

THE *Current*

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[Sonia Fernandez](#)

UCSB's College of Creative Studies kicks off 2025 Commencement season

Eighty-six of UC Santa Barbara's finest undergraduates made their way across the commencement stage Sunday, June 8 — the College of Creative Studies (CCS) Class of 2025.

"We have seen how hard you have worked," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang in his address to the first cohort of students to graduate this Commencement season. "Some of you have held part-time jobs, many have pursued double majors; you have undertaken original research and creative projects. You have volunteered your time to help others; you have contributed to the life of our campus and community in countless ways."

"I am constantly in awe of everything that you have brought to our campus," added CCS Dean Tim Sherwood. "You remind us that the spirit of this university — collaboration, innovation, excellence, kindness and creativity lies in the creative work and the connections that we make with one another."

Known as a "graduate school for undergrads," the College of Creative Studies was established in 1967 to serve highly motivated students who demonstrate talent for original work in art or science. Originally offering degrees in art, biology, chemistry and biochemistry, math, physics, writing, literature and music composition, the

college has added computing and most recently, marine science.

“Creative Studies is where everything began for me,” said alumni speaker Angela Belcher, who was in the CCS graduating class of 1991, before going on to get her Ph.D. in chemistry in 1997. “You are full of things you are excited about, your hopes and dreams and ways you want to make an impact on the world and I can tell you that that’s unusual,” continued Belcher, currently a professor of engineering and materials science at MIT.

Since her time at UCSB, Belcher has gone on to be recognized for her work in viral self-assembling nanotechnology, with elections to the Academy of Arts & Sciences, the National Academy of Inventors and the National Academy of Engineering. In 2024, she was honored with the National Medal of Science and at the CCS commencement she received the UC Santa Barbara Medal. This drive to creatively solve problems, collaborate and innovate are “absolutely key” to the students’ continuing success, she said.

The new graduates are off to a good start. Among them, over their four years they have produced 45 original works, published

16 poems and 12 prose pieces. They have designed multiple theater productions, organized nine concerts and developed six computer applications. Additionally, they have authored 15 peer-reviewed publications and contributed to at least 35 others, while also producing more than 60 group art exhibitions, 36 individual exhibitions and 25 solo exhibitions. They also have presented 109 posters, and delivered 81 oral presentations across 12 international gatherings while receiving 81 grants. Add to that the completion of 97 internships, 58 undergraduate and seven graduate research internships and six colloquiums.

Student speakers Amanda Harris(art) and Derek H. Uy (writing and literature) were also on hand to congratulate and encourage their peers, while music composition students Donovan Walker, Terry Wong, Finlay Christensen and Cameron Schubert presented their works to the audiences. [Meiya Sidney \(art\)](#) received the Sara Sterphone Student Service Award

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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.