



Loyola Marymount  
University

# Academic Community of Excellence

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Fall 2024



## Join Our Campaign!

For 20 years, LMU's Academic Community of Excellence (ACE) has educated, equipped, and empowered students along the path to graduate studies and career success. Supporting historically underrepresented students, ACE provides the strategies, tools, and resources for our students to apply to *and thrive in* master's degree and doctoral programs.

ACE has served nearly 400 students who have secured prestigious awards and membership in Phi Beta Kappa, California Senate Fellows Program, Teach for America, LMU Ignatian Award, Presidential Citation, and much more.

In honor of ACE's 20th anniversary this fall, you are invited to [make a gift](#) to help us expand access and educational opportunities for underrepresented students. Interest in ACE has increased among students, and we need to strengthen our ability to advance our mission. Your support bolsters this important work, which helps our students achieve their postgraduate aspirations.

Steven Neal

Director, Academic Community of Excellence

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## **ACE Partners with Olive View UCLA Medical Center on Career Enrichment Program**



(Left to right) ACE scholars Marisa Gomez, Alyssa Rodriguez, and Juliana Roman.

Last spring, ACE launched a residency, shadowing partnership with Olive View UCLA Medical Center (OVMC). According to Daniel Georgie, an ACE alum and former physician at OVMC, "the pre-med ACE scholars participating in the OV-MCARE Program are paired with internal medicine resident physicians actively training at OVMC. These residents are all part of a medical education track, demonstrating their commitment to teaching future generations of medical trainees. The program participants will also interact with attending

physicians across multiple subspecialties, including cardiology, gastroenterology, nephrology, rheumatology, etc., as well as current medical students rotating through these respective medical services."

ACE scholars Alyssa Rodriguez, Marisa Gomez, and Juliana Roman experienced firsthand what it was like to shadow at the facility. Alyssa hopes to pursue a dual M.D./Ph.D. to fulfill her curiosity through research and exercise her compassion as a practicing doctor. The opportunity to shadow ACE alum Dr. Daniel Georgie, formerly a physician at the facility, motivated Alyssa to participate in the OV-MCARE Program. "I thought it was really cool [that] somebody actually did it and got there.... I thought that was really inspiring." On what she's looking forward to experiencing in the OV-MCARE Program, Alyssa said, "I'm really excited to ask the residents about their journeys because I'm just hearing so many things about what it's like to be in medical school. So, I want to get it straight ... you know, what it's really like to spend all that time studying, and taking exams, and everything like that.

Juliana's excitement as an 8 year old with stickers now manifests itself as an aspiring physician assistant at her OV-MCARE program orientation learning how to properly put on hospital attire. "Putting on the gown and then our gloves, wearing masks ... just felt ... like I looked into the future...This is going to be us in five years or six years. It felt so real, and it was just a really nice feeling inside," she says.

As Juliana spent time with Dr. Daniel Georgie during orientation, her passion for helping others and ensuring access to health care for all grew. Having attended the orientation, Juliana looks forward to networking and exposure to the hospital environment. "I felt that I've never really been in a hospital setting before. It's one thing to learn [about it], but then it's one thing to actually be in the workforce.... I just wanted to experience that for myself and see what it was like just to be in a hospital setting, see how doctors or the residents are going to interact with the patients.... I just felt like it was a really good opportunity for me to put myself out there and network with people and just kind of be exposed to that environment, and gain experience."

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## **ACE Alum Spearheads Shadowing Initiative with Olive View UCLA Medical Center**

ACE alum **Dr. Daniel Georgie '10** initiated a partnership between Olive View UCLA Medical Center (OVMC) and ACE on its medical career enrichment program.

Georgie served as an assistant clinical professor of health sciences at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, a primary care physician to 800 patients, and an associate director for the



OVMC Internal Medicine Residency Program and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Antiracism lead. We spoke to Georgie about his aspirations for this partnership.

**What motivated you to launch the OVMC Career Enrichment Program?**

As a person of color in the medical field, I recognize the unique challenges that underrepresented minority students may face in pursuing careers in the health care field. The ACE program was always dear to me because I not only identify with its mission, but I also benefited from it as a former ACE scholar. After establishing a foundation in my own career, I was finally able to give back in a more concrete way,

and with more pre-med ACE scholars requesting shadowing experiences at OVMC, it seemed as though all the stars were aligning to develop a formal shadowing program. With the guidance of our OVMC Internal Medicine Residency Program Director, Dr. Laxmi Suthar, and the OVMC Chair of the Department of Medicine, Dr. Soma Wali, we created an infrastructure to support more pre-med ACE scholars, and thus the Olive View Medical Career Enrichment Program was born.

**What do you hope the current participants will gain from the program/experience?**

As the name of our program implies, our goal is for participants to have experiences that will be enriching, allowing them to use their participation in the program as a boost for their medical school applications and also to give them a glimpse into what it's like to live in the health care field. The program will also provide participants networking opportunities with physicians and trainees of all levels, including medical students who recently completed the application process. I also hope to expose the participants to the challenges and barriers that vulnerable populations, such as the underserved community that OVMC treats, encounter every day in trying to navigate the health care system and the importance of treating such populations with cultural sensitivity, humility, and the highest quality care we can provide.

**Projecting ahead, what are your hopes or what is your vision for the program?**

In the future, I would love to see the OV-MCARE Program become a staple at LMU, paving the way for more and more pre-med students to successfully matriculate into medical school and beyond. With the principles and values that LMU helped to instill in me, I believe that the world would benefit from more physicians with roots at LMU.

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## ACE Partners with Local Dental Clinic to Provide Shadow Experiences

Last year, ACE entered into a shadowing partnership with Mathews Dental Group in Westchester. **Stephanie Flores** (pictured right), who desires to pursue a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree at the University of Pennsylvania, shadowed **Lauren Mathews** (pictured below), owner of Mathews Dental Group. Stephanie is the second ACE



scholar to shadow Mathews after Giuliana Toscano, now pursuing a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree at the USC Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry.

Stephanie shadowed Mathews for three to four hours weekly. Stephanie recalled, "I knew [shadowing] would make me a competitive applicant for dental school, and I also really wanted to see, you know, a day in the life of a dentist, and ... how it works. And I also was drawn to [the fact] that it's a Black-owned business by Dr. Matthews, which I would love to own my own business in the future." Stephanie shared that the experience "taught me the importance of viewing patient care from multiple perspectives to prioritize comfort and trust. I [too] aspire to create an environment where patients feel safe, informed, and respected."



Mathews stated that Giuliana and Stephanie witnessed fillings, crowns, bridges, and regular and deep cleanings while shadowing. They also used the intra-oral scanner and were welcome to observe the specialists. "It was really refreshing to have Giuliana and Stephanie come and actually have questions and actually want to learn and take notes ...." Mathews recalled. Regarding her goals for the shadow experience, Mathews said, "I'm hoping that [predental students] get a generalized overview of what happens at a dental office. I want them to see all of the things that they can see so that they're not surprised by anything if they end up going to dental school. I just want them to understand just a clear view of dentistry so that if they go

to school, nothing is a surprise."

When asked about the experience's impact, Stephanie concluded, "For me. I'm a lot more knowledgeable about the history already. Like I know a lot of things that I wouldn't have even known if I had shadowed and also just like the atmosphere ... and you know what [Mathews] does on the day to day.... I feel like [the shadowing experience] really solidified my choice to pursue dentistry."



## Congratulations Isabelle!

**Congratulations to Isabelle Aquino** on her acceptance to the following graduate programs:

- \* Master of Arts in criminal justice at the University of Nevada, Reno
- \* Master of Science in criminology at the University of Texas, Dallas
- \* Master of Science in criminology and criminal justice at Arizona State University

Isabelle shared the following about her ACE experience:

"ACE played a significant role in my application process. The classes and support I received through ACE gave me valuable information about researching schools, taking the GRE, applying to programs, writing my personal statements, and receiving letters of recommendation. I couldn't have done this without ACE and the knowledge of Mr. Neal. Through ACE, I made connections with other students who have the same goals as me, and these connections helped me to feel less alone during the application process. I am forever grateful for ACE and all of the help I received during my time in the program."



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