

# Meet the 2020–21 APSA Minority Fellows

The APSA Minority Fellows Program (MFP), established in 1969, is a longstanding fellowship competition to diversify the profession by providing support to students from underrepresented backgrounds applying to, or in the early stages of, a PhD program in political science. The goal of the program is to increase the number of minority scholars in the discipline, in particular political science PhD programs, and ultimately the professoriate. APSA has once again awarded a new cycle to provide support for first- and second-year political science PhD students from underrepresented backgrounds. Please join us in congratulating the 2020–2021 class of fellows.

## SANDRA CARRILLO RODRIGUEZ

Sandra Carrillo Rodriguez is a senior in the honors program at Idaho State University majoring in political science and human resource management. As a McNair Scholar, she conducted independent research on



Latina/o/x identity and voting behaviors. Sandra has also conducted original research on factors that influence support for immigration

policies such as DACA. She has presented her work at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, the 25th Annual Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (SAEOPP) McNair/SSS Scholars Research Conference, and the Idaho Conference on Undergraduate Research. Her research interests include public opinion, political participation, and voting preferences of Latina/o/x voters in the US. As a first-generation limited-income student from a small rural town in southeast Idaho, she is passionate about diversifying the discipline and creating a more inclusive path for future scholars of color. She plans to pursue a PhD in political science where she can empower and mentor students as a professor.

## CARLA GARCIA

Carla Garcia is an honors senior at the University of Central Florida, where she is pursuing dual degrees in political science and economics. Her research interests focus on comparative political economy, as well as identity and gender, in the Global South. As a McNair Scholar, Carla completed a summer research project at Michigan State University exploring issues of survey methodology in the Afrobarometer. She presented this research at the 2019 Society for Advancement of Chicanos/



Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) conference in Honolulu, HI. Previously, Carla completed an independent study assessing the relationship

between democracy and intraregional trade in West Africa. She developed these interests as a Nelson Mandela African Affairs Fellow at the UCF Global Perspectives office in 2017, as well as during her experience as a 2018 Rangel Scholar. She is a teaching assistant for a microeconomics course and a leader in student organizations, motivating her passion for education and mentorship. Carla plans to attain a PhD in political science and pursue a career in academia.

## KIARA HERNANDEZ

Kiara Hernandez is a predoctoral research specialist through the Emerging Scholars in Political Science program in the Department of Politics at Princeton University. Her research interests include immigration, race and ethnic politics, political psychology, and public opinion. Her current research projects explore how attitudes on immigration and wealth redistribution are influenced by perceptions of intergenerational economic mobility. At Princeton,



she has had the opportunity to collaborate on the National Election Panel Study, a large-n survey experiment that examines the political mobilization and behavior of white and Latinx registered voters. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2018, where she majored in international relations and German. As an undergraduate, she was a research assistant at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and a student fellow of the Penn Program on Opinion Research and Election Studies. Kiara aspires to become a professor of political science and contribute to the collective understanding of public opinion.

## RIKIO INOUE

Rikio Inouye graduated *summa cum laude* with highest honors in political science from UC Berkeley in 2017 and currently



teaches on the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme. His undergraduate research examined both the justification for, and the mechanism by which

Japan passed its controversial 2015 security legislation. His current research interests expand to focus on the Asia-Pacific more broadly, analyzing international security with sensitivity toward international organizations. Given that both membership and issue priorities within Asia-Pacific organizations are vehicles for regional power jockeying, he aims to explore the efficacy of such organizations in mediating ongoing security concerns. In pursuing a career as a research professor, he aims to synthesize research and instruction, with mentorship and advocacy for future students and scholars.

## REBEKAH JONES

Rebekah Jones is a senior majoring in development sociology with minors in crime, prisons, education, and justice and public policy at Cornell University. She is a McNair Scholar and a Hunter Rawlings Presidential Research Scholar. Her current research focuses on how the carceral state and alternatives to incarceration, particularly mental health courts, shape sentiments of

political isolation. Having studied incarceration systems in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, she is eager to continue analyzing the effects of the penal system from a comparative perspective. More broadly, she is interested in the role of public policy in shaping how vulnerable populations form political trust and participate in the political sphere. She plans to continue her research in a PhD program and become a faculty member at a research institution to mentor students of color with similar interests.



#### SHEKINAH LIGHTNER

Shekinah Lightner is a senior at Furman University, double majoring in politics and international affairs and economics. She serves as a research assistant for the Riley Institute at Furman's Center on Education Policy and Leadership and is a graduate of the 2019 American Economic Association



Summer Program (AEASP). She has presented her research at the 2019 American Montessori Society Annual Conference and the 2019 AEA Summer Mentoring Pipeline Conference.

Shekinah's research interests include racial and ethnic politics and public policy and she hopes to concentrate in quantitative methodology and racial and ethnic politics in a PhD program.

#### RAYMUNDO LOPEZ

Raymundo Lopez is a senior at Sonoma State University, where his unique experience in the foster care system has led him to research the intricacies of the legislative process, equity in the electoral arena, and Latina/o politics. Double majoring in political science and French, he has



held research positions in culturally-rich settings. In the realm of political science, his research has been supported by Michigan State University, The George Washington University, and DSPolitical, LLC. His contributions to the French language appear in works for the Center for Civil and Political Rights in Togo, Africa, and France's United Nations Development Program in Model UN. As a McNair scholar, he is studying the electoral disenfranchisement of American citizens in the Caribbean. In his PhD program, Raymundo intends to pursue an American politics concentration and challenge his understanding of statistical modeling to provide inclusive and data-driven insights for underrepresented communities.

#### YISBELL MARRERO

Yisbell Marrero is currently a senior at Trinity College with a double major in political science and international studies conducting a thesis titled "Women's Empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean: Case Study of Barbados and the Dominican Republic." Marrero has dedicated her college career to developing analytical skills that surpass the classroom space. Given her volunteer work, academic achievements, and leadership roles, Marrero was awarded the Posse Full Tuition Scholarship, Gates Millennium Hispanic Scholar Fund, and the Dominican Day Parade Scholarship. Marrero has completed internships with Hispanic Federation, as well as Morgan Lewis & Bockius Law Firm, The Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations in New York, and The Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to FAO, WFP, and PMA, in Rome, Italy. These experiences have informed Marrero's trilingual communication skills and cultural awareness.



#### TAIWO MUSTAFA

Taiwo Mustafa is a senior majoring in government and politics in the honors program at the University of Maryland, College Park. His research interests lie at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations. He is particularly interested in migrant networks,

refugee integration, and political mobilization within sub-Saharan Africa. He is a



McNair Scholar and was invited to present his honors thesis at the University of Michigan's Emerging Scholars Conference. This project explored ethnic discrimination

and violence against refugees on a global scale. At the doctoral level, he aspires to contribute to scholarly knowledge of human mobility and contentious politics, both in Africa and beyond.

#### IGNANGELI SALINAS-MUÑIZ

Ignangeli Salinas-Muñiz (RBSI 2019) is a political science major and a senior at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez. She was part of the 2018 Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) at Purdue University. Under the mentorship of Dr. Nadia Brown, she researched the influence of the Trump administration's policy agenda on minority women candidates' decisions to run for office. She also was part of the 2019 Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, where she researched the effects of group identity and social networks on women's approval of protest politics in Argentina. She presented this research at the 2019 APSA Annual Meeting and at the 2019 Emerging Scholars Conference at the University of Michigan. She is interested in the political participation of women, ethnic-minorities, and citizens in territorial arrangements. In a PhD program, she plans to continue studying how exclusion and lack of representation in formal political institutions affects groups' political participation.



#### ANIBAL SERRANO

Anibal Serrano graduated from California State University, San Bernardino, with his MA in national security studies, where he was also a 2018–2019 CSU Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholar. Prior to that, he earned his BA in political science with

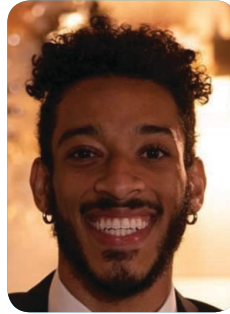


a minor in history from CSU Los Angeles. Anibal's research lies at the intersection of international relations and comparative politics, particularly political

violence, peace, and security. As a 2019 visiting student at UC Irvine, Anibal reviewed some of international relations most dominant theories to examine how they understand and explain violent non-state actors (VNSAs). He also developed a categorization of VNSAs to further comprehend their nuances and complexities. Anibal looks forward to continuing his research on how nation-states understand and cope with violent non-state actors and their impacts on international, national, and human security. He has presented and published his work in various venues and hopes to become a faculty member.

#### PYAR SETH

Pyar Seth (RBSI 2019) is a recent honors graduate of Trinity University with a BA in African American studies and political science. Pyar has a particular interest in the emotional ethos that enacts and sustains cases of political violence, in particular, cases of police misconduct.



Since participating in the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, Pyar has spent time working at Norfolk State University in the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology as well as working alongside Dr. Mary McThomas (University of California, Irvine), Dr. Carlton Harrison (University of Central Florida), and Dr. Jesse Crosson (Princeton University) on projects ranging from political polarization and interest groups to policing and popular culture. Pyar is pursuing a PhD in

political science with a concentration in political theory.

#### NALLELY VALENZUELA

Nallely Valenzuela is a senior majoring in political science at the University of California, Riverside. Her research interests lie within the subfields of international political economy and comparative political economy—specifically, in international finance, exchange rate regimes, and monetary policy.



In addition, she is interested in investigating the reactions of different sectors in the economy when currency values are volatile. She intends to use her research interests to pursue a PhD in political science with a focus in international political economy. Nallely aims to be a professor and work to increase the scope of diverse perspectives in the field of international political economy. ■