

## *About the Awardees*

**LEAH M. CORBY (KINESIOLOGY MAJOR)**, from Tecumseh, Michigan, has dedicated her time to making Occidental a more animal-friendly and environmentally sustainable institution. She is the Resident Advisor and creator of Occidental's first pet-friendly on-campus housing option, focusing her programming around raising awareness of animal rights and issues affecting Los Angeles' animal shelter system such as responsible ownership and the misconceptions behind certain breeds. A volunteer at North Central Animal Shelter since her first year at Oxy, she dedicates her spare time working to find loving and safe homes for the dogs and cats of Los Angeles. In addition to living a sustainable lifestyle herself, Leah encourages others to do the same. Along with two other students, she co-created Sustainable ReCycle, a campus-wide program which drastically decreases student waste through the collection and storage of gently used dorm items each May and resale of these items during move-in each August. Her success in these endeavours would not have been possible without the support of many peers, supervisors, and faculty. Leah plans to work with animals after graduation.

**LILA SINGER-BERK (UEP MAJOR, HISTORY MINOR)**, a native of Canton, MA, spearheaded an effort to bolster sustainability education on campus by creating Oxy Green Tours in the spring of 2012. Lila co-led this group to give tours three times a year to prospective, current, and former students that highlighted sustainability initiatives on campus and identified potential for environmental change. Lila further contributed to boosting sustainability on campus by completing an Undergraduate Research Center-sponsored research project in the summer of 2013 on water, transportation, and sustainability networks at Oxy. Her research resulted in the hiring of Oxy's first sustainability coordinator. Most recently, Lila co-facilitated a UEP 246 class in the fall of 2013 that led to the first campus-wide conservation challenge. She is incredibly grateful for the steadfast support of the UEP department, as well as that of her family, friends, and cross-country teammates.

**QIU MENG FOGARTY (SOCIAL JUSTICE & CHANGE MAJOR)**, has been involved in mentoring and educating Asian American and Adoptee communities in Manhattan, New York. After taking a course taught by Prof. Rodriguez at Occidental College, Qiu found a deep passion and commitment for social justice and intergroup dialogue. At Occidental, Qiu facilitated for the Intergroup Dialogue Program, worked as a programming assistant for the Intercultural Community Center, served as the Hall Coordinator for the Multicultural Summer Institute, participated in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life's Values and Vocations Fellowship, and currently conducts interviews and information sessions for the Office of Admissions as a Senior Fellow. This year Qiu has dedicated her time on campus to student organizing through work in the Coalition for Diversity and Equity, as a Co-President of Asian Pacific Americans for Liberation, and through the Typhoon Haiyan Relief Committee. Qiu has worked with a number of Asian Pacific American communities and non-profit organizations including Families with Children from China, Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership,

Southeast Asian Community Alliance, and the Asian Pacific Women's Center.

**BIANCA FONSECA CERVANTES (UEP MAJOR, LATINO/A & LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES MAJOR)**, is proud to be the first one in her family to graduate from a college in the U.S. She believes in the power that education has to transform people's lives and has advocated for the access and success of underrepresented students like her in higher education. Since her first year at Occidental, she planned and led college workshops for low-income high school students with MOSTE. As a programming assistant for the ICC and an e-board member for the new First Generation Club, she also planned sessions for first generation college students at Oxy. To help hold Occidental accountable for the success of first generation students and students of color on campus, Bianca conducted research on the topic; joined the Coalition for Diversity and Equity; and, in partnership with Jacky Ayala '14, led a community mural project to empower students. Thanks to her commitment to helping others, Bianca was the recipient of the Truman Scholarship in 2013, an award given to students who are agents of change.

**MYAISHA A. HAYES (BLACK STUDIES MAJOR)**, a native of Brooklyn, New York, came to Occidental College for its commitment to diversity, equity, and excellence. This commitment inspired her to be a part of the conversation on diversity by being involved on campus through cultural organizations as well as programming events with the ICC. Her involvement on campus led her to pursue an independent pattern of study where she declared herself a Black Studies major. This opportunity and field of study further prepared her with the tools to think critically about the world around her. During her junior year she worked for President Obama's re-election campaign through the Politics Department's Campaign Semester and then studied multiculturalism and human rights in South Africa. After returning from abroad, Myaisha conducted research through the undergraduate research center on contemporary black student organizing. After graduation, she hopes to continue exploring and imagining new ways of organizing for equitable solutions to our social issues.

**ESTRELLA M. LUCERO (POLITICS MAJOR, HISTORY MINOR)**, originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, first engaged with campus climate issues and student organizing in her sophomore year. She served as the programming assistant for the Center for Gender Equity, Vice-President of Vote for Equality at Oxy, and performed as a cast member of the Vagina Monologues. She worked as a field organizer with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center the summer following her second year as a Community Arts and Public Service fellow. She then worked on the Elizabeth Warren for Senate campaign in her third year as a Campaign Semester student. Upon arriving back to campus from Boston, she became connected with the Occidental Sexual Assault Coalition, helping to organizing students to fight for stricter and more just on-campus sexual assault policies. Nearing the end of her third year, Estrella also began organizing with other passionate students through the Coalition for the Diversity and Equity to demand systematic changes to Occidental to ensure success for students of color. She also served as Co-

President of the Vagina Monologues her senior year.

**NANCY NGUYEN (POLITICS MAJOR, EAST ASIAN STUDIES MINOR)**, hails from a strong Vietnamese-American community in Des Moines, Iowa. She has used her time at Oxy to develop her own identity as an Asian-American, and foster multiculturalism on campus. Nancy is currently a Co-President for Asian Pacific Americans for Liberation (APAL), and played a role in shaping the organization from the ground up in order to empower APA students on campus. This past summer, she was Hall Coordinator for the Multicultural Summer Institute (MSI)—a program she was a participant of in 2010, and Teaching Assistant for in 2011. MSI was a formative experience for Nancy, and guided her commitment through the Coalition for the Diversity and Equity and APAL in pursuing diversity and equity on campus. Nancy has been a participant in the Undergraduate Summer Research program, conducting research on the Vietnamese “Valedictorian-Delinquent model”. This work shaped her Senior Comprehensive Project, entitled *The Prisoner Erasure Complex: The Politics of Incarceration Work in the Asian and Pacific Islander Communities*, which she finished this semester. Nancy is committed to empowering APA communities, and hopes to work on Asian Pacific American social justice issues in the future.

**DAVID A. PINO (SOCIOLOGY MAJOR, HISTORY MINOR)** a native of Sacramento, CA, has been involved in the leadership of cultural clubs (the Black Student Alliance and Harambee); been an active participation in Social Justice movements (CODE, OSAC, and 99Rise); and participated in the Intergroup Dialogue Program as a facilitator since arriving Oxy’s campus in the Fall of 2010. As a member of the Coalition for Diversity and Equity, he has sought to change the campus climate into being more equitable and to shape Occidental as a much safer space for students of all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. He is incredibly thankful for the support of the Sociology Department, the Intergroup Dialogue Program, and all of the student/faculty members who’ve helped shape his activist perspective. He would also like to thank his family who’ve been incredibly supportive throughout his four years at Occidental College.

**JASMINE TOVAR (LATINO/A & LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES MAJOR, EDUCATION MINOR AND POLITICS MINOR)**, from South Central Los Angeles, has worked towards diversity and equity on campus since arriving in 2010. Setting foot on campus as a first generation college student of color, she soon realized that Occidental College’s rhetoric did not match the reality she currently faced on campus. Through leadership positions in organizations such as La Raza Coalition, Sigma Lambda Gamma, and SABOR, she promoted the resistance of communities of color; explored the culture and decolonized histories of communities; and sparked conversations on the lived experiences of students of color on campus. It was not until her senior year that Jasmine began to organize with the inspiring faculty and students of the Coalition for the Diversity and Equity (CODE) to create meaningful change on campus regarding diversity and equity. She has already seen how CODE’s efforts have inspired younger students to fight for a more diverse campus and to ensure that students of target identities are thriving, not solely surviving. She is excited to see the future work of CODE and students on campus after graduation!