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PRESS RELEASE

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Members of the Class of 2025 at the Toyota Arena for the CSUSB College of Natural Sciences Spring Commencement ceremony, one of five held on May 16-17.

CSUSB celebrates its Class of 2025

PALM DESERT, Calif. – The five Cal State San Bernardino Spring Commencement exercises, in the words of Carson Fajardo, the graduating student government president, were more than ceremonies. They were moments that represented “years of dedication, late nights, early mornings, setbacks and comebacks,” that changed not only the course of the graduates’ lives, “but for our families and for the communities we come from.”

And such moments, said university President Tomás D. Morales in his commencement address shared at each of the ceremonies, were built on history and on the efforts that came before.

More than 3,000 graduates from both the Palm Desert and San Bernardino campuses marched across the stage at the Toyota Arena in Ontario on May 16 and 17 to the cheers of family and friends, along with university faculty and staff. That number included 20 who received their doctorate in educational leadership, the most ever in CSUSB's history.

Many of the newly minted CSUSB alumni are the first in their families to earn a college degree. "With this achievement," Morales said, "you have broken a barrier and will now forever be a role model for siblings, relatives and future generations."

Yet as standard bearers for a future still to be written, Morales reminded them of all that came before them that collectively shaped their present. He spoke of California's indigenous First Peoples on whose homeland the two university campuses sit. He went on to recount those that came after, "waves of immigrants, willing or not," that included explorers and the enslaved, and those seeking freedom and opportunity for a better life.

"What was eventually created, and what is still being created, is a living history of California," Morales said. "A history we need to know, a history we need to value – in its ugliness and heartache, in its hope, in its moments of betterment for individual lives, and in its creation of who and what and where we are today. Where you have pursued your degree is a space filled with history, that is, the lived lives of so many humans who came before you," he told graduates and their families and friends. "Know that this is your heritage, your history – in its richness, in its diversity, in its many voices and languages and traditions. As Californians, we are not one thing. Rather we are many. And that is our strength."

Part of that strength is the foundation built and inherited "from the many, many peoples and traditions and histories which have formed and shaped each of you and your classmates," Morales said.

"You know that you are stronger and better equipped to face the future because of those who came before," he said. "We are also stronger together, not apart. As resilient individuals, facing a future which is not yet written, you have the tools, you have the skills, you have the knowledge to break new ground and build tomorrow."

In his brief remarks, Fajardo, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in administration and was [student government president for two consecutive terms](#), foreshadowed some of the thoughts Morales would later share.

"Earning a degree from Cal State San Bernardino is no small achievement," he said. "Many of us are the first in our families to do this. Many of us work jobs, sometimes more than one, while attending school full-time. Some of us commuted long hours, cared for loved ones, or balanced parenting and exams."

“But we did it. And today, we celebrate the fact that we refuse to give up,” Fajardo said. “This degree is not just a piece of paper, it is proof. Proof that we are capable, that we’re prepared, that we belong in boardrooms, classrooms, hospitals, studios, nonprofits, wherever our passion takes us. And wherever we go next, we carry our communities with us. We carry our stories, our hustle, and our pride.”

As part of the weekend celebrations the university also bestowed two honorary doctorate degrees. [Paul C. Granillo](#), a CSUSB alumnus and president and CEO of the [Inland Empire Economic Partnership](#), received a California State University Trustee-Nominated Honorary Doctor of Human Letters. [Mary Jane McCoy](#), a member of the Class of 1967 – CSUSB’s first graduating class – who had a long career as an educator in the Inland Empire, received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Like Fajardo, Granillo told his fellow graduates that CSUSB had prepared them well. “I guarantee you that your degree, your education at Cal State San Bernardino makes you ready to stand up to anybody, sit in any boardroom and accomplish anything you want,” he said to graduates during the Jack H. Brown College commencement. “Now, this is an unpredictable time to be embarking on a new career. The world is changing rapidly with new technologies, evolving job markets, and challenges to the rule of law. But unpredictable isn’t only a challenge, it’s an opportunity. It’s in uncertain times that creative thinking, perseverance and integrity matter. It’s in moments like these that the greatest servant leaders emerge. You’ve already proven that you can adapt, improvise and overcome. That’s not just preparation for the real world. It is a way to deal with the real world, and you’re ready for it.”

McCoy addressed graduates at the Watson College of Education and College of Arts and Letters ceremony. “Chase your dream. Chase your dream because it belongs to you to accomplish. You decide what you want to do, not others,” she said. “Don’t let anything or anyone deter you, because sometimes it takes a long time to accomplish. But don’t quit. If you don’t quit, you win. If you fail, there’s nothing wrong with failure. Failure is the catalyst to your success. You know why? Because it teaches you how to proceed after you have made your mistake. It teaches you to learn from your mistakes. So shoot for the moon. And if you fail, hitch on to one of the stars and continue to chase your dream. Remember, you have worth and value, so don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.”

In addition, each of the colleges honored their outstanding students:

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Jessica Fanene, Outstanding Graduate Student

Lauren Pittman, Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration

Monica Ybanez, Outstanding Graduate Student

Justus Baker-Postell, Outstanding Undergraduate Student

College of Natural Sciences

Walter Navarro, Outstanding Graduate Student
Alaina O'Connell, Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Palm Desert Campus

Jason Davalos, Outstanding Student

College of Arts and Letters

Veronica Morales, Outstanding Graduate Student
Katherine Posada, Outstanding Graduate Student
Trisha Rose, Outstanding Undergraduate Student

James R. Watson and Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education

Marvin Espinoza, Outstanding Doctoral Student
Marilyn Monroy, Outstanding Graduate Student

Recordings of all five ceremonies can be viewed at [Online CSUSB](#) on Youtube.

Located in the heart of the Coachella Valley, the Palm Desert Campus is dedicated to providing a transformative educational experience for students and plays a vital role in expanding access to higher education in the region. With the campus seeing an increase in student enrollment, the new Student Services Building is part of a long-term vision to grow the campus and better serve the needs of its diverse student population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.