

*Latinx*  
*Sarape*  
*Ceremony*

May 23, 2020

12:00-1:15PM

Vassar

# SENIORS

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Miguel Andrade  
Karly Andreassen  
Kevin Arce  
Larissa Archondo  
Roayan Azanza  
Anya Bernstein  
Bethany Brown  
Gabriella Caballero  
Bryant Calero  
Kevin Cañas  
Joshua Carreras  
Chloe Catoya  
Hope Challenger  
Elias Contrubis  
Robert Elizardo  
Carlos Espina  
Jean Fernandez  
Olivia Fiol  
Esperanza Garcia  
Yesenia Garcia  
Emmanuel Garcia-Villar  
Sarah Garijo-Garde  
Celia Gomez-Colon  
Kayla Gonzalez  
Ivanna Guerra  
Isabelle Hart  
Caroline Hartman  
Laurel Hennen Vigil  
Elder Hernandez  
James Hueston  
Sara Inoa  
Mendel Jiménez  
Kyle Kappes  
Loizos Karaikos  
Gerardo Lamadrid  
Ryan Levitt

Cristina Lopez  
Eugene Lopez-Huerta  
Edgar Lozano  
Helen Magowan  
William Mathiesen  
Austin Mello  
Noa Mendoza-Goot  
Jordan Moss  
Adriana Ochoa  
Dea Oviedo Vazquez  
Stephen Palencia  
Stephanie Palma  
Kyle Patterson  
Marisa Peczuh  
Christian Perez  
Martha Pita  
Joshua Ramirez  
Sharen Rivas  
Sofia Rodas  
Jonathan Rodriguez  
Xris Rodriguez  
Elysia Roman  
Ariana Salguero  
Sarah Santaquida  
Natalia Santos  
Madeline Schmitt  
David Stevenson  
Vanessa Tate  
Martin Terrazas Lopez  
Issai Torres  
Evan Trausch  
Kayla Vasquez  
Aislinn Vences-Dimas  
Charles Waltz-Chesnaye  
Damian Zapien  
Vincent Zarate



# LATINX SARAPE CEREMONY



Opening Remarks

Introducción

Mari Robles '21 and Eugene Lopez-Huerta '20



Message from the President

Mensaje de la Presidenta

Elizabeth Bradley, Vassar College President



Sarape Ceremony

Ceremonia de Estola

Mari Robles '21 and Eugene Lopez-Huerta '20



Alumna Remarks

Mensaje de Alumna

Norma Newton '00



Closing Remarks

Observaciones Finales

Luis Inoa P'20

*Associate Dean of the College and  
Dean of Student Living and Wellness*



## ADVICE TO GRADUATING SENIORS

Congratulations Class of 2020! You are part of a legacy of Latinx Vassar alums and students who are incredibly proud of all that you have done and where you will go. Always remember your Vassar family is here to support you and stand by you. As a member of the graduating class right after 9/11, I know everything feels strange in the world and the world as you knew it before March will not be the same, but you are equipped with the tools to thrive. Felicidades!

~ *Juan Acosta, Class of 2002*

Associate Director of College Counseling

Find your voice and don't be afraid to use it.

Make yourself visible whenever you feel invisible.

Remember where you come from but don't let it limit where you want to go.

Learn to listen to your gut, follow your instincts like our ama's taught us.

Look for mentors whom you can trust to guide you but know that a time will come when you can move forward in your journey with what you have learned.

Write thank you notes often, remember who helped you, return the gesture and pay it forward.

Dream big dreams even if you are starting small.

The job or career you will have one day, may not exist yet so build upon your skills with every step you take.

Call home, they need to hear from you.

Celebrate yourself and celebrate this transition any way you can. It's important to mark transitions in your life - the good and the bad.

*Sigue adelante, con ganas!*

*Felicidades* - we are all proud of you!

~ *Kathleen Bedoya, Class of 1989*

Television Writer/Producer, Script Consultant,  
Sexual Health Youth Advocate and Media Professor



All of you are walking pillars of what our ancestors strived for through years of oppression simply because of our rich culture and heritage. Remember your families who encouraged you to dream more and shoot higher than they ever could. Remember your fellow Latino/Latinx allies who were your support network. Most importantly, remember how YOU carried yourself through Vassar and that's attributed to your merit and work ethic, not because of your social identities. Congrats 2020!

~ *Lauren Delgado, Class of 2019*

Mechanical Engineering Graduate Research Assistant

Never let them silence you. You will find the world outside of Vassar's walls is absolutely intimidated by your size of your shine. Even those you believe have your back professionally will tell you to settle down, not to go for it, that there is much to be learned, that you have to pay your dues, to shush up and quiet down. Never ever let them. You have been trained to ask the hard questions and see the gaps no one wants to see. Do it. Change the world one question at a time.

~ *Rebecca M. Fernandez, Class of 2007*

City of Orlando Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator

My Latinx identity is a central part of who I am. My bilingual skills, bicultural heritage and growing up in Nicaragua have all opened up so many doors for me, not only for jobs, but in terms of my broader purpose in life. Vassar opened up my eyes to things I hadn't thought about or experienced before college. I'm sorry that Covid-19 has interfered with your last semester and graduation, but I wish you the best as you embark on the next stage of your life.

~ *Ron Garcia-Fogarty, Class of 1996*

Interpreter & Translator



You've all accomplished something incredible today! My biggest takeaway from my first five years out of college: the friendships and community that have been so important to your time at Vassar will keep you grounded in the months and years after graduating. Lean on each other during periods of stress and uncertainty; uplift each other and celebrate the victories.

~ *Christopher Gonzalez, Class of 2015*

Digital Production Manager

lo y en realidad me siento quizás más perdid@ que cuando me gradué así que no tengo mucho consejo que dar so i do not have much advice to give other than letting you know i too graduated somehow stumbling through since, tropezando ando, espero que disfrutes lo que sigue, i hope you enjoy the whirlwinds ahead compartiendo logros y aprendiendo siempre, holding those who keep you along caminos menos prestigiosos nos enseñan en otras cantidades y cuando quieras, te abraza tu compañerx marica.

~ *Sófia Gutiérrez, Class of 2018*

Unemployed/Artwist

Vassar has prepared you in countless ways. Be thoughtful. Be kind. Learn every day. Take risks. Be adventurous and passionate. Reach for your dreams. Do what you love. Always strive to improve. Give support. Show love. More importantly, as you are building a career - a family - a life - always think about your community. Give back - and BE INVOLVED. Run for office (seriously). Our nation and the world need critical thinkers now more than ever. The world needs Vassar grads. The world needs you.

~ *Alfonso Lopez, Class of 1992*

Majority Whip and Member (49th District) of the Virginia House of Delegates

Dear Class of 2020, I am beyond words proud of each and every one of you on this HUGE accomplishment. I can only imagine the sacrifices, late nights, tears, frustrations, and perseverance that led to this moment. Thank you for being the light and hope we all need. The hard work will continue, but for today enjoy your moment however it feels right for you. You did it! Congratulations to you and your loved ones!

~ *Maggie López, Class of 2014*

SEL Specialist





Use your education and passions to support the Latinx community. Tell our stories and share our culture with the world. Our humanity shines through your accomplishments, grace, and grit. Have fun, and adelante!

~ *Daniel Medina, Class of 2008*

Managing Site Editor, PBS SoCal

Felicidades! Latinx people are resilient and infinitely diverse. Use these to your advantage as you navigate this strange world post Vassar. Don't be afraid or disheartened if your plans have changed. I thought I was going to be a PhD in Cultural Anthropology someday, and now I get paid to draw. Your experience is valuable, share it. Your networks are strong, let them support you. Vassar forever.

~ *Maggie Negrete, Class of 2010*

Artist, Educator

Trust yourself as you embark on this next phase of your journey - you can become everything your heart desires.

~ *Norma Newton, Class of 2000*

Attorney/Writer/Creative

Take the Vassar "space" with you wherever you go by staying in touch with your VC friends and continuing to extend engaging and curious conversations into the world. At first your thoughts might seem like outliers or futuristic, but soon they'll become big ideas and you'll have what it takes to make them happen.

~ *Nicole Nieto, Class of 1998*

Executive Vice President, NHI

Muchísimas felicidades en su graduación. El camino que les queda por delante les traerá tanto momentos gratos como ingratos, pero las experiencias que han tenido en Vassar los han dejado bien capacitados para abrirse brecha y echar hacia adelante. Bienvenidos a la familia de exalumnos de Vassar.

~ *Joseph Panepinto, Class of 1991*

Staff Assistant



Congratulations Class of 2020! I graduated from Vassar 31 years ago. I'm the first physician in my family and I'm so proud to be a Vassar grad. My best advice is to use your experiences at Vassar to empower yourself to keep moving through the difficulties ahead of you. Remember where you came from and set a good example for those behind you. When you succeed, always lend a hand to those in need. Salve!

~ *Rachel Rivera, Class of 1989*

Physician, Infectious Diseases

Congratulations Class of 2020!

¡Felicidades! Graduating college is an incredible achievement, one that carries particular significance this year. We are truly living in extraordinary times. I am sure few would have imagined graduating in the midst of a pandemic. Nevertheless, my hope is that you celebrate this accomplishment to the fullest. Although the future may seem uncertain at the moment, please keep the faith. Let today's challenges inspire you to take action. I have no doubt Vassar has prepared you with the skills and knowledge to succeed in the next chapter of your life. As you set forth into the world, remember you are enough. In love, power & solidarity,

~ *Dennis A. Rivera-Cash, Class of 2015*

Graduate Research Assistant, MPH Candidate

The best advice I received at graduation is that this is a milestone, not a conclusion. Celebrate what you've accomplished today, and keep striving from tomorrow! Remember that your education is an opportunity. You will have many more opportunities and also more challenges; you have the tools to face them. Prove right the people who believed in you all along and continue to make them proud. Be brave in your pursuits! You have a community and we light a candle for you. Congratulations!

~ *Elizabeth Salmon, Class of 2014*

Graduate Researcher, Materials Conservation





Keep learning, move beyond what you think you can do and what is comfortable and cultivate happiness along your journey.

~ *David Sarpal, Class of 1994*

Educator

Remember that the future belongs to you. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something, or that you can't be something. As you grow older, you will realize that most people's expectations of you don't matter. Pay attention only to those who have your best interest at heart. The world is yours.

~ *Moirá Tamayo, Class of 1980*

SVP Marketing

Upon graduating, I went straight to work, and found it painful to watch more affluent friends "succeed" more rapidly than I did. Ultimately, however, I discovered that finding my own path WAS my path and, though I didn't realize it at the time, my Latinx heritage was a significant factor in the path I wanted to walk. So, don't be afraid to do things at your own pace, follow your curiosity and your conscience, and remember that short-term losses lead to long-term wisdom. Abrazos and good luck.

~ *Jesica Bornemann Vega, Class of 1991*

Editor/Storytelling/Writing Instructor

