

**2021**

**HEALTH SCIENCES**  
**ALUMNI AND STUDENT**  
**SPOTLIGHTS AND AWARDS**



UCF

Department of  
Health Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

[chps.ucf.edu/healthsciences](https://chps.ucf.edu/healthsciences)

## Alejandro Arroyo Rodriguez '21

Born in Puerto Rico, Alejandro and his family moved to Orlando where he discovered his first love - volleyball. Nationally ranked, Alejandro suffered injuries requiring frequent care from medical staff. While injuries jeopardized his NCAA aspirations, they also served as a bridge to his second love - medicine. Of the similarities between the two, Alejandro says, "Medicine is as much a team sport as volleyball. You must work collectively as a unit to solve the problem at hand." Captain of UCF Club Volleyball, Alejandro takes pride in being a student-athlete and leader. He extends his leadership to UCF as Building Manager of the Recreation & Wellness Center, where he oversees the health and safety of fellow Knights. This summer, Alejandro was one of 13 scholars selected for Nemours Health Equity Summer Scholars Program, a research program that receives over 1,000 applications a year. He's also conducting research with Health Sciences faculty investigating health equity issues. He states, "As a Hispanic, I see data highlighting health inequities as more than numbers. I see people - people like me." Alejandro is currently applying to medical school with the hope of continuing his interest in health equity research.

## Student Spotlight

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*As a Hispanic, I see data highlighting health inequities as more than numbers. I see people—people like me.*



**ALEJANDRO ARROYO  
RODRIGUEZ '21**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical)  
Captain, UCF Club Volleyball





## **Breon Clark '20**

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Breon Clark, a Health Sciences alum, has been an achiever from the get-go. From reading contests in grade school to weightlifting championships in high school, he's demonstrated a drive to succeed.

A 2nd year UCF Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) student, Breon has fused his passions for movement and academia with the goal of instilling hope in his patients. On choosing PT, Breon states, "I've always wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. As an interactive, hands-on profession, PT is where I believe I can have the greatest impact."

Reflecting on his recent first day in a clinical rotation, Breon smiled and said, "I loved every minute. I was prepared, and in my element. By lunch, it felt like I already worked there. It just felt right."

With a full year of clinicals ahead, Breon expresses his eagerness to work with a diverse group of patients, particularly those of advanced age. "I've always cherished working with older populations. They share invaluable wisdom and stories that I hope to pass along."

As a future dual-degree Knight, Breon says, "UCF gave me the opportunity to be myself. There was no microscope on me-- no one judging me. The diversity and inclusion I felt gave me the comfort to explore freely and forge a path that is uniquely mine."

## *Alumni Spotlight*

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*I wouldn't be where I am today without my Health Sciences professors—they challenged me to fulfill my learning potential.*

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**BREON CLARK '20**

**Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)**

*Second-Year UCF Doctor of Physical Therapy Student*





## **Brooke Powers '22**

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When Brooke Powers' younger brother was born prematurely, she passed time in the hospital waiting room by knitting. On entering the hospital one day, she spotted a stack of tiny beanies at the hospital's front desk. After speaking with staff, she learned that local families made and donated them for newborns. Struck by the kindness of these strangers, Brooke was inspired to start making her own beanies. Using YouTube tutorials, Brooke learned how to crochet beanies of different sizes using yarns suitable for newborns' sensitive skin. After sharing this project with Health Sciences instructor, Steven Burroughs, she was encouraged to connect with Arnold and Winnie Palmer Hospitals to develop a more formal partnership for her operation. Brooke recently donated over 50 beanies and plans to donate at least 75 a month, each with an encouraging note tucked inside. On receiving positive feedback from patients and hospital employees, Brooke says, "It's nice to know that a small gesture can make such a difference. My hope is that the beanies serve as a reminder that they're not in this journey alone". Brooke plans on pursuing a Master of Health Administration degree with the goal of making a difference in medical care through administrative actions.

## *Student Spotlight*

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*A small gesture can make such a difference in the lives of others.*

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**BROOKE POWERS '22**

Health Sciences

*On donating handmade beanies to families with premature newborns.*





## **Anisah Husman '21**

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An interest in global health and medicine and a desire to experience the world led Anisah Husman, a Health Sciences alum, to join International Medical Outreach (IMO). This student-led organization provides medical services in countries like Columbia, Peru, and Haiti. For her, the mission that stands out is the Haiti Project where she and IMO members provided care to over 500 patients in a week. Reflecting on these missions, Anisah says, "I was fascinated by the impact of culture on health care beliefs and systems. Each trip reinforced my desire to become a physician and play a role in improving global health." As a senior, Anisah was elected President of IMO and tasked with serving communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. While travel restrictions prevented involvement in direct patient care, Anisah directed her team to focus on hosting donation drives, fundraising events, and other efforts to benefit local and global communities. Recognizing the need for an interdisciplinary approach to improve global public health, Anisah is completing an MPH at the NYU School of Global Public Health before attending medical school. Anisah hopes to combine her passion for medicine and travel by serving as a global health physician and collaborating with organizations like Doctors Without Borders.

## *Alumni Spotlight*

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*As a medical service volunteer in other countries, I was fascinated by the impact of culture on health care beliefs and systems.*

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**ANISAH HUSMAN '21**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

MPH Student at New York University

School of Global Public Health





## **Carina McClean '23**

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Carina McClean, a Health Sciences junior, was raised in Chuluota, FL, a small suburb near Oviedo. Growing up, she attended UCF football games, soccer camps, and Light Up UCF. For Carina, becoming a UCF student was a dream come true. Since becoming a Knight, Carina has participated in much more than classes and university events. Her involvement in leadership and service roles began in 2020 with her selection as a Student Government Senator representing #CHPS. Now, a mentor in the Science Leadership and Mentoring (SLAM) Program, Carina promotes STEM and STEM-related leadership opportunities to middle school girls. These themes carry through in her role as the President of UCF's Black Women in Medicine, an organization that supports black women in their pursuit of careers in medicine and science. Carina's impetus for assuming these roles comes from her desire to ensure equal representation in medicine and STEM. As she says, "Addressing health disparities requires a multifaceted approach. By increasing racial and ethnic diversity among healthcare providers and identifying implicit bias and structural racism in healthcare, we take a step towards achieving health equity." An aspiring physician, Carina hopes to reduce health disparities and inequities in the communities she serves.

## *Student Spotlight*

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*Representation plays an immense role in healthcare. It's important to have clinicians of different backgrounds to optimize treatment plans and improve health outcomes.*

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**CARINA McCLEAN '23**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

President of Black Women in Medicine





## **Dr. Guillermo Alfonso '15**

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Dr. Guillermo Alfonso, a diagnostic radiology resident at the University of Arizona, College of Medicine, and a Health Sciences graduate, attributes his start to his medical career to an internship he completed under Dr. Rovito. The mentorship he received gave him confidence in his ability to pursue a career as a physician. He advises that opportunities like internships, assisting with research projects and attending office hours are great ways to develop a mentoring relationship with faculty who can inspire and motivate you to achieve your goals.

After graduating from UCF, Dr. Alfonso attended Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) in South Carolina. While completing a third year radiology elective, he fell in love with the problem-solving and anatomy-oriented nature of the field. As Dr. Alfonso nears the end of his residency, he hopes to focus on pediatric radiology. When asked what drew him to this subspecialty, he stated, "When a child is sick, it's rarely their fault. I've always been drawn to helping those in their most vulnerable state."

Dr. Alfonso and his wife, a pediatric resident, recently had their first child. Speaking about the challenges as a father and resident physician, he says, "I wouldn't want it any other way. I truly love it."

## *Alumni Spotlight*

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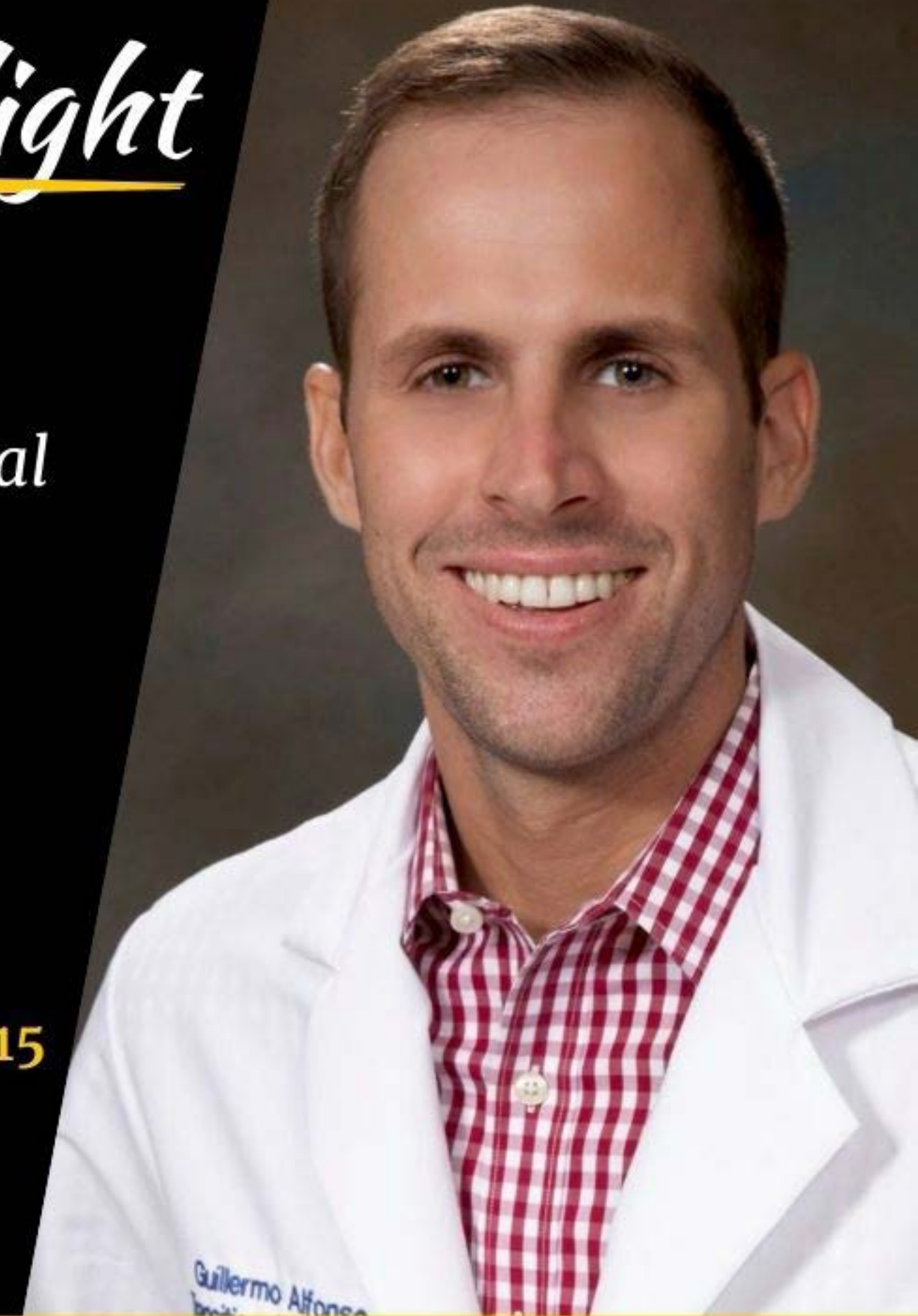
*The flexibility and clinical relevancy of the Health Sciences major played a vital role in my path to becoming a physician.*

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**DR. GUILLERMO ALFONSO '15**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

Resident Physician at the University of Arizona, College of Medicine





## **Justo Alvarez '22**

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Health Sciences major, Justo Alvarez, left home at 18 to serve in the military. “When I graduated high school, I never thought I could be successful in college. Lacking a clear career path, I decided to join the U.S. Navy.” After eight weeks of boot camp, Justo says he was a “completely changed person”. With newfound discipline and resilience, he graduated from Corpsman School at the top of his class. Soon after, Justo was stationed in North Carolina to provide medical care to Marines in training. One winter day, Justo and his roommate were alerted that a group of Marines had been stranded and needed emergency care. With the roads frozen, they hiked 15 miles through the snow to provide life-saving aid. Upon arrival, they isolated the Marines suffering from gastroenteritis and began repairing lacerations and treating cases of frostbite, dehydration, and vomiting. There for nearly a week, Justo ensured that everyone returned home safely. He recalls, “Until this mission, I had never felt so satisfied with myself. It was here that medicine became my calling.” Seven months later, Justo was severely injured and medically retired from the U.S. Navy. An aspiring emergency medicine physician, Justo hopes to save the lives of those in need to honor the fellow corpsmen who saved his life.

## *Student Spotlight*

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*Until this mission, I had never felt so satisfied with myself. It was here that medicine became my calling in life.*

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**JUSTO ALVAREZ '22**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

United States Navy Veteran





# Alumni Spotlight

## Michael Viscusi '20

Michael Viscusi, a Health Sciences Class of 2020 alum, transferred to UCF without a clear idea of his ultimate career path. After pursuing majors in Business Management and Digital Media, Michael found his home in #CHPS as a Health Sciences major. A longstanding passion for animals, Michael began shadowing at a local veterinary hospital. This experience, along with his clinically focused coursework, forged his interest in becoming a veterinarian. Reflecting on his time at UCF, Michael said, “while changing majors prolonged my graduation, it allowed me to figure out what I truly wanted to do.” Michael is thrilled to have been accepted into Louisiana State University’s Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program, which he will begin in August 2021. His advice to those traveling the long and winding road of college, “be patient and stay positive. If you keep working hard, good things will happen”.

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*Be patient and stay positive. If you keep working hard, good things will happen.*

**MICHAEL VISCUSI '20**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

Louisiana State University

School of Veterinary Medicine '25





## **Romina Homayoun '21**

Romina Homayoun is a senior majoring in Health Sciences and minoring in Spanish. Last month, Romina was inducted into the Order of Pegasus Class of 2021. The breadth of accomplishments required for this award makes the Order of Pegasus the most prestigious and significant award a student can attain at UCF. The award recognizes recipients' exemplary performance academically, as well as their outstanding contributions to university involvement, leadership, and community service. Romina graduates in May, after which she is headed for the University of Florida where she will work toward earning a Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry (DMD) degree.

## *Student Spotlight*

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*Be brave and share your stories, wear your metaphorical scars of triumph, and show people who you are and what you have gone through.*

**ROMINA HOMAYOUN '21**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

2021 Order of Pegasus Inductee  
and Future Dentist





## **Safia Centner '21**

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As a Health Sciences major, Safia Centner ('21) dedicated her time outside the classroom to leading the fight against cancer. She served on the UCF Executive Board of Relay for Life, the country's largest fundraiser benefiting the American Cancer Society, and she co-founded Be the Match at UCF, an organization dedicated to supporting those affected by blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma. Safia says, "Starting an organization from scratch and contributing to an amazing cause like Relay for Life were among my most meaningful experiences as a Knight. Those experiences taught me the importance of being a team leader AND a team player."

A testament to her leadership and academic success, Safia was inducted into the Order of Pegasus Class of 2020, UCF's most prestigious and significant student award. Now a first year medical student at the UCF College of Medicine (COM), Safia credits her success to faculty like Dr. Suha Saleh and to the opportunities she had as a student in CHPS. When talking about her major she says, "Majoring in Health Sciences prepared me tremendously for medical school and beyond."

Reflecting on receiving her white coat this August, Safia says, "To me, it represents the culmination of time and effort I have dedicated since high school."

## *Alumni Spotlight*

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*Being a Health Sciences major prepared me tremendously for medical school and beyond.*

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**SAFIA CENTNER '21**

**Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)**

*First-Year Medical Student at the UCF College of Medicine*





## **Sarah Moyer '21**

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Single mom and magna cum laude Health Sciences graduate, Sarah Moyer, has persevered and is proof that keeping your goals and purpose at the forefront of everything you do leads to success. While family and some of her closest friends doubted that she could manage being a student and a mother concurrently, her determination to graduate and position herself as a competitive candidate for medical school kept her on track. During her pregnancy and after the birth of her son in 2019, Sarah had to do a lot of juggling to overcome challenges. Of this difficult time, Sarah says, “I was forced to really believe in myself and to be my own advocate.”

While being a full-time “super-mom”, Sarah has served as a teaching assistant for multiple courses and was awarded a “Judge’s Choice Award” at the 2021 UCF Scholar Symposium for her research proposal on depression and diabetes. Driven by a passion for diversity and inclusion, Sarah has also held leadership positions in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

When confronted with adversity, Sarah encourages each of her peers to adapt and “keep your goals and purpose at the forefront of everything you do.”

## *Student Spotlight*

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*Keep your goals and purpose at the forefront of everything you do.*

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### **SARAH MOYER '21**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

Single mom and *Magna Cum Laude* graduate





## **Taylor Duffy '20**

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Taylor Duffy, a Health Sciences Class of 2020 alum and UCF Order of Pegasus Inductee, is a service-oriented Knight who aspires to a career that merges his passions for public health and medicine. Taylor founded and served as president of Knights Exemplar (KE), an organization providing mentorship to UCF students with intellectual disabilities. KE was selected as UCF's 2020 "Registered Student Organization of the Year". Taylor also received the 2020 Student Diversity & Inclusion Impact Award.

Post-graduation, Taylor was appointed by the Orange County FL Government's Board of County Commissioners to serve on the county's Disability Advisory Board and the Citizens' Review Panel for Human Services. In April 2021, he had the honor of speaking at the UCF Board of Trustees meeting where he shared how UCF shaped him and his future. Listen to Taylor's message here: <https://lnkd.in/dnGeZgv>.

Taylor remains active in the UCF community as a Research Assistant, Health Sciences Alumni Ambassador, and co-founder of the UCF Pre-Health Alumni Mentorship Program. Taylor continues to gain clinical experience through his work as a medical scribe and hopes to pursue a dual MD/MPH degree.

## *Alumni Spotlight*

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*I left UCF with a burning passion for education and its intersection with health, medicine, accessibility, and public policy. For me, it's not about choosing any one of these, but **choosing all.***

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**TAYLOR DUFFY '20**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

2020 Order of Pegasus Inductee





## **Sean Singh '21**

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Sean Singh is a Spring 2021 Health Sciences graduate. As a first-generation Knight, Sean was the first in his family to navigate the experience of college. As such, he sought out the support of programs such as Knights of Distinction and PRIME STEM to provide him with the tools to become a physician assistant. Sean says, “through these programs, I was able to come out of my shell and blossom into a future graduate student. They have molded me into the person I am today.” Sean’s advice to first-generation students, “Join organizations, seek out resources, and surround yourself with people that are willing to help you. Once you show your interest, people will be happy to help you.”

## *Student Spotlight*

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*Join organizations, seek out resources, and surround yourself with people that are willing to help you. Once you show your interest, people will be **happy** to help you.*

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**SEAN SINGH '21**

Health Sciences (Pre-Clinical Track)

*Advice for fellow first-generation Knights*





**2020-2021**

**HEALTH SCIENCES  
STUDENT AWARDS**

**Order of Pegasus**

Romina Homayoun

**Founder's Day Award**

Riley Shurack

**30 Under 30**

Ashley Culbreth '13





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