

# THE *Current*

June 14, 2021

[Andrea Estrada](#)

## **Congratulations, Graduates**

The UC Santa Barbara Class of 2021 became the university's newest alumni Saturday when they were honored in a virtual commencement ceremony that included a livestreamed keynote graduation address by media executive, talk show host, author and philanthropist Oprah Winfrey. "You adjusted, you innovated, you stepped up to every challenge the pandemic could throw your way," she told the graduates. "And today you get to claim victory as we celebrate the classes of 2020 and 2021.

"You'll be telling your story to your grandchildren, the story of surviving a global health crisis, of thriving and graduating during a pandemic," she continued. "You already had, in your young lives, created a legacy of resilience, of not giving up when the challenges kept coming, of making virtual reality your reality — all while learning and growing and now moving into the next chapter of your life."

The pomp and circumstances for the Class of 2021 — and for graduates from the Class of 2020 who chose to join in — began June 7 with the Grad Walk procession. The Grad Walk allowed graduating students to hear their names called, cross a stage and be photographed against a backdrop of the campus lagoon while two guests looked on.

Saturday's commencement ceremony opened with Krishna Balagapol, who has completed her bachelor's degree in psychological and brain sciences, performing the National Anthem, and closed with her rendition of the University song, "Hail to California."

The morning's celebration continued with a number of other virtual ceremonies presented by colleges and departments to recognize and honor their respective graduates.

---

## **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.