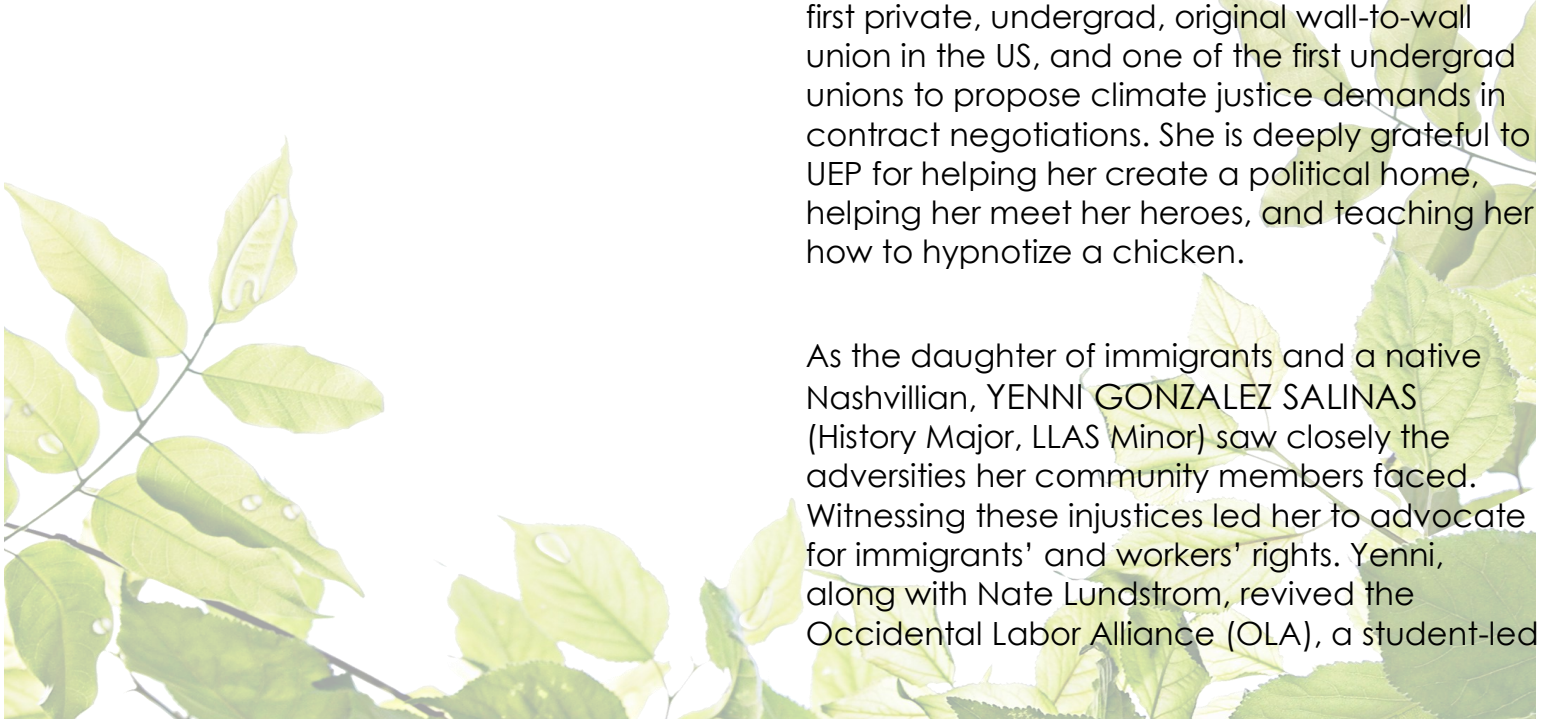



partners, explored how art can inspire the cultivation of kinship ties with non-human life. Her most recent scholarship uplifts the stories of Angeleno Urban Agriculturists, centering conversations about community gardens as sites of resistance, imagination, and healing.

2025 About the Awardees

EMMA GALBRAITH (UEP major) is from Austin, TX. She came to Oxy for UEP's organizing curriculum, but immediately fell in love with every aspect of UEP when she arrived. As an underclassman, she helped revitalize Sunrise Oxy and connected students with local mutual aid, electoral campaigns, and climate justice campaigns. She starred in a play at Geffen Playhouse in her freshman year, which was solely possible because of her professors' support. In the summer before her junior year, she interned at Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy via UEPI. While juggling acting, two torn ACLs, and routinely taking more classes than she was allowed to receive credit for, she cofounded and served as a bargaining representative for the Rising Occidental Student Employees Union — the first private, undergrad, original wall-to-wall union in the US, and one of the first undergrad unions to propose climate justice demands in contract negotiations. She is deeply grateful to UEP for helping her create a political home, helping her meet her heroes, and teaching her how to hypnotize a chicken.

As the daughter of immigrants and a native Nashvillian, YENNI GONZALEZ SALINAS (History Major, LLAS Minor) saw closely the adversities her community members faced. Witnessing these injustices led her to advocate for immigrants' and workers' rights. Yenni, along with Nate Lundstrom, revived the Occidental Labor Alliance (OLA), a student-led





organization at Occidental providing support to the college's staff workers. She also partnered with the Cypress Park Branch Library to expand Comparte, a student-led program at Oxy offering English-speaking and writing classes, to include local Highland Park residents. Additionally, Yenni worked as a boycott intern with UNITE HERE Local 11, conducted research through the Undergraduate Research Center (URC) on the Mexican government's responsibility to its citizens during the Bracero Program, and served as an equity ambassador at the Intercultural Community Center (ICC). Yenni would like to thank her mother, who inspired her to help those who need it most. She would also like to thank Professor Mora, Professor Gasper, Jennifer Locke, and her friends, who always believed in her and kept her grounded during challenging times.

FRANCESCA ROMERO (DWA major, LLAS and Politics minors), was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. She currently acts as the founder and president of the First-Gen and Low-Income Student Union, and an Involvement Program Coordinator at the SLICE Office. Additionally, she was one of only eight students selected for the Barack Obama Scholars Program, which trains students for a life and career committed to the public good. Francesca was recently a Digital Equity Fellow at Michelson Philanthropies conducting research on the internet as a public utility in Los Angeles where she advocated for municipally-owned internet. Additionally, she served as a policy intern with the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) and a Housing and Communities Intern at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA). Last summer, Francesca was also selected to be a Yale Launchpad Scholar and she intends to take her first LSAT in June. Francesca hopes to become a movement lawyer and advocate for affordable housing while working with community-based organizations. Above all, she believes in the power of community, human rights, and leading with compassion.

Karina Smith (CTSJ major, UEP minor) grew up in Corvallis, Oregon. Her advocacy focuses on public and reproductive health, feminized labor, and economic and housing justice in both her hometown and in Los Angeles. Throughout college, Karina has worked in public K–8 schools, at the Downtown Women's Center in Skid Row, learning about advocacy for houseless women and queer folk, and at the Immigrant Defenders Law Center, supporting the deported veterans post-convictions team. At Occidental, Karina has also been a core organizer and worker leader with Rising Occidental Student Employees. Karina's work is inseparable from the ecosystem of people she organizes alongside. These movements are vitalized by a collective of peers who have put their hearts and bodies forward to care and create community. Karina shares this space with fellow senior organizers Kiki González (Group Language), Izzy Wang (UEP), and Daria Undeland (Econ) – comrades and friends whose resistance is rooted in an ethic of care and radical love.

FRANKIE VEGA (Sociology major), born and raised in Denver, Colorado, roots herself in community-driven work at the intersection of ecology, education, and art. As a long-time member and current director of the Food, Energy, and Sustainability Team (FEAST), she has led efforts to foster a space of reciprocity, reflection, and action within Occidental College's garden. Throughout their tenure at FEAST, Frankie has led hands-on, educational programming for learners of all ages. Workshops, such as "Decolonize Your Drink & Health" and "Recycled Paper Making", emerged from Frankie's dedication to disseminating accessible, culturally grounded lessons on topics of food sovereignty and waste mitigation. Additionally, Frankie has taught various art classes and literacy lessons to local youth. Intending to marry art engagement with critical land stewardship, Frankie curated a sculpture installation in FEAST entitled "ECOKinship" in partnership with local artists. Her prior academic research, conducted in collaboration with community