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**PRESS RELEASE**

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*A member of CSUSB's Class of 2026 celebrates at Toyota Arena on May 16.*

**CSUSB celebrates its Class of 2026**

PALM DESERT, Calif. – California State University, San Bernardino celebrated the Class of 2026 across five commencement ceremonies May 15-16 at Toyota Arena, honoring an estimated 3,186 graduates from its San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses, many of whom celebrated being the first in their families to earn a college degree.

The weekend also marked the end of a chapter for university President Tomás D. Morales, who delivered his final spring commencement address after years of leading the institution and championing its mission of access, diversity and transformation.

“This is your moment,” [Morales told graduates](#) during the ceremonies. “Graduation is both about looking back and looking forward. That is what the term commencement is all about. It is about beginnings. It is about hope, it is about possibilities, and it is about adventure.”

The weekend began Friday afternoon with graduates from the [College of Social and Behavioral Sciences](#), including students in child development, economics, ethnic studies, political science and psychology. A [second Friday evening ceremony](#) honored graduates from criminology and criminal justice, social work, anthropology, geography and environmental studies, history, sociology and social sciences.

Saturday’s ceremonies featured graduates from the [College of Arts and Letters, the James R. Watson and Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education](#) in the morning, the [Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration](#) in the afternoon, and the [College of Natural Sciences](#) in the evening.

Morales, who reflected on his own background in public education, highlighted the university’s role in serving first-generation and historically underserved students. As he had at previous commencement ceremonies during his 13 years at CSUSB, he asked those graduates who were the first in their families to earn a college degree to stand. At each ceremony, a majority stood to the applause of the audience.

“With this achievement, you have broken a barrier and will now forever be a role model for siblings, relatives, and future generations,” Morales told them.

“Calling CSUSB education transformational is not an exaggeration,” he said. “I have seen this truth demonstrated again and again in the lives of the students who entrust this university with their academic dreams and goals.”

He also emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusion during a period of national division.

“More than ever, diversity, equity and inclusion are not threats,” Morales said. “Rather, they are living into the promise of democracy.”

Throughout the ceremonies, speakers highlighted perseverance, service and opportunity as defining themes for the graduating class.

Associated Students Inc. President Diego Rendon, a member of the Class of 2026, encouraged graduates to embrace uncertainty and pursue ambitious goals despite fear or self-doubt.

“The same courage it took you to get to this stage today is the same courage that will carry you forward into a new career, new cities, and new dreams,” [Rendon said](#). “You don’t need to see the whole path; you just need to trust yourself enough to begin.”

Rendon reflected on his own student journey, which included leadership roles in student government, attending the Palm Desert Campus and earning admission to a University of California business master’s program with a full scholarship while still an undergraduate.

But he said the deeper meaning of graduation extended beyond personal achievements.

“Some of you standing here today are living proof of your family’s biggest dreams,” he said. “You carry their hopes, their sacrifices, and their expectations. And today, you honor them by crossing this stage.”

The university also awarded honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees to two distinguished alumni during the commencement weekend.

[Yolanda T. Moses](#), a nationally recognized anthropologist and higher education leader, received her honorary degree during the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences’ [ceremony on Friday evening](#). Moses, a 1968 CSUSB graduate, told students that educators who recognized her potential shaped the course of her life and career.

“My faculty, the faculty who taught me, saw me,” Moses said. “They saw me and my potential.”

She urged graduates to build a more inclusive society through leadership and empathy.

“Our democracy is going to depend on you,” Moses said. “It’s going to depend on you seeing others and the potential in others so that we can become the nation that we were meant to be, an inclusive United States of America.”

[William M. Stevenson](#), a banking executive, educator and longtime university volunteer, received an honorary doctorate during the Jack H. Brown College’s [Saturday afternoon ceremony](#).

Stevenson, a first-generation college graduate, Class of 1984, credited CSUSB with changing his life and encouraged graduates to define success through community service, as well as professional achievement.

“You will be invited to measure success by the size of your salary, the prestige of your title, or the number of accomplishments on your resume,” Stevenson said. “These are all meaningful, but I urge you to hold another measure alongside them: the time you give without expectation of return.”

He encouraged graduates to remain connected to the university and to use their education to address challenges, such as climate change, public health crises and inequitable education.

“Your actions will impact other people’s lives for the better,” Stevenson said. “Frankly, the world needs you.”

Across the two-day celebration, Morales repeatedly reminded graduates that they were leaving with more than a diploma.

“As CSUSB graduates 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. So now it is time to go out and pursue the future, which is not only yours, but also the future for those around you,” he said.

“Participate, engage, and support the marvelous diversity that has created the history of the Inland Empire, of the state of California, and of the nation of which it is a part,” Morales said. “You are the future that our diverse and vibrant forebears were dreaming of. You belong. You matter. So, what are you waiting for? Let's do this. Congratulations.”

**About the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus:** The [CSUSB Palm Desert Campus](#) is dedicated to providing a transformative educational experience in the Coachella Valley. With a focus on academic excellence and community engagement, the campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its students and the region.

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