

## **Bestselling Author Stedman Graham to Speak at UC San Diego OASIS Summer Bridge Graduation Aug. 25**

*The New York Times* bestselling author, educator and businessman will deliver a message for success to new UC San Diego students from underserved school districts

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Stedman Graham teaches that in the 21st century one's talent and skills above all else will define one's value. At the University of California, San Diego, 140 high-achieving, incoming students from underserved high schools are developing their talents and honing their skills as part of the Summer Bridge program, hosted by the university's Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS). This free program is designed to help new students acclimate to the academic, social and cultural life at the university, preparing them to be successful students and future leaders. At the OASIS Summer Bridge Celebration Aug. 25, Graham will offer graduates of the program advice for making their education relevant and gaining an edge in the marketplace.

"None of us is defined by our circumstances, nor are we defined by how other people perceive us," said Graham, the chairman and CEO of S. Graham & Associates, a management and marketing consulting company that specializes in the corporate and educational markets. The author of 10 books, Graham lectures and conducts seminars around the world teaching his Nine Step Success Program, a life management and learning system that explains how to organize one's life based on one's identity. "It is up to each one of us to define ourselves, and that is a life's work. Each of us has the ability to lead a dynamic life by pursuing our unique goals and dreams."

Joining the graduates at the celebration will be Chancellor Marye Anne Fox, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Penny Rue, OASIS staff and sponsors of the Summer Bridge program. This year's graduation also includes a special pre-reception for program sponsors, select students and Graham. For programs like Summer Bridge that previously relied on state and federal funding, private support has been increasingly critical to ensure that students of all backgrounds have access to the resources and support needed to be successful at UC San Diego. While the program is free for participants, it costs the university approximately \$4,700 per student to operate.

For Elize Diop, a current senior at UC San Diego, the Summer Bridge program was a transformative experience. Growing up in South Los Angeles, Diop was reluctant to leave behind the familiarity and comfort of her hometown, family and friends to begin anew in San Diego. But through Summer Bridge, Diop gained confidence in her identity and her ability for success.

"At Summer Bridge I learned who I was," said Diop. "I became more confident in meetings, among friends and in the classroom. Summer Bridge gave me something that I didn't even know I needed, and I am still so appreciative."

This year's Summer Bridge graduates have another reason to celebrate: three Summer Bridge students will receive scholarships of \$4,000 each thanks to funds raised during UC San Diego's 50th Anniversary year, specifically from 50th merchandise sold at the UC San Diego Bookstore.

Summer Bridge takes students from the bottom two-fifths of high schools in California, many of whom will be the first in their families to graduate from college. Over four weeks, these incoming students participate in academic courses, special workshops, seminars, mentoring and other activities to gain a clear understanding of the demands they will face as students at a major research university, as well as the resources available to meet those demands. Additionally, the program helps students to develop an understanding of the complex social issues in today's increasingly diverse society. After the summer, students continue to receive support services throughout the academic year, including tutoring, mentoring, counseling and networking.

"If it wasn't for the friends I made at Summer Bridge, and the resources and organizations I was exposed to, I probably would have entered UC San Diego on the first day of school feeling like a foreigner in a strange land," added Diop. "Instead, I walked proudly, confidently and excitedly to and from all of my classes, even offering directions to other new students who had never been on campus before."

The Summer Bridge Celebration will begin Thursday, Aug. 25 at 4:30 p.m. on the UC San Diego campus. For event details visit <http://celebratesummerbridge.ucsd.edu>. For ticket and sponsorship information, contact (858) 822-6623 or [supportdiversity@ucsd.edu](mailto:supportdiversity@ucsd.edu).

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