

# THE *Current*

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[Shelly Leachman](#)

## University names winners of top student awards for Class of 2024

With graduation season in full swing, UC Santa Barbara has announced recipients of its most prestigious student honors, awarded for scholastic achievement, extraordinary service and personal courage and persistence.

- **Amelie Calderon** has won the Thomas More Storke Award for Excellence, the campus's highest honor, for her outstanding scholarship and extraordinary service to the university, its students and the community. Calderon will graduate with degrees in political science and feminist studies.
- **Marina Habib** has won the Jeremy D. Friedman Memorial Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership, superior scholarship and contributions to undergraduate life on campus. Habib will graduate with degrees in communication and sociology.
- **Andrew Smith** has won the Alyce Marita Whitted Memorial Award, which recognizes a nontraditional student's endurance, persistence and courage in the face of extraordinary challenges while pursuing an academic degree. Smith will graduate with a degree in environmental science.

An award ceremony for winners of these and other student awards, as well as for their families, faculty and staff, will be held at 3:30 p.m. Friday, June 14 in Corwin Pavilion.

The Yonie Harris Award for Civility in Public Discourse will be presented to **Angellina Monique Lugo Querol**. The honor is bestowed upon graduates who best exemplify the principles of free speech and respectful dialogue and who foster a campus climate of civility and open-mindedness. **Sarah Margaron** and **Cierra Raine Sorin** will both receive the Michael D. Young Engaged Scholar Award for students who have successfully applied their scholarly knowledge and/or values to action.

Prizes for the University Service Award, the University Award of Distinction, and the Vice Chancellor's Award for Scholarship, Leadership and Citizenship will be presented to multiple graduating seniors and graduate students. The winner of the 2024 Mortar Board Award, which recognizes the student who earned the highest cumulative GPA of the graduating class, will be announced at the ceremony.

Storke Award winner Calderon is graduating with two degrees in three years. Beyond academic pursuits, her contributions to campus spanned civic engagement, K-12 outreach and education and equitable access to basic needs. She helped to register voters among the student body as a member of Gaucho Vote, tutored local schoolchildren in literacy as a Teach for America Ignite Fellow and worked as a coordinator for the Basic Needs Pilot Program. Her innovative, interdisciplinary research, encompassing ethnic studies, feminist studies and LGBTQ studies, won funding from UCSB's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities program. She is part of the small, competitive ÉXITO, or Educational eXcellence and Inclusion Training Opportunities program.

In her time on campus, Habib, winner of the Friedman Award, demonstrated a commitment to fostering inclusivity, cultural awareness and social justice. To enter and celebrate Black entrepreneurship, she established and facilitated the Black Flea Market in recognition of Black History Month. Working at the Office of Black Student Development, she fostered communal spaces and self-care for the campus's Black community and received an OBSD Vision Fellowship for her empowerment-focused podcast, "Becoming HER." She also was a resident assistant, a peer mentor for the Educational Opportunity Program and an undergraduate researcher in the Department of Communication.

Smith, winner of the Whitted Award, [overcame extraordinary challenges](#) to earn his undergraduate degree. Near the end of his freshman year, in 2017, an accident left him severely injured, requiring him to leave campus to recover. He returned only to develop an addiction to his medications, and again withdrew from school. After

entering treatment and getting sober, he returned in 2021. He played on the lacrosse team and served as its risk management chair, worked at the UCSB Athletic Performance Center as a strength specialist and conducted undergraduate research with the Marine Science Institute.

In addition to the overall university awards, the College of Letters & Science also has recognized some of its graduating students for scholastic achievement in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and fine arts.

- **Julia Miyamoto**, who has earned a degree in microbiology, has received the Dean's Award for Outstanding Senior, in recognition of her outstanding scholarship and contributions to the campus community. The award is given on behalf of the deans of the College of Letters and Science. She was nominated, in part, "to honor her tremendous performance in her coursework, her research performance in [the] lab, and the grace and kindness with which she has treated others while at UCSB."
- **Hanna Kawamoto**, a history major, has received the William R. Reardon Undergraduate Award for outstanding academic achievement in an arts or humanities discipline. The award is named for Reardon, a professor emeritus of dramatic art and former associate dean in the College of Letters and Science. One of their co-nominators characterized them as "a terrific human," "hard-working and dedicated" and "unquestionably among the top 2% of the thousands of undergraduates I have taught and had the privilege to mentor over my tenure as a university professor."
- **Tori LeVier**, who majored in psychological and brain sciences, has received the Frances Colville and Terry Dearborn Memorial Award for outstanding academic achievement as an honors student majoring in the sciences. The award was established in memory of Colville and Dearborn, associate professors of physical education at UC Santa Barbara. Her nominators described her as "highly motivated and intellectually prepared for advanced education and research training in social psychology and cognitive neuroscience, and ... the most outstanding undergraduate researcher we have worked with at several top universities across the world."
- **Tara Mandrekar**, who will graduate with degrees in political science and feminist studies, has received the Luis Leal Award for outstanding interdisciplinary achievement in the social sciences. The award was established in honor of the late Luis Leal, a professor emeritus of Chicana and Chicano Studies, whose presence and scholarship greatly enriched the Santa Barbara campus. Described as a "once-in-a-

decade student,” she was lauded by her nominator for her academics and her character and for making “the taking of classes here only the foundation for their real accomplishments.”

Media Contact

**Shelly Leachman**

Editorial Director

(805) 893-2191

[sleachman@ucsb.edu](mailto:sleachman@ucsb.edu)

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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.