

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

March 19, 2026

[Sonia Fernandez](#)

Nobel laureate Shuji Nakamura to receive honorary doctorate from University of Oxford

UC Santa Barbara professor [Shuji Nakamura](#) has been selected as one of this year's recipients for a prestigious honorary degree from the University of Oxford. The inventor of the blue LED, which ushered in a revolution in energy efficient lighting all over the world, Nakamura was a co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physics.

"I am deeply honored to receive this recognition from the University of Oxford," said Nakamura, who will receive the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*. "The development of the blue LED was the result of many years of persistence and collaboration, and I am grateful to the colleagues and students who have contributed to advancing this technology and its impact on society."

A professor of both electrical and computer engineering and of materials at UCSB, Nakamura hails from Japan, where he spent the first part of his research career. His work involved the development of two-flow metal-organic chemical vapor deposition, a technology that enabled the growth of the highest quality gallium nitride crystals — the foundational material for the blue LED — and subsequently, the invention of the first high-brightness blue LED.

In 2000, Nakamura joined the faculty of UCSB, later also becoming a co-director of the campus's Solid State Lighting & Energy Electronics Center, which was formed to

advance highly efficient solid-state lighting and energy-efficient power switching using wide-bandgap semiconductors. In addition, he is the CEO of Blue Laser Fusion, Inc., and is a fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering as well as a recipient of numerous awards and honors for his work.

The presentation of an honorary degree is a time-honored tradition at the University of Oxford, which bestowed the first recorded honorary degree in 1478 or 1479. Since then, the university has recognized individuals “of conspicuous distinction” in academia, business, the arts and in public life with this honor. This year, Nakamura joins economist Daron Acemoğlu, professor of neurosurgery Katalin Karikó, literary critic and historian Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Birmingham Royal Ballet director Carlos Acosta, actress Adjoa Andoh, tennis champion Billie Jean King and business executive Dame Emma Walmsley as a recipient of the University of Oxford’s most prestigious award.

Nakamura will receive his honorary doctorate at a special ceremony, the Encaenia, at the University of Oxford on Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

Tags

[Awards](#)

Media Contact

Sonia Fernandez

Senior Science Writer

(805) 893-4765

sonia.fernandez@ucsb.edu

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.