



NEW LEADER SCHOLAR BIOS 2012

TERRY ALLEN, 21, is a Rhetoric and Theater major in his senior year at U.C., Berkeley and wants to go on to earn a joint graduate degree in Education and Business Administration. As an African American who grew up in the projects of San Francisco, his childhood observations of the education tracking system has inspired his desire to assist others in reaching their highest potential. While working for his undergraduate degree, Terry serves as the president of Black Sociological Alliance, Vice-President for National Pan-Hellenic Council, Campus Community Coordinator for Teach For America, Peer Advisor and has taught two courses at Cal titled Conflicting Messages in American Media: Objectification of Women and The Art of Film. As the highest ranking undergraduate official on the Executive Team of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, he oversaw and administered multiple national service projects. This past summer, Terry participated in a Pre MBA Global Leadership Program at Yale University where he gained sound business tools which he believes are best practices for education today.

HALEH BADKOOBEHI, 31, received her Bachelor's degree in Molecular and Systems Neuroscience from U.C., Berkeley in 2003. She completed her M.D. at Albany Medical College in 2009 and is currently a resident in Orthopedics at U.C.L.A.'s Harbor General Hospital. She earned an M.P. H. degree from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. While her parents were studying in the United States, the revolution in Iran and hostage crisis prevented them from returning to their country. The many experiences of her family as refugees have shaped her passionate advocacy on behalf of children. In addition to her volunteer work for foster children in Oakland, she spent a summer in Cambodia working at an orphanage founded by a U.C., Berkeley faculty member. Haleh also spent a year conducting research on AIDS and its effects on the brain at U. C., San Diego in the Psychiatry Department. During medical school, Haleh conducted research at UCLA in neuropathology. She is planning a career in surgery and has worked and researched at HEAL Africa, a non-governmental organization and hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where she was able to provide care to seriously injured children and advocate on their behalf through research. She has received four New Leader Scholarships.

RITANKAR DAS, 18, is pursuing simultaneous degrees in chemical biology and bioengineering with a minor in creative writing at UC Berkeley, where he has worked as an academic senator and as a graduate student instructor. He is the founding president of the American Chemical Society chapter on campus and the editor-in-chief of the Berkeley Chemical Review research journal. His goal is to become a physician and practice in immigrant communities. He is founder of the non-profit, See Your Future, which seeks to inspire youth around sustainability and nutrition through visual demonstrations. The goal is to increase the number of students from low-performing schools interested in science, technology, engineering and math. He is currently working with the US Department of Energy to build demonstration videos for teachers. Outside of science, he is a published poet who has taught several courses on poetry, hosted slams and workshops both on campus and at local community colleges and high schools, and judged poetry competitions.

GABRIELLE FALZONE, 41, graduated from San Francisco State University with a major in Psychology and a minor in Classics. She is currently attending U.C., Berkeley's Social and Cultural Studies M.A. /Ph.D. Program where she will research community-based alternatives to school for homeless and marginalized youth. Using her own experience as a teenage runaway, she has been successful in developing programs for troubled homeless youth, incorporating her interest in Greek mythology as part of a successful outreach approach. She graduated magna cum laude, was admitted to Psi Chi, the Golden Key Honor Society and to Phi Beta Kappa, and attended New College's multicultural teaching program. She has three teaching credentials and taught at two different charter schools in San Francisco. She has fostered three teens. Gabrielle is the recipient of three New Leader Scholarships.

TABITHA FREYTAG MANCINI, 41, is a senior at U.C., Berkeley working to complete a degree in sociology. When she graduates, she will be the first in her family of seven to earn a college degree. Tabitha has overcome many extraordinary obstacles in her life and is dedicated to helping others both through her academic pursuits and through community service. Tabitha is involved with Project Eye-to-Eye, which mentors high school students with learning differences. She regularly accepts many speaking engagements sharing her story and life experiences with various organizations such Learning Ally. Having raised two sons, she works to inspire them as well as her many nieces and nephews through her long-term goal of obtaining a Ph.D. in Psychology. This is her second New Leader Scholarship.

TIFFANY MONTGOMERY graduated from San Jose State University, with a B.S. in nursing and a minor in African American Studies. She was named the 2005 Student of the Year by the National Black Nurses Association. She, along with Pastor Franklin T. Hysten, founded a non-profit organization called "Waking the Dream". Additionally, she developed and led a prevention and intervention program for medical emergencies in her community. At San Jose State, she was president of Student Nurses of African Descent and Vice Chair of the student advisory Committee for the College of Applied Science and Arts. She held a position as a registered nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital in San Jose in the Labor and Delivery Unit before returning to the Los Angeles area. Tiffany completed a Master of Science Nursing Program at California State University, Dominguez Hills and is now in the Doctoral Program in Nursing at UCLA with a Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship. In addition to numerous awards and prestigious positions related to nursing, she has also established a mentoring academy for high school students desiring to enter nursing and a scholarship at her former high school for students who register in a nursing program. Tiffany has received two New Leader Scholarships.

MAITRIA MOUA, 21, a senior at U.C., Berkeley, will receive her Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Asian American Studies and plans to go on for a degree in Law and Public Policy. Growing up in the Central Valley of California as a first generation American daughter of Hmong immigrants, Maitria wants to return to the Central Valley as a public defender when her educational goals have been reached. As a student she has tutored elementary students through the Oakland Asian Students Educational Services, served as a council member to the Berkeley Student Cooperative and has volunteered for U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee. Through outreach experiences at UC, Davis Law School and through Harvard's School of Government, her commitment to provide aid to disenfranchised communities has been reinforced.

JOSHUA NIELSEN-BALTODANO, 30, is working at the US Department of Labor as a Workforce Program Specialist in Support Division of the San Francisco Regional Office of Job Corps. He received his American Studies BA Degree from UC, Berkeley in 2013 and completed his honors thesis of the school-to-prison pipeline. Joshua was tracked down in the third grade where he was placed into special education and dropped out of High School. After experiencing the school-to-prison pipeline first hand, Joshua was a trainee at Job Corps Treasure Island and obtained his education and is now paying it forward in his new role. He is also a fellow of the 2014 Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute cohort with Urban Habitat in Oakland.

CHRISTYNA SERRANO, 36, received her B.A. from U.C., Berkeley in Sociology and Social Welfare. She is currently at U.C., Berkeley working on her Ph.D. in Education. While born in the United States, she lived in Puerto Rico until age 11, when she and her parents returned here permanently. At age twenty, she was awarded a full athletic scholarship to U.C., Berkeley. As she puts it, her emphasis was on athletics and not academics, which resulted in poor grades and dismissal. After a seven year hiatus, she successfully applied for re-entry. As a woman of color from an impoverished background, she is dedicated to helping others like herself. Christyna has received numerous scholarships, awards and research grants for her work on educational policy. She has served on several university-wide committees, including the Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Dependent Care and has been a student member of a university academic senate committee on "The Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Higher Education." Along with her acceptance to the doctoral program at U.C., Berkeley, she has been awarded the prestigious Chancellor's Fellowship for Graduate Study. Christyna has also served as Secretary on the Board of Directors for Berkeley's first charter school: Revolutionary Education and Learning Movement (REALM). This is her sixth New Leader Scholarship.

KARINA SOLIS, 23, is a senior at UC Berkeley majoring in Sociology with plans to continue toward her Ph.D. Karina is interested in the intersectionality of race, class and gender. As a young Latina from Mexican immigrant parents, Karina is the first in her family of eight siblings to attend college and hopes to serve as a positive role model in her community. In addition to her studies, Karina has tutored San Quentin Prison inmates, served as an advocate for Survivors of Sexual Assault and has been a mentor. She is also involved in the Berkeley Student Cooperative and is currently developing the framework for her long- term comparative research project. This past summer Karina went abroad and studied art, culture, and history in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Karina hopes to go on to a top tier graduate school and become a university professor.

KEVIN WILLIAMS, 22, a senior at U.C. Berkeley, will graduate in 2013 with an undergraduate degree in American Studies with a minor in African American Studies and plans to earn a joint post-graduate degree in Public Policy and Law. Raised in the low-income Black neighborhoods of Oakland, California, by a single mother, Kevin experienced added challenges as a foster child. His determination to get an education and "defy the statistics" of his community inspired him to serve as the only high school student on the Student Attendance Review Board of the Pittsburg Unified School District and, as a college sophomore, serve as the Northern California Recruitment Coordinator for the Black Recruitment and Retention Center. Kevin has also served as the only African-American senator for the Associated Students of the University of California where he was able to enact policies and fund events to help disadvantaged student groups.