

2017 Recipients

MARISSA CHAN (Urban & Environmental Policy Major and Public Health and Biology Minors) has found her passion and academic interests in environmental health (place-based and product-based toxics) and environmental justice. Through her work as the President of Oxy Public Health Club and the UEPI Environmental Health and Justice Research Assistant, she has worked on a number of projects aimed to bring awareness to local, national, and global public health issues, as well as advance the work of researchers and organizations fighting injustice in Los Angeles. This work has allowed her to realize her passion for research focused on the impacts from cumulative exposure to endocrine disruptors on reproductive/developmental health. She is grateful for all the enthusiastic public health students she has met along the way and hopes that she has managed to inspire some of them to continue with public health. She would also like to thank everyone in the UEPI and Professor James Sadd for all the support and opportunities throughout the years; she could not have done it without you all! She hopes that the public health minor continues to expand and that UEP students embrace the interdisciplinary focus that the department was built on!

ISABELLA OJEDA (Sociology and Spanish Majors) has dedicated her time at Oxy to reclaiming her identity by showing up for her communities. Her early work - volunteering with nonprofits to educate Spanish-speaking immigrants about their rights - sparked her interest in public service. As a Values and Vocations fellow, she worked for the LA Commission on the Status of Women, compiling data to improve resources for the transgender community, and New Ground: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change, fostering interfaith dialogue through events and social media. On campus, she has led the Muslim Students Association, hosting events to discuss topics like the refugee crisis and the intersection of Black and Muslim identities. She has also been a programming assistant for ORSL and a Spanish adviser for the CDLA. Isabella is deeply grateful for her intelligent and supportive professors, peers, and family, who have encouraged her to think big and be kind to herself. She is excited to attend USC Gould School of Law this fall, where she hopes to acquire new skills to fight systems of oppression.

DANIELLE RASKIN (Urban & Environmental Policy Major and Politics Minor) is from New York, NY. She first got involved in social justice work at 15 years old and has been compulsively organizing ever since. While at Oxy, she has been involved in many fights for justice. She was a leader in fighting to get big money out of politics through 99Rise; an organizer with CODE (battles include the hiring of the Chief Diversity Officer, the creation of the ASOC Diversity and Equity Board, and managing press for the AGC occupation); and interned at LAANE (Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy) on the Raise the Wage campaign and at the Working Families Party. This past year she helped found the Oxy Student-Labor Alliance to address workers' grievances on campus. She is so thankful to her friends, faculty, and community of comrades for making her college experience so meaningful. She plans to dedicate her life to organizing and social movement building. You can catch her working at the Center for the Working Poor in Echo Park this summer.

CHLOÉ WELMOND (Studio Art & Art History) began to develop a deep connection to the surrounding neighborhood and community throughout her time at Oxy. This community of resilience with a proud history of folx here that fight for preservation in the face of forced migration, displacement, erasure: gentrification. She had the honor to learn from this community, from the artists at Avenue 50 Studio, the activists of the Marmion Royal Tenant Union, the North East LA Alliance, her soulmates attending Oxy, and Valerie Lizarraga and Ella Turenne at the OCE (Office for Community Engagement). For her interacting with the community was not optional, it was a form of survival, it was to find meaning, it was to grow roots to feed her mind and body. She experienced many barriers, which many define as the "Oxy bubble", and for her popping the bubble meant developing connections; it meant creating OSUAG (Occidental Students United Against Gentrification): vines that break through concrete, walls, borders, and other institutional barriers to foster genuine interactions, love and support.