

# THE *Current*

June 20, 2023

[Shelly Leachman](#)

## **And just like that ... a new crop of Gaucho grads takes a bow**

Almost as if on cue, Mother Nature served up some much-needed blue sky and sunshine to kick off UC Santa Barbara's weekend commencement exercises, which featured six undergraduate ceremonies over two days to officially confer bachelor's degrees on students from the College of Engineering and the Divisions of Social Sciences, Humanities & Fine Arts, and Math, Life & Physical Sciences. The university's Graduate Division, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management and College of Creative Studies held their respective celebrations during the week.

With the dial set to loud, the mood unabashedly festive and "Pomp & Circumstance" on repeat, thousands of cap-and-gown-clad grads wended their way from the Thunderdome, across the bike path, behind Hatlen Theater, toward the lagoon and onto Commencement Green to the cheers of family and friends. On other parts of campus, similarly joyous scenes unfolded at Black Graduation and Comunidad Latinx Graduación.

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Jeff Liang  
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- Deans welcomed grads and guests; anthems were sung; Chancellor Henry T. Yang offered an address at every ceremony. Student speakers and guest speakers alike served up inspiration and perspectives from their own lives and, more than once, from Kung Fu Panda.

“Today, fellow graduates, we are Po,” said speaker Athena Wang, referring to the lovable and trailblazing bear who, against all odds, becomes the Dragon Warrior and saves his village from the villainous snow leopard Tai Lung. “We’ve learned to follow our passions, find our inner strength and apply them to any job, any path, any walk of life.”

Their first walk, though? Across the commencement stage, their names read one by one, each getting their big moment in the sun — and on the Jumbotron. Then, one last instruction from a UC Santa Barbara faculty member, to move their tassels from right to left, cementing their official status as alumni.





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- “As the wise tortoise from Kung Fu Panda once said, ‘Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift,’ said student speaker/graduate Nick Eckles, invoking the wisdom of panda Po’s teacher, Master Shifu. “So let’s all make sure to cherish the present and make the most of every moment. Thank you, and congratulations once again to the Class of 2023.”

Tags

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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.