

CARYS LIEBGOLD (UEP major, German and Politics minors) was born and raised in Los Angeles. While her advocacy focuses on housing and economic justice, she envisions a world where war, borders, profit, and the exploitative powers that be cease to exist. Carys first interned at the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing in the summer before her junior year, and eventually shifted gears to more community-focused organizing work. The following summer, she assisted local organizer, John Urquiza, with a year-long community-engaged research project documenting anti-gentrification efforts in Northeast Los Angeles. In the fall of her senior year, Carys interned at Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, working on tenant-centered initiatives. Through it all, Carys worked at the Center for Community-Based Learning, building relationships with students and local community partners. She also worked at the Oxy preschool, feeding kids goldfish crackers and being subject to the innocent, brutal honesty of 3-year-olds. After graduation, Carys will begin a six-month fellowship at the Korean Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA) in Koreatown, organizing tenants and workers in the restaurant and retail industries.


GRAHAM LUETHE (UEP major) came to Oxy from Burien, Washington. In transitioning from the verdant evergreens of the Pacific Northwest to a hotter, drier Southern California climate, he found solace in native restoration events and on-campus sustainability work. In his first semester he became an O.S.C.A.R. composter, joined ASOC's Sustainability Fund, where he currently serves as president, and declared a UEP major. The following summer, he interned at the Urban Homestead through the UEP/UEPI Food Studies and Urban Agriculture Internship Program. During his sophomore year, Graham led the transformation of a campus lawn into a native demonstration garden, an enduring space for education, habitat, and community. He also conducted research on plant heat tolerance through the Undergraduate Research Center and studied the role of landscaping in the spread of the 2025 Eaton Fire for his Senior Comprehensive Project. Graham is deeply grateful to Professors Ashenmiller, North, Wander, and Matsuoka, as well as his family, friends, and to the Oxy community for nurturing his interests and passions. He hopes to dedicate his life to stewarding our crucial urban ecosystems.

2026

About the Awardees

RAYMOND ARIAS (Economics major, Politics minor) is originally from La Habra, California, and more recently from Tualatin, Oregon. As a first-generation Mexican-American and college student, Raymond's commitment to public interest law is rooted in a belief that legal and economic systems should protect, rather than marginalize, vulnerable communities. His work at the Oregon Legislative Assembly, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, and Inner City Law Center has deepened his interest in housing justice, public policy, and the role of law in addressing economic inequality. At Occidental, Raymond has sought to build spaces where students can think critically about law and justice. Alongside Madalyn Palay '25 and Max Goldman '26, he helped revive the Occidental Law Society and founded the *Occidental Law Review*, a platform for undergraduate legal scholarship. He has also worked as a research assistant to Associate Professor of Economics Jorgen Harris, studying the relationship between economics and the U.S. legal system. After graduation, Raymond will work in labor and electoral organizing in Phoenix, Arizona, before attending law school to become a public interest attorney.

CHRIS CASSEL (UEP major, Politics minor) grew up in Basel, Switzerland. He works as a Green Bean Barista, for Games Management, and as a Senior Senator. Chris has been involved in a number of student groups, such as the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), the student worker union (ROSE), and anti-imperialist organizations. In his first year, he was part of a group that revived the Oxy Labor Alliance. OLA was formative to Chris's development as an organizer, teaching him the importance of creating a space where people

The background of the page is a collage of various green leaves, some with prominent veins, creating a natural and organic feel. The leaves are scattered across the page, with some appearing in the foreground and others in the background, all in shades of light to medium green.

feel comfortable and encouraged to step into their own power. Chris worked on economic justice, labor, and electoral campaigns with the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, Unite Here Local 11, and Worker Power Arizona. These experiences developed Chris's understanding of the labor movement's ability to operate inside and outside of institutions. Chris applied what he learned from organizing to student government as a Senior Senator. He helped push the Senate from apoliticism into passing multiple resolutions to advocate for students and workers on campus, learning the importance and limits of insider-strategy change. Chris is honored to have been shaped by his friends, mentors, and family, and he will carry his experiences organizing at Oxy in his heart for the rest of his life.

ELLIE CHANG is a senior at Occidental College studying Urban and Environmental Policy with a focus on disability justice, public health, and community-based work, as well as a minor in Religious Studies. Throughout her time at Occidental, she has centered accessibility and equity through both advocacy and hands-on organizing. She served as President of the Disabled Student Union, where she led campus-wide efforts to improve accessibility and expand institutional support for disabled students. Her leadership contributed to a successful two-year campaign to secure an ADA-accessible shuttle van, significantly improving mobility and access across campus. Ellie is also a Director at FEAST, Occidental's student-run organic garden, where she develops programming focused on food justice, sustainability, and community engagement. In this role, she works to connect ecological practice with mutual aid and student learning. In addition, she has worked as a Community Food System Intern with the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, contributing to initiatives that expand food access across Los Angeles through research, policy analysis, and community-based implementation. Her work is grounded in disability justice, public health, and creating inclusive systems that prioritize equity, care, and the well-being of underserved communities.

LUCI JOHNSTON (Biology major, Environmental Science concentration, UEP minor) is from Kirkland, Washington. Their organizing work addresses the areas where Occidental College and U.S institu-

tions fall short on climate justice, labor rights, and human rights. Luci is a co-founder of Rising Occidental Student Employees (ROSE) worker union and were the bargaining representative for the Resident Advisors (RAs). They are a core organizer for Sunrise Oxy, working on climate resilience, progressive politics, and mutual aid. Through Sunrise, they worked on Mia Livas Porter's campaign for Assembly District 52 and volunteered on LA City Council member Ysabel Jurado's campaign. Luci has spoken in front of the LA City Council and Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council on climate justice efforts. Through the UEPI Urban Agriculture internship, they worked with Avenue 33 and Black Thumb farms. They also interned with Community Power Collective. Luci is in Professor Gretchen North's botany research lab and helped plan Oxy's microforest of native plants. They also studied abroad at the Organization for Tropical Studies in Costa Rica, learning about conservation ecology. Luci calls on the Oxy community to use their voices and actions to improve this institution and effect positive change in their communities.

OWEN LEE (American Studies major, UEP minor) is a settler raised on the occupied territories of the Snohomish and Suquamish peoples. At Oxy, Owen sought to center Indigenous perspectives and settler colonial harm reduction practices while supporting land-based education as both participant and facilitator. They participated in the Urban Agriculture Internship as a first-year student, which inspired their subsequent summer research. For the Urban Ag at the Market project, they interviewed urban farmers about the challenges and opportunities of farmers' markets to help develop an Urban Ag Accelerator curriculum that could support aspiring urban farmers in expanding operations to meet market constraints. More recently, they have built upon these relationships by facilitating long-term community partnerships while continuing their land-based learning as an Educator-in-Action Facilitator. Owen remains committed to anti-colonial learning. As a junior, they studied abroad in Samoa and developed original research interviewing street-side produce vendors in Apia, and as a senior, they interned at the Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Land Conservancy and focused their Senior Comprehensive project on decolonization.