Husky 100 Includes Two LSJ Majors

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By Emma York, LSJ Communications Student Assistant

Two seniors in Law, Societies, and Justice -- Rodha Sheikh and Erika Arias -- are part of this year's Husky 100, due to their impressive journeys as undergraduate students. LSJ is proud to be the home of two such exceptional individuals and to have played a role in shaping their Husky experiences.

“To think that my journey is something to be awarded felt good,” said Rodha. “I was very flattered and honored.”

The Husky 100 is an annual award that recognizes undergraduate and graduate students across all three campuses that make the
most of their time at UW. Applicants are assessed by the extent of their community engagement, their embrace of inclusivity, and their capacity for leadership. Based on their extensive work both on and off campus, Rodha and Erika embody these criteria.

Rodha has been involved in many activities that have helped inform her passion for social justice through education. Since she was a freshman, Rodha has been involved with the Pipeline Project at UW, which enabled her to lead her own seminar – a STEM outreach program at her alma mater, Highline High School. In addition, she interned with Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal’s office in Washington DC last summer. In connection to LSJ, she is a participant in the book club at Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women.

Looking ahead, Rodha is enthusiastic to continue pursuing her interests in education and social justice. Following graduation, Rodha will be working with an organization called Free the Facts in DC, where she will educate college-aged students on pressing issues. In particular, she will focus on the increasing use of life sentences due to the work of Professor Steve Herbert. Additionally, Rodha is a recipient of the Fulbright English-teaching award for Malaysia in 2020.

The foundation of an LSJ education has been critical to both informing Rodha’s interests and shaping her career path.

“I am so grateful for my journey at UW,” she said. “Even my experiences in STEM classes that were really difficult and not so pleasant ended up helping me find LSJ and being really confident that LSJ was meant to be my major. LSJ has been transformative. I think social justice has been a part of me prior to being at UW, but LSJ further emphasized it and has helped shaped my professional career around social justice.”

Joining Rodha as part of the Husky 100, Erika Arias is majoring in LSJ and International Studies. Erika has been involved in a number of research opportunities while at UW, including a group effort to transcribe texts from the late Ottoman Empire and an individual project in which she used mapping software to chart changes in the Tigris River. As a Ronald E. McNair Scholar, she was afforded support in both her undergraduate endeavors and future ambitions. In addition to research, Erika has been a role model to other students as both a First-Year Interest Group (FIG) leader and a participant in the Mentor Power for Success Program at the Ethnic Cultural Center.

Some of the opportunities Erika was afforded by studying LSJ was participation in the Mixed Enrollment course at the Washington State Reformatory and studying abroad in Rome.

Erika indicated that the courses and community engagement she experienced in LSJ, particularly those with a human rights focus, were able to narrow down her interests and what she is most passionate about.

“LSJ has given me the opportunity to try different things that I wouldn’t have been able to do in any other major,” said Erika. “I also think it is amazing that UW has this to spotlight 100 students on their campus, and it is cool to see the other students who got it who are doing such amazing work.”

At the intersection of both of her areas of study, Erika is considering continuing her education with graduate school. She is interested in research concerning conflict and civil-military relations, with a focus on Latin America and the Middle East.

LSJ adviser, Qanani Kali, nominated both Erika and Rodha for the Husky 100 award due to their exceptional work during their undergraduate career that best illustrates the type of students for whom LSJ is home.

“Rodha and Erika are both extraordinary LSJ students,” Qanani said. “They’re very involved inside and outside of the classroom, both
on and off campus. I am always amazed to learn about the new projects they're working on or the work they are doing in the community. I am immensely proud for both of them to represent LSJ and UW to the community."

Check out the rest of the individuals selected for the 2019 Husky 100.