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FIRST-GEN STUDENT THRIVES IN ARBORETUM INTERNSHIP

Dear <<informal salutation>>,

Brisny Argueta Balan, a civil engineering major and first-generation college student, shares that gaining experience outside the classroom during her freshman year was very important to her. When she heard about the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden's Learning by Leading™ internship program, she was instantly intrigued. "The Arboretum is one of my favorite spots on campus."

Brisny became an Arboretum Ambassador, a cohort of interns who play a central role in fostering a vibrant community and providing a sense of belonging to students in the Learning by Leading™ program. They also are a direct connection to the broader campus population, visitors, and guests of the Arboretum and Public Garden. Brisny was particularly excited to be part of a first-generation cohort of ambassadors, led by outreach and leadership program manager Melissa Cruz Hernandez.

"Mentoring the first-generation college student cohort has been an incredibly rewarding and meaningful experience for me," Melissa said. "It's inspiring to watch them build confidence, develop leadership skills, and find a sense of belonging. Supporting and uplifting students who are the first in their families to navigate college feels like a dream come true."

Arboretum Ambassadors engage in projects focused on public engagement, stewardship, and outreach, and seek collaborative opportunities with other campus groups to improve visitor experiences. **The Learning by Leading™ program provides undergraduates with opportunities to learn about issues facing California's environment, develop leadership skills, and apply classroom learning to real-world experiences.**

Learning by Leading™ helps us grow the environmental leaders of tomorrow. Please join us in this important work by giving to the Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden Annual Fund.

With thanks and warm regards,

Ann Daniel and Kristen Bennett

Co-Presidents, Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden



"This program has helped me grow both as a person and as a student, and I know it is preparing me for the future, where I plan to become the first engineer in my family."

- **BRISNY ARGUETA BALAN (LEFT)**

P.S. In addition to supporting students like Brisny now, we'll direct 10% of each gift into our permanent Friends Endowment Fund to support Learning by Leading™ and other education programs in perpetuity.