

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Graduating UCSB Seniors Receive Top Awards

Three graduating UC Santa Barbara seniors will receive the university's top three awards for their academic achievements, their service to the campus, and their courage and determination to succeed.

Iliana Martinez, a Regents Scholar and sociology honors student from Hesperia, will receive the Thomas More Storke Award, the campus's highest student honor.

Martinez earned a 3.87 grade point average while volunteering her services broadly on campus and in the community.

She was a co-founder and co-director of the Advancing College Transitions Mentor Program, and director of the Associated Students' Child-Care Grant Program.

She worked as a bilingual aide and volunteer teacher at Isla Vista Elementary School, a tutor for fifth- and sixth-graders through the College of Letters and Science's Honors Program, a counselor to children with cancer at Camp Ronald McDonald, and a mentor to a junior high student through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Enlace y Avance partnership, which is led by UCSB.

Denise Bielby, professor of sociology and faculty nominator for the award, states that Martinez is "without question, one of the finest, brightest, and most motivated undergraduates I have encountered in 25 years at UCSB."

Jordan Lee Fruchtman, a Global Studies major with an emphasis on the Middle East from Oakland, will receive the Jeremy D. Friedman Memorial Award for his strong academic record, extensive community service and history of outstanding leadership to the Jewish student population. Rabbi Stephen Cohen, who nominated Fruchtman for the award, states that he is "a young man with an unquenchable passion for service, an amazingly creative, versatile mind, and an inspiring moral vision."

Cohen is director of Hillel, the organization that serves UCSB's Jewish students.

Michelle Erika Unzueta, a double major in business economics and law and society from Los Angeles, will receive the Alyce Marita Whitted Award, which is presented annually to a non-traditional graduating senior who has demonstrated endurance, persistence and courage in the face of extraordinary challenges while in pursuit of an academic degree.

Since she was 19 years old, Unzueta has been the sole support of her disabled mother, juggling academics, full- and part-time jobs and her mother's care.

An outstanding student, Unzueta has been described by her nominator, Gaston Espinosa, who directed the Hispanic Churches In American Public Life project in UCSB's department of religious studies, as a "fiercely independent and a creative thinker."

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.