

2021 Student Scholarship Award Recipients

Tom Getts, CWSS Student Liaison Director and committee have awarded \$1000 scholarships to ten deserving students this year:



Aaron Becerra-Alvarez (*Photo left*) – University of California, Davis

My name is Aaron Becerra-Alvarez and I am a graduate student in pursuit of a Ph.D. in weed science at the University of California, Davis in the Horticulture and Agronomy Graduate Group. Soon after completing my bachelor's degree in Crop Science and Horticulture from California State University, Chico, I joined UC Davis under the supervision of Dr. Kassim Al-Khatib in the rice weed research program. My research pertains to the rice cropping systems of California, focusing on weed management and herbicide crop injury. My research interests include agronomy, rice systems, integrated pest management, and herbicide physiology. In the future, I hope to work in the industry or extension to further develop our science and assist growers. When not hard at work, I enjoy reading and hanging out with friends and family.

Kristine Fajardo (*Photo right*) – California State University, Fresno

A Master's student at California State University, Fresno in the Biology graduate program, Kristine Fajardo is examining the population genetics of Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*). Her project seeks to utilize bioinformatic techniques in order to investigate the genetic diversity and connectivity of Central California populations against their native and nonnative counterparts, focusing on tracing the origin of Central California populations. She is also exploring the genetic makeup of emerging populations in the San Joaquin Valley to identify potential genes linked to invasion, range expansion, and adaptation to California's environment. In the future, Kristine hopes to pursue a career in research with an emphasis in genetics as a means of hopefully making meaningful contributions to her community in the San Joaquin Valley.

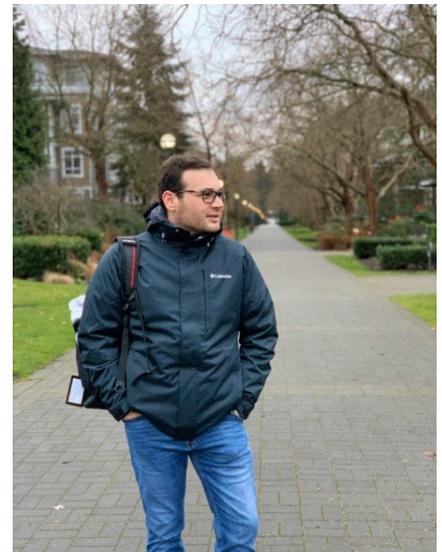


Takui Frnzyan (*Not pictured*) – California State University, Fresno

I come from a family of Fresno State graduates. I am a Viticulture and Ecology graduate student. My area of research is Palmer amaranth with grape competition. Once I have completed my studies in Viticulture and Enology. I plan on working with researchers and farmers within the Central Valley to find solutions to various problems within Viticulture. While developing and implementing educational materials/ resources for the average citizen to understand viticulture and enology process.

Deniz Inci (*Photo right*) – University of California, Davis

Deniz Inci is a Ph.D. student at UC Davis working with Dr. Kassim Al-Khatib. His research focuses on sustainable weed management for ideal rice growth in California water-seeded rice production. He is also interested in the impacts of off-target rice herbicide drift of California nut and vine crops



Guelta Laguerre (*Photo left*) –University of California, Davis

I recently completed my BS in International Agricultural Development from UC Davis and have been admitted to the MS program in Horticulture and Agronomy and Dr. Brad Hanson is my major professor for my thesis project. I have initiated my thesis research since January 2021. My research is focused on the orchard crop safety and weed control efficacy of an experimental herbicide under consideration for future registration in California specialty crops. Before joining the Hanson Lab, I worked with Dr. Kassim Al-Khatib assisted in a variety of work related to control of weeds and algae

Alexander Lopez (Photo right) – California State University, Fresno

I am a graduate student majoring in Biology at Fresno state. In my thesis work, I am investigating the origins of recently arisen populations of *Amaranthus tuberculatus* (common waterhemp) in Merced County groecosystems, using both model-based and non-model-based genetic clustering methods.



Bianey Medina (Photo left) – California State University, Fresno

I am currently a senior, majoring in Plant Science. Being first generation in my family and coming from immigrant parents inspired me to pursue a career in agriculture.

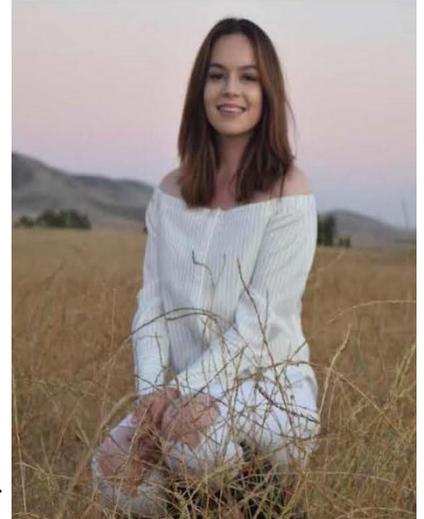
Currently I am in my two last semesters. I have really enjoyed being part of this amazing university. I have been involved with the Plant Science Club through my college experience being able to be part of this wonderful organization. I was able to meet other students that have the same interests and goals as I have.

Currently I am working full time at FMC Corporation in Madera CA as a Student Research Technician. After graduation, I plan to get my PCA, CCA and QAL licenses. I plan to work for a couple of years and if God is great, come back to get my master's degree once I have enough money saved up to pay for some of my school.

By awarding me with this amazing opportunity, you have reduced the amount of my financial needs. Which will allow me to focus on my academics and not worry about how I am going to pay for school. I hope one day in the near future I will also be able to help struggling students like myself reach their goals in their higher education by assisting them the same way you are helping me. Once again thank you for your generosity. I truly appreciate it.

**Jennifer Valdez Herrera (*Photo right*) –
California State University, Fresno**

My name is Jennifer Valdez Herrera a current undergraduate student majoring in Plant Science. I assist graduate students and Fresno State professors with various research projects, in hopes of discovering new innovative weed management solutions that will help reduce/avoid detrimental invasive weeds which affect our crops. Currently, I am assisting Fresno State Viticulture & Enology professor, Dr. Anil Shrestha, in several of his ongoing studies on herbicide resistance, biology and ecology of weed species such as common waterhemp and Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*). In one of the studies Dr. Shrestha and I are evaluating a roller-crimper cover cropping, strip-till silage corn production systems with various cover crop species. One of the objectives is to monitor weed population dynamics in these systems. All in all, after graduating from Fresno State I plan on furthering my education by applying to the Masters' program at Fresno State, which will help me expand my knowledge of weed ecology, biology, genetics, and molecular biology. Weed science is a neglected research field, and the scale for herbicide resistance weed will continue to grow if efforts towards emphasizing the importance of weed science aren't acknowledged. I aspire that my research can intrigue and encourage further research in weed science to help develop sustainable weed control practices which will benefit farmers and science



**Matthew Winters (*Photo left*) – University of
California, Santa Barbara**



My name is Matthew Winter (he/him/his) and I am a current undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara double majoring in Environmental Studies (B.A.) and Geography (B.A.). I am a research assistant with the RIVRLab (Riparian InVasion Research Laboratory) working on the Biological Control of Cape Ivy. Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*) is an invasive vine that forms smothering mats that suppress native vegetation growth. To combat Cape Ivy, the RIVRLab is utilizing the Cape Ivy Fly (*Parafreutreta regalis*), which oviposits into the shoot tips of the ivy and causes galls to form. Further, I am a restoration assistant with the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER) working on the restoration of an estuary referred to as North Campus Open Space (NCOS).

Wenzhuo Wu (*Photo right*) – University of California, Davis

Wenzhuo Wu is a Ph.D. student working with Dr. Mohsen Mesgaran in the Horticulture and Agronomy graduate group at University of California, Davis. She is conducting research to test the viability of a novel approach for managing weeds by pollinating with irradiated and sterile pollen in unisexual breeding systems

