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University selects top graduate students for 2013 Deans Graduate Medalists

Each of the university's eight schools and colleges, along with the Division of Student Affairs, have selected an outstanding student to honor as the Deans Graduate Medalists for the Class of 2013.

Each dean selects an undergraduate medalist and a graduate medalist based on academic excellence, community involvement and other achievements.

One medalist will be announced as the University Graduate Medal winner at the 102nd University Commencement at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, May 18 at the Save Mart Center.

2013 Deans Graduate Medalists



Joy Hollingsworth, Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology

Joy Hollingsworth, of Kingsburg, completed an M.S. in Plant Science with a 3.87 GPA. Her thesis research is on developing soil and water conserving cropping systems in the San Joaquin Valley. She presented her research at the annual meetings of the California Weed Science Society, where she was awarded the first and second place in the student speaking contest in both 2012 and 2013. She was invited by UC Cooperative Extension personnel to give oral presentations at the 2011 and 2012 Cotton Field Days and Twilight Field Tours. Hollingsworth published abstracts of the presentations and plans on submitting journal publications based on her thesis research. She was nominated by the Department of Plant Science for the

G.O. Mott Meritorious Graduate Student award, a national honor from the Crop Science Society of America. She is also the recipient of the UC's Bill and Jane Fischer scholarship in vegetation management. Her volunteer work includes service at the annual Fresno State Future Farmers of America field day. After graduation she plans on working in agricultural research for UC Cooperative Extension.

Jennifer Zenovich, College of Arts and Humanities

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Jennifer Zenovich, of Fresno, completed an M.A. in Communication with a 4.0 GPA. She earned a Fulbright research grant during the course of her graduate studies, which enabled her to complete a thesis focusing on an ethnographic study of academic women in Montenegro. She also worked on an oral history project about a local feminist/activist and an ethnographic study conducted at a homeless shelter for refugees in London. Zenovich is the recipient of several research grants, including a Woodrow Wilson International Center Scholars Award. She participated in several regional, national, and international conferences and is the co-author of a paper under review for publication in Text and Performance Quarterly. In the area of service, Zenovich served as president of the Communication Graduate Student

Association. She also volunteered for a number of organizations, including Crisis Homeless Center, River Tree Fresno, Fresno Mayoral Campaign and Community Garden. Additionally, she worked as a teaching associate in the Department of Communication. She was admitted to a number of prestigious Ph.D. programs and is currently selecting where she will pursue further study.

Elizabeth Jonasson, Craig School of Business

Elizabeth Jonasson, of Fresno, completed an M.B.A. with a 3.92 GPA. Described as possessing maturity, diplomacy and a love of helping others, Jonasson attended high school in Paraguay and completed university studies in Mexico City, where she earned her degree in international relations. Her first experience with Fresno State was as an undergraduate exchange student. Jonasson provides professional services in translation and narration. She was a volunteer translator for Governor Schwarzenegger's Town Hall at Fresno State. The culminating experience of her M.B.A. was a strategic plan for the Division of Continuing and Global Education. Jonasson was Fresno's project



manager for the 2010 Census, in which she was responsible for getting underrepresented populations to participate and raised the overall participating population to a 72 percent mail response. In addition, she is a representative and advocate for the Valley at city, county and regional levels. She was also honored by the Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce with their “Rising Star” award and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society “Love of Learning” award. Jonasson hopes to pursue a doctorate degree.



Celeste Naik, Kremen School of Education and Human Development

Celeste M. Naik, of Sanger, completed an M.S. in Counseling with a 4.0 GPA. She has been recognized by numerous honor societies, including Psi Chi (International Honor Society in Psychology), Golden Key, and Phi Kappa Phi. She is a member of Chi Sigma Iota (Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International) and has served as the Chi Sigma Phi chapter president for the past two years, increasing its membership significantly. In 2013, she was named one of 10 Chi Sigma Iota Leadership Fellows, a national position typically reserved for doctoral level students; she was the first Leadership Fellow ever selected from California. She also was

recognized with an award at the American Counseling Association conference. During her undergraduate career, Naik served the community through her work as a Wellness Ambassador for the Fresno State Student Health Center. For the past three years, Naik has worked as an academic advisor in the Psychology Department at Fresno State. She currently volunteers as a Counselor Trainee at Fresno Family Counseling Center (FFCC) and serves as FFCC's representative for the Fresno County Teen Parent Support Collaborative. Naik plans to earn a Ph.D. in Counselor Education so she can have a broader effect on the discipline of Counseling and continue her research on effective interventions to improve the retention rates of mothers in college. Naik has accepted an internship with Fresno Family Counseling Center and an adjunct faculty position with Fresno State's Psychology Department.



Jared Maddox, Lyles College of Engineering

Jared Maddox, of Fresno, earned an M.S. in Engineering (Civil Engineering Option) with a 4.0 GPA. For his graduate work, Maddox focused on validating the feasibility of applying pre-stressing advanced fibrous composite on reinforced concrete and quantifying the effect of such application on the stiffness and load capacity of the system. His work is timely and of relevance, as this application can be an effective means for restoring and strengthening the nation's aging infrastructure, especially bridges. Maddox is currently a practicing engineer at a local engineering firm and serves as a part-time instructor in the Civil Engineering program, a role he took on as a graduate student. He also served as vice president of the Chi Epsilon Civil Engineering Honors Society and

as treasurer of the Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics Student Chapter. He is a member of the American Concrete Institute and the American Institute of Steel Construction. Maddox was on both the Dean's and President's Lists for seven consecutive semesters, and is a two-time recipient of

the Charles Buckley Engineering Scholarship. His plan is to pursue professional licensure and further his studies in structural engineering.



Taylor Harris, College of Health and Human Services

Taylor Harris, of Fresno, completed an M.A. in Communicative Disorders with a 4.0 GPA. Most recently she was the recipient of the 2012 California Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (CSHA) District 5 Outstanding Student award, the CSHA's 2012 Judith Porter Memorial scholarship. Additionally, she received an Alumni Chapter scholarship from the Department of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Studies. For her graduate project, Harris created a professional set of video modules demonstrating speech pathology treatment procedures. Harris is involved in a number of community organizations and is an Advisory Board member of the Gay Central Valley lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

(LGBT+) Community Center. She is a poet and performer at the Inner-Ear Beat Down Poetry Slam. With students from the developmental psychology class she teaches, she partnered with United Way to provide job skills to low-income families and promoted free workshops to promote literacy in young children. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in speech-language pathology and to open a private practice for low-income clients.

Nalong Mekdara, College of Science and Mathematics



Nalong-Mekdara

Nalong Mekdara, of Fresno, completed an M.S. in Biology with a 3.77 GPA. Mekdara is a first-generation college student who grew up in a gang environment. He has matured into a hard-working scholar and a mentor to other students. Working in Dr. Ulrike Muller's lab, he is the primary author of a paper published in the Journal of Experimental Zoology, and is working on a second manuscript to be submitted to the journal Neurotoxicology and Teratology this summer. Mekdara received an award for outstanding oral presentation at the Fourth Annual Graduate Research and Creative Activities Symposium. He was largely responsible for a significant group of students being able to attend the national zoology meeting. For the last ten years he has volunteered at Stone Soup, tutoring children and providing lectures on dental

hygiene. Mekdara also worked as a teaching associate at Fresno State and has been hired as a lecturer. His goal is to enter a Ph.D. program and become a professor in the biological sciences.

Megan Rose Bailey, College of Social Sciences

Megan Rose Bailey, of Lancaster, completed an M.A. in International Relations with a 4.0 GPA. As a President's Scholar in the Smittcamp Honors College, she is an academically well-rounded and accomplished student. To date, she has co-authored an article in Organization and Environment, a peer-reviewed journal, and has two other articles under review with the journals of Energy Policy and Energy Economics. During her academic career at Fresno State, Bailey demonstrated her exceptional research, analytical and oral communication skills by presenting her research at symposiums and colloquia, and as research assistant for Dr. David Vera in the Department of Economics. She worked as the program consultant for the Center of Creativity and the Arts and also served as a tutor for Boys 2 Men and Girls 2 Women. In addition, she was a peer health evaluator for Fresno State's Fresno Student Health Center. Bailey's volunteer work includes service to the Fresno



Recycling Club. Her goal is to apply to a Ph.D. program in economics with an emphasis in public policy. Toward this end, she applied for an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.



Arthur Montejano, Division of Student Affairs

Arthur Montejano, of Atwater, completed an M.A. in Kinesiology with a 3.75 GPA. His area of emphasis is Sports Psychology. Before coming to Fresno, he served as vice president of Judicial Affairs for the Associated Students of Merced College. One of his more notable accomplishments at Fresno State is his service as president of Associate Students, Inc. Another accomplishment is his presentation at the Association for Applied Sport Psychology's Annual National Conference on research concerning coaches' perceptions of the mental skills training program. Described as committed, dedicated, and reliable, he has a strong desire to give back to the university and to students who helped him discover his potential. He

gives freely of his time in order to help others meet their own needs and goals. His interests include reading, writing, hiking, camping, coaching, swimming, and spending time with his dog, Lancelot. He is pursuing entrance into a joint J.D./Ph.D. program to study sport psychology and pedagogy.

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