

June 16, 2018 | By Jade Griffin

UC San Diego Celebrates Commencement with Message of Hope

Speakers encourage graduates to be bold in breaking boundaries for positive change

It was emotional. It was inspirational. It was moving. The University of California San Diego held its All Campus Commencement today, celebrating the graduation of approximately 7,500 graduates from the university.

Speakers included Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, 1982 graduate Kimberley Phillips Boehm and graduating student Lucero Camarena. Social justice and breaking the status quo to make a better future were prominent themes of the day. Students also received a copy of Representative John Lewis' book, "Building Bridges," as a graduation gift.



Lucero Camarena, this year's student speaker, encouraged fellow students to live their truth

Chancellor Khosla kicked off the festivities, welcoming an expansive sea of students, families and friends to the momentous event on RIMAC Field. All Campus Commencement provides an opportunity for all graduating students from across campus to come together to celebrate graduation and experience the pomp and circumstance, joy and pride that mark one of the most memorable times in a student's life.

"We are here to celebrate this milestone – your milestone – of graduating from one of the top universities in the country," said Khosla. "It is our hope that you always continue to learn. To question. To stoke the flame of enlightenment.

"You are the Tritons who will continue to unlock our world's mysteries. You are our future CEOs, artists, inventors, educators, elected officials ... and scientists," he continued. "No matter what you do, you are our beacon of light. You are our beacon of hope."

The graduation program next featured UC San Diego alumna Kimberley Phillips Boehm, an award-winning author whose research and scholarship focuses on the history and culture of African Americans and U.S. workers. Boehm's long career as a university academic and administrator began as a faculty member at the College of William and Mary. She later became founding dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Brooklyn College-CUNY, then served as provost and dean of the faculty at Mills College. Boehm received a Bachelor's degree in history from UC San Diego and a Master's degree and Ph.D. from Yale University.

"I have no doubt you will spend a lifetime weaving together your past and your present to create a you with skills and talents and passions too good to ignore," said Boehm. "When your past and your present converge, you will chart your own journey. Please return to UC San Diego, though, and share with us stories about your travels."

Lucero Camarena, the campus' first transgender graduation speaker, overcame great challenges to attend UC San Diego. In her address, Camarena encouraged students to channel their truth as a powerful form of social change.

"Five years ago from today, I didn't believe in my education. I didn't even believe in my capacity to live my truth," said Camarena. "Yet, I am here – and so are you. I am leaving this campus a different person from when I arrived. And maybe, so are you."

With the goal of attending medical school with an undergraduate major in global health, Camarena plans to continue to push boundaries to make positive change as a physician-scientist.

"In our future work, disrupting the status quo will help to define and find solutions for the problems that continue to go unresolved," she said.

"We as Tritons – and changemakers – have the ability to overcome so much more than we know," concluded Camarena. "Congratulations, class of 2018. Build bridges, speak out and live your truth."

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