



NEWS

For the community of the University of Illinois at Chicago

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LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR

"It is because of you that I see a bright future for UIC"



"You have been my partners, my advisors, my inspiration," says UIC Chancellor Michael Amiridis.

Dear graduates,

Congratulations on your commencement!

As Chancellor, I am excited to celebrate the conferral of degrees and what the ceremony signifies for each of you, and I eagerly await your success and achievements that are yet to come.

Since I became Chancellor three years ago, we built confidence in UIC's strengths, renewed focus on our mission, and embraced bold aspirations for our future. You have been my partners, my advisors, my inspiration. It is because of you that I see a bright future for UIC and for all the students who will follow in your footsteps.

Think about your first day on campus. Most likely, you are a much different person now than you were then. Through that evolution you had family, friends and faculty who cheered you on, gave you a boost when you needed a lift or guidance when you required some direction.

Consider the knowledge, skills and perspective that you've acquired that will prepare you for what awaits at work and in life.

UIC isn't just an acronym. It signifies high-quality education, cutting-edge research, vital health care delivery, and a tradition of community engagement and service.

UIC is recognized by employers who seek UIC students and graduates for their accomplishments in rigorous programs across various disciplines, strong work ethic, and readiness for today's global workplace after succeeding at one of the country's most racially and

ethnically diverse institutions.

It is no surprise that as Chicago's largest university and only public research institution, we are gaining attention internationally with *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Times Higher Education* ranking UIC 23rd among U.S. public universities.

You are the living embodiment of that excellence, so display your degree prominently. Wear your UIC gear with pride. Let people know what this university means to you.

The recent launch of "IGNITE: The Campaign for UIC" will help us to raise millions of dollars in support of scholarships, faculty, facilities and research. We have also established our own UIC Alumni Association. As the newest members of this group, I encourage you to remain engaged with life at UIC post-commencement.

You remain an important part of UIC's future, so I hope you will return to campus often to share your time, knowledge and energy with our community.

Go Flames!

Sincerely,

Michael Amiridis
Chancellor

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COLLEGE CEREMONIES

By Francisca Corona – fcoron3@uic.edu

UIC will applaud 2018 graduates at celebratory commencement ceremonies May 9–14. Three guests will be granted honorary degrees, the university's highest award: Juan Salgado, chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago, from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; award-winning documentary filmmaker Steve James, from the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts; and Randall Grove, executive director of the Chicago Dental Society, from the College of Dentistry.

More than 5,300 degrees will be awarded at 14 college ceremonies, which will all take place at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave.

HONORS COLLEGE

7 p.m. Wed., May 9

EBOO PATEL

Eboo Patel, who holds a doctorate in the sociology of religion from Oxford University, will address guests.

Patel is the founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core, a national nonprofit working to make interfaith cooperation a social norm; an author of three books on faith-based topics; and a former member of President Barack Obama's Inaugural Faith Council.



PHARMACY

10 a.m. Thurs., May 10

HENRI MANASSE

The keynote speaker is Henri Manasse, a 1968 Golden Graduate of the College of Pharmacy.

Manasse is a former faculty member and dean of the college. As dean, he led the college's transition to the PharmD, making UIC the 6th U.S. university to make the PharmD its entry-level degree. Manasse, a Harvey A.K. Whitney Lecture Award winner, continues to volunteer at the college.



NURSING

2 p.m. Thurs., May 10

DEBORAH TRAUTMAN

Commencement speaker is Deborah Trautman, chief executive officer of the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN).

Trautman is a member of professional societies and serves on high-profile boards and advisory groups such as the National Academies of Science, Global Forum and Department of Veterans Affairs' Special Medical Advisory Group.

Prior to AACN, Trautman held leadership positions at John Hopkins and the University of Pittsburgh and was a 2007-08 Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow.



APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

7 p.m. Thurs., May 10

STEVIE HOPKINS

Stevie Hopkins, owner of music merchandise company Second City Prints and leader of disability-awareness brand 3E Love, will speak to graduates.

Hopkins continued 3E Love's legacy after losing his sister and co-founder Annie Hopkins to complications from spinal muscular atrophy. At the time, she was pursuing a Ph.D. in disability studies at UIC.

The Anne Hopkins Foundation, established by the family in her honor, endows a scholarship to students on the Champaign and Chicago campuses.



SOCIAL WORK

9 a.m. Fri., May 11

CELENA ROLDÁN

Celena Roldán, the chief executive officer of the American Red Cross of Chicago & Northern Illinois since 2016, will serve as the commencement speaker.

The region Roldán is responsible for is the fourth largest of the American Red Cross, which responds to 1,200 disasters annually. She is the 2017 recipient of the Chicago Woman award for Women Driving Excellence, and she was named Community Leader of the Year in 2016 by United Way of Metropolitan Chicago.



MEDICINE

2 p.m. Fri., May 11

RICHARD CARMONA

Former surgeon general Richard Carmona will give the commencement speech.

Carmona is a U.S. Army veteran, surgeon, former deputy sheriff, and a distinguished professor of public health at the University of Arizona.

After his time in Washington as the 17th Surgeon General of the U.S., Carmona became vice chairman of the Canyon Ranch Company, a luxury spa operator. He is chief executive of health initiatives, which focuses on best health practices



EDUCATION

7 p.m. Fri., May 11

JANICE JACKSON

Janice Jackson, chief executive officer of Chicago Public Schools, will deliver remarks.

Before managing CPS, the third-largest U.S. school district, Jackson was a high school teacher, principal, network chief, and chief education officer, where she was responsible for CPS departments that included the Office of Teaching and Learning, College and Career Success, and more.

Jackson earned her master's and doctorate in education from UIC.



BUSINESS

8:30 a.m. Sat., May 12

MARY SZELA

Mary Szela, a business and nursing alumna, is the speaker.

Szela has 30 years of experience in building and growing billion-dollar businesses. She's held leadership roles at Novell Therapeutics, Melinta Therapeutics and Abbott Laboratories. In January, Szela became chief executive officer of Surefire Medical, a company that develops and delivers treatments for tumors.



DENTISTRY

12:30 p.m. Sat., May 12

CLARK STANFORD

Dean of Dentistry Clark Stanford will deliver the commencement address.

Stanford is a UIC Distinguished Professor and a winner of 15 teaching awards.

In research, Stanford's work has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, foundations and industry. He has written more than 22 book chapters, published over 125 papers and shared more than 200 research and clinical presentations.



RANDALL B. GROVE

Receiving an honorary degree of Doctor of Science will be Randall B. Grove. Grove has served as the executive director of the Chicago Dental Society (CDS) for 28 years, where he has led the society's growth, prosperity and service activities for low-income individuals.

The success of CDS has supported two endowed professorships and clinical fellowships, and a partnership between CDS and UIC's College of Dentistry.



COLLEGE CEREMONIES

PUBLIC HEALTH

4 p.m. Sat. May 12

DAVID SATCHER

Physician-scientist and public health administrator David Satcher is the featured speaker.

Satcher has served as the 16th U.S. Surgeon General; 10th Assistant Secretary for Health in the Department of Health and Human Services; director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and administrator for the Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

Currently, Satcher is the founding director and senior adviser for the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine.



ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, & THE ARTS

7:30 p.m. Sat., May 12

STEVE JAMES

Chicago-based filmmaker Steve James will give a commencement speech and accept a Doctor of Humane Letters from the college.

Known for his take on inner-city youth in "Hoop Dreams," a winner of every major critics prize, James has produced, edited and directed other outstanding films such as Sundance-award winner "Stevie," IDA Documentary Award-winner "The New Americans," Emmy-winner "The Interrupters," and more.



LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

10 a.m. Sun., May 13

ROBERT MARIANO

The featured speaker for LAS is Robert Mariano, a retail grocery business executive who earned his bachelor's from UIC.

Mariano started working in Dominick's Finer Foods as a part-time deli clerk and ultimately became its president and CEO in 1995. He grew the supermarket chain before becoming the chairman and CEO of Roundy's, Inc., a Midwest grocery retailer. In 2010, he introduced Mariano's Fresh Market. He merged Roundy's with The Kroger Company before retiring in 2016.



JUAN SALGADO

Juan Salgado, Chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago, will receive an honorary degree.

Salgado is the former president and CEO of Instituto del Progreso Latino. During his career, he's served Latino communities in places like Pilsen and Little Village, an effort that earned him recognition from the White House as a Champion of Change in 2011.



ENGINEERING

3 p.m. Sun., May 13

JIM D'ANGELO

Jim D'Angelo, chief operating officer of Lou Malnati's Pizzeria, will make the commencement address.

D'Angelo has been with Lou Malnati's for 30 years, working from bus boy in 1983 to chief operating officer in 2009. He is responsible for implementing operational excellence across the company, maintaining product consistency and building capabilities for future growth.

D'Angelo holds an industrial engineering degree from UIC.



URBAN PLANNING & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2 p.m. Mon., May 14

JEANNETTE TAMAYO

Jeannette Tamayo, regional director for the Economic Development Administration, will be the keynote speaker.

The UIC Latin American and Latino Studies alumna leads the EDA's Chicago Regional Office, an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce that gives grant funds to economically distressed communities and leads economic development initiatives nationally.

In 2016, Tamayo won a Gold Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce for co-leading business process improvement in federal grants.



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INSPIRING GRADS

College of Education commencement a family affair

By Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

Three members of the same family will celebrate their achievements together during the College of Education commencement ceremony May 11.

Eddie Taylor Jr., his brother, Evan Taylor, and Kara Taylor, who is Evan's wife, all share the philosophy of teaching as a way to give back.

Kara Taylor, who received her bachelor's in English from UIC, will be honored during commencement with a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction, with a concentration in literacy, language and culture. Evan Taylor, who received his bachelor's degree in urban education from UIC, will receive a master's degree in language, literacies and learning.

Eddie Taylor, who will graduate with a master's in science education, hopes to teach anatomy and physiology or biology.

"The Black Lives Matter movement made me want to do something to help the community," said Eddie Taylor, who received his bachelor's in animal sciences from the Urbana-Champaign campus. "My veterinary dreams or medical school dreams didn't really work for what I want-

ed to do, but with urban education, I saw that as a way to actually do something with and for the community."

As graduate students, Eddie and Evan Taylor became advocates for the underserved.

Eddie Taylor got involved with Project SEEED, which provides mentorship for future science teachers

to increase equity and excellence in science teaching. Evan Taylor joined Project SUSTAIN, a group of educators and researchers who study culturally relevant teaching in different contexts.

And then the brothers met Kara Taylor. Many publications and one dissertation later, Kara and Evan Taylor went to Busy Burger for their first date. They married last August.

"[Evan and I] formed a friendship through our research group," Kara Taylor said. "We saw each other in a lot of research capacities, we researched together, we saw each other as teachers and knew each other's teaching practices. I'm a nerd for that kind of stuff. An awesome teacher makes me happy."

As a longtime student and a teacher,



Eddie Taylor Jr., Evan Taylor and Kara Taylor (Photo: Jenny Fontaine)

she's weathered late nights and financial hardships.

"It's surreal," Kara Taylor said about her time at UIC.

"It's impossible to do all this by yourself," added Evan Taylor.

They all noted that friends, professors and mentors have helped them get where they are now, and that they're excited for what's to come.

"It's a dream come true," Kara Taylor said.

Engineer's career plans are out of this world

By Farooq Chaudhry — mchaud23@uic.edu

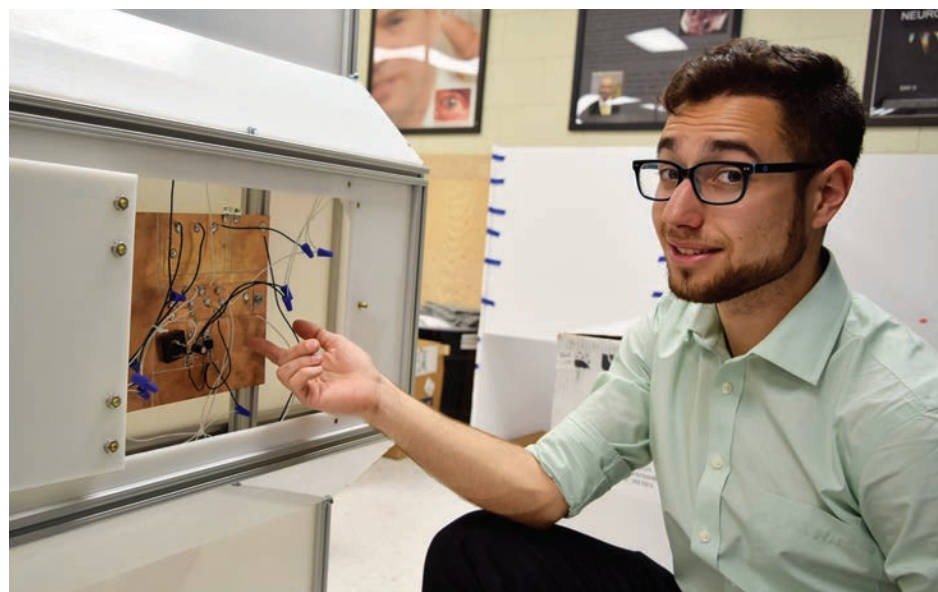
It's common to hear people say they want to grow up and change the world. Even more rare, though, is when someone grows up and says they want to change two worlds.

However, growing up to change multiple worlds is becoming a reality for senior Barak Stoltz. After graduation, the mechanical engineering student will work for SpaceX, the famous aerospace company founded by Elon Musk in Hawthorne, California.

Stoltz's journey to working with SpaceX — an aerospace company with the goal of enabling people to live on other planets — started with him first making a tremendous impact on the lives of people on this planet through Engineering World Health.

"Engineering World Health is a biomedical engineering organization that creates devices for people in third-world countries, and I eventually worked my way up to manager," Stoltz said.

"My first project was a flow hood project that you mix medications under. So, they (Engineering World Health officials) go to Vietnam and scope out the area and you see what projects they need to work on. The laminar flow hood was in a neona-



Barak Stoltz

tal hospital, and they were mixing medications out in the open."

Stoltz's project helped decrease infant mortality rates at the neonatal hospital by 30 percent.

His work with Engineering World Health opened the door for him to earn an internship with SpaceX, which helped

shape him as an engineer.

"That professionalism and the documentation and the getting-stuff-done aspect of the industry is what you get when you go to an internship with a real company with deadlines, ambition and money. That drive to complete products and get them out the door, all while teach-

ing others, too," Stoltz said.

Being the people-first person he is, Stoltz had UIC in mind when working at SpaceX.

"When I came back, I wanted to make sure everything I learned at SpaceX — the technical skills and everything else — was brought back with me," Stoltz said.

Stoltz, who was born and raised in Israel, credits UIC for exposing him to a wide variety of people from diverse backgrounds.

"It was the people I hung out with at UIC — older and younger — who showed me what I can do and what can be accomplished as a student and as an individual," he said.

"There are so many people from other countries, and you see the way they culturally operate, the way they treat each other, and cultural norms they have in other countries, and it really opens your eyes to the norms we have in the U.S. They really kind of broaden your scope of understanding of how this world works, how society works, and how you can be a better understanding and contributing member of society.

"It made me a more understanding person."

INSPIRING GRADS

Lincoln Laureate finds passion in giving back to community

By Farooq Chaudhry — mchaud23@uic.edu

For UIC senior Mariel Rancel, service is part of being human.

"I think service comes from the recognition that because you are a human, you intrinsically need to depend on others," said Rancel, a senior in biological sciences who is in the Honors College. "It's that concept of interdependence. It's the nature of being a human."

Rancel is the 2018 recipient of the Lincoln Laureate award, which honors an outstanding senior at each undergraduate institution in Illinois. Service is a major component of the award, and Rancel's tremendous record of service spans back to her experience volunteering for the Girl Scouts in seventh grade.

"My job was to help out the camp counselors, teach the girls about wilderness, fire safety, to be really goofy, and it was so fun," she said. "I loved every second."

Her experience with the Girl Scouts, combined with her passion for service, inspired her to pursue a career in education. She has guaranteed admission to UIC's master's in science education through the GPPA program.

Her love for serving others has taken her down many paths. Rancel has volunteered at the University of Illinois Hospital and Rush University Medical Center;



Serving others is "the nature of being human," says Mariel Rancel, a senior in biological sciences and the Honors College. (Photo: Jenny Fontaine)

served as mentor in the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program; and was a participant in the Urban Public Policy Fellowship program, where she helped women in Englewood learn about nutrition.

As much as Rancel has given back to the community, UIC has given her a stronger understanding of herself. As an

albino Puerto Rican woman who is visually impaired, Rancel has found communities on campus that have contributed to her growth.

"I think my disability politic really flourished here because when I was growing up, I always felt like it was burdensome to ask my teachers for accommodations," she said. "But once I told people, I didn't like the paternalistic treatment I got. I

wanted the ability to self-determine when I needed help — and so I internalized these issues of 'I'm different.'"

However, minoring in disability studies proved to be an enlightening and empowering experience for Rancel.

"Every time I went to class I was like, 'Holy cow! I went through that!'" she said. "I didn't understand how big of a part

being visually impaired is in my life, and the role it played until I unpacked that in class. But now it's like, 'Yeah, I'm disabled.' And this isn't a negative thing."

Rancel also found another home for herself in the Latino Cultural Center.

"I remember going to one event as a freshman, and it ended up with me going to 90 percent of their events," she said.

"I finally know (Latino) people who aren't my family. And I've always struggled with that because I've never looked Puerto Rican.

"On the inside, I'm a disabled brown person. On the outside, I'm an able-bodied white person. It's funny how society doesn't tolerate variance very well. We simplify, simplify, simplify, and it then leaves people like me who don't fit into one category, and it makes you feel conflicted in my life. But I'm Puerto Rican. And it feels so good to be able to connect with that."

Rancel feels like she's just getting started with her service.

"Winning this award is nice, but I'm not done," she said. "The work hasn't even started. I'm not a teacher yet, so what service have I really done? We're at like 5 percent, man."

Advocating for herself, others with disabilities

By Christy Levy — christyb@uic.edu

Katie Longos aspires to be an advocate to help others who, like herself, live with a disability.

When she was in high school, Longos was diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis Type 2 (NF2), a neurological disorder that can lead to tumor growth within the nervous system. Because of the condition, Longos has lost her hearing and uses a wheelchair.

"The physical effects of NF2 didn't present themselves until my late 20s, but unfortunately they progressed quite rapidly," she wrote in an email.

"It's really profound how much society's judgement changes with a person's appearance. Becoming a minority virtually overnight has been a greater learning experience than a formal education will ever provide. I am so much more conscious of the barriers that minorities face in everyday life.

"Ironically, I think these unfortunate events will be the biggest contributor to my ability to advocate and serve on behalf of others."

She joined UIC in 2016, after transferring from the City Colleges of Chicago to pursue a psychology degree.

"I chose UIC because of the opportunities offered by the Honors College," she

wrote. "Best decision ever. I will never forget the private luncheons they offered with city and state officials. I got to ask questions about the current administration that [MSNBC political commentators] Chris Hayes or Rachel Maddow didn't."

Longos has conducted research in the lab of Bette Bottoms, professor of psychology and dean emerita of the Honors College. Her interest in psychology was inspired by her self-advocacy work.

"I have spent hundreds of hours researching my illness, learning medical terminology, how to read MRIs and the anatomy of the brain and nervous system," she wrote. "I always make sure that I am getting the best care. All of these experiences have cultivated a passion for both neuro and behavioral psychology."

Her work ethic hasn't gone unnoticed by Bottoms.

"Katie Longos is the most inspiring student I have ever encountered in my entire academic career, among thousands of others," Bottoms said. "On top of unusual intellectual skills, she has more grit, determination and fortitude than anyone I have ever known."

This fall, Longos will pursue her master's in social services administration at the University of Chicago.



Katie Longos

"Katie has all the characteristics of a person who will distinguish herself, and in this case, distinguish herself not for her own personal glory, but on behalf of others — people with disability who sometimes need powerful advocacy to reach their full potential," Bottoms said.

"Katie will become an advocate, public

policy expert, and a leader who will effect change broadly in the city of Chicago."

For her Honors College capstone research, Longos interned at Artfully Gifted, a nonprofit for individuals who have intellectual and physical disabilities who are pursuing entrepreneurship.

"It was an amazing and humbling experience that I otherwise would have never had," she wrote.

Through the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, she was awarded the Urban Public Policy Fellowship to work with the Department of Family Support Services in the Mayor's Office. She helps support the team of women who administer the One Summer Chicago program, which provides summer employment and internship opportunities for young adults.

"I will leave that fellowship with so much insight into what it takes to produce city programs," she wrote. "I will reflect on the qualities of the women who run that program when I begin my career in social services."

She looks forward to a career serving others.

"Ultimately, I'll feel satisfied when I am able to say that I'm part of the solution," she wrote.

Senior wins national jazz awards

By Carlos Sadovi — csadovi@uic.edu

UIC student Morgan Pirtle, who is graduating from the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts and the Honors College this week, has received several national jazz awards for vocal music.

DownBeat magazine recently announced that Pirtle is a recipient of The DownBeat Student Music Awards 2018 “Outstanding Performance” award in the Vocal Jazz Soloist category, Undergraduate College. Each year, DownBeat magazine, one of the nation’s premier jazz publications, singles out exemplary jazz students across the country for their Student Music Awards.

Pirtle also recently won the prestigious Chicago-based Luminarts Jazz Fellowship, after winning the People’s Choice Award at the Luminarts 2018 Jazz Finals.

“As I approach graduation, receiving these awards is exciting and humbling. They are a reflection of the hours and passion that I have poured into my art these past four years, and I am extremely grateful to be recognized nationally,” Pirtle said.

Pirtle will graduate with honors from both the Jazz Studies program and the Honors College, which she attended on

both merit and academic scholarships.

At UIC, Pirtle studied with vocalist Cheryl Wilson and said the UIC School of Theatre and Music provided her with opportunities to work with some of the most

respected and talented musicians in Chicago. She said the Jazz Festival hosted annually by the School of Theatre and Music was an invaluable experience. It granted a

young artist like herself “unmatchable opportunities” to work with and learn from well-known artists, including Rufus Reid, Robin Eubanks and Jon Faddis.

“I have learned so much from my four years and am so fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with these amazing musicians,” she said. “These opportunities, among others, have shaped my career as a musician and a student at UIC, and I believe they will help jumpstart me into my life after graduation.”

This summer she will be performing at the Jazzin’ at the Shedd series and the 2018 Chicago Jazz Festival.

In addition to her career as a jazz vocalist, she currently works as membership, volunteer and office coordinator at the



UIC graduating student Morgan Pirtle has won a DownBeat Student Music Award. (Photo: Colleen Garcia)

Jazz Institute of Chicago and is a co-founder of the Women’s Jazz Leadership Initiative. She will continue to run the initiative, which fosters a community of professional female musicians and students in the Chicago area by focusing on dialog between artists, making connections and exchanging musical ideas.

“Morgan represents the kind of talent

that is not commonly seen,” said Chris Madsen, interim director of Jazz Studies at the School of Theatre and Music at UIC. “Not only is she gifted with an immense natural talent, but she possesses the work ethic and drive to consistently improve upon that talent. To top it off, she is a stellar student, as well. I have no doubt that she can become a household name.”

Congratulations graduates! You are officially #UICAlumni2K18

Now, it’s time to go out and change the world! As you chase your goals and dreams, we’ll be here working hard to ensure the value of your degree every step of the way. At the same time, your UIC Alumni Association is assembling programs, events and initiatives to keep you engaged with your alma mater, and with one another.

Let’s continue to make each other #UICProud!
Update us on your successes, and follow ours at:



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Finding my sense of self at UIC

By Farooq Chaudhry — mchaud23@uic.edu

When I came to UIC in 2014, I entered as a sociology major, thinking that studying society and analyzing social structures would be interesting. A year down the line, I added a second major, economics, as I fell in love with ideas around economic development, econometrics and answering questions.

This journey took me all sorts of interesting places. I worked as a research assistant studying the affects of race on decision making in a jury; I tutored economics to students from all sorts of backgrounds; I'm writing a thesis on the affects of mass media on the treatment of women in Pakistan.

When I came to UIC in 2014, I entered as a passive Muslim and apathetic Pakistani-American. Growing up in a town with no diversity, not only did I never encounter opportunities for me to learn about my traditions and heritage — I didn't even have the language to describe who I was as a person. I was a statistic reflected in demographic surveys claiming diversity in skin, but not thought, or practice.

This lack of understanding took me on

a journey of exploration, resulting in becoming the co-president of the Muslim Student Association, a civil rights activist and visiting Pakistan in 2017 (and finding my heart there).

As I walk away from UIC, I realize the most important knowledge one needs to have is not of an academic or industrial discipline.

Rather, it is knowledge of the self.

Who are you, and who do you want to be? Why are you here, and what are you doing here? The answers to these questions are infinite and come in a multitude of forms, but they all serve a singular purpose: to root you.

The most important things I walk away from UIC with are my sense of self, rooted in knowledge of who I am, where I came from and why I'm here.

My roots span from Wazir Khan Masjid in Lahore, Pakistan, to The Gambia, the beautiful city of Chicago, and all the way to St. Charles, Illinois.

My roots are treating others as the best versions of themselves, whether or not they've gotten there yet; my roots are loving and serving people as they are, not



Farooq Chaudhry (Photo: Jenny Fontaine)

who I expect or want them to be.

My roots are Muhammad ibn Abd-Allah.

My roots are *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and *Purification of the Heart* by Hamza Yusuf.

My roots span well beyond this page,

and the point isn't for me to list mine. But rather to ask you, reader, who, what, where are yours?

As a dear mentor taught me, those who are rooted do not uproot, and those who are rooted are not shaken by storms.



Michelle Garcia De La Vega (Photo: Jenny Fontaine)

'At UIC, I dared to dream'

By Michelle Garcia De La Vega

It feels like only yesterday that I stepped foot onto campus for the first time — an enthusiastic, yet insecure, 19-year-old — unable able to answer the most basic question: What is your major?

Today, as I sit in this commencement ceremony with my fellow classmates, I cannot help but congratulate myself as I recall these past four years of countless projects, essays, exams, presentations, readings, all-nighters and more coffee than I should have consumed. I also recall something deeper: the process of personal growth.

In these past four years, I've learned so much from so many. Semester after semester, professors reminded me to exercise my mind, place my creativity into practice, think critically and always question everything. I also met a diverse set of intelligent individuals with struggles, dreams, aspirations, and stories of their own, many of whom not only inspired me to chase my dreams, but also became my dear friends.

At UIC, I dared to dream. I hopped on a plane, flew across the ocean and experienced life on the other side of the world. I

studied abroad in Spain, something I never thought I'd have the courage to do.

At UIC, I felt lost, but also found a path of my own. I had many doubts and fears, but found the positivity and courage to overcome them. My freshman year I felt small, but today I feel emboldened and leave knowing that I have the potential to only be greater. I made countless memories that will last forever and learned valuable lessons, most notably: if you don't go after it, you won't have it; and failure is not the end, it is only the beginning.

Today, at 22, I am still enthusiastic for what's to come, but I'm no longer insecure. I leave UIC knowing that the importance of college was not in deciding a major; rather it was in gaining the skills necessary to pursue what makes me happy in life, regardless of where that happiness may lie.

This journey called college has come to an end, but the personal growth, acquisition of knowledge and experiential learning has not. I'm turning my tassel to the left and closing a very special chapter in my life, but also beginning a new one.

Goodbye, UIC, and thank you!

MEETING THEIR MATCH

Match Day an emotional milestone for medical students

By Christy Levy — christyb@uic.edu

At 11 a.m. March 16, the UIC Forum erupted into cheers and happy tears.

Together, members of UIC's College of Medicine Class of 2018 opened envelopes that held the reward for their hard work in medical school. On Match Day, the fourth-year medical students — who are celebrating their graduation at this week — learned where they will train for their residency programs for the next three to seven years, starting July 1.

"It's four years of blood, sweat and tears all culminating into a really meaningful day and excitement for the next chapter of life," said Christiana Shoushtari, who will train in internal medicine at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge.

More than 30,000 students at medical schools nationwide were matched to residencies this year through the National Resident Matching Program.

At UIC, 162 students matched with residency programs, and the top specialty was internal medicine. About 33 percent of UIC students will stay in Illinois, and the top placements were UIC, University of

Chicago and Baylor University.

"With you at the helm, the future of medicine is bright," College of Medicine interim dean Charles Ray told students.

"Residency will be tough, but worth every effort," added Robert Barish, vice chancellor for health affairs.

Fifty-three students from the College of Medicine's Rockford campus, 56 from Peoria and 24 at the Urbana-Champaign campus received their placements on Match Day.

Elizabeth Zavala cried and hugged UIC faculty members as she learned that she had received her first choice and would remain at UIC, training in family medicine.

"The faculty is tremendous, the diversity and patient population are important to me — UIC is just a leader in family medicine," she said.

Katarzyna Rojek and Trevor Thompson opened their envelopes together and were thrilled to learn they will both complete internal medicine residencies at the University of North Carolina Medical Center. A couple since the first year of medical school, they had requested to match to-



Photo: Jenny Fontaine

gether.

"We applied on a whim, but we just fell in love with Chapel Hill," Rojek said.

Arron Cole matched with his first choice: otolaryngology at NewYork-Presbyterian, a hospital affiliated with Cornell and Columbia universities. Cole said his training at UIC has prepared him well for

his residency program.

"UIC really puts you in the field — we're in the trenches in a lot of ways," Cole said.

He's ready to begin the next stage of his medical career.

"This is the first time it's really starting to feel real," he said. "And it's super exciting."

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Undergrads travel to Mexico City to learn about urban architecture

By Francisca Corona – fcoron3@uic.edu

Many architecture majors have studied Mexico City in their college curriculum, but nine UIC undergraduates can now say they have actually seen the giant metropolis up close — and for free.

The students, who are all seniors, embarked on a one-week trip in February to the country's capital for a studio design class called Learning from Mexico City. The class examines the relationships and modality between architecture and the city, known as architectural urbanism.

"Mexico City provides a really good case study of urban architecture really unlike any other capital of the world," said Alexander Eisenschmidt, associate professor of architecture.

The city was originally built on an island in Lake Texcoco by the Aztecs, but it was destroyed and redesigned by the Spanish after conquest.

"Half of the architecture that is built there is built without regulation, without permit, yet filled with spatial, programmatic and material ingenuity," said Eisenschmidt.

Rapid economic, urban, demographic, technology-based, political and other changes have shaped the city. Now, more than 21.2 million people occupy its metropolitan area, making it the most populous in the Western Hemisphere.

In a seminar that inspired the course, Eisenschmidt and students looked at architectural and urban typologies within the city. For the design class, students chose a topic for field research in Mexico.

The group visited places of architectural significance, too, including a house designed by Pritzker Prize-winner Luis Barragán. During their stay, they met with famous architecture offices, gave presentations at the City Laboratory of Mexico



UIC student Alexandros Mpougas photographs the processions around the Basilica de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe.

co City and collaborated with Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM).

The UIC Office of Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR) funded the trip.

"It was an incredible experience," said Andrew Lang. His research focused on the power that plazas have to control what the city looks like. With the group, he went to the area's main squares: Zócalo, Plaza de Santo Domingo and Plaza de Santa Veracruz. There, he took an interest in the plazas' columns and building fa-

cades.

"Researching in the city, actually going there and experiencing it for ourselves, was completely different from Google Earth and reading papers written about our subjects," Lang said.

The experience continues to help the students. They're using their newfound knowledge for design projects, which they'll present at the end of the semester.

Katrina Reyes, whose project focused on the use of fountains, learned more

"HALF OF THE ARCHITECTURE THAT IS BUILT THERE IS BUILT WITHOUT REGULATION, WITHOUT PERMIT, YET FILLED WITH SPACIAL, PROBLEMATIC AND MATERIAL INGENUITY."

about the architectural repercussions of the megatropolis and larger urban trends. Things like pollution, climate change and natural disasters, such as earthquakes, have made the amount of drinkable water in Mexico City scarce.

"I'm designing an aqueduct that will serve as a monumental object, to remind people in the city of what the water used to be," Reyes said. Her aqueduct is meant to deliver water from a lake to Xochimilco and Tlalpan, where the only source of safe drinking water for some is truck deliveries.

"[The trip] was really eye-opening," said Reyes.

Eisenschmidt thanked OVCR for making the travel possible and added that the class will impact students for years to come.

"I cannot stress enough how important it was and how much it contributes to the students' understanding of the world of architecture and diversity of cultures," he said.



Left: Katrina Reyes and Adan Orozco photograph the interior of the Casa Gilardi by Luis Barragán. Center: Students Alexandros Mpougas, Amen Tefarie, Blake Hernandez, Victoria Carvalho Cavalcante, Jasen Domanico, Andrew Lang, Adan Orozco, Katrina Reyes and Karam Odisho tour the campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) with UNAM professor Elena Tudela (far left). Right: Viewing north from the top floor at the Torre Latinoamericana.

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