

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Announces Winners of Thomas More Storke Award and Other Top Prizes for Outstanding Graduating Seniors

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

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Harrison E. Weber, of Falmouth, Maine, is the recipient of the Thomas More Storke Award for Excellence, the campus's highest student honor, for outstanding scholarship and extraordinary service to the university, its students, and the community.

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Seth R. Gorelik, of Los Angeles, is the recipient of the Jeremy D. Friedman Memorial Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership, superior scholarship, and contributions to undergraduate life on campus.

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Antoinette L. Moreland-Carter, of Carson, is the recipient of the Alyce Marita Whitted Memorial Award, which recognizes a non-traditional student's endurance, persistence, and courage in the face of extraordinary challenges while pursuing an academic degree.

These and other student award winners will be honored at a University Awards Ceremony and Reception on Friday, June 15, from 3:30 to 6 p.m. in the campus's Corwin Pavilion. The winner of the Storke Award will also be honored at the Humanities and Arts Commencement ceremony at 1 p.m., Sunday, June 17, on the Commencement Green.

Harrison E. Weber, the Storke Award winner, is an honors student who one nominator described as "a visionary who has the courage and commitment to tackle big ideas." A tireless advocate for students, Weber has been a highly effective Associated Students (A.S.) president, and an influential leader impacting policy and practice in the UC system as a whole.

During his time at UCSB, Weber has influenced many areas of campus life, including student healthcare services, capital planning, and policies and practices related to judicial affairs and student protests. As A.S. president, he created the position of vice president for public health; and, as the undergraduate chair of the UC systemwide presidents, he co-authored a letter outlining concerns about proposed changes to student healthcare and insurance.

Weber also was able to broker an unprecedented agreement between UCSB students and the administration that promised nonviolent protests as long as the campus respected the rights of students to engage in freedom of expression around volatile issues. In his capacity as Student Advocate General, he lobbied to implement restorative justice practices across campus that resulted in the formation of the Restorative Justice Implementation Committee, which began its work during the current academic year.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree with distinction in the history of public policy, Weber was described by another nominator as "mature, insightful, sensitive, politically astute, articulate, intelligent, and hard-working," and as someone who combines the capacity to lead with a strongly grounded social conscience.

Remarkably, Weber's journey to UCSB almost didn't happen after he sustained brain injuries from an accident during his senior year in high school. These led to a

sustained absence from school, impacted his cognitive processing ability, and put both high school graduation and college admission at risk. With tremendous perseverance, Weber did graduate, and, after gaining admission to a range of top universities, decided to leave his hometown to attend school on the West Coast.

After graduation from UCSB, Weber plans to pursue joint degrees in law and public policy or public service at UC Berkeley, New York University, Columbia, or the University of Michigan.

Seth R. Gorelik, recipient of the Friedman award, is graduating with a degree in geography. Describing him as "a rock star of a worker" and "a poster child for the kind of student we want," Gorelik's nominator credits him with increasing the visibility of geography and of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) on campus.

Gorelik's commitment to excellence in geography is evident in his academic achievement as well as his extracurricular involvement. While at UCSB, he worked as a student intern for the geography department's VIPER Lab, and as a research assistant for the Earth Research Institute, in addition to concurrent responsibilities as a grader for the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Santa Barbara City College. He participated as a volunteer at the Association of American Geographers 2012 Annual Meeting, and as an assistant at the 2011 Esri International User Conference.

Gorelik's most impressive achievement, according to his nominator, has emerged through his work as a student assistant in the Map and Imagery Lab at UCSB's Davidson Library. With superior technical skills and rare initiative, he led the integration of a new set of important GIS technologies into the daily work of the library. He also helped the library create digital data from a wealth of older analog materials in aerial photography, allowing for more seamless, fast, and remote access to map information.

In addition to his contributions at UCSB, Gorelik has worked as a data entry volunteer for the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens Blakesly Library Digital Image Database Project, and a student intern for the South Bay Cable Fisheries Liaison Committee. He also served as a volunteer after-school counselor with the Wilderness Youth Projects; as a camp counselor with Camp Okizu, a summer program for children battling cancer; and as a math and reading tutor for Transition House on Wheels, where he tutored an 11-year-old homeless child.

After graduation, Gorelik will begin an internship with NASA's DEVELOP program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, where he will work with other students and professionals on an earth science research project using remote sensing techniques.

As a former foster youth, Antoinette L. Moreland-Carter has shown a rare determination and perseverance. Separated from her mother and siblings at a young age, Moreland-Carter spent her early childhood in foster care. Given that fewer than 2 percent of foster youths earn bachelor's degrees -- and even fewer do so at UCSB -- Moreland-Carter's accomplishments are awe-inspiring. She is graduating with a bachelor's degree in sociology, and leaving an important legacy for former foster youths at UCSB -- the Guardian Scholars program.

The co-founder and co-chair of UCSB's Guardian Scholars, Moreland-Carter worked to raise awareness about foster youth issues on campus, provide support to Guardian Scholars, and initiate outreach to high school students in the foster care system. She expanded her work beyond UCSB in her role as founding member and secretary of the Santa Barbara County Chapter of the California Youth Connection, an organization run by former foster youths who work with local and state leaders to enact policy changes affecting this population.

Additionally, Moreland-Carter was a founding member and outreach chair of Behind the Walls, a student support and activist group for college students who have loved ones in the prison system. She has acted as a liaison with nonprofit organizations helping youth visit family members who are serving sentences. Recently, she became involved with Freedom4Youth, which pairs youths in the juvenile justice system with college-age mentors. She is also a member of the campus's Black Student Union, and the UCSB Gospel Choir. At the same time, Moreland-Carter has supported herself financially by working as a student manager at the campus's Coral Tree Café, where her day begins at 5 a.m.

Despite setbacks, Moreland-Carter has, according to her nominator, demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her education, and an uncommon resilience. She has transformed hardships into opportunities for leadership and service. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector with organizations that support foster youths and their families.

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.