

CMGMH Scholarship Awardees 2021-2022

The 2021-2022 scholarship awardees—**Ajaycia Jackson, Guissel Marroquin, Denisse Ochoa, Janelle Ridley, Emily Rowland, and Delora Sutton**—were selected based on a combination of academic achievements, volunteer and community service to underserved groups, demonstrable commitment to social justice and advocacy, leadership skills, and financial needs. As CMGMH Fellows, they will actively engage in mentoring, community service, social-cultural, and professional development initiatives at WJC. The six new CMGMH Scholarship Fellows are profiled below.



Ajaycia Jackson

Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MA

Concentration(s): African & Caribbean Mental Health

Favorite Quote: *“If you run out of hope at the end of the day, rise in the morning and put it on again with your shoes.”* - Barbara Kingslover

Ajaycia is an African American woman from Mattapan, Massachusetts. She received her undergraduate psychology degree from the illustrious HBCU, Clark

Atlanta University, in 2019 and is excited to be continuing her education at WJC. One accomplishment of which she is most proud is graduating from Clark Atlanta University Magna Cum Laude.

Ajaycia is particularly interested in working with youth and families that come from under-resourced communities with the goal of improving their qualities of life and to help people transition from just surviving to thriving as well.

During her time at William James College, she hopes to advocate for social justice-related issues by educating her community and peers, most likely through social media posts, to bridge the gap between available resources and communities in need. She also hopes to be more involved in the communities around Boston through different service events and opportunities. In the future, **Ajaycia hopes to be able to work for herself and start a non-profit to assist the people of her community.**

When reflecting on hobbies and activities she enjoys, Ajaycia considers listening to music her favorite past time.

Ajaycia writes about being a recipient of the Serving the Underserved Scholarship: *“It is very meaningful to me, to know that there are people who understand and acknowledge my passion and want to help me to make that come true. It's a great*

feeling truly, and I will definitely use this assistance to my benefit and make this experience worthwhile."

Guissel Marroquin

Organizational Psychology, MA

Favorite Quote: *"To remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all."* - Elie Wiesel



Denisse Ochoa

Clinical Psychology, PsyD

Concentration(s): Children & Families of Adversity & Resilience, Neuropsychology

Favorite Quote: *"The quest for love changes us. There is no seeker among those who search for love who has not matured on the way. The moment you start looking for love, you start to change within and without."* - Shams Tabrizi, The Forty Rules of Love

Denisse is a queer, cis-gender, Spanish-speaking, white, Latinx woman from Brooklyn, New York. She is a professional counselor and earned her master's degree from Penn State University. Denisse is currently a first-year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at WJC. Prior to pursuing her doctoral degree, she served as a School Clinician providing individual and group therapy for several years before changing course to live abroad in Palestine, where she worked as an English Teacher. Much of her clinical experience has focused children and adolescents in low-income BIPOC communities.

Denisse is an active member of the National Latinx Psychological Association's Student Committee, APA's Graduate Student Committee for the Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Diversity mentoring program, and the Latino Mental Health concentration at WJC. Denisse believes that there is not enough transparency about the racism that occurs in our own BIPOC communities, and is passionate about expanding consciousness in this area.

Denisse is interested in improving psychology's practice towards underrepresented and diverse populations, including serving refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, Denisse is passionate about the recruitment and retention of BIPOC students in higher education. She looks forward to continuing engaging in trainings that advocate for

underserved populations as well as participating in community service events, volunteer, and service-learning opportunities at WJC.

Ultimately, Denisse dreams of opening a community center to provide free and low-cost mental health services to underserved populations in overlooked locations.

In addition to being fluent in English and Spanish, Denisse is currently learning Arabic. Her favorite self-care activity is going on discovery trips with her rescue dog, Sadie.

Denisse shares about being a recipient of the Serving the Underserved Scholarship, “It feels validating to know that my work is valued by people in power. It feels reinforcing to know that there are people out there who actually put their money where their mouth is and support the development of underserved populations. I am honored. I am thankful. I am “an underserved” population that gets the opportunity to excel in higher education thanks to funding like this scholarship. Thank you for opening this door for me, I literally would not be here today if it had not been the case.”



Janelle Ridley

Organizational Psychology, MA

Concentration(s): Global Mental Health

Favorite Quote: “Our fear is not that we are inadequate, Our fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.” - Marianne Williamson

Janelle has worked for **Boston Public Schools (BPS) as the Coordinator for System-Involved Youth and is currently in the Boston Mayor’s Office.** She is an expert in identifying and implementing services to aid youth transitioning from detention back to BPS and seeks to intentionally foster educational equity and actively work to dismantle the school to prison pipeline.

Janelle’s proudest accomplishment is her son. She writes, “*Being his mom is my most rewarding accomplishment.*”



Emily Rowland

School Psychology, MA/CAGS

Concentration(s): African & Caribbean Mental Health

Favorite Quote: *“For what it’s worth...it’s never too late or, in my case, too early to be whoever you want to be...I hope you live a life you’re proud of, and if you’re not, I hope you have the courage to start over again.” - F. Scott Fitzgerald*

Emily is an Irish American woman who grew up in Winchester, Massachusetts. She attended Stonehill College where she majored in psychology and minored in political science. Some of her clinical experiences include working in residential group homes for children with significant trauma histories and interning under an adjustment counselor in a **Brockton elementary school**. Currently, Emily is working as a **Lead Direct Care Assistant at L’Arche Boston North**, a group home for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She is most proud of her commitment to community service as an undergraduate student, which led Emily to her current position working to provide direct care to the underserved population of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

One of Emily’s passions is advocating for the social justice of people with disabilities. As a fellow in the Masters/CAGS School Psychology program, she aspires to gain clinical competency in working with diverse populations including children with emotional, social, developmental, and intellectual disabilities. Some of Emily’s potential research interests include resilience, learning disabilities, and the transition to young adulthood for these populations.

Emily aspires to broaden her knowledge of multiculturalism, learn more effective ways to be an advocate for social justice, and build relationships with community partners within the Newton area. In the future, Emily hopes to be a licensed school psychologist. She aspires to work in a school system with a diverse population and intends to base her practices off of evidence based, multi-cultural research as well as her passion for social justice.

A self-care activity Emily enjoys is spending time with animals.

Emily feels *“honored to be selected as a recipient of the Serving the Underserved Scholarship as I think social justice for people with disabilities is under acknowledged within our society. I am very excited to be [in] a community of others advocating for social justice, and learn from others!”*



Delora Sutton

Clinical Psychology, PsyD

Concentration(s): Forensic Psychology, African & Caribbean Mental Health

Favorite Quote: *“Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always.”* - Robin Williams

Delora is an African American woman, originally from Raleigh, North Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Dance Therapy from Meredith College. She created this degree to combine two subjects that she was passionate about, Psychology and Dance. Delora went on to complete

her Master of Arts in Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling from Antioch University New England. She is a **Registered Dance/Movement Therapist** whose career started as an Intensive In-Home Qualified Professional at **The Aya Center**, developing and implementing home based behavioral interventions with at risk youth and their families. In this position, Delora also administered a battery of psychological testing, including IQ testing to determine eligibility for IEPs in children and testing to identify disabilities in adults.

Most recently, Delora worked as a Dance/Movement Therapist in a forensic setting at **Napa State Hospital**, with patients found mentally incompetent to stand trial. During her time as a Dance/Movement Therapist at Napa State Hospital, Delora's commitment and willingness to speak on racial and social justice matters within the hospital setting allowed her the privilege to be recommended to represent her hospital for a statewide Racial Justice and Equity committee.

Delora's research interests include addressing the stigma around mental health services and Black Christian churches. She wants to continue advocating for mental health services to underserved communities as well as individuals involved in the criminal justice system. With the goal to become a culturally humble clinician who affects change in communities of color, Delora will work to become involved in policy work, actively improving pre-employment psychological evaluations and fitness for duty evaluations for police officers.

Delora is proud that she is raising her daughter to be a smart, thoughtful, individual who wants to help others. An interesting fact about her background is that all her degrees have been from different schools in different states. In her free time, Delora loves to dance and eat.

Delora says about being a recipient of the Serving the Underserved Scholarship: *“It is an honor and a privilege to have been awarded such a prestigious award. This award lets me know that I am on the right path in my desire of making a difference in underserved communities.”*