

UC San Diego's Stellar Students from the Class of 2016

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[UC San Diego's Stellar Students from the Class of 2016, Part II](#)

The first installment of this year's list of outstanding grads. To read additional stories, check out the next issue of This Week@UC San Diego on June 16.

Gurbhupinder "Gary" Sahota Graduates as one of Rady's Youngest Alums

Gurbhupinder "Gary" Sahota will graduate in June with an M.B.A. from the Rady School of Management at age 22. He is one of the youngest alumni of the school. Upon graduation, Sahota will move to the Bay Area to embark on a career as a program manager in Cisco System's customer advocacy department. For Sahota, graduating and starting a full-time job is the culmination of many years of hard work and perseverance. At age 10, he lost his mother to leukemia. Paying for college and graduate school would prove to be challenging for Sahota, whose father is an industrial electrician at the food processing facility for Sun-Maid Raisins in central California. "We never had much disposable income," said the Selma, Calif. native. "I started working at the age of 16 just so I could help my family afford my college tuition. Six years ago, I started off as a janitor in a local grocery store in Selma. Now, I will be working my dream job in Silicon Valley!" At age 16, Sahota graduated from high school and three years later, he earned a bachelor's of science in international business at California State University, Fresno. Though he has always worked while a student, he also has been heavily involved in student life. He has served as vice president of technology integration in the Rady Student Board, the Rady representative for the UC San Diego Graduate Student Association (GSA), president of the Rady Technology Club, leader of Rady Student Ambassador Program, and a member for the UC San Diego Sikh Student Association.; In addition, he's also been heavily involved in community service. "I love to give back to the community in various ways," he said. Some of his favorite memories of UC San Diego include feeding the homeless through his volunteer work with the Sikh Student Association and mentoring underclassmen. He hopes to one day establish a scholarship fund in memory of his mother.



Gary Sahota

Ph.D. Graduate Nick Obradovich Breaks Barriers When it Comes to Climate Change Research

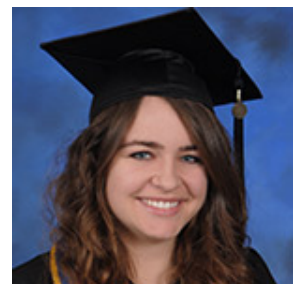
As a graduate student at UC San Diego, Nick Obradovich made his mark on the campus by conducting groundbreaking interdisciplinary environmental research. He is now earning a doctoral degree in political science. “I’m particularly interested in the ways that political opinions and attitudes shape climate change debates and related policy outcomes,” he said. Obradovich was lead author on a UC San Diego study that suggested that when people think about climate change in a collective framework, they are more likely to act on the issue. Published in the journal [Climatic Change](#), the study found that people are willing to donate up to 50 percent more cash to the cause when thinking about the problem in collective terms. These findings run contrary to popular wisdom; Obradovich found that when individuals thought about climate change from a personal perspective, they produced little to no change in behavior. Obradovich’s additional research projects conducted at UC San Diego surveyed social media sites such as Twitter to gauge how weird weather affects discussion of climate change and climate-related legislation. In addition to his doctoral studies in the Department of Political Science, Obradovich was also a fellow of the Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation at the university’s Scripps Institution of Oceanography. His studies led him to complete fieldwork in multiple Sub-Saharan African nations, such as Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. On a visit to Malawi, Obradovich contracted a viral hemorrhagic disease and was hospitalized for several days to recover from the illness. But that hasn’t deterred him from continuing to push boundaries in climate change research. “Climate change is arguably the largest collective-action problem the world has ever faced,” he said. Upon graduation, Obradovich will head to Harvard University to begin a postdoctoral fellowship in the Science, Technology and Public Policy program at the Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center. He will also work part time as a research scientist at the MIT Media Lab.



Nick Obradovich

Revelle College Graduate Strives to Contribute to Criminal Justice Reforms

Revelle College student Kyra Hendrickson is graduating this June with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology and a Bachelor of Science in psychology. As a discussion leader for Revelle College’s First Year Experience, she committed her time to ensuring freshmen successfully transitioned into college. The course is designed to help new students become engaged and informed about UC San Diego. She also served as a resident assistant, addressing issues and concerns for more than 100 residents, and organized numerous community events focusing on topics such as academic success, social justice and leadership development. Hendrickson is interested in pursuing a graduate degree in the future so that she can make a difference in the criminal justice system. Last summer, she was an investigative intern for the San



Kyra Hendrickson

Diego County Office of Alternate Public Defender. She had the opportunity to accompany investigators on field interviews to canvass crime scenes as well as attend court hearings and serve subpoenas. “I would like to pursue the criminal justice or law enforcement field because it’s not a perfect system, and I hope that someday I can contribute to reforms.”

Devoted Student Mentor Aspires to Promote Reproductive Health in Underserved Communities

Isi lyoha’s most meaningful memories at UC San Diego involve her experiences as a mentor helping students develop their identity. As a Retention Coordinator for the Black Student Union, she led programs to help retain black students, including a big-little mentorship program and social gatherings such as study jams. “I’ve seen many of my mentees grow from their first year, and they all make me so proud,” said lyoha. “I’m honored that I got to be a part of their lives.” In addition, lyoha served as a Gender and Sexuality Awareness Coordinator for the student group Kaibigang Pilipin@. She organized workshops surrounding issues relating to gender and sexuality and collaborated with team members on the annual Pilipino Awareness Week and other events to recognize the history and lives of Pilipino people. A Revelle College graduate, lyoha earned two Bachelor of Science degrees in general biology and psychology with an emphasis in Human Health. She aspires to become an OB/GYN doctor, a decision motivated by family and friends who have had issues with their reproductive health. “I want to go to underserved communities, like where I spent part of my childhood, to educate them about reproductive health and how to protect themselves,” said lyoha.



Isi lyoha

UCSD Guardian Editor-in-Chief Serves Students on and off Campus and will Pursue Teaching Upon Graduation

Vincent Pham, of Eleanor Roosevelt College, is graduating with a degree in political science and a minor in education studies. Pham has been involved with student life throughout his undergraduate career, primarily with the UCSD Guardian, the campus’s official student-run newspaper, where he has served as editor-in-chief for the last year. In addition, Vincent has gained valuable mentoring experience outside the classroom. He has tutored at several schools throughout San Diego’s diverse community, such as Florence Elementary in Hillcrest and Garfield High in Downtown San Diego. This experiential learning and fieldwork has inspired him to pursue a career in teaching, and he hopes to work with communities that have been typically underserved and marginalized. While Pham has mentored many students outside of the UC San Diego campus, he also consistently made time to serve students on campus. As a First Year Experience discussion leader, he helped provide insight to new freshmen on how to tap into all the resources the campus has to offer. He also served as an instructional assistant for an education



Vincent Pham

studies course for over a year. Pham will be furthering his teaching experience by fulfilling a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant in Dong Ha, Viet Nam after his graduation. "It is my firm belief that a life in service is a life well lived," Pham said.

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