



UCLA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS COMMENCEMENT 2026



LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

To the Class of 2026:

Congratulations! My colleagues and I are extraordinarily pleased to be here with you today to celebrate your graduation. You have worked hard and achieved much. UCLA is one of the top universities in the world, and Economics and Business Economics are among the most challenging majors at the University. Your presence here tonight is a testament to your academic accomplishments, and we applaud you for that. You have also challenged yourselves with numerous co-curricular activities. You have interacted with alumni at various events and panel discussions; you have developed career skills through internships, and you have explored the opportunities and friendships offered by dozens of economics-related student organizations. Through it all, you have benefited from the guidance of a world-renowned faculty and from talented classmates who have helped drive your success. You should be proud of yourself, and we, along with your family and friends, share in that pride.

If you look around this evening, you may be struck by the number of students sitting here in Pauley Pavilion. This academic year over 1000 students will graduate with a degree in Economics, Business Economics, or Mathematics / Economics and last Fall, 51 percent of the incoming freshmen in the Social Sciences had selected Economics or Business Economics as their major.

These are amazing statistics, but the popularity of Economics comes as no surprise when one looks at headlines from around the world—tariffs, the national debt, the cost of health care, and growing inequality, are frequently front and center in various policy and news forums. As economists you bring important insights into these issues, insights gleaned from classes such as Econ 11 where you learned the concept of opportunity cost and the trade-offs that exist in every decision, Econ 148 where you learned about the behavioral models that guide individual decision making, and Econ 102 where you acquired the tools to think about the economy in the aggregate and assess trends in important statistics such as unemployment and interest rates.

As you face a rapidly changing world, your degree in Economics has prepared you to think broadly, to tackle new situations, and to find solutions to unanticipated problems. You are the next generation of leaders.

Whatever your chosen path in life may be, we hope you remember us here at UCLA. Come back often, share with us your accomplishments, and reach out to future Bruins the way many alumni have reached out to you. Don't ever forget UCLA or your home Department; we will not forget you and we wish you every happiness in life.

Warmest Wishes,

Professor Kathleen McGarry

Chair, Department of Economics

2026 PROGRAM

UCLA College of Letters and Science
Department of Economics

2026 Commencement

Saturday, June 13, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Pauley Pavilion

Procession of the Students

Procession of the Faculty

Led by Class of 2026 Grand Marshals

Department Welcome

Professor Kathleen McGarry
Chair, Department of Economics

Keynote Speaker

Aaron Bendikson

**Recognition of Departmental Scholar, Departmental Honors,
and Academic Excellence**

Presentation of the Candidates

Department of Economics Faculty

Class of 2026 Photo

Closing

Professor Kathleen McGarry
Chair, Department of Economics

Recessional



2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Aaron Bendikson

Bachelors Degree in Economics and History, UCLA
MBA Economics, Harvard University

2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Aaron Bendikson is a Partner at Onsight Capital Management, a firm that he co-founded. He has more than 25 years of investment experience. During his career, Mr. Bendikson has been responsible for making both public and private investments across a broad range of sectors. Prior to Onsight, Mr. Bendikson was a Managing Director at Oaktree Capital Management and also a Principal within the private equity team at Soros Fund Management. Mr. Bendikson started his career as an Analyst in the Mergers & Acquisitions group at J.P. Morgan & Co.

Mr. Bendikson received an M.B.A. from the Harvard Business School and a B.A. degree cum laude in Economics and History from the University of California at Los Angeles, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Mr. Bendikson is currently serving as a member of the UCLA Department of Economics Board of Visitors and the UCLA Division of Social Sciences Dean's Advisory Board, as well as the Board of Directors for Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He has served as a member of the board of directors of numerous public and private companies as well as charitable foundations.

"UCLA was a foundational, formative experience for me. It ignited lifelong curiosities and transformed the way I engage with the world. I met the love of my life at UCLA. Many of my most cherished personal relationships were forged around campus. For many years, I have continued that tradition with my own family; making frequent pilgrimages to the Royce Quad, the Rose Bowl, Pauley Pavilion and Bruin Woods."



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Class of 2026 Grand Marshals

MATTHEW BUCHANAN

LISA TIUTIUNNIK

Departmental Scholar Program

HAYDEN GHOSH
JORDAN LEE

VISNU SYAM NAIR
ELI PAPAGNI

Departmental Honors Program

ABIGAIL FANG
SAMVIT GARG
ZIRUI ZHOU

Academic Excellence

4.0 Major and UC GPA

ERIC AMKRAUT
DOMINIC DIMATTEO
MICHAEL ARI GOLDBERG
STELLA HUEY LING KOH
ETHAN C. LEE

ROBERT C. LEE
KALIYA KRISTINE MAH
YUKO NAGAKURA
ZI WANG
CINDY CHEN ZHANG

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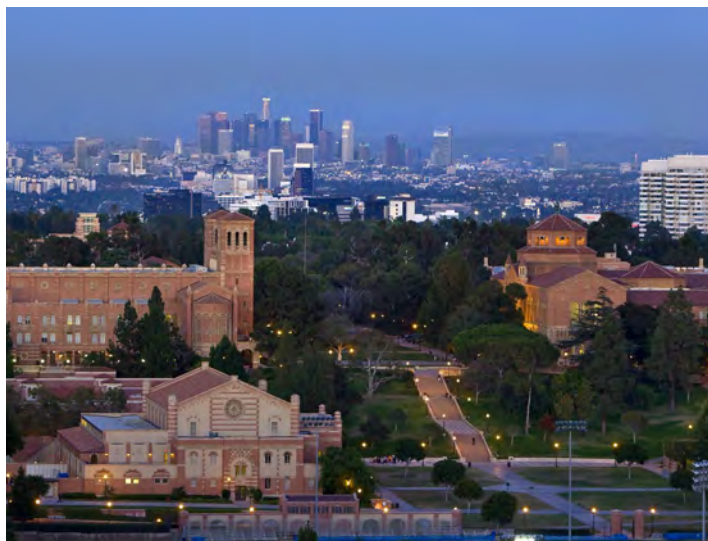
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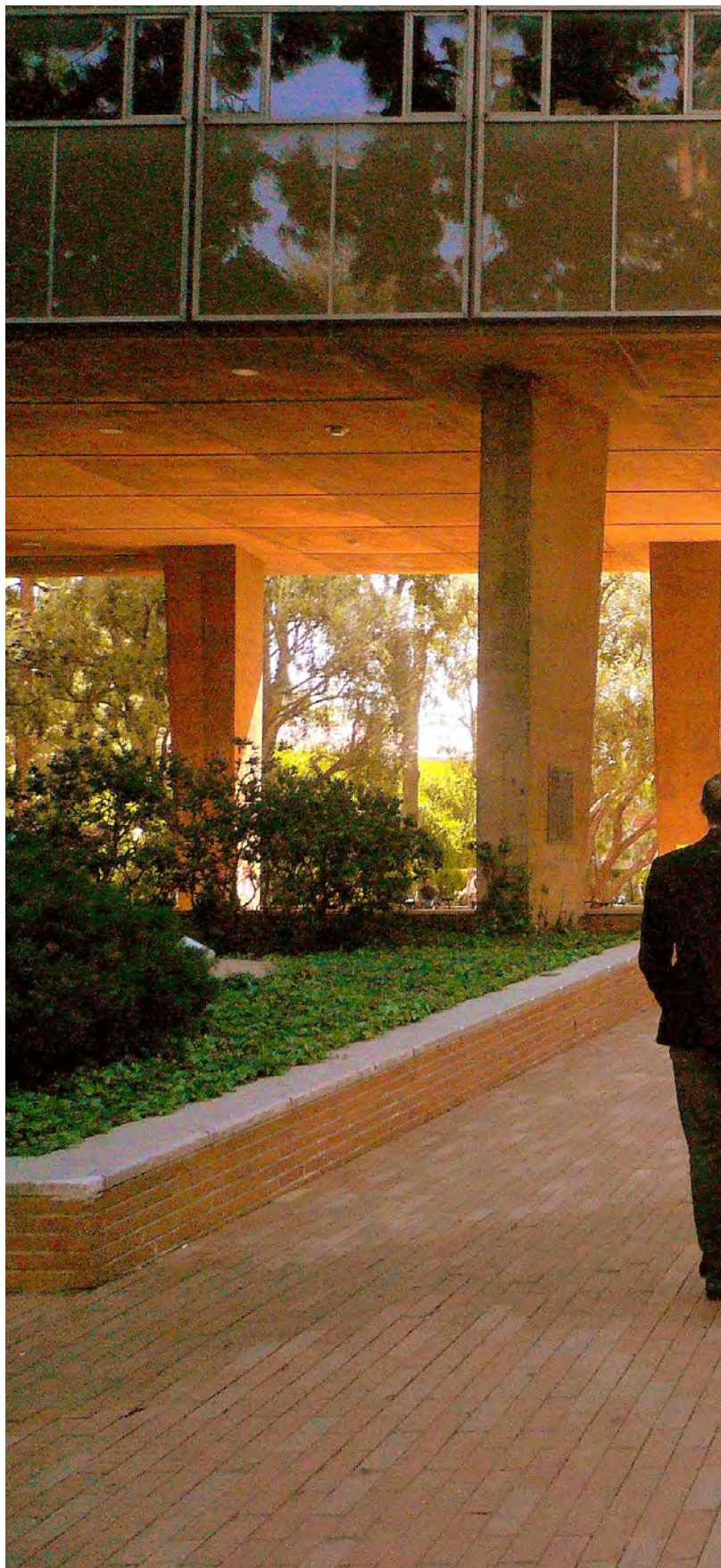


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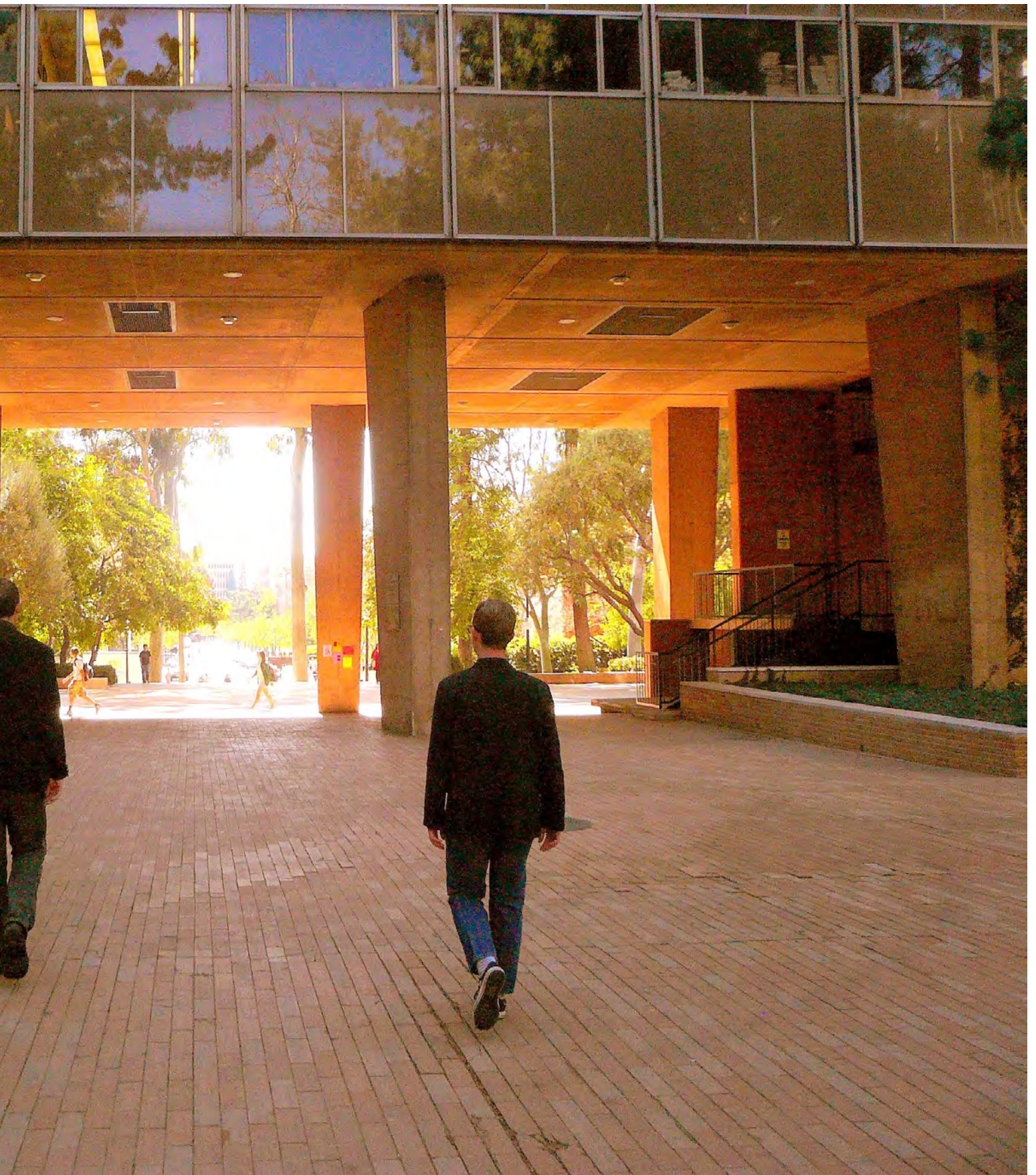
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We would also like to extend our thanks to the alumni who have enriched our students' learning experiences this year by sharing your expertise in classrooms, judging case competitions, and in many other ways. We appreciate you coming back to your alma mater to invest in students' professional development.

HAIL TO THE HILLS OF WESTWOOD

Hail to the hills of Westwood,
To the mighty sea below;
Hail to our Alma Mater,
She will conquer every foe.
For we're loyal to the Southland,
Her honor we'll uphold;
We'll gladly give our hearts to thee,
To the Blue and to the Gold.

UCLA 8 CLAP

(Hands in the air)
Ahhh...1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8!
U! (clap, clap, clap)
C! (clap, clap, clap)
L! (clap, clap, clap)
A! (clap, clap, clap)
U! C! L! A! Fight, fight, fight!

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