

THE *Current*

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UCSB Alumnus Chiao Assigned as NASA Space Station Commander

NASA Astronaut Leroy Chiao, who received his doctorate in chemical engineering from UC Santa Barbara in 1987, has been assigned as commander of Expedition 9, the next mission aboard the International Space Station, according to a NASA announcement.

The expedition is scheduled for launch aboard a Soyuz spacecraft in April.

Selected by NASA in January 1990, Chiao became an astronaut in July 1991.

He is a veteran of three space flights and has logged a total of almost 37 hours in space, which included four space walks.

On his first space mission aboard Columbia in 1994, Chiao took with him a UCSB flag in honor of his alma mater and his faculty mentor Robert Rinker, professor of chemical engineering and associate dean for academic affairs at UCSB. Chiao was the first Chinese American in space.

Chiao was the recipient of a Distinguished Alumni Award in 1995.

He delivered the commencement address to UCSB engineering graduates in 1996.

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[Leroy Chiao](#)

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