CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES

INDIGIGRAD 2026

Celebrating American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, & Indigenous Students

May 15th, 2026 | 10am-12pm
University-Student Union | U-SU Theatre

MIYIIHA

With great respect, Cal State LA acknowledges the Tongva people as the traditional caretakers of Tovaangar-the Tongva world, including the Los Angeles Basin, South Channel Islands, San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, and portions of Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. Cal State LA is located within these lands. As an institution located on unceded Tongva land, we pay our respects to the ancestors, elders, and our relatives/relations, past, present, and emerging.

Consistent with our values of community and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible the university's relationship to Native peoples.

By offering this Land Acknowledgment, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Cal State LA more accountable to the needs of American Indian peoples.

Prepared by Dr. Kimberly Robertson (Mvskoke)
and Tongva Elder Julia Bogany, 2020

PROGRAM

Blessing
Dennis Garcia

Land Acknowledgment
Dr. Carolyn Dunn

University Welcome
Dr. Blanca Martinez-Navarro, PH.D., MSW
Associate Vice President and Dean of Students
Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Performance
Wildhorse Singers and Dancers

Keynote Speaker
Judge Deborah Sanchez

Recognition of Graduates
Dr. Carolyn Dunn

Performance
Chumash Sisters

Closing Remarks

MASTER'S DEGREES



Martha Angelica Escudero

Latin American Studies, M.A.

Gracias a los Mapuche por enseñarme que otro mundo es posible. Thanks to my girls, professors, sisters, comrades, and community, I could not have done this without you. Love you all for attempting to create a more just world. My work and life are dedicated to Wallmapu, that land that made me remember I am a part of nature.

BACHELOR'S DEGREES



Danny Aldama

Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies, BA

Latin American Studies, BA

This is something I thought I never do. I appreciate the hard work and relations, being on this campus learning and engaging with other students. How those students thinking had changed the way I think. To Come with a optimistic mind set, and know every person has a story. Breaking family oppression, dismantling from internal oppression with higher education, to always have a solution in life and not give up,

Native Pride.

Respect, Tongva Territories.

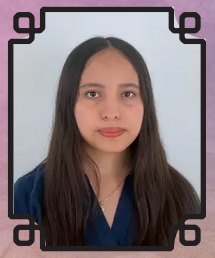


Albert Isaias Faz

History, BA

Religious Studies

I am deeply thankful to my family, especially my parents, for their constant love and encouragement throughout my time at Cal State LA. Their faith in me, along with the support of friends and mentors, gave me strength during every challenge. Living with a disability never defined my limits—it revealed my resilience. I will always cherish the memories and friendships made here, and I step forward with gratitude, pride, and hope for what comes next.



Marlene Nunez

Rehabilitation Services, BS

I would like to thank my parents for their support and encouragement through my long journey at Cal State LA. Without my family and friends, I would not have accomplished all my goals. I am grateful for all the wonderful memories and friends I made at this university, and I will keep striving for the next big thing.



Alyssa Michelle Orozco

Business Administration, BS

Business Pre-legal

Looking back at the little girl who dreamed big but never knew what I would accomplish, I want to take a moment to thank my past self. For it were not for my determination and push to do better for myself, I would not be standing here today. For dreaming so big, she was the only one I strived to impress. Thank you.



Alvaro Antonio Ramirez

Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies, BA

Mesoamerican Studies Latin American Studies

For my ancestors, my family, and my community this degree is ours. May the knowledge gained through Chicano, Mesoamerican, and Latin American Studies serve as a tool for empowerment, justice, and collective liberation.



Shannon Ruth Sanchez

Mathematics, BS

I would like to thank my Family, Friends, and those who have taught me new ideas. It has been a wonderful and tough time. Yet in this time I have grown tremendously, for this I am grateful. Thank you for the opportunity and to my Family, thank you for your patience. Although it has felt a harsh lonely journey, I know you've always have been by my side and always been my encouragement. Thank you!



Marianna Villa

Psychology, BA

This degree represents a lifelong dream fulfilled through perseverance. Beginning at East Los Angeles College and transferring to Cal State LA, this journey took turns to reach this moment. I give my gratitude to my daughters, Alicia, Alessandra, and Alexis, my greatest motivation and the reason I never gave up. I am thankful for my family, my support system, and Guardian Scholars. As a first-generation college graduate, I look ahead to graduate studies—sin rendirme jamás.



Nytia Yazzie York

Communication, BA

I am here to honor my parents, my family, and myself. To show that the hard work, tears, and exhaustion were worth it in the end. This is just the start of my journey and I can not wait to move forward in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

American Indian & Indigenous Student Alliance
Indigenous Faculty and Staff Association
Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

College of Ethnic Studies
College of Arts and Letters
Office of the President
The Cross Cultural Centers

Jesus Escandon
Steve Galindo
Fabiola Avina
Dr. Megan Bell
Dr. Carolyn M Dunn
Meghan Eagen
Dr. Andre Ellis

University-Student Union
Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

...and all others who contributed to the success of the IndigiGrad Celebration!



Cover background artwork by J'Dyn R. Scruggs


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