Welcome to our first Newsletter! The Multidisciplinary Financial, Administrative, and Student Unit (MDU) provide services in the areas of financial, business, and student affairs. We support the teaching, research, and business for the Department of Ethnic Studies, Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies, Department of Media and Cultural Studies, Department of Religious Studies, and all Interdisciplinary Major and Minor Programs. Academic personnel include Ladder Faculty, Lecturers, Visiting Scholars, Researchers, Associate-Ins, Teaching Assistants, and Readers. Some departments offer both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

While providing exceptional customer service to faculty, students, and the UCR community, we strive to maintain a high level of professionalism, expertise, and ethics.

Please feel free to contact the staff with any questions you may have! [www.mdu.ucr.edu](http://www.mdu.ucr.edu)

Sincerely,

**Diane Monroe-Shaw**, Unit Officer (FAO)
Multidisciplinary Financial, Administrative, and Student Unit

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**Staff Members Victor Moreira, Cassee Barba, Kristine Specht, Ryan Mariano, Brenda Aragón, Crystal Meza, Diana Marroquin, Diane Shaw, and Celeste Townsend (not pictured)**
We know that achievement and success aren’t by accident. Breakthroughs come after spending what seem like hours, days, and years of hard work and trying new ideas. Staff will always be one of the University’s greatest assets. It’s with sincere appreciation for staff’s contribution, dedication, and loyalty that enables us to recognize these milestones and wish continued success to all.

The distinction of working at UCR for more than a quarter of a century is a reflective moment for me. When I started, I was very young and full of expectations and quickly learned that progress doesn’t stand still. Of course, during all these years, there have been successes and struggles. All of these experiences, the good and bad, gave me the inspiration to stand strong and continue to move forward. I am thankful for the avenues UCR provided and endorsed for both my professional and personal development. My advice for everyone is to recognize and use every opportunity to live your entire life to the best of your ability. ~ ~ Diane Monroe-Shaw

Looking back at the past decade, despite the differences in location: with a beginning at UCLA, then the following years at UCR, with three years at CNAS and the last two here in CHASS, Multidisciplinary Unit (MDU), I cannot help, but feel a sense of overall pride in being a part of the UC family. I am thankful for being a part of all the transitions I have experienced and for having such a wide umbrella of opportunity. I am so grateful for the things I have learned at each UC college, for the people I have met and for the networking that continues, as we each work to make the University experience the best we can. I could not be happier to be a part of such a supportive workplace. I am so lucky and hopeful for what the future holds with this wonderful foundation. ~ ~ Kristine Specht

Celeste Townsend is our new Budget & Financial Officer. Celeste received her BA in Business Administration (2005) and her MBA (2007) with a focus in Finance and Organizational Behavior from the University of Redlands. She serves as an advisor on all financial matters; performs complex budget analysis, makes recommendations for expenditures, and creates financial reports. She is also responsible for data collection, tracking of expenses, and analysis. One of Celeste’s personal passions is becoming an active member of the California Indian Nations College (CINC) initiative where she serves as Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. The CINC Strategic Planning Committee is a coalition of constituents from the local Indian Community propelling the initiative to create a Tribal College for all Indigenous nations and establish a curriculum that will incorporate cultural and language preservation along with re-institutionalization of traditional Native American values.
**MDU Happenings**

**Student Connections**

Our Professional Academic Advisors, Brenda Aragón, Cassee Barba, and Victor Moreira, happily reaches out to students to help them with their short- and long-term goals. They participate in campus outreach programs such as UCR Discover, Highlander, and Community College Days. Staff members also volunteered for the UCR Commencement Ceremony, Pride Prom, and Diversity Enhancement Programs. In addition, our Advisors are working on the transition to UCR’s new Banner Student Information System.

**Emergency Preparedness**

We are also becoming more pro-active in being better prepared to resume our critical functions during and after an emergency interruption. We participated in “RAIN” training (respond, assess, isolate, and notify), emergency drills, survival kits, and other needs assessments. Ryan Mariano, Administrative Assistant, also serves as our Unit Safety Coordinator and is a vital part of our structure. He’s responsible for implementing our safety program including training, planning, inspections, records management, and hazard reporting. The campus also provides a free Campus Safety Escort Service. For more information, visit [http://wrc.ucr.edu/escortservices/index.html](http://wrc.ucr.edu/escortservices/index.html).

**UCR Diversity Certification Program**

We’re happy to announce that two staff members received Certificate of Completion for participation in the UCR Diversity Program. The six-month "Making Excellence Inclusive" program guides participants through a series of learning activities all designed to make the subject matter "come to life." The program is developed around the belief that individuals learn most effectively when they discover, understand, and apply their new knowledge to the real world situations they face in the university environment. With this in mind, the program includes the following learning elements: Workshops - Led by leading authorities representing a broad cross-section of diversity topics. Discussion Sessions - Prompted by stimulating questions, participants share their thoughts on the topic areas. Outside Readings - To enrich the understanding of the topics discussed in the workshops. Capstone Projects - To allow for a practical application of the series concepts, each group produces a white paper and poster on a selected diversity topic. Project Presentation – Participants have an opportunity to celebrate and demonstrate their new understanding of "Making Excellence Inclusive."

Diana Marroquín participated in the group whose subject matters was “Branding UCR as an Employer of Choice” by creating a UCR Diversity Informational Community website, offering all new hires (both staff and faculty alike) the opportunity to complete a Diversity Workshop within their first year of employment, and creating a departmental Diversity Ambassador responsible for communicating information regarding events, news, changes in policy, forums on diversity, etc. to all UCR employees in their unit.

Kristine Specht was in a workgroup whose theme was “Hiring Managers Guidelines and Promising Practices.” Specifically, the goals were to identify the best practices, policies, or tools that address and/or promote diversity in the application process and face-to-face interviews on campus.
MDU Happenings

Giving Back

The MDU Staff goes beyond the campus to give back to the community. Over the years, children and families receiving county mental health services continues to increase. During the Holiday Season, we decided to “Pay It Forward” by providing food to families in need through the Riverside County Department of Mental Health – Children’s Services/Parent Support Division. It was a huge success and we were able to provide a large variety of food items. We also participated in donating to “Toys for Tots” to deliver a message of hope to some of our nation’s most valuable resources – our children. We look forward to future charitable deeds.

Healthy Living

We have stepped up efforts to engage staff in living a healthy and active lifestyle. MDU Staff members Crystal Meza and Kristine Specht volunteer as Unit UCR wellness Ambassadors and provides us with enthusiasm, strategies, and motivation in promoting a healthy work environment. They have created an MDU Wellness Board that shares information about nutrition, exercise, and other health topics. All of the MDU staff participated in this year’s UCR “Mission: Possible 3”, an 6-week team wellness challenge. We completed all the weekly missions and activities and was presented with awards and a certificates of completion.

We are also proud to represent and participate in numerous activities, across campus. From mobile fit sessions to the CHASS Chili cook-off, MDU strives to give thoroughly in all activities we participate. We also celebrate with birthday parties, potlucks, and any function that demonstrate our individuality, creativity and teamwork. Within CHASS College staff activities, we also strive to excel which was demonstrated by being winners in the CHASS Staff Chili Cook-off, individual win for the fall Costume Competition, and the Pumpkin Carving contest.

2015-2016 CHASS STAFF CHILI COOK-OFF OVERALL WINNER

MISSION: POSSIBLE 3 CELEBRATION 6-WEEK TEAM WELLNESS CHALLENGE

MDU STAFF GETTING READY FOR THEIR WORKOUT WITH ZUMBA INSTRUCTOR TYRA LOVATO

ONE OF OUR MANY POTLUCKS
2015-16 MDU HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

2015-16 HOLLYWOOD HALLOWEEN

GOOD TIMES!

DEAN PEÑA WITH THE MDU STAFF AND THE PIPE BAND AT THE DEAN’S OUTDOOR RECEPTION

VC of Student Affairs James Sandoval, Victor Moreira, Cassee Barba, & Chancellor Wilcox at the Undocumented Student Programs’ One Year Anniversary Celebration
Meet the Staff Team

~~~ Finance & Administration ~~~

Diane Monroe-Shaw
*Financial, Admin, & Student Unit Officer (FAO)*
[Image]
diane.shaw@ucr.edu

Primary responsibilities include providing oversight and management of the daily operations of the Unit’s departments and programs, such as financial, grants, administrative, student affairs, academic support, facilities management, and other operational matters. Manages business, accountability, stewardship, publicity, and develops strategies to achieve goals and objectives in meeting the mission of the University. Significant responsibility to organize work and achieve broadly stated goals.

Diana Marroquín
*Accounting & Payroll Specialist*
[Image]
diana.marroquin@ucr.edu

Responsible for all accounts payables and receivables, purchasing, travel, academic, and staff payroll functions. Process all travel reimbursements, check requests, and purchase orders. Maintain financial records, research open items to identify problems in payment/order receipt, return credit and resolve misapplied credit discrepancies as needed. Serve as back-up to the Graduate Student affairs Advisor and the Units' graduate programs.

Ryan Mariano
*Administrative & Event Assistant*
[Image]
ryan.mariano@ucr.edu

Plans and executes events such as lectures, colloquia, conferences, luncheons, receptions, and meetings. Arranges room scheduling, room set-up, media resources, catering, parking, and other event needs. Prepares general communication materials such as flyers, press releases, newsletters, and other promotional documents. Responsible for storehouse supply purchasing, equipment inventory, copier coordination, key distribution, and serves as the Unit's Safety Coordinator. Assists in office coverage, answering phones, distributing mail, and maintaining bulletin boards.

Kristine Specht
*Academic Personnel Assistant*
[Image]
kristine.specht@ucr.edu

Administers the recruitment and hiring process for ladder and non-senate faculty, including Lecturers, Visiting Appointees, Associate-Ins, Researchers, and other academic titles. Ensures compliance with the Academic Personnel Manual, the Memorandum of Understanding, and other contracts. Provides support for personnel actions, including document preparation for assessments, excellence reviews, merits, promotion, reviews, and instructional workload course equivalency requests. In addition, coordinates sabbatical, medical, and other academic leaves.
Celeste Townsend  
*Budget & Financial Officer*  
celeste.townsend@ucr.edu  

Provides support in the areas of financial activity, contracts and grants, space, and other administrative matters. Serves as an advisor to the FAO and Chairs regarding all funding sources and responsible for monthly budget reconciliation. Makes recommendations and assist in facilitating strategic short- and long-range planning of financial resources. Prepares complex budget reports and analyses and takes a lead role in the year-end fiscal close process. Assists with the allocation and management of all financial commitments and ensures compliance with internal audit requirements and University policies.

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Graduate Student Affairs

Crystal Meza  
*Graduate Student & Program Affairs Officer*  
crystal.meza@ucr.edu  

Prepares and coordinates of a variety of Graduate Student Affairs operations. Provides support for the academic advising, recruitment, and payroll administration. Consults to prospective graduate students regarding the admission process, degree requirements, transfer units, international transcript evaluation, and financial support. Administers academic progress, degree completion requirements, and exceptions. Prepares graduate and undergraduate course proposals and program changes via the Course Maintenance System (CRAMS).

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Undergraduate Student Affairs

Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors

- Brenda Aragón  
  *Students H-O*  
  brenda.aragon@ucr.edu  

- Cassee Barba  
  *Students P-Z*  
  cassee.barba@ucr.edu  

- Victor Moreira  
  *Students A-G*  
  victor.moreira@ucr.edu  

Professional Academic advising and support services to the Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Student Affairs Center. Provides advice on academics for majors and minors, and all aspects of course requirements for degree completion. Advice students on determining a major and other academic options. Helps identify needs for programs, services, and complex issues dealing with multiple degrees. Communicates information and make referrals to other student services. Provides information on programs with special articulated eligibility requirements such as honors programs, awards fellowships scholarships, and advanced level courses. Applies articulated courses and certifies degree completion. Responsible for Schedule of Classes and advising Chairs on curriculum matters.
Interdisciplinary Program Spotlight

~~~ Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies ~~~

The Program for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Program (MEIS) was established in 2008 with faculty members from across various departments within the College of Humanities, Arts, & Sciences. Associate Professor Fariba Zarinebaf from the Department of History was Chair from 2011-2016. Beginning July 1, 2016, Associate Professor Muhamad Ali from the Department of Religious Studies began his term as Program Chair.

The program offers a broad course of interdisciplinary and theoretically informed study. It is designed to provide a broad understanding of the history, politics and culture of the Middle East and Muslim societies. The coursework introduces students to the complexity and diversity of the cultural and geographic regions that are represented in the Middle East and Islamic world with focuses on gender, history, religion, literature, popular discourses and politics. MEIS faculty are drawn from the Departments of Anthropology, Comparative Literature, Hispanic Studies, History, Media and Cultural Studies, Religious Studies, Theatre, Political Science, and Women’s Studies. Their research and expertise canvass a vast and diverse area from Muslim Spain to Ottoman Greece, and North Africa, in the west, to Central Asia, Indonesia, and South Asia, in the east. Under Fariba’s leadership MEIS majors and minors have been steadily growing. Many majors and minors have graduated with honors and have entered prestigious graduate schools such as Johns Hopkins University (Kevin Hack), Georgetown University (Chris Seeling), and Oxford University (Giosianna Turchetti).

The Ph.D. Designated Emphasis in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (DeMEIS) was established in 2015. We currently have graduate students in this field who are completing their dissertations on the Middle East and Islam in America within the Departments of Political Science (Ian Oxnevad) and Anthropology (Shahab Malik). Also several of our majors and minors participated in study abroad in the Middle East and Europe (London).

A lecture and afternoon tea series was established and in 2015-16, two lecture series on “Islamophobia” and “Muslim-Christian Encounters” with several workshops and panel discussions were given. MEIS sponsored and co-sponsored at least five talks and workshops every year along with hosting leading scholars from the US and overseas. To engage students, celebrate, and recognize their achievements, the Undergraduate Best Student Paper Award was created. This past year, Giosiana Turchetti (MEIS major) won the Best Student Award. We also hold an End of Year celebration, where we recognize our graduating undergraduates and their achievements.

For additional information please visit [http://meis.ucr.edu](http://meis.ucr.edu/) or [https://www.facebook.com/meis.ucr/](https://www.facebook.com/meis.ucr/)

MEIS students and faculty, Shahab Malik (grad student), Muhamad Ali, Sherine Hafez, Fariba Zarinebaf, Ruhi Khan, Jeff Sacks, Megan Toussau (MEIS major).