



UC Merced Updates - Spring 2026

UCGHI Representation at UC Merced



[Dalia Magaña, PhD](#)

UCGHI Advisory Council, UCGHI GloCal Health Fellowship Steering Committee, Associate Professor, Spanish Linguistics

The [UC Global Health Institute](#) (UCGHI) continues to advance the University of California's leadership in global health through active engagement across the UC and on the UC Merced campus.

This 2025-2026 academic year, we are pleased to highlight the appointment of three new [UCGHI Student Ambassadors](#) at UC Merced.

UCGHI Student Ambassadors (UC Merced)

Blossom Miakiakwua Abudu
(Public Health)



Elizabeth Amankwah
(PhD in Public Health)



Felix Opoku
(PhD in Public Health)



UCGHI Centers and Programs supported campus-based activities that align with UC systemwide priorities, including health workforce development, research, and climate leadership.

UC Merced Updates - Spring 2026 (cont'd)

- [UCGHI Water and Health Research Fellow](#), Felix Opoko (second-year PhD student), finished his fellowship in Fall 2025 which focused on harmful algal bloom causes, toxicity, and global mitigation strategies. Felix is now serving as a UCGHI Student Ambassador and a member of the Scientific Organizing Committee for UCGHI's Water and Health Research Conference (Jan 29, 2027).



Felix Opoko

- [Latinxs and the Environment](#), a flagship program by the [UCGHI Center for Planetary Health](#), expanded to UC Merced with a new student chapter led by Postdoctoral Scholar, Dr. Michael Rodriguez (UCM).
- [UCGHI Summer Researchers in Global Health \(SRGH\) Program](#) - Three rising high school seniors completed their 2025 summer internships at UC Merced.
 - **Isabella Medina** (Merced High School) and **Shradha Kesari** (Irvington High School)
 - [Project](#): Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Mental Health: Expanding Access and Support in the San Joaquin Valley (Mentors: [Dr. Kesia Garibay](#), [Dr. Nancy Burke](#))
 - **Navya Sinha** (Hillsdale High School)
 - [Project](#): Characterizing Endothelial Vascular Cells Through Single-Cell RNA Sequencing Data Analysis (Mentors: [Dr. Kara McCloskey](#), [Maria Mendoza](#))



Isabella Medina and Shradha Kesari

"I'm grateful to be part of the UCGHI SRGH internship as it allows me to explore meaningful solutions to health disparities locally."
- Shradha Kesari

Watch Shradha and Isabella's full research presentation on [UCGHI's YouTube](#).

We appreciate the continued partnership of UC Merced leadership and look forward to building on this momentum in the coming quarter.