

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

First-Generation Student Celebration

—2026—



FIRST GENERATION
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



**We may be the first,
but we will not
be the last!**



CELEBRATION WELCOME LETTER

Greetings,

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2026 and the participants of this year's First-Generation Student Celebration.

Commencement is a meaningful milestone for the University of Michigan community. Today, we recognize your achievements, your growth, and the communities that supported you along the way. We celebrate all that you have accomplished and the paths you have created.

As first-generation college graduates, you have navigated spaces that were not always designed with you in mind. You learned how to ask questions, build networks, and create opportunities through persistence and determination. Your journey reflects strength, clarity, and a deep commitment to your goals.

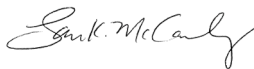
You did not walk this path alone. Your families, communities, mentors, and peers have been part of this journey. Their support, sacrifices, and belief in you helped make this moment possible. At the same time, you have built community here by showing up for one another and creating spaces of belonging and support.

As you move forward, you carry more than your degree. You carry knowledge, experience, and a perspective that will continue to open doors for others. You have created pathways that future first-generation students will follow and build upon. Our campus community is better because of the myriad of contributions that you have made to it.

We celebrate you, your journey, and all that is ahead.
Wherever you go from here - Always Go Blue!



Domenico Grasso
President



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



Martino Harmon
Vice President for Student Life



Angela D. Dillard
Interim Vice Provost for Access &
Opportunity and Vice Provost
for Undergraduate Education

OAMI'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Dear Graduates,

It is a true honor to celebrate with you at this year's First-Generation Celebration at the University of Michigan.

Today marks a milestone shaped by perseverance, growth, and determination. Each of you has created your own path, learning as you went, building confidence, and finding your place here. This achievement is yours, and it is also shared with the families, friends, and communities who supported you along the way. None of us arrives here alone.

At OAMI, we believe student success is not only about what you accomplish, but about who you become and what you build along the way. You have done both. Through your presence, your leadership, and your willingness to show up for one another, you have created spaces where your friends, families, and peers feel seen, supported, and connected. You have helped shape a Michigan where the students who come after you can imagine themselves here and thrive.

Being first in your family to attend (and now graduate!) college is powerful. It means you are expanding what is possible in real time. You are setting new paths, creating new opportunities, and showing others that they belong here, too. What may have once felt unfamiliar has become something you now move through with confidence, and you have made that path more visible for those who will follow.

Your families and communities are part of this moment, their belief in you, their encouragement, their pride. You carry that with you now, not just as a reflection of where you come from, but as a foundation for where you are going.

This is not an ending. It is the beginning of everything you've been building toward.

We are incredibly proud of you and excited for all that comes next.

With pride and appreciation,

The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

PROGRAM

OPENING

Norris Chase

Director of the LSA First-Generation Commitment

WELCOME

Angela D. Dillard

Interim Vice Provost for Access & Opportunity
and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Martino Harmon

Vice President for Student Life

STUDENT SPEAKER

Elsa Olander

PRESENTATION OF THE GRADUATES

CLOSING

Norris Chase

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Norris Chase

Director of the LSA First-Generation Commitment

Dr. Norris Chase serves as the Director of First-Gen Commitment within the College of Literature, Science, and Arts (LSA) where he is a part of the team responsible for scaling support for first-generation and limited-income students within the college.



A scholar, practitioner, and proud Detroit Native, Dr. Chase has committed his career to cultivating learning environments that foster resilience, agency, cultural wealth, and equity for all students. With more than 15 years in higher education, Dr. Chase aligns vision, strategy, and organizational leadership to support students in their pursuit of the life-changing outcomes of obtaining higher education.

Prior to joining the university, Dr. Chase served for over a decade as a senior administrative leader across various institution types, geographical landscapes, and roles, providing strategic and operational oversight for a wide array of co-curriculum, student success, and student engagement programs, units, and divisions. Dr. Chase has also taught courses at the undergraduate level and served on local non-profit boards and professional associations nationally.

As a proud first-generation graduate whose life was transformed by college, Dr. Chase believes in the power of mentorship, literacy, and higher education collectively.

Outside of his professional endeavors, Dr. Chase is an aspirational foodie who enjoys spending time with family and friends while cheering on the Detroit Pistons and the Oakland University basketball teams.

WELCOME SPEAKER



Angela D. Dillard

*Interim Vice Provost for Access & Opportunity
and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education*

Dr. Angela D. Dillard is the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Interim Vice Provost for Access & Opportunity at the University of Michigan; former chair of the Department of History in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA); and the Richard A. Meisler Collegiate Professor of Afroamerican & African Studies and History. She also maintains affiliated faculty status within the Residential College, where she is a member of the Social Theory & Practice program.

Dillard is an interdisciplinary scholar trained in history and political theory with a Ph.D. in American Studies from U-M's Department of American Culture. She specializes in American and African-American intellectual history, particularly around issues of race, religion, and politics — on both the Left and the Right sides of the political spectrum.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Martino Harmon

Vice President for Student Life

Dr. Martino Harmon serves as the Vice President for Student Life at the University of Michigan, overseeing a family of programs, services, and resources that support the student experience in and beyond the classroom. For over two decades, he has served in senior student affairs roles at two- and four-year institutions, including overseeing admissions, student success, and multicultural recruitment, and working on the front lines of student access and opportunity.

As a first-generation college student, VP Harmon earned a Bachelor's of Business Administration in Marketing Management, a Master's of Education in Human Resource Development and Educational Technology, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education and Administration, all from The University of Toledo.

STUDENT SPEAKER



Elsa Olander

Elsa Olander is a multidisciplinary artist and 2026 graduate of the University of Michigan, earning her BFA from the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design with a minor in Entrepreneurship. Working across painting, textiles, and fashion, her practice explores identity, community, and African diasporic experiences. Born and raised in Kenya to a South Sudanese mother and an American father, her work is deeply informed by her transnational upbringing. Elsa has exhibited nationally and internationally, was a selected artist for the 2023 Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair and has had work acquired by the University of Michigan.

Her recent exhibitions include the IP Senior Showcase and her debut solo exhibition, *Becoming*, opening April 30 at the Duderstadt Center; both are open to the public. Following graduation, she will participate in an artist residency in Lamu, Kenya, with aspirations to collaborate with global brands and develop creative initiatives that connect art, culture, and social impact across continents.

DOCTORAL GRADUATES

Delina Kamposh

College of Pharmacy

Doctor of Pharmacy

Jessie Williams

A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture
and Urban Planning, Law School

Law; Urban and Regional Planning

MASTER'S GRADUATES

Mridul Aggrawal

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Accounting

Ridha Al-Wishah

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Coral Avery

School for Environment and
Sustainability
*Environmental Justice; Behavior,
Education, and Communication*

Genevi Babati

School of Public Health
*Occupational and
Environmental Epidemiology;
Public Health Genetics*

Ashley Banas

School of Public Health
*Public Health; Health Behavior
and Health Equity*

Jada Bent-Thomas

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
*Business Administration;
Data and Business Analytics*

Alexis Black

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Carla Carreon-Elisea

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Analytics

Emily Chizek

School of Public Health
*Health Services Administration;
Health Management and Policy*

Joselyn Cortes- Samano

School of Social Work
Social Work; Community Change

Bella Crayton

Marsal Family School of
Education
*Educational Studies;
Educational Equity, Justice,
and Social Transformation*

David DeLaRosa

Marsal Family School of
Education
*Higher and Postsecondary
Education*

Avery Fields

College of Engineering
*Environmental Engineering;
Music; Program in Sustainable
Engineering*

Deepak Goyal

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

MASTER'S GRADUATES

Brandon Heid

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Marsalis Jolley

School for Environment and
Sustainability
Landscape Architecture

Antonio Junior- Robins

Marsal Family School of
Education
Higher Education

Ridhima Kalra

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Danielle Maduka

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Melanie Martinez

School of Information
User Experience

Tina Nguyen

A. Alfred Taubman College
of Architecture and Urban
Planning
*Architecture Design and
Research; Digital and Material
Technologies*

Justin Thompson

Gerald R. Ford School of Public
Policy, School for Environment
and Sustainability
*Environmental Policy; Science,
Technology, and Public Policy;
Healthy Cities; Innovation and
Entrepreneurship; Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion*

Alyssa Tiscareno

Rackham Graduate School
*Molecular and Integrative
Physiology*

Tamer Tubishat

A. Alfred Taubman College
of Architecture and Urban
Planning
Architecture

Michael Vu

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Yingying Ye

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Amarilis Acosta Oliva

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Political Science; Law, Justice,
and Social Change; Latina/o
Studies*

Tabark Al-Rishawi

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Biochemistry

Selma Alawbali

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience*

Iftikhaar Alli-Balogun

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Anthropology

Alan Andrade

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Political Science; History

Jasmine Arechiga- Jacob

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Biology, Health, and Society

Rachel Arroyo

College of Pharmacy

*Pharmaceutical Science;
Gender and Health*

Nyla Austin

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Women's and Gender Studies

Georgina Ayala

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Neuroscience; Quantitative
Methods in the Social Sciences*

Han Beaucamp

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*English; Gender, Race, and
Nation*

Nicole Bermudez- Alvarado

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biology, Health, and Society;
Sociology; Health and Medicine*

Marcela Billingslea Durini

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

General Studies

Sofia Bodrun

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Program in the Environment;
Sustainability*

Crystal Briskey

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

English; Anthropology

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Matthew Briskey

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
English; Anthropology

Alexa Brockway

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Political Science; History

Victoria Brown

College of Engineering
*Industrial and Operations
Engineering; Sustainability*

Tyler Buividas

College of Engineering
*Engineering Physics; Electrical
Engineering; Mathematics;
Music*

Kaily Burgau

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Political Science

Christopher Bustamante

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Economics

Alex Bzdula

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Biochemistry; Mathematics;
Physics; Computer Science*

Alexander Calderon

School of Public Health
*Public Health Sciences; Science,
Technology, and Society*

Delaney Christy

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Molecular, Cellular, and
Developmental Biology; Writing*

Jayce Clarke

College of Engineering
Computer Engineering

Katelynn Cooper

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Psychology; Sociology

Madison Cregar

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Psychology

Joshua Crook

Gerald R. Ford School of Public
Policy
*Public Policy; International
Studies*

Melanie Cruz

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Sociology; Latina/o Studies

Beyonce Cruz

College of Engineering
*Aerospace Engineering,
Philosophy*

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Paige Davis

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Aiskel DeJesus

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Sociology; Law, Justice, and
Social Change; Urban Studies;
Political Science*

Rachel DeVeyra

Penny W. Stamps School of Art
& Design
Art and Design

Emily Esqueda- Valtierra

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Biology, Health, and Society

Janalee Euristee Robinson

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Cognitive Science; Philosophy
and Cognition; Russian
Language, Literature, and
Culture*

Rejoana Evana

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience*

Taree Evans

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Yunhan Fang

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Earth and Environmental
Sciences; Chemistry;
Oceanography*

Arianna Fazlic

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Molecular, Cellular, and
Developmental Biology;
Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian*

Veronica Finley

School of Nursing
Nursing

Jesse Galvan

College of Engineering
Chemical Engineering

Kenya Garza

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Economics; Statistics

Victoria Gasienica

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Economics; Philosophy, Politics,
and Economics*

Natalie Givi

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Data Science

Aiden Gomez

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Political Science; History

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Briana Gonzalez

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience; Creative Writing
and Literature*

Lizbeth Gonzalez

College of Engineering
Civil Engineering

Rea Hajredini

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biology, Health, & Society;
Spanish*

Olga Hamilton

School of Information
*Information; Information
Analysis*

Tarneem Hanna

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Communication and Media

Amaria Harris

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Biomolecular Science; Spanish

Kailah Hawkins

School of Public Health
*Global and Community Public
Health; French*

Sara Haycox

College of Engineering
Computer Engineering

Cecilia He

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Neuroscience

Shelby Holmes

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biomolecular Science;
Entrepreneurship*

Miranda Hontz

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Political Science; English

Magdalyn Hubbard

Penny W. Stamps School of Art
& Design

*Fine Arts; Museum studies; Art
History*

Tayyiba Hussain

School of Nursing

Nursing

Hanny Izquierdo

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Psychology

Nadia Jahan

School of Information
*Information Science; Human
Centered AI*

Elizabeth Jaramillo

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Sociology and Social Work;
Psychology*

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Brianna Jarvis

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Ecology, Evolution, and
Biodiversity; Creative Writing*

Cielo Jimenez

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Economics

Aya Kabbout

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Biology, Health, and Society

Giselle Kassab

College of Engineering

*Chemical Engineering; Crime
and Justice*

Sandy Khalil

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Chloe Khalil

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Psychology

Riley Kina

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Political Science; Psychology;
Gender, Race, and Nation*

Melissah Kooiker

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biology; Sociocultural
Anthropology*

Chelsea Korang- Otchere

School of Public Health
Public Health Sciences

Tiziana Lampignano

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Political Science

Karina Landero- Möttus

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience; Law, Justice, and
Social Change*

Alondra Larios

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biology; Gender and Health
Sciences*

Gormao Lee

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Psychology

Ivan Li

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Computer Science

Celing Li

College of Engineering

*Robotics; Engineering; Physics;
Music*

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Tiffany Lin

School of Nursing
*Nursing; Population Health in a
Global Context*

YuFeng Lin

School of Information
Information

Sara Lin

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Psychology; Law, Justice, and
Social Change*

Xu Dong Liu

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Psychology; Intergroup
Relations*

Sergio Lopez

College of Engineering
Aerospace Engineering; Physics

Gabriela Lopez- Salgado

College of Engineering
Computer Science

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College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Communications and Media

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and the Arts
Sociology; Health and Medicine

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College of Engineering
*Industrial and Operations
Engineering*

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College of Literature, Science,
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*Sociology; Law, Justice, and
Social Change*

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Samira Marquez- Gomez

School of Information
User Experience Design

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School of Nursing
Nursing

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College of Literature, Science,
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*Sociology; Health and Medicine;
Gender and Health*

Laura McLees

School of Public Health
Public Health Sciences; Biology

Cassandra McMahon

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts, Penny W. Stamps
School of Art & Design
*Art and Design; Film, Television,
and Media*

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Tiana Melendez

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Political Science; American
Culture*

Glynnys Mencho- Ramos

School of Nursing

Nursing

Tonanzky Mendoza Alvarado

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biopsychology, Cognitive, and
Neuroscience*

Karen Menez

School of Nursing

Global Health

Jamaria Minor

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Women's and Gender Studies

Daniela Mora

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Psychology; Law, Justice, and
Social Change*

Arlette Morales

School of Nursing

Nursing

Mackenzie Morgan

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

History; Political Science

Lejla Nakic

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience*

Kasandra Negrete

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

*Political Science; Latina/o
Studies; Spanish*

Taylor Newton

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Biology, Health, and Society

An Nguyen

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Psychology

Yasmeen Nimer

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Sociology and Social Work

Kayla Noga

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business

Business Administration

David Ntsiful

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Biomolecular Science

Brianna Ochoa

School of Nursing

*Nursing; Science, Technology,
and Society*

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Kayenne Ohno

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Biology, Health, and Society

Elsa Olander

Penny W. Stamps School of Art
& Design
Fine Arts; Entrepreneurship

Oluwasemiloore Oyekanmi

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Biomolecular Science

Regina Paguada

School of Nursing
Nursing

Jasmine Desiree Paredes

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Biology

Jasmine Parlett

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Anthropology; Archaeology;
Creative Writing*

Annahi Peralta-Sorto

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Communication and Media;
Community Action and Social
Change*

Emily Pietrzak

School of Nursing
Nursing; Global Health

Alycia Pietrzak

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Creative Writing and Literature

Brianna Pirini

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Communications and Media

Madison Quinn

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Nursing; Gender and Health

Natalia Rak

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Elias Rashmawi

School of Music, Theatre &
Dance
Music Performance

Nicolle Reid

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Biology, Health, and Society;
Women's Gender and Health*

Cai Yi Ru

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Data Science; Statistics

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Daisy Ruiz

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Communication and Media

Jessica Ruvalcaba

School of Nursing
Nursing

Dani Sanchez

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*American Culture; Native
American Ethnic Studies; Digital
Studies*

Nazareth Sanchez

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Sociology; Law, Justice, and
Social Change; Latino/a Studies)*

Laiyla Santillan

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Comparative Literature, Arts,
and Media*

Sophia Santos Ufkes

School of Music, Theatre &
Dance
Acting

Delanie Shaffer

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Sociology; Social Work; History

Chazia Siskowski

School of Nursing
Nursing; Global Health

Nickolas Skiver

College of Engineering
Civil Engineering

Amber Spudowski

School of Nursing
Nursing

Abigail Stacy

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Political Science

Raymond Sturgill

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Maria Suci

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience*

Emerald Taylor

College of Engineering
*Robotics Engineering; Human
Factors Engineering*

Marvin Tetteh

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration

Garrett Thorne

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts, Stephen M. Ross
School of Business
*Business Administration;
Germanic Literature;
Philosophy; Real Estate and
Development*

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Haylie Toth

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Communication and Media;
English

Angela Tran

College of Engineering
Electrical Engineering

Leslie Treto

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Neuroscience

Lamisa Uddin

College of Engineering
Industrial and Operations
Engineering

Laila Vang

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Psychology

Grace Varghese

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration; Moral
and Political Philosophy

Andrey Vo

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Psychology; Crime and Justice

Milena Vu

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
English

Tina Vū

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Political Economic
Development; Quantitative
Methods in Social Sciences; UX
Design; Japanese Language
and Culture

Nela Vugdalic

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Biology, Health, and Society;
Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian

Kenyatta Washington

A. Alfred Taubman College
of Architecture and Urban
Planning
Urban Technology; Real Estate
Development

Madison Wheeler

School of Kinesiology
Movement Science;
Entrepreneurship

Makayla Whitsell

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Political Science;
Communication and Media

Devin Wiles

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration;
Writing

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Tamberly Williams

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Biopsychology, Cognition, and
Neuroscience; Gender and
Health*

Angela Wu

Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
*Business; Community Action
and Social Change*

Ashley Xochimanca

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Political Science;
Communications and Media*

Jailia Yang

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Neuroscience

Angela Zhang

College of Engineering
*Biomedical Engineering;
Material Science Engineering*

Kening Zhao

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
Computer Science

Tiffany Zheng

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts
*Biology, Health, and Society;
Cognitive Science*

*Congratulations to
the Class of 2026!*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the offices, students, and staff that have supported first-generation programs throughout the year.

We'd like to especially recognize the following faculty, staff, and students...

Joseph Ballard II
Julia Barron
Norris Chase
Timothy Cheek
antonio c. cuyler
Katie Fredline
Joelle Fundaro Randall
Adan Hussain
Merry Krus
Dwight Lang
Sylvia Lang
Matthew Sullivan
Caitlin Taylor
Pa Houa Xiong

First Generation Students @ Michigan*
University Career Center
University Housing

*Founded in the Fall of 2007, First Generation College Students @ Michigan (FGCS) is a student organization dedicated to the goals of recognizing, raising awareness of, and resolving the unique needs of first-generation college students at the University of Michigan.

FIRST-GENERATION CELEBRATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

The First Generation Celebration is a celebration that acknowledges the unique experiences that come with being the first person in your family to graduate from college. The First Generation Celebration Committee is made up of students and staff from First-Generation College Students @ Michigan and the First Generation Gateway. The committee works together on several aspects of the celebration, including the theme, speakers, marketing, graphic design, and community involvement.

Joseph Ballard II

Ashley Banas

Katie Fredline

Joelle Fundaro Randall

Sophia Judas

Terra Molengraff

Linda Ru

Caitlin Taylor

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT GATEWAY

The First Generation Gateway and its programs are a four-office collaborative effort. The directors and staff from each office provide leadership and support to the mission, goals, and strategies that contribute to first-generation student success.

Comprehensive Studies Program

John Vasquez, Senior Director

Office of the Vice President of Student Life

Nadia Bazy, Director of Student Initiatives and Partnerships

Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

Sharon Burch and Hector Galvan,
Interim Co-directors

Office of New Student Programs

Joe Colangelo, Director

HISTORY OF THE FIRST-GEN CELEBRATION

The University of Michigan's First Generation College Student @ Michigan student organization held its first celebration for graduates in 2008. This first celebration was hosted in the pool hall in the Michigan Union. In 2009 and 2010, the celebration was hosted in the living room of Dwight Lang, a sociology professor at the University of Michigan, and his wife, Sylvia. In 2011, the number of students participating in the celebration had grown, and the event was relocated to the Pond Room in the Michigan Union.

In 2017, the university expanded this work by establishing the First-Generation Gateway Office and launching initiatives to support student success. These efforts have contributed to increased engagement and national recognition. While the program centers first-generation student experiences, it is open to all students and members of the campus community who wish to participate and support this work.

STUDENT CELEBRATION MISSION

The First-Generation Celebration reflects the history of activism by first-generation college students to pursue access and opportunity through education. This event celebrates the commonalities and differences that characterize the experiences of first-generation college students and serves as an example of the excellence and innovation first-generation college students bring to the University of Michigan.

The First-Generation Celebration recognizes the experiences and accomplishments of participating students while fostering a sense of community and belonging. It also highlights the contributions of faculty and staff who support student success. Through this work, OAMI affirms its commitment to creating inclusive environments that support student achievement and connection across the university. The event is open to all students and members of the university community who wish to participate, engage, and celebrate in this space.

LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The University of Michigan is located on the territory of the Anishinaabeg people. The Ann Arbor campus 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 establishing 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 educating the children of Native ancestors.

We further recognize that whether you are on campus in Ann Arbor or elsewhere in the United States, we stand on land developed at the often-fatal expense of forcefully enslaved Black people. We acknowledge that much of this country, including its culture, economic growth, and development has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking, chattel slavery, and dehumanization through segregation and Jim Crow laws.

We remember those who did not survive the Middle Passage, those who were beaten and lynched, and those who are still suffering while fighting for their freedom. We are indebted to their labor and unwilling sacrifice, and acknowledge the violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact and generational trauma still felt today.

The fights against settler colonialism and anti-blackness will always be inextricably linked. To the land, to the collective, and to the ancestors, we thank you, we thank you, we thank you.

STATEMENT OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The University of Michigan strives to create an open forum 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, speech that breaks the law, violates the University of Michigan's code of conduct, or threatens harm to another person will not be tolerated. Persons engaging in such speech may be warned by University representatives, and if the warnings are not heeded, may be removed 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.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

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 non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex, color, religion, creed, national origin, or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, 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 the Office of Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX/ Section 504 Coordinator, Office of Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX at 2072 Administrative Services Building, 1009 Greene Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48109, 734-763-0235

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OAMI STUDENT CELEBRATIONS

OAMI Student Celebrations take place during graduation season to honor the achievements, shared experiences, and diverse backgrounds that shape our students' journeys.

All of OAMI's celebrations are open to all students at the University of Michigan, recognizing and honoring the diverse experiences and identities within our community.

CELEBRATION SYMBOLS

These symbols are used by OAMI and the organizing committees to represent the eight student celebrations:



**Native Student Celebration
La Celebración Latina**

**Black Celebratory
Asian Student Celebration
Oceania Student Celebration
Middle Eastern & North African Student Celebration**

**First-Generation Student Celebration
Undocumented Student Celebration**

oami.umich.edu/celebrations



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