

# THE *Current*

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## **Top Awards for 3 Outstanding UCSB Graduating Seniors**

Three remarkable graduating seniors at the University of California, Santa Barbara, have been named winners of the university's top awards for their scholastic achievements, their extraordinary service to the university and the community, and their personal courage and persistence.

·Areo G. Saffarzadeh of Sherman Oaks is the winner of the Thomas More Storke Award, the campus's highest student honor, for outstanding scholarship and extraordinary service to the university, its students, and the community.

·David Benjamin Landes of Redwood City is the winner of the Jeremy D. Friedman Memorial Award for outstanding leadership, superior scholarship, and contributions to undergraduate life on campus.

·Brittany Lakeisha Logan of Placencia is the winner of the Alyce Marita Whitted Memorial Award in recognition of endurance, persistence, and courage in the face of extraordinary challenges.

These and other student-award winners will be honored at a University Awards Ceremony and Reception on Friday, June 15, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Corwin Pavilion on campus.

Areo G. Saffarzadeh, the Storke Award winner, is an honors student with a double major in business economics and biology. For his senior thesis, he combined his

studies in both areas to research the economic value and biological risks of implementing a mandatory human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for 12 year-old girls.

"What impresses me most, even amazes me, is that Areo's superb academic performance is equally matched with the energy he puts into helping the campus and local community," wrote Robert Geller, a lecturer in the physics department who nominated Areo for the award. "In the thousands of students I have seen, no one matches Areo in having these academic and altruistic qualities. He is truly on a mission to make the world a better place."

During his years at UCSB, Areo performed regularly with both the Middle East Ensemble and his own fusion Spanish/Middle Eastern rock band. Combining his love for music and his desire to work with children, he founded the student organization Musicians Making a Difference, which provides tutoring and free music lessons to low-income children at Isla Vista Elementary School. With a grant from the Donald Strauss Foundation he established the ancillary program Making Melodies, which purchases books and musical instruments to be used by children participating in the Musicians Making a Difference program.

In addition, Areo was a founding officer of the organization Project Smile, which encourages dentists to provide orthodontic care to low-income families in exchange for volunteer work by pre-dental students. He also tutored introductory physics for Campus Learning Assistance Service (CLAS), and participated in the Associated Students Fee Initiative campaign last fall.

Areo, whose parents immigrated to the United States from Iran 25 years ago, is the first in his family to be born in this country and considers his acceptance to UCSB as the "turning point" in his life. He plans to attend a medical school that offers both a medical degree and a master's degree in business administration.

David Benjamin Landes, the Friedman Award winner, is a scholar, teacher, writer, actor, and accomplished musician. In addition to designing his own writing and rhetoric major, he worked with the director of the Writing Program to develop and establish writing and rhetoric as majors offered to other students. He also collaborated with faculty on the design, shape, and teaching of two upper division courses, and as the first undergraduate student to be offered a teaching assistant position in the Writing Program, he led sections on visual rhetoric and the rhetoric of

music and technology.

As a tutor for CLAS, he helped fellow students hone their writing skills and also tutored course material in linguistics, grammar, philosophy, film studies, political science, and music.

A skilled musician, David has performed with several community and campus music groups at the San Jose and Reno Jazz Festivals, UCSB's Art Museum and College of Creative Studies, and with the UCSB jazz combo. Also, he has shared billing with the Julliard String Quartet at a Chancellor's Reception for donors and performed in front of 4,000 students at a New Student Convocation.

David plans to earn his master's and doctoral degrees in rhetoric and communication from the University of Pittsburgh.

Brittany Lakeisha Logan, winner of the Whitted Memorial Award, overcame enormous obstacles to pursue her goal of graduating from UCSB. Wrote one of her nominators: "While I admire her intelligence, ambition, and energy, I am simply awestruck by her resilience, determination, and strength of character."

Brittany's story is truly inspirational. As a high school student, she began to experience unexplained blackouts, which eventually were attributed to epilepsy. Later, when Brittany was 17, her mother abandoned her, and she was sent to live with temporary guardians.

While majoring in global studies at UCSB, Brittany supported herself by working 40 to 50 hours per week. At the same time, she co-founded the University Task Force for Uniting and Redefining Nightlife (U-TURN). She also served as vice president of Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society, and has held resident assistant positions at Santa Cruz Hall and with the Summer Transitional Education Program and Upward Bound.

In addition, she participated in study programs at King's College, University of Cambridge, and the UCSB Washington Center.

Brittany will begin law school next fall and plans to work for an international humanitarian organization.

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## **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.