Traditions Programming. I also serve as the HESA Intern for the Career Center on campus where I advise the peer-education student organization based out of our department. Working with these students through the Career Center is really what pushed me to seek out more information about student affairs and eventually make it a career path. Having a hand in their development and experience in college has impacted me in such a profound way that I cannot imagine doing anything else.

Outside of work and school, I like to find a variety of things to take up what free time I still have. I've been dancing and singing since I was a kid, and I love finding ways to integrate those interests into my life as often as possible. Finding new restaurants and quirky spots to hang out are some of my favorite things to do. The introvert in me is also all about a chill night in with Netflix (and that may happen a lot with this cold weather that I'm not used to – someone's going to have to help me figure that out!). I'm excited to start this new adventure and experience something so different from where I live now.

Emily Daher



Undergrad: Calvin College
Major: International Development/Political Science
Hometown: Copley, OH
Assistantship: Careers for the Common Good

I was born and raised in Ohio but have called Ghana my home for the past five years. I graduated from Calvin College with a Bachelor's in International Development Studies and Political Science. As an undergraduate at Calvin College I was involved in student organizations and service learning. I studied in Washington D.C., Ghana and Kenya.

After I graduated I moved to Ghana to gain first-hand development experience by managing a mentoring program for small and medium sized businesses. What was supposed to be one year in Ghana turned into several more years and different career opportunities across sectors, including working with rural fishing and farming communities as the Director of Community Relations for an agricultural company and training and mentoring software entrepreneurs from Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria as a Communications Teaching Fellow.

It was through my work and engagement with students and Universities in Ghana that I recognized the significant impact that the opportunities and services under the student affairs umbrella had on my growth and development as an undergraduate student. I began to learn about the needs in the student affairs sector in Ghana and have since developed an interest in being a part of the growth and development of the student affairs sector in Ghana and other emerging economies.

Outside of my work, I love listening to peoples' stories over a good cup of coffee, cooking up a new creation in the kitchen, exploring nature, and discovering hidden cultural pockets in different places.

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Ricardo Destinvil



Undergrad: SUNY Cortland
Major: Political Science (Law and Justice Concentration)
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
Assistantship: Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's Program

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY (RIP Biggie Smalls). After attending SUNY Cortland, I noticed there was a lack of diversity, compared to the city, and I knew I had to leave a mark on this predominantly white campus. Creating substantial changes for those in my community has always been a personal goal that I set for myself and others. I discovered my excitement for Student Affairs early on through my involvement in Residence Life and Housing, Advisement and Transitions, Student Conduct, and Multicultural Life and Diversity.

You can always catch me with a good book or pen in hand. My passion for art and writing lead me to create and direct a project titled #DontBoxMeIn and #DontBoxMeInToo, which sheds light on the impacts of stereotypes on students. Furthermore, on my free time I enjoy running, photography, binge watching Law and Order; SVU, and traveling. My goal, while living in Connecticut, is to learn to cook more than pasta.

I am elated to start this new chapter of my life at the University of Connecticut, as the Higher Education and Student Affairs Graduate Assistant. I hope to gain firsthand experience and mentorship from leaders in Higher Education, as well as develop a profound understanding of the meaning and purpose of Student Affairs within Higher Education. Above all, I look forward utilizing the tools provided to become a successful young professional. GO HUSKIES!

Alex Dutro-Maeda



Undergrad: University of Colorado at Boulder
Major: Advertising
Hometown: Boulder, CO
Assistantship: Women's Center

I've lived in Boulder, CO for the last 10 years. I went to high school and college in Boulder, majoring in Advertising with a certificate in Technology, Arts and Media at the University of Colorado. As a kid, I moved around a lot while my parents built their higher ed careers, so after a long stay in beautiful Colorado, I'm thrilled to be having my own adventure in Connecticut!

I found my passion for student affairs during my time as a student worker in college. I was on the board of two LGBTQIA+ student groups and worked as a marketing coordinator for the Women's Resource Center, and I felt so lucky to be a part of those wonderful, supportive communities. After graduating and a year of working in web marketing, I realized that my passion was in higher education. Making positive change and creating safe spaces is the most fulfilling feeling in the world, and it's what I want to pursue for the rest of my life.

Outside of school and work, I love to draw, read, listen to podcasts, hike and work on my creative projects; I'm currently drawing an ongoing webcomic and writing an adventure novel about a cow on the plains of Colorado.

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Gabby Erestain



Undergrad: James Madison University
Major: Health Sciences
Hometown: Burke, VA
Assistantship: Student Activities – Student Union Board of Governors/Late Night

My name is Gabby Erestain and I am a May 2016 graduate from James Madison University. While at JMU, I majored in Health Sciences. I am originally from Burke, VA, which is just outside of Washington D.C.

Throughout my undergraduate college experience, I was heavily involved in the Student Activities and Involvement office, primarily with their programming board. Through University Program Board and the different positions I held in the organization, I felt myself develop so much as a student leader, but was also able to facilitate growth in others- so it makes perfect sense that my time in UPB sparked my interest and helped me discover my passion for student affairs! Other involvements on campus included volunteering for my institution's Career and Academic Planning office, working in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and getting involved in several leadership conferences.

I am so excited to start my UConn HESA experience and begin my assistantship in the Programs Office, working with the students that are a part of the UConn Late Night Program. Go Huskies!

Lisa Famularo



Undergrad: Ithaca College
Major: Business Administration
Hometown: New Hyde Park, NY
Assistantship: Center for Career Development

My name is Lisa Famularo, and I was born and raised on Long Island. I stayed in NY to complete my undergrad at Ithaca College, where I completed a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management and a minor in the Ithaca College Honors Program. Before declaring my major, I was a student in the Ithaca College Exploratory Program for a whole year. My active exploration, including my interactions with individuals who later became amazing mentors to me, is what initially sparked my interest in student development. During my time at IC, I was heavily involved with the Office of Student Engagement and Multicultural Affairs, First-Year Experience (including summer orientation), Career Services, and the Exploratory Program.

Outside academics, I love playing soccer and volleyball, cooking, hiking/spending time outside, and playing instruments (mainly viola and piano). I also devote much of my time to volunteering, and my favorite activity is crocheting baby items to donate to Project Sunshine, an organization dedicated to brightening the days of children in long-term medical facilities and their families.

I am very excited to be pursuing a degree in Higher Education Student Affairs at UConn because I know the combination of coursework, assistantship experience, and fieldwork will prepare me for an extremely successful career in the field. I am also excited to begin my assistantship in the Center for Career Development, where I will be able to work with students to help them solidify their career objectives, just as my mentors did for me. I can't wait to see what the next two years have in store!

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Moriah Hernandez



Undergrad: Willamette University
Major: Studio Art
Hometown: Santa Rose, CA
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

Hi all! My name is Moriah and I grew up in northern California. I graduated from Willamette University in Oregon in 2013 where I studied studio art and math. There I was involved in Willamette Dance Company, Mosaic Peer Mentoring, and other organizations, and was an orientation leader. Since graduating from WU I've been working at my high school as the Alumni College Success Coordinator. In this position I work with high school seniors and college freshmen to and through college. While I am sad to leave my students, I am even more excited for UConn.

Rilwan Ilumoka



Undergrad: Providence College
Major: Health Policy & Management
Hometown: Pawtucket, RI
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

What's good? The name is Rilwan but you can call me "Ril" or "Real". I am a recent graduate of Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island. During my undergrad, I majored in Health Policy & Management and minored in Black Studies and Sociology. I was privileged to serve as a Head Resident Assistant, Orientation Coordinator, and Mentor and RA for our summer bridge program while at PC. I also founded a support group for men of color called, "The Brotherhood". I truly enjoy motivating students and seeing their growth and development. It is a blessing to be able to influence and learn from students each day. I am thankful for the opportunity to continue this at UConn.

I am a proud Nigerian American who loves food, music, and African culture. You can catch me at a Kid Cudi or Travis Scott concert, the gym, watching movies, surfing the web, or playing volleyball. My mom means the world to me and I hope I can continue to make her proud by earning my Masters in HESA. I am excited to serve students as an Assistant Residence Hall Director and I look forward to growing and becoming a better person at UConn. Go Huskies!

Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's Program Class of 2018 - Student Bios

Daphnee Laguerre



Undergrad: University of Massachusetts, Boston
Major: Political Science
Hometown: Medford, MA
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

I was born in the city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti and at the age of ten, my mother agreed for a family in the United States to adopt and relocate me to Boston Massachusetts. I attended University of Massachusetts Boston, where I majored in Political Science and minored in Africana Studies and Public Policy. As an undergrad I was heavily involved in Student Affairs and took on roles such as orientation leader, Student Director for the Freshmen leadership program and intern in the Office of the Chancellor for my campus.

My junior year of college will always be known to me as my great awakening, as it was the year I discovered the power of leadership. My first leadership opportunity was being a program assistant for a freshman leadership program and I was entrusted to facilitate a workshop at a weekend retreat. To some, this would not be a major ordeal but for a quiet, shy individual, this was the start of a new journey. That weekend, I stood in front of 50 freshman students and discussed the truths and misconceptions about leadership. In that moment, I was in awe of how much that session alone had impacted the students. More importantly, I realized I had a real passion for leadership and a strong desire to develop student potential. After graduating in 2013 I decided to take on a role in higher education to confirm my passions. I started working at Lesley University as an Application Coordinator in graduate admissions.

Two years later, I am excited to finally be going back to graduate school to pursue my passion! I have no doubt that this will all be an amazing Journey!

Garland Mann-Lamb



Undergrad: Eastern Connecticut State University
Major: Sociology
Hometown: DeKalb, IL
Assistantship: Residential Life – Assistant Residence Hall Director

Born in Connecticut but raised in Illinois, I started my college career at Kishwaukee Community College and spent time working at a local university (also the huskies!) before realizing how much I wanted to be back on the east coast with my extended family. I recently earned my bachelor's degree in Sociology with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies from Eastern Connecticut State University. While there I dabbled around the student affairs realm, becoming an RA, orientation counselor, campus activity board coordinator, and women's center intern. These various positions opened my eyes to student affairs as a career path and the ways in which I can challenge and support students outside of the classroom. In my free time, I enjoy a good Hulu/Netflix session, listening to audiobooks, eating yummy foods, and playing with my cat, Lucy. I'm excited to continue my life out east and look forward to experiencing life as a Husky!

Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's Program Class of 2018 - Student Bios

Michelle Meek



Undergrad: The Ohio State University
Major: Business Administration, Marketing
Hometown: Fremont, OH
Assistantship: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Alumni Relations

Hi everyone! My name is Michelle Meek and I hail from the great state of Ohio. Buckeye born and bred, I attended The Ohio State University for a degree in business administration and marketing. In undergrad, I was heavily involved with Undergraduate Admissions, Orientation and First Year Experience, and community engagement with nonprofits. Realizing that I didn't want my main goal at work to be focused on making a company more money, I decided to explore the world of higher education as a place where I could find meaning in my career.

I graduated in 2014 and have worked for the Ohio State College of Dentistry Student Affairs office since then. I now know more about teeth than I ever expected to learn! My job responsibilities were heavily focused on student services, as well as personal counseling, administrative support and office management. Working with professional students in such close proximity helped solidify my early interest in higher education and pursuing a master's degree in student affairs was next on my list! Do I know a single person in the state of Connecticut? Sure don't, but here's to the next adventure with new friends, colleagues, students and mentors!

I'm always reading at least two books at a time (British chick lit, Kennedy histories and Tolkien fantasy are some of my favorite topics), baking and trying new recipes, and hiking in state parks and nature preserves. I love watching college football, but I'm also excited to be joining another national championship team with the WBB team – Go Huskies! I'm excited to get back into school through the HESA program at UConn and exploring everything that Connecticut and New England has to offer!

Morgan Sutton



Undergrad: Wheelock College
Major: Psychology & Human Development
Hometown: Grafton, MA
Assistantship: The Graduate School

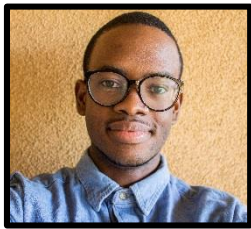
My passion for student affairs was born of a serendipitously received email inviting students to join the Campus Activities Board. However, my journey began several years before that in a small town called Grafton, Massachusetts. After many years of hoping to teach special education, I realized my true desire was to serve college students in their experiences and development through their transformative college years.

Attending The University of Connecticut has always been a dream of mine and I cannot wait to watch it come to fruition. I strongly believe that my experiences in the HESA program will prepare me to be the professional I desire to be. I look forward to developing my professional identity at UConn by strengthening my research skills and increasing my theoretical and practical knowledge in the field.

Anticipating the unique move from the hustle and bustle of Boston to a totally different way of living in Storrs, I look forward to continuing to embrace all of my favorite activities: spending time with family, reading, exploring outdoors, heading to the beach, and of course, quality retail therapy. Go Huskies!!!

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Alex Vann



Undergrad: University of Redlands
Major: Business Management, Sociology
Hometown: Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Assistantship: Student Activities/Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life

Hi, hello! My name is Alex Vann, and as the child of two marines I've called plenty of locations "home," but have spent most of my life in good ol' Southern California. After moving from SoCal to Chicago during high school I made the decision to return to California to pursue my bachelor's degree at the University of Redlands (Los Angeles area). Throughout high school I never really understood the "appeal" in student involvement; why would I want to stay after school and work with a club or organization when I could go skateboarding and play video games?! This mindset changed once I attended T.R.A.I.N. (Training Radical and Involved New Students), my first student leadership retreat as first year college undergraduate. This retreat presented to me a campus community rooted in acceptance, support, and personal development and inspired me to involve myself in said community. In my following years as an undergraduate I picked up a variety of involvements on campus, ranging from residence life, to greek life, to alumni relations, to student leadership. Engaging with my campus community and the leaders in this community has taught me so much about myself and as a UConn HESA graduate student I hope assist the students whom I will serve in discovering their own passions, aspirations, and identities.

I graduated from Redlands in 2015 and am currently working as a Graphic Designer for an LED lighting manufacturer in the Los Angeles area. Design is one of my largest passions (one that actually developed through designing apparel and marketing materials for my fraternity) and I hope to integrate my love of the arts into my studies and work at UConn! In addition to making art, in my spare time I love to discover new music (punk, hardcore, hip-hop, etc.), skateboard, put in some time at the gym, try new restaurants, and collect tattoos; I'm currently at 8 and growing. I'm humbled by this opportunity and am excited to join the HESA Husky family!