



*Reaching*

*for the*

*Stars*



Undocumented Student  
Graduation Celebration

2023



OFFICE OF ACADEMIC MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



# *Celebration Welcome Letter*

Greetings,

It is with great enthusiasm and honor that we recognize the graduation of undocumented students at the University of Michigan.

Some people are presented with opportunities to attempt new things and explore roads that may not have been available to those who came before them. Unfortunately, in our society these opportunities have not been available to all. We are proud and humbled that you chose to bring your talents to the University of Michigan and participate in and contribute to its academic, co- and extra-curricular, and social communities. As a university, we remain committed to supporting access and opportunities for other undocumented students like you - who have demonstrated strong potential and who bring a diversity of personal and cultural strengths to our campus community.

To navigate college pathways as undocumented college students requires not only academic and intellectual skills but also a great deal of strength, courage and determination. In pursuing higher education, you have taken steps to expand the world of opportunities that await you, one where dreams have the potential to become a reality. The impacts of your hard work and accomplishments will be long-lasting and also offer hope and inspiration to those who are connected to your success and those who follow in your footsteps.

We are confident that you have the skills, talent, drive and commitment to overcome future life challenges and continue to make a real difference in our society. Our University community has been made better for having you as students. The University of Michigan will always be your home, and you will always be welcome.

From one perspective, we are marking this wonderful occasion of graduation as an ending, the conclusion of a long journey. However, the root of the word "commencement" is the act of beginning, starting, initiating. We wish you nothing but success and happiness as you now start these next steps of your life journey.



# Celebration Welcome Letter

Go forth and do great things with what you have learned in whatever responsibilities and roles you take on – personally and professionally. Do them well and with integrity and joy.

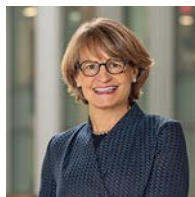
And whatever you do, and wherever your journey takes you –

Go Blue!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Santa J. Ono".

**Santa J. Ono**  
President



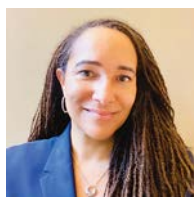
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie K. McCauley".

**Laurie K. McCauley**  
Provost & Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martino Harmon".

**Martino Harmon**  
Vice President for Student Life



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tabbye M. Chavous".

**Tabbye M. Chavous**  
Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion  
and Chief Diversity Officer



“The stars we are given. The constellations we make. That is to say, stars exist in the cosmos, but constellations are the imaginary lines we draw between them, the readings we give the sky, the stories we tell.”

“Las estrellas se nos dan. Las constelaciones las hacemos nosotros. Es decir, las estrellas existen en los cosmos, pero las constelaciones son líneas imaginarias que dibujas entre ellas, las obras que le damos al cielo, las historias que contamos.”

- *Rebecca Solnit*



# *Masters of Ceremonies*



## **Rosa Avilez-Martínez and Daniel Izquierdo**

Rosa Avilez-Martínez (Class of 2020 and 2022) and Daniel Izquierdo (Class of 2022) are both alumni of the University of Michigan. They are veteran members of the undocumented student organization Student Community of Progressive Empowerment (SCOPE), and collectively have over 5 years of experience advocating for the undocumented community. This ultimate dynamic duo is excited to lead this year's ceremony and bestow their knowledge and wisdom with our graduating students.



# Welcome Speaker



## Marie Ting

*Assistant Vice Provost for Equity, Inclusion & Academic Affairs*

Dr. Marie P. Ting earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in higher education from the University of Michigan (U-M), and her doctorate in higher education policy and leadership from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Prior to her current position, Marie served as associate director at U-M's National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID) and also has held administrative positions at the Center for Educational Outreach (CEO) and the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI). She has also served as the university director of student affairs and special programs at the City University of New York (CUNY) system office and held positions in both academic and student affairs at the University of Maryland, College Park.



# *Keynote Speaker*



## **Yvonne Navarrete**

Yvonne Navarrete was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, and immigrated to Detroit, Michigan at the age of two. Her experiences growing up undocumented in Detroit have driven her to a life committed to organizing for more within and for the power of her community. She earned a B.A. in Public Policy from the University of Michigan where she organized for Latinx and undocumented student issues as a co-founder of both La Casa and the Student Community of Progressive Empowerment (SCOPE). She then went on to earn her M.A. in Urban Education Policy from Brown University. Yvonne supports statewide organizing campaigns, including the fight for driver's licenses for undocumented Michiganders as the Policy Director for We the People Michigan and organizes in Detroit at the intersection of immigration and education justice as a core team member of MIStudentsDream.





# *Congratulations graduates!*





# *Rosa Avilez-Martínez*



Class of 2022 | *Master of Social Work; Interpersonal Practice in Integrated Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse*  
School of Social Work

*"Never underestimate what you are capable of, and remember that everything is always worth trying. Forever incredibly appreciative of my family and friends for all their support all these years. Gracias mamá y papá, esto fue para ustedes."*



# *Victor Jáuregui-Tapia*



Class of 2023 | *Bachelor of Business Administration*  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business

*"SI SE PUEDE! SI SE PUEDE!"*

*I want to live in a world where success for students like me isn't an anomaly but instead expected. I owe all my achievements to the loved ones that have motivated and supported me. Gracias por su amor y apoyo."*



# *Alexis Jiménez*



Class of 2023 | *Bachelor of Business Administration*  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business

*Bachelor of Arts in Film, Television, & Media*  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

*"Gracias a mi familia y a mi comunidad por empujarme  
hasta este punto."*







## *Planning Committee*

### **Students**

Rosa Avilez-Martínez  
Victor Jáuregui-Tapia  
Alexis Jiménez  
Lauren Kouassi

### **Staff**

Emmanuel Navarro  
Sandra Pérez

The 2023 Undocumented Student Graduation  
is coordinated by:

### **Héctor Galván**

Assistant Director, Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives  
A Unit of the Office of the Vice Provost for Equity, Inclusion and  
Academic Affairs  
3009 Student Activities Building  
515 East Jefferson Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1316  
Phone: (734) 936-1055

## *Regents of the University of Michigan*

Santa J. Ono, *ex officio*, President  
Jordan B. Acker, Huntington Woods  
Michael J. Behm, Grand Blanc  
Mark J. Bernstein, Ann Arbor  
Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor  
Sarah Hubbard, Okemos  
Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms, chair  
Ron Weiser, Ann Arbor  
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor



## *Graduation Celebration History*

This annual graduation ceremony, which began in 2019, is one of various celebrations organized by the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI) that supplement the traditional University of Michigan Commencement and express appreciation for the achievements, commonalities, and cultural differences that characterize the experiences of students at the University of Michigan.

The Undocumented Student Celebration celebrates the graduation of undocumented students and students with DACA at the University of Michigan. This event allows for graduating students to celebrate their accomplishments with those who supported them during their academic journey, including friends, family and community members, and U-M faculty, staff, and administrators.

This event is organized in collaboration with the Student Community of Progressive Empowerment (SCOPE), a student organization that advocates for and centers the experiences of undocumented students at the University of Michigan. While aware of the many challenges presented to undocumented individuals across the country as pertaining to legal status, we are proud to showcase and honor with great pride the tenacity and determination of our own students.

## *Graduation Celebration Mission*

The Undocumented Student Graduation celebrates the commonalities and differences that characterize the experiences of undocumented and other students at the University of Michigan and serves as an example of the University of Michigan's commitment to diversity.

The ceremony acknowledges the value and uniqueness of the undocumented student experience and serves to commemorate the accomplishments of those students that participate in the celebration. The celebration recognizes faculty and staff who provide academic enrichments, research opportunities, programs, and activities that promote the communal striving and sense of accountability that help students to achieve.

The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI), in partnership with the Undocumented Student Graduation Planning Committee, institutes this annual celebration as an expression and tradition of valuing the University's cultural offerings and commitment to diversity.



## *Statement of Freedom of Speech and Artistic Expression*

The University of Michigan strives to create an open form in which diverse opinions can be expressed and heard. Members of the University community, speakers, artists, and other invited guests have a right to express their views and opinions, and the University will protect that right. The University also supports the rights of those with differing views to express their opinions. In the interest of protecting these rights for all, University representatives may warn anyone unduly interfering with a speaker or performer's freedom of expression, and if the warnings are not heeded, may remove those individuals from the building. The policy extends and affirms University policies set forth by our Civil Liberties Board in our Student Handbook; and in the U-M Standard Practice Guide; Regents Ordinance Article XII, Section 1; and state statutes.

## *Statement of Affirmative Action*

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex\*, color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or Vietnam-era veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for Institutional Equity and Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator, Office for Institutional Equity, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388. For other University of Michigan information call 734-764-1817.





# *Land Acknowledgement*

The University of Michigan is located on the territory of the Anishinaabeg people. The Ann Arbor campus currently resides on land ceded through the Treaty of Detroit in 1807. Additionally, in 1817, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadami Nations made the largest single land transfer to the University of Michigan, ceded through the Treaty of Fort Meigs, with the agreement that their children would be educated in perpetuity.

We assert the sovereignty of tribal lands and acknowledge the painful historical and ongoing genocide, forced assimilation, and displacement of Native communities in the establishment of the University.

We affirm contemporary and ancestral Anishinaabeg ties to this land, the profound contributions of Native American peoples to this institution, and the University's commitment to educate the children of Native ancestors.

Acknowledging the land is an important first step towards healing that needs to be followed by further action. We invite all of you to think about how you can support Indigenous communities that surround you.



UNDOCUMENTED  
**M** STUDENTS  
WELCOME

[UNDOCUMENTED.UMICH.EDU](http://UNDOCUMENTED.UMICH.EDU)



SCOPE

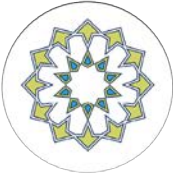
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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN





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These symbols represent the cultural graduation ceremonies that are coordinated annually through the Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI).

Top left to right:

Black Celebratory, Native American Graduation, La Celebración Latina

Bottom left to right:

Middle Eastern & North African Celebration,  
First Generation Graduation, Asian & Pacific Islander Graduation

[oami.umich.edu](http://oami.umich.edu)





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