

Meet Our 2017-2018 Carolina United Co-Directors



We sat down with Carolina United Co-Directors, Priya Patel and Laleh Emadi to get know a little bit more about them and their goals for uniting the Carolina community. Learn more about Carolina United [here!](#)

Can I get your name, year, major.

P: I'm Priya Patel, I'm a junior, and my major is econ & global studies.

E: My name is Laleh Emadi; I am a junior majoring in Hispanic linguistics with minors in neuroscience & medical anthropology.

Tell us about what you do as Co-Directors.

E: We do a lot of the behind the scenes, logistical planning of the event. We are going to be figuring out the curriculum of the program, what kind of lessons we want to teach, and what kind of discussions we want to have. As we get closer to the event, we may tailor it to current events so it's a relevant, relatable experience.

P: Our main role as co-directors at camp would be helping facilitate those discussions, help

the counselors, help the participants?

E: This year I think it's also important that we're taking more of a step back and supervising rather than directly facilitating discussions. We'll have some of the bigger lessons with all the counselors and all the campers, but again, the counselors will be in the small groups and it's going to be our job to guide them through how they want to run their sessions.

You talked about developing a curriculum, what are the main points or topics that you all like to address?

P: Some of the main points are intersectionality: figuring out who you are as a person which would later help with self actualization; helping to figure out who you are and then how that's going to help you become a leader in the future both on campus and off campus.

E: Another integral part of the program is the whole concept of vulnerability. Each year we watch a TED talk by Brené Brown about vulnerability and its importance in spaces like Carolina United. where we can be comfortable sharing our true identities, all of them combined, and not have to hide any of them, not have to feel judged, because CU is a place where you can come as you are and have meaningful conversations with people who are both very similar to you and have a lot of your same experiences but also are very different from yourself.

Are either of you returning co-directors or previous participants from the program?

P: Both of us participated in the program. We applied our freshman year and became participants the summer before our sophomore year and then we both returned as counselors last year.

Can you talk to me about your experiences so far with Carolina United as a whole or some of the most memorable experiences you've had?

E: The program in general is definitely the most welcoming experience I've had at UNC. I feel the most at peace with CU more than any other community or organization at Carolina just because of the nature of the program and the people who are there. I think one of the things that I love the most about it is that everyone is very into getting to know each other. Someone that you just met five minutes ago you can go say "Hey, do you want to come join this game thing once everyone's going to bed?" or something like that. One of my favorite things was staying up late one of the nights talking with a camper that wasn't even in my small group and just getting to know her super well. It's really cool.

P: Piggy-backing off that, the fact that you're going to a random place in North Carolina that's kind of excluded from everyone else with sixty-five to seventy random people that you've never met people and coming out as a family and coming back to campus and having them and just seeing them around is awesome.

E: One of the best things about it is that it's right before school starts. It reminds me about how much I love coming to Carolina because every year before classes start again, I'm very hesitant, I'm kind of dreading starting class again, and I come to CU and am reminded of all the great people that attend this school, and I can just come into the new semester with a really great mindset.

What would you say to students interested in participating in the program?

E & P: Apply!

P: Definitely apply, it's one of the best experiences at Carolina. It teaches you a lot about yourself and about others on our campus, also about all the diversity our campus has to offer even though it might not be seen when you're just on campus. It's not just diversity as in skin color or race; it gives a holistic view of diversity, it takes into account your documentation status, your economic status, and things you would never really think about, so it's really helpful.

Any closing thoughts?

E: CU is a great place to learn. If you're an ally to students this is a great place to come expand your knowledge about how you can be a very useful part of the campus in making social policy changes for the better. CU is also a great place for students of color and other marginalized communities to bond and feel validated, heard, and loved? it's become a very diverse place where you can connect and relate to people. I think that being able to relate to people who have some of our same experiences is so so healthy, and that's necessary because we don't get that a lot here.

P: I'm really excited for the upcoming year and CU in general and to work with Laleh and Kate and everyone else.

Thank you Priya and Laleh!

For more information about applying to Carolina United, click [here](#).

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