

President

Allison Crump

"I am running for President of the Urban Planning Student Association because I want to be an advocate for the students in our program. In serving our UCI MURP population, I will be a successful liaison between the faculty and students at UCI allowing for professional and academic opportunities for each student. Currently, I am working with the faculty on adding an internship component to our curriculum to encourage further professional interaction and opportunities for students. I see the importance of improvements like this and am more than willing to help our department in any way possible. Additionally, I would like to work on allocating funds for us to attend planning conferences and seminars. In the past few months, I've had the opportunity to attend the California APA conference and the Active Transportation Seminar, both of which were complimentary for students. If more events like this were free or discounted for students, I believe more of us would be able to attend, increasing our awareness and participation in our field.

I have a diverse background within the field of planning because of my undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture and past internships I have participated in. I've held a number of leadership positions as an undergrad and in the professional world where I've learned to collaborate, listen and take appropriate action as part of a leadership team. I'm looking forward to the next two years we all have together!"

Jay Bessette

"I, Jay A. Bessette am announcing my candidacy for President of UPSA for the 2013 Term. My experience as Vice President of the UC Berkeley Triathlon Team, as well as my positions within Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity as both the Recruitment Chair and Pledge Educator makes me an excellent choice here at UCI. My responsibility with Cal Tri included managing the twelve internal officer positions that supported the team of 200 athletes, which led us to two National Championships. My goal as President of UPSA is to use my past experience to work closely with the other Officers and Chairs to enhance the overall experience of the students in the MURP program. Specifically, I want to continue the enthusiasm, creativity and motivation of the 2014 class to build a strong program that provides readily available resources to current and future MURPs. In addition to my responsibilities with the Council, I believe that I can be a strong ambassador for UPSA at PPD faculty meetings to communicate the concerns of MURP students. My priority at the beginning of the 2013 term will be to increase the level of communication between the council and the MURPs to make it easier for MURPs to be aware of current events. I want to focus on raising money to help us plan for conferences and other networking opportunities. I also want to create an internship database so that we are providing information to MURPs about which companies currently have internships available in correspondence to the companies that are reaching out to the University. I want to expand our mentorship program to include a buddy system for first-year MURPs, especially for our international students. Lastly, I want to partner with the Social Ecology Department to reorganize orientation for the incoming MURPs to make it more welcoming, efficient, practical and applicable to the incoming first-years. I am asking for your vote so that I can help create a solid foundation for each of us to reach our professional goals when we graduate from UCI."

Vice President

Luis Rodriguez

"My fellow MURPs, I would like to take this opportunity to announce my candidacy for UPSA Vice President for the upcoming 2013 term. I have had the privilege of meeting and interacting with a majority of you, but for those I yet have to become acquainted with, let me fill you in. My background stems from representing diverse communities and interests. For the past two years, I had a great experience working for the California State Assembly as a district representative in Southeast LA County. The district I represented was made up of five major incorporated cities and surrounding unincorporated areas. What led me to pursue my former career was what I believe is well aligned with most MURP's passion in pursuing our professional education in this field: a drive to change and improve the quality of life and well being of communities. In my former position, I held many responsibilities such as assisting constituents via casework, representing communities at public information sessions, serving as liaison to chambers of commerce and LA Metro. I became a "jack of all trades" specialist and thrived in a fast paced work environment. The work was tough, but very rewarding as our ultimate goal was to represent our constituents to the fullest and make sure their voice was heard in the many decision making processes that take place in the public sector. I chose to resign from my position to seek my MURP degree here with the confidence I will learn the necessary skills and insights to continue my passion in a much higher and direct capacity. I am running for this position because I see an opportunity to represent our voice, interest, and passion here at UCI and I have every confidence my prior experience provides me with the well-rounded skills necessary to fulfill the duties of the Vice President to the fullest capacity and beyond. I look forward to building off of the current council's work and continuing to apply principles that incorporate creativity, enthusiasm, and motivation. I urge and ask for your vote in the coming UPSA elections and I thank you for your time in hearing me out."

Holly Geber

"Hello there MURPS! It is important for us to find our voices as grad students in this challenging and empowering time for all of us. Which is why I am stoked to run for the Vice President of UPSA. Currently, I am working with the faculty on allowing students to receive course credit for their internships to encourage and enhance our learning experience. My short-term vision for next year as Vice President is to involve as many MURP students as possible in local and national conferences happening in other states. This would allow us to grow as a cohort, expand our knowledge and make connections with other professionals within our field. UPSA is awaiting its new leaders and is a place for tremendous growth. Over the next year I will be devoted to innovatively and actively pursuing its development."

"While getting my B.A. in Public Administration (with an emphasis in Urban Planning) I was involved in the Volunteer and Service Center. There I volunteered my time putting on the Social Justice Summit, People Against Human Trafficking Club, & Project Earth. Through advocating for the afflicted my leadership, analytical, perseverance skills, and my unique creative perspective revealed itself through these challenges. In spring 2012, I moved to Vietnam for four months and worked as an Executive Assistant to the Director of the non-profit. In this position I was responsible for a variety of different functions in the organization. These roles would range from doing community development fieldwork, administration, H.R., writing reports/case studies, I.T. duties, and restructuring the whole organization. I believe my diverse abilities, skill sets, and proactive nature makes me a stellar candidate for fulfilling the Vice President duties."

Secretary

Calvin Chan

“I am running for Secretary and APA Student Representative because I would like to utilize my professional and academic experiences to support and strengthen UPSA’s presence at UCI. In my last job as store manager for American Apparel, I learned a great deal about effective communication strategies and record keeping. Being the liaison between staff and corporate in Los Angeles, I felt a great responsibility to not only ensure that the workplace was the best it could be for my employees but also procure significant financial gains for the company. My store, located in New Orleans, became the highest grossing store for our tier in the Southwestern United States—beating out much larger stores in Miami and Atlanta! Organization and logistics is something I excel at and enjoy doing. Academically, my time spent at UCSD and UCI have only contributed to my passion for this field we are all currently in. I am confident that if given the opportunity, I will become an asset to UPSA and overall, I am just glad to be here for the grad school ride along with you all.”

Keelie Rucker

“Throughout my undergraduate career at UCI, I held numerous leadership positions and have never left a task unfinished. My organization and social skills show through in executive positions held with Habitat for Humanity OC (Fundraising Chair, Public Relations Chair, Treasurer), Alpha Chi Omega sorority (Lifetime member, Parents Chair), Cal IT 2 researcher (Design, Culture, & Sustainability team leader), and multiple honors societies. Hence, I am familiar with maintaining an executive position for a UCI club and have proven my success in such positions. Upon graduation, I acquired a full-time internship with the City of Encinitas as an Advance Planning Intern. Because of this, I have developed professional experience in the planning sphere and great networking as well. After interning in Washington DC (Summer 2011), I expanded my network to the east coast, where I still have connections with grassroots foundations.”

“As UPSA secretary, I will use my experience managing clubs at UCI to make UPSA more cohesive. Because I have stood as a leader for a research group and represented clubs on campus to professionals outside UCI, I will excel at maintaining registration to both APA and the UCI Dean of Students. I hope to use my networking skills to provide MURP students with increased internship opportunities both in Irvine and across the country. While keeping our contacts organized, I would like to offer alumni and professionals in our community access to our minutes, so they can keep up to date on our recent activity and become more involved. My duties as Secretary will stem beyond maintaining records; I have already become involved in the Fundraising Committee and I hope to take on whatever opportunities come my way. Running a UCI club is not new to me, so taking on the position of Secretary will not be an adjustment for me.”

Treasurer

Neil Smolen

“I am running for Treasurer with confidence that the position will enable my interests and skills to become an asset for UPSA. My goal as Treasurer is to provide UPSA with financial stability through the creation of a logical annual budget, thorough monitoring of expenditures, and detailed and accurate record keeping. I am a first year MURP student pursuing the dual degree with Civil Engineering with an emphasis in transportation systems. My leadership experience includes overseeing all internal operations of my undergraduate fraternity, Sigma Pi, of which I served as Vice President. In addition to creating a quarterly calendar and fulfilling the President’s duties when he was unable to do so, I worked with the Treasurer to draft budgets and monitor spending for each of the committees within the house. Professionally, I have worked as a summer school teacher and as a private tutor in Orange County. I also volunteer as Program Manager for US Green Building Council’s Real Estate Finance Committee. As Program Manager, I organize educational seminars at business schools in the Los Angeles region on the topic of finance within green building. If elected, I believe that my interests, experience, and skills will provide valuable benefit to UPSA and the MURP program.”

Jason Friedman

“Fellow MURPs. My name is Jason Friedman and I am running for Treasurer of our UPSA board. As Treasurer I will work together with my fellow officers and engage with the student body to put forth and manage a budget that represents the collective interests of the MURP department. We've had an extremely interactive first quarter of students working well together, and I want to help keep that momentum going forward through financial decisions that we can all appreciate. My background as Founder and CEO of my own fashion company operated successfully for three years before I began my graduate studies. This is a testimony of my experience and proficiency in creating and managing a successful business plan. Prior to that, I held a managerial position at Apple, Inc. where I was in charge of millions of dollars of company resources, which required a constant stream of communication and idea sharing with top company executives. This demonstrated my personal accountability and trustworthy professionalism. Through a creative and intelligent approach, I plan to create a budget that will keep the entire student body active, involved and enthusiastic about what we're doing in UPSA, and make sure our funds are proportionately budgeted to keep us going strong throughout the entire year. Vote for me for Treasurer, and let's keep this good thing going into 2013 and beyond.”