

The logo features the word "UCLA" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters inside a dark blue square. To the right of the square, the words "School of Theater, Film & Television" are written in a smaller, dark blue, sans-serif font.

**UCLA**

School of  
**Theater, Film & Television**

# **2025 COMMENCEMENT**



# COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM

Friday, June 13, 2025

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## PROCESSIONAL

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

JANELLE SORIANO

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

CHON NORIEGA

INTERIM DEAN, UCLA SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION

## RECOGNITION OF MARSHALS

CHON NORIEGA

## CLASS OF 2025 STUDENT REMARKS

ANH QUOC DOAN

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA UNDERGRADUATE

SARAH SCHECTER

DEPARTMENT OF THEATER UNDERGRADUATE

## INTRODUCTION OF COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

CHON NORIEGA

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

DUSTIN LANCE BLACK

SCREENWRITER AND DIRECTOR

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SPEAKER

BRIAN KITE

THEATER DIRECTOR, DEAN AND VICE PROVOST/GRADUATE EDUCATION

## RECOGNITIONS

## CONFERRAL OF THE DEGREES

CHON NORIEGA

## CLASS OF 2025 DEPARTMENT OF THEATER MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"ONE LIFE"

BY: JOHN LEGEND, JEFFREY GITELMAN, BRANDON PAAK ANDERSON, JOSHUA KARPEH

PERFORMED BY:

AVERY BECKMAN, MATTHEW BEYMER, IAN CARDAMONE, AMANDA KANG,  
SETH HOLT, ROBYN MORALES, JANELLE SORIANO, OLIVER STRACHAN,  
JACK STUHLEY AND SABRINA WILLIAMS

## ALMA MATER

JACK STUHLEY

## FINAL REMARKS

CHON NORIEGA

## RECESSIONAL



# LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR

JULIO FRENK



Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

Today, we celebrate your hard work, your perseverance, and the journey that has brought you to this special moment. I hope you are proud of how far you have come.

Graduation marks both a culmination and a new beginning. It is a chance to look back on your time at UCLA and all of the ways that you have grown and changed. It is also an opportunity to look ahead — with hope and purpose — to all that lies ahead.

To be sure: Your graduation coincides with a complex moment in human history, when the ground appears to be shifting under our feet and we may feel a desire to lower our sights rather than raise them. My challenge to you: Resist that. I can assure you that your UCLA education has prepared you to meet this moment.

The values you have cultivated at our university — kindness, integrity, curiosity, a commitment to service, and a respect for diverse perspectives — will serve as your foundation as you become leaders in your communities and industries. You are now part of a global network of more than 670,000 Bruins who are shaping the future in bold and meaningful ways. Stay connected to your classmates, your mentors, and this university, which will always be your home.

On behalf of the entire UCLA community, I extend my deepest congratulations to you. We can't wait to see all that you will accomplish.

Go Bruins!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Julio Frenk'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the end.

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**JULIO FRENK**  
C h a n c e l l o r

# LETTER FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

CHON NORIEGA



Dear Graduates,

Today, we celebrate your journey—a path shaped by creativity and resilience, and by your commitment to the collaborative arts.

At TFT, you've created together: across stages, sets, studios, and screens. You've built worlds, challenged conventions, and brought bold ideas to life—never in isolation, but always in conversation with others. Through every script and score, every performance and edit, you've shown the power of storytelling forged through collaboration.

The world you're entering needs artists who know creativity is not a solitary act. It needs storytellers who lead with empathy, see possibility where others see limits, and understand that the strongest visions are shaped together. You are ready—to build, to transform, to lead.

Though your time on campus is ending, you will always be part of the TFT community—a network of artists, thinkers, and changemakers who lift one another higher. Draw strength from that community. Let it remind you that you are never creating alone—and in all you touch, let that community grow as others rise with the opportunities you help make possible.

Congratulations, Class of 2025. Your journey is just beginning—and we are proud to be part of your story.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Chon Noriega". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a thin horizontal line.

**CHON NORIEGA**  
Interim Dean

# ALUMNI SPEAKER

**BRIAN KITE**  
Theater Director, Dean and  
Vice Provost/Graduate Education



Brian Kite is a proud double Bruin with a deep connection to the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (TFT), a community that has shaped his creative, academic, and professional life. He earned his BA in Theater in 1991 and his MFA in 2004, returning to serve as a faculty member, Chair of the Department of Theater, Interim Dean, and Dean of the School. He now serves as UCLA's Dean and Vice Provost of Graduate Education while continuing to teach at TFT.

As a director, Brian has worked extensively in live theater across the country and internationally, known for visually rich productions that engage audiences with clarity and emotional impact. His credits include *American Idiot*, *Billy Elliot*, *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Dinner With Friends*, *Steel Magnolias* starring Cathy Rigby, and *Driving Miss Daisy* with Michael Learned. He was honored with the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle's Joel Hirschhorn Award and received an Ovation Award for Best Direction of a Musical for *Spring Awakening*, with additional nominations for *Les Misérables* and *American Idiot*.

Brian has directed national tours for L.A. Theatre Works and staged international productions in China, Poland, and Bermuda, including the first production of *Miss Saigon* in China and the Chinese tour of *Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers* at Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts. Recent projects include the premiere of *Irena*, a new musical in Poznań and Warsaw, and *From Baghdad to Brooklyn* with Michelle Azar, which premiered at the United Solo Festival in New York and continues to tour nationally.

He previously served as Producing Artistic Director of La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts and is Chair Emeritus of the L.A. Stage Alliance Board of Governors. He is also a visiting professor at the Shanghai Theatre Academy.

Being the Distinguished Alumni Speaker is especially meaningful to Brian because TFT has been a constant through every stage of his life—as a student, artist, educator, and member of the School's leadership. He is grateful to be part of this vibrant community and deeply honored to be recognized by the School that has given him so much. As someone whose own career and passion were shaped by the faculty and fellow students at TFT, Brian feels particularly inspired by this year's graduates, knowing firsthand the creativity, resilience, and vision they're ready to bring to the world.



# KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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DUSTIN LANCE BLACK  
Screenwriter and Director



Dustin Lance Black received his BA with honors in Motion Picture-TV from the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television in 1996. He began his career as an art director before moving into directing documentaries and commercials. His early work, including *On the Bus* (2001) and *My Life with Count Dracula* (2003), led to producing and directing TLC and BBC's acclaimed series *Faking It*.

Black is an Academy Award®-winning filmmaker, LGBTQ+ activist, husband, and father. He earned an Oscar and two WGA Awards for his screenplay for *Milk* (2008), the biopic he also executive produced about civil rights leader Harvey Milk. In 2018, he received the Valentine Davies Award from the Writers Guild of America for his body of work.

Most recently, Black wrote the Golden Globe and Academy Award-nominated feature *Rustin* (2023), produced by Higher Ground, and created, wrote, and directed the Emmy, Golden Globe, and Critics Choice-nominated FX limited series *Under the Banner of Heaven* (2023), starring Andrew Garfield.

His additional credits include the ABC miniseries *When We Rise* (2017), which chronicles the LGBTQ+ rights movement; the Clint Eastwood-directed *J. Edgar* (2011); HBO's *Big Love* (2004–2008); and the play *8*, which dramatized the federal trial challenging California's Proposition 8 and was staged globally. His 2019 best-selling memoir *Mama's Boy* was adapted into an HBO documentary directed by Laurent Bouzereau.

A founding board member of the American Foundation for Equal Rights and former board member of The Trevor Project, Black also co-founded the Uprising of Love Coalition and helped organize the 2009 National Equality March in Washington, D.C.

He has lectured at UCLA, USC, Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge, and has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, and the BBC as a political commentator. Throughout his career, Black has used storytelling as a powerful vehicle for social change and LGBTQ+ advocacy.



# CHANCELLOR'S MARSHALS

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Recognized for outstanding academic achievement and identified by the Blue and Gold Fourragere

## **THEATER**

MARY ELIZABETH BARCLAY

BRANDON DE SANTIAGO

MICHAELA DUARTE

SARAH SCHECTER

## **FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

KARLY HANAKO KATO BANG

ANH QUOC DOAN

ROO JOSHI

ANDREAS MICKELOPOULOS

# DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## THEATER

### Degree Conferred

ELIZABETH MCQUEEN

*Dissertation Title: Acting Edible: The Taste of Performance of a Damaged Planet*

YUN-PU YANG

*Dissertation Title: The Eroticism of Peking Opera Kunsheng from the 1880 to the 1980s*

### Degree Candidates

DEVON BAUR

*Dissertation Title: Scent Trails: Olfaction in Performance, New Media, and Phenomenology*

# DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

### Degree Conferred

FENGYUN ZHANG

*Dissertation Title: The Shadow Network: Distribution and Exhibition of Chinese Cinema in the US, 2002-2020*

### Degree Candidates

SLAVEYA MIROSLAVOVA MINKOVA

*Dissertation Title: Haunting Postsocialisms: Media Infrastructures and Mediated Landscapes in South East Europe*

# MASTER OF FINE ARTS

---

## **T H E A T E R**

### Degree Candidates

MOLLY SHANNON CORNELL

YEJIN ELENA GIM

RYE MANDEL

RUTH IRENE REICHMAN

JEAN YVONNE TYSON

MARIO VEGA

AYEBANENGIYEFA TEPHANIE WABOTE

# MASTER OF FINE ARTS

## FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

### Degrees Conferred

MICHAEL DOUGLAS LARDIZABAL-FOGLIA  
MERRY MAY MA MA  
PALOMA RONQUILLO

### Degree Candidates

ABIGAIL LORIN ALONSO	JOHN PATRICK MARCHI
YUXIN CHENG	DYLAN MELROY MARTIS
HECTOR COLES	ZOE MATHEWSON
CORTNEY LEE COLVIG	FELIX JAMES MCENROY
GRACE ELIZABETH CRITCHFIELD	ANDREW MCGOWAN
DANIEL BROWNING CUMMINS	EILEEN MCNULTY
ALEXANDRIA NICOLE DANIELS	CATERINA MONACO
YUTONG DENG	JULIA MOSER
CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL DUNLEAVY	NIALL FRANCIS MURPHY
MATTHEW ROBERT EVANS	NAZANIN NEMATOLLAHI
EMILIA NOVELLA FIGLIOMENI	JEREMY OLETSKY
MARCELLO PAUL FRISINA	JORGE PARRA JR.
BRIDGET MCALLISTER GARRITY	BRENNA N. PENROD
JOSH GENAO	JASIAH POTTER
KELSEY GILMORE	IBRAHIM AZMAT RANA
FELICITY HOPE GIRTY	SHIZUE ROCHE ADACHI
ATHENA GREENLEAF	BARBIE LEIGH ROSS
VAN HOFMAISTER	JAKOB ROSTON
ZACHARY CURTIS HOHENSTEIN	NYELAH NECIA-GRACE SAWYER
ANIKA KAUR HUNDAL	EMMA ALYSE SHAW
ELLIE SERENA HUNT	JACOB SHIVERS
RUDY JANSEN	SARA STERNHEIMER
OR KEISAR	ISABELLA UZCATEGUI MATOS
GEORGE LANIGAN	GRACE LAUREN VINCENT
MICHELLE L LI	QUINTEN WILLIAMS
NIKA LITT	SHUCHENG YAN
TIFFANY JIAOLONG LU	YOUNGJIE ZENG
MAYYI MAHAMA	

# MASTER OF ARTS

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## FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

### Degree Candidates

VICTOR AI

JORDAN BECK

JAMIR JOSEPH BOWERS

MARK ALEXANDER BURBRIDGE

NOE CERVANTES

JUSTIN FOSTER

TRAVIS BENJAMIN GARCIA

EDWARD HUANG

MATTHEW RUEDAS

SHAHARA LEILI SHABAZZ

VIVIAN TRAN

BLAKE WILLIAM VONTILZER

NIKKYA WILLIAMS

SALMA MARIA ZEPEDA



# BACHELOR OF ARTS

## THEATER

### Degrees Conferred

MELISSA JENNIFER GRAFF  
SAM MATTHYS KAPLAN  
ROBYN LOURDES MORALES^  
KATE EVELYN STARGARDTER

† MAGNA CUM LAUDE   § SUMMA CUM LAUDE   ^ CUM LAUDE

### Degree Candidates

MARY ELIZABETH BARCLAY*	ELAINA LORENZO MARINO
ANA ISABELLA BARRADAS GAUNA	SARA KAYLEY LOWE*
GABE PEARCE BATE	BLUU B. LUU†
ALEXIS MARCELA BAUTISTA SARABIA	WILLIAM SIMPSON LYONS
AVERY MAKENA BECKMAN	EMMA ROSE MALONEY
DANIELLE ELIZABETH BEST*	LYLE RAY MARLEY
MATTHEW DAVID BEYMER*	KAITLYN ANN MARTIN
BIANCA LIDIA ROENE BISHOP	LEWIS HALL MCCURDY IV*
KAITLYN ELISABETH CAIRO	CATHERINE MORENO
SHUWEN CAO	TYLER EVAN NEUFELD
IAN DAVID CARDAMONE	MADELINE HOPE JOY PALMER*
ZACHARIAH WALKER CHASEN	JESSICA LEE REED
BRANDON DE SANTIAGO*	MARISOL MARCIE ROBLEDOS
MICHAELA GRACE DUARTE*	JOSEPH EMMANUEL ROSALES
ISABELLA MARIE DURAND	JAVEON SHANNON
SIAVASH PATRICK FORD*	SARAH SCHECTER*
TRYSTAN ANN FORSON	ISABELLA G SCHWARTZ*
DAKOTA FOX	NICHOLAS MAXIMILLIAN SITILIDES
KYLE OLIVIA GREEN	LOGAN SOBEL
LUCAS PAUL GUAZELLI*	JANELLE SORIANO
DEVIN JAMES GUINEE	OLIVER STRACHAN
ALEXANDRIA MILAN HAMILTON	KATHRYN ISABELLA STEENBURGH*
GARRETT HAUN	JACK RYAN STUHLEY
ANOUSHKA HEMNANI	MAYA TAY TANAKA*
SOPHIA RAYE HERNANDEZ*	JEANNINE MOLINA VARGAS
SETH ELLIOTT HOLT	EMILIA VIAL
AMANDA KANG	SABRINA MARIELLE WILLIAMS
KAIA HELEN CHUNGAE KIM-WEIGANDT*	BRIANNA MIHYUN YI
BROOKE ELYSE LEBIDINE	JIAYUN ZHANG
CERULEAN CHEN LONG	

\*LATIN HONORS (SPRING OR SUMMER 2025 CANDIDATES WHOSE CURRENT GPA QUALIFIES THEM FOR LATIN HONORS. LEVEL OF LATIN HONORS IS DETERMINED BY FINAL GPA.)

(† DECEASED) POSTHUMOUS DEGREE

WE HONOR THE MEMORY OF BLUU B. LUU, WHO IS RECEIVING A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATER.

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

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## FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

### Degree Conferred

ODIN A CONTRERAS-VILLEGAS  
BRENDON ALEXANDER MILAN-HOWELLS  
ZHIKUN XIA

### Degree Candidates

AMANI ABDUL RAHMAN	MAR IBRAHIM KOUROUMA
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KARLY HANAKO KATO BANG*	MATTHEW STEPHEN MOORE
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ELLE MARIE CHRISTIANSEN*	MATEO NIKOLAV
ANH QUOC DOAN*	MICAH MARCHEÉ PATTERSON
ARMON M. ESFANDIARI	EILON PRESMAN
KAVEH PARIS GHAEMI	ANGELICA QUINTANA-OSORIO MERINO
JACK HILLYER*	DANIELLE LAVERNE ROBINSON*
ROO JOSHI*	DAVIA CHERIE ROSARIO
ANGELA SUH-YOUNG KIM*	ETHAN SWOPE

---

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# LEADERSHIP

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JEFF BURKE, Associate Dean, Research and Technology  
SUK-YOUNG KIM, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs and External Engagement  
SUSAN MARCANO, Associate Dean, Chief Administrative Officer  
JASMINE NADUA TRICE, Equity Advisor

# FACULTY 2024-25

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PHOEBE PING  
AASHA RAMDEEN  
AARON RHYNE  
LAUREN ROARK  
LEON ROTHENBERG  
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BILL MARSILII

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DAN MCDERMOTT

ZACH MEDOW

ALISHA MEHTA

HOWARD MEYERS

GABE MICHAEL

JOSH MORGAN

# FACULTY 2024-25

## DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA *Continued*

### LECTURERS *Continued*

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ALEX O'FLINN  
ANDREW ORENSTEIN  
ROSE CATHERINE PINKNEY  
ROYA RASTEGAR  
RICHARD RAYNER  
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MAYA SMUKLER  
JONATHAN SNIPES  
JAMES SUHR  
THY THAN  
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A.P. GONZALEZ  
STEPHEN D. MAMBER  
BARBARA MARKS  
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NANCY RICHARDSON  
BECKY J. SMITH  
VIVIAN SOBSHACK  
HOWARD SUBER

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GYULA GAZDAG

### LECTURERS SOE EMERITI

HAROLD L. ACKERMAN  
MARK MCCARTY



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CECILIA DEMILLE PRESLEY  
SCOTT SANDERS  
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HARRY EVANS SLOAN, ESQ.  
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ELIZABETH REIKO KUBOTA  
WHITNEY  
DEBORAH WIDENER  
RICHARD WOLPERT

# PAST HONOREES

## COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS

1990	June Wayne
1991	Bella Lewitzky
1992	Jack Valenti
1993	James Earl Jones
1994	Peter Guber
1995	Quincy Jones
1996	Debbie Allen
1997	Warren Littlefield
1998	John Frankenheimer
1999	Annette Bening
2000	Joe Roth
2001	Eva Marie Saint
2002	Martha Coolidge
2003	Terry Semel
2004	Sherry Lansing
2005	Fay Kanin
2006	George C. Wolfe
2007	Larry Gelbart
2008	Colin Callender
2009	Oliver Stone
2010	Peter Guber
2011	U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer
2012	Ron Meyer
2013	Cathy Schulman
2014	Jane Fonda
2015	Kevin Beggs
2016	Channing Dungey
2017	Ava DuVernay
2018	Carl Franklin
2019	Pierce Brosnan
2021	Nilo Cruz
2022	Troy Kotsur
2023	Gina Prince-Bythewood
2024	Tarell Alvin McCraney

## ALUMNI AND HONOREES

2000	Army Archerd
2001	Louis J. Horvitz
2003	Moctesuma Esparza
2004	Gregory Nava
2005	Geoffrey Gilmore
2007	Gene Reynolds
2008	Fred Roos
2009	Ellen Geer
2010	Felicia D. Henderson
2010	John Rando
2011	Charles Burnett
2011	Mariska Hargitay

2012	Shirley Jo Finney
2012	Penelope Spheeris
2013	Dustin Lance Black
2013	Kristin Hanggi
2014	Wendy C. Goldberg
2014	Darren Star
2015	Donna Deitch
2015	Sarabeth Grossman
2016	Robert L. Friedman
2016	Gina Prince-Bythewood
2017	Justin Lin
2017	Michael Stuhlbarg
2018	Judy Kaye
2018	Allison Anders
2019	Julie Dash
2019	George Takei
2020	Patricia Cardoso
2022	Amy Aniobi
2023	Rachel Hauck

## COMMENCEMENT DEDICATION

2012	Gilbert Cates
2015	Samuel Goldwyn, Jr.

## UCLA MEDAL

1985	Carol Burnett
2009	Haskell Wexler, A.s.c.
2017	Peter Guber

## CHANCELLOR'S MEDAL

1993	James Earl Jones
1994	Francis Ford Coppola
1995	Quincy Jones
1996	Neil Simon
1998	Edie Wasserman
2002	Kirk Douglas
2005	Sir Anthony Hopkins
2006	Samuel Goldwyn, Jr.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

2017	Nadja Swarovski
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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CRYSTAL SANTANA  
CHRISTINA VACCHIANO

### ANNOUNCER

MIEBAKA YOHANNES

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### SPECIAL THANKS

ACADEMIC PERSONNEL  
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DEAN'S OFFICE  
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AND DIGITAL MEDIA  
DEPARTMENT OF THEATER  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT  
& ALUMNI AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS & PROTOCOL  
OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES



“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.”

– Jeane Emerson ’29

UCLA SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION ACKNOWLEDGES THE GABRIELINO/TONGVA PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL LAND CARETAKERS OF THE LOS ANGELES BASIN AND SOUTHERN CHANNEL ISLANDS. AS A LAND GRANT INSTITUTION, UCLA ALSO PAYS RESPECT TO TONGVA ANCESTORS, ELDERS AND RELATIVES - PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.

# WELCOME, NEW UCLA TFT ALUMNI!

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FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025

Welcome to the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (UCLA TFT) alumni family! We are thrilled to have you join our vibrant community of Bruin alumni. Please keep us updated with your exciting journeys and achievements — we can't wait to see you at our programs and events, and share your successes with pride! Stay connected with us to make the most of your alumni experience:

- Email [devo@tft.ucla.edu](mailto:devo@tft.ucla.edu) to update your email and mailing address to receive communications, news and alumni event invitations.
- Connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Also, expand your network, connect with fellow TFT alumni, and explore job opportunities through the new TFT Directory on BrightCrowd. To get started, scan the QR code or email TFT Development at [devo@TFT.UCLA.EDU](mailto:devo@TFT.UCLA.EDU).

Join the UCLA TFT community on BrightCrowd, our new online alumni directory. To register please email us at [devo@tft.ucla.edu](mailto:devo@tft.ucla.edu).

We eagerly look forward to celebrating your accomplishments in the days, months, and years ahead. Congratulations and welcome!

Warm regards,



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**AARON DANIEL CERVANTES, J.D.**  
Executive Director of Development











School of  
**Theater, Film & Television**