


organizing. Post-graduation, he will work on an electoral campaign with Unite Here Local 11. He extends a special thanks to a long list of professors, mentors, friends, and family to whom he is most grateful and who teach and inspire him every day.

SUNARI WEAVER-ANDERSON (Politics Major, UEP & CTSJ Minors) is from North Richmond, California. Working at the Center for Community-Based Learning taught her the importance of reciprocity and reflection in community-based work. Serving on the Diversity and Equity Board taught her the value and limits of institutional change. She has been involved with a variety of community partners, including: Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, UNITE HERE, Public Counsel, and Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy. She has worked on numerous economic justice campaigns throughout the city, such as RePower, LA Street Vendors, and Tourism Workers Rising. Her UEPI Summer Internship research was published by SAJE, in a widely-cited report advocating for fareless transit, “The Road to Transit Equity (2023).” During Campaign Semester, she organized in Philadelphia with UH Local 247. She has been an Obama Scholar, and in Oxy Labor Alliance and Democratic Socialists for America. Arm-in-arm with her friends and coworkers, she co-started the student union campaign, Rising Occidental Student Employees. She has organized with hundreds of workers—on-campus and across the country. After graduation, she will work on an electoral campaign with UH Local 11. She is honored and grounded to learn from inspiring professors, mentors, friends, and family (to whom she dedicates all of her “wins”).



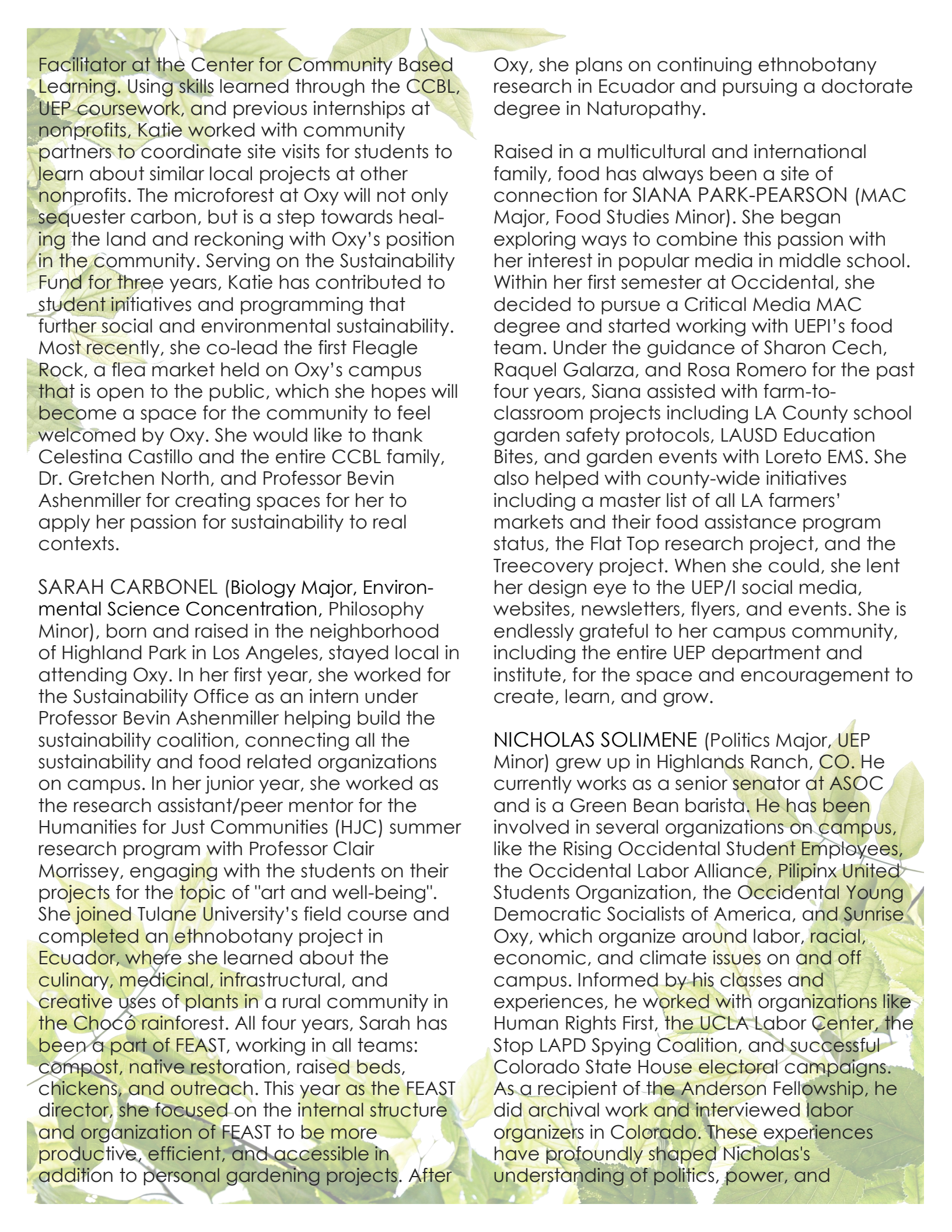
2024

About the Awardees



ISAC BENYAM-DESBEL (Black Studies major, Education minor) was born in Pennsylvania’s capital city and came to Occidental College, never having been more west than Ohio, with big city dreams and a want to pursue a future in education. While studying in the Education department, he became closely associated with Professor Kenjus Watson who asked him to be the EIA facilitator for his class through the Center for Community-Based Learning. Isac aided Professor Watson in his course Education 215: Educating African-America, which had a record-breaking number of Black students in the course. Isac and Professor Watson continued this relationship into the next semester, where Isac acted as the EIA facilitator for his Education 101 course. As an EIA facilitator, Isac helped Professor Watson to plan field trips, communicated with community partners, and even collaborated with Professor Watson on lesson plans for the day’s class on some occasions. Through this, Isac was able to get a job in the CCBL office as an EIA co-coordinator, where he and Sunari, collaborated on meeting agendas and helped to manage the cohort of EIA facilitators.

KATIE CALLAHAN (Urban and Environmental Policy) is a Queens, NY native. Having experienced some of the negative outcomes of zoning and planning firsthand, she is interested in the ways our cities impact our health, and how cities can become more livable. Katie spent a year working on getting a microforest planted on Oxy’s campus through her position as an Education in Action



Facilitator at the Center for Community Based Learning. Using skills learned through the CCBL, UEP coursework, and previous internships at nonprofits, Katie worked with community partners to coordinate site visits for students to learn about similar local projects at other nonprofits. The microforest at Oxy will not only sequester carbon, but is a step towards healing the land and reckoning with Oxy's position in the community. Serving on the Sustainability Fund for three years, Katie has contributed to student initiatives and programming that further social and environmental sustainability. Most recently, she co-lead the first Fleagle Rock, a flea market held on Oxy's campus that is open to the public, which she hopes will become a space for the community to feel welcomed by Oxy. She would like to thank Celestina Castillo and the entire CCBL family, Dr. Gretchen North, and Professor Bevin Ashenmiller for creating spaces for her to apply her passion for sustainability to real contexts.

SARAH CARBONEL (Biology Major, Environmental Science Concentration, Philosophy Minor), born and raised in the neighborhood of Highland Park in Los Angeles, stayed local in attending Oxy. In her first year, she worked for the Sustainability Office as an intern under Professor Bevin Ashenmiller helping build the sustainability coalition, connecting all the sustainability and food related organizations on campus. In her junior year, she worked as the research assistant/peer mentor for the Humanities for Just Communities (HJC) summer research program with Professor Clair Morrissey, engaging with the students on their projects for the topic of "art and well-being". She joined Tulane University's field course and completed an ethnobotany project in Ecuador, where she learned about the culinary, medicinal, infrastructural, and creative uses of plants in a rural community in the Chocó rainforest. All four years, Sarah has been a part of FEAST, working in all teams: compost, native restoration, raised beds, chickens, and outreach. This year as the FEAST director, she focused on the internal structure and organization of FEAST to be more productive, efficient, and accessible in addition to personal gardening projects. After

Oxy, she plans on continuing ethnobotany research in Ecuador and pursuing a doctorate degree in Naturopathy.

Raised in a multicultural and international family, food has always been a site of connection for SIANA PARK-PEARSON (MAC Major, Food Studies Minor). She began exploring ways to combine this passion with her interest in popular media in middle school. Within her first semester at Occidental, she decided to pursue a Critical Media MAC degree and started working with UEPI's food team. Under the guidance of Sharon Cech, Raquel Galarza, and Rosa Romero for the past four years, Siana assisted with farm-to-classroom projects including LA County school garden safety protocols, LAUSD Education Bites, and garden events with Loreto EMS. She also helped with county-wide initiatives including a master list of all LA farmers' markets and their food assistance program status, the Flat Top research project, and the Treecover project. When she could, she lent her design eye to the UEP/I social media, websites, newsletters, flyers, and events. She is endlessly grateful to her campus community, including the entire UEP department and institute, for the space and encouragement to create, learn, and grow.

NICHOLAS SOLIMENE (Politics Major, UEP Minor) grew up in Highlands Ranch, CO. He currently works as a senior senator at ASOC and is a Green Bean barista. He has been involved in several organizations on campus, like the Rising Occidental Student Employees, the Occidental Labor Alliance, Pilipinx United Students Organization, the Occidental Young Democratic Socialists of America, and Sunrise Oxy, which organize around labor, racial, economic, and climate issues on and off campus. Informed by his classes and experiences, he worked with organizations like Human Rights First, the UCLA Labor Center, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, and successful Colorado State House electoral campaigns. As a recipient of the Anderson Fellowship, he did archival work and interviewed labor organizers in Colorado. These experiences have profoundly shaped Nicholas's understanding of politics, power, and