

June 6, 2024

Looking Back on a Year Marked by Challenge and Achievement

Campus Update

Chancellor Block shared the following message with the UCLA campus community.

Dear Bruin Community:

As the 2023–24 academic year draws to a close, students prepare for final exams and we wrap up planning for our commencement ceremonies, I wanted to pause to express my profound gratitude for the UCLA community’s resilience and dedication over the year filled with both significant challenges and important achievements.

I recognize that the challenges are probably foremost in our minds. Nearly our entire academic year has been set against the backdrop of war in Gaza, which — while troubling in its own right — has also unfortunately sown division and strife here on campus. Much of our community has engaged with this complex topic peacefully, but we have also seen political advocacy devolve into discriminatory harassment. Frustratingly, in some cases, disagreement has even led to outright violence (which [continues to be actively investigated](#)).

The war’s impact on our campus reached a crescendo in the last six weeks, and this period now looms large in UCLA’s collective consciousness. I do not wish to downplay the anxiety people continue to feel, or the significant healing that we will need to do. I believe, though, that it is important to remember that our university, our community and this academic year are not defined solely by this current, difficult chapter. In fact, looking back, this year was also marked by incredible achievement.

During the 2023–24 academic year, our university inaugurated a new performance space, the [UCLA Nimoy Theater](#); incorporated a new health system [a new hospital serving the San Fernando Valley](#); and established the game-changing [UCLA Research Park](#) — where, among other things, we will work to fight cancer and autoimmune, neurological and cardiovascular diseases.

We announced a [transformational gift to the Institute of American Cultures](#) to advance our ethnic studies centers, launched the [Disabilities Studies major](#) in the UC system, and further developed our [Dialogue across Difference initiative](#) to help us work through our challenges in humane and compassionate ways.

Reflecting our trademark excellence, Bruins took home honors including the [National Medal of Science](#), [National Book Award](#), [MacArthur ‘genius’ grants](#), and two NCAA championship trophies in [women’s water polo](#) and [men’s volleyball](#).

And as we look to the future, we are grateful to be guided by a [campuswide strategic plan](#) — launched last fall — that promises to shepherd the university into a new era of innovation and inclusive excellence.

Though we surely face turbulent times, these are still things we should celebrate. We should also acknowledge that *all* of our students, faculty and staff have displayed immense strength and fortitude this year, continuing their work and studies amidst substantial challenges and upheaval.

The final few days of spring are a period of excitement and anticipation as we prepare to send off a new class of UCLA graduates. This milestone is a significant accomplishment at any time, but it is especially meaningful for many of this year’s undergraduates whose senior year of high school was disrupted by the pandemic and who were not able to participate in their schools’ typical graduation ceremonies. I am happy to confirm that UCLA will honor students’ achievements with our regular in-person commencement event this year, and I urge graduates to visit our [commencement website](#) for details and updates.

As I near the end of my time as UCLA’s chancellor — a role that remains the greatest honor of my professional life — I am filled with mixed emotions, but above all an overwhelming gratitude for every person who has made the UCLA community so special. So in closing, I can only simply offer you my thanks.

Thank you for your dedication, creativity, resolve and commitment to excellence.

Thank you for the compassion, respect and support you have shown one another.

Thank you for carrying out our university’s important mission, and thank you for representing the very best of public higher education.

At UCLA, even in dark times there is still so, so much light.

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