CAL STATE LA | The Honors College



FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM (PST) | Golden Eagle Ballroom 1

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the Senior Thesis Symposium 2025!

The Honors College at Cal State LA ensures that students from around the University have the opportunity to engage fully in the intellectual and cultural life of the University through a curated set of courses, on and off campus opportunities, and research. Our students, like our community, have a wide range of backgrounds, life experiences, and trajectories. Working with students at Cal State LA is among the most fulfilling I have ever had to this point in my career—thank you to each of you! I also am grateful for the tireless work of the staff and faculty of the Honors College, and the support of Central Administration.

Today, we welcome you--our guests, students, faculty, and staff—to celebrate the lifelong curiosity, as well as the knowledge creation, leadership, and civic engagement, that we are fortunate to see every day in our graduating seniors. You will meet students who entered through many pathways, ranging from traditional students who have joined us soon after they completed high school, to our Early Entrance Program students who came to college right from middle school, to those who have come to us from other life experiences, including transfer from other institutions, caring for children or other family members, or career transitions.

Please, talk with these students about their work and experiences, and to enjoy getting to know them as much as we in the Honors College have over the past several years. You will learn what we already know—our Honors students always exceed our expectations, and surprise us in the best ways possible.

Today's event is structured in two parts:

The first half mimics a professional conference. This format includes a first session with parallel panels in which students share their research through a traditional presentation format. Choose your panel, admire, learn, and ask questions when invited. During the second session, students display posters. Please explore the various options. Stop and ask the students to tell you more. They will appreciate dialogue and follow-up questions, so be sure to maximize your chance to learn from these experts by asking for more information or interpretation.

The second half of our afternoon together is our celebration, the Medallion Ceremony, in which we recognize the students and their mentors. We have a few surprises planned as well! During the break between the posters and ceremony, grab a cup of coffee and a snack, then find your seat, relax, enjoy, and celebrate.

A reception with some light snacks will follow our Ceremony.



Kathy J. Cooke Ph.D.
Director, Honors College



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With great respect, Cal State LA acknowledges the Tongva people as the traditional caretakers of Tovaangar – the Tongva world, including the Los Angeles basin, South Channel Islands, San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, and portions of Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. Cal State LA is located within these lands. As an institution located on unceded Tongva land, we pay our respects to the ancestors, elders, and their relatives relations, past, present, and emerging.

Consistent with our values of community and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible the university's relationship to native peoples. By offering this land acknowledgment, we affirm indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Cal State LA more accountable to the needs of American Indian peoples.

PROGRAM

1:00 PM

Dr. Kathy J. Cooke, *Director of Honors College*

Golden Eagle Ballroom 1

1:15– 2:30 PM

Panel 1: Trends, Politics, and Society

University Student Union - Los Angeles Room A

Moderator: Dr. Jeannette Vaught

Narek Abelian (Presentation)
Jason Chen (Presentation)
Lizette Roman (Presentation)
Michael Zitser (Presentation)
Gabriel Meza (Presentation)
Lea Campos (Slide)
Lexy Strom (Slide)
Zarife Agin (Slide)

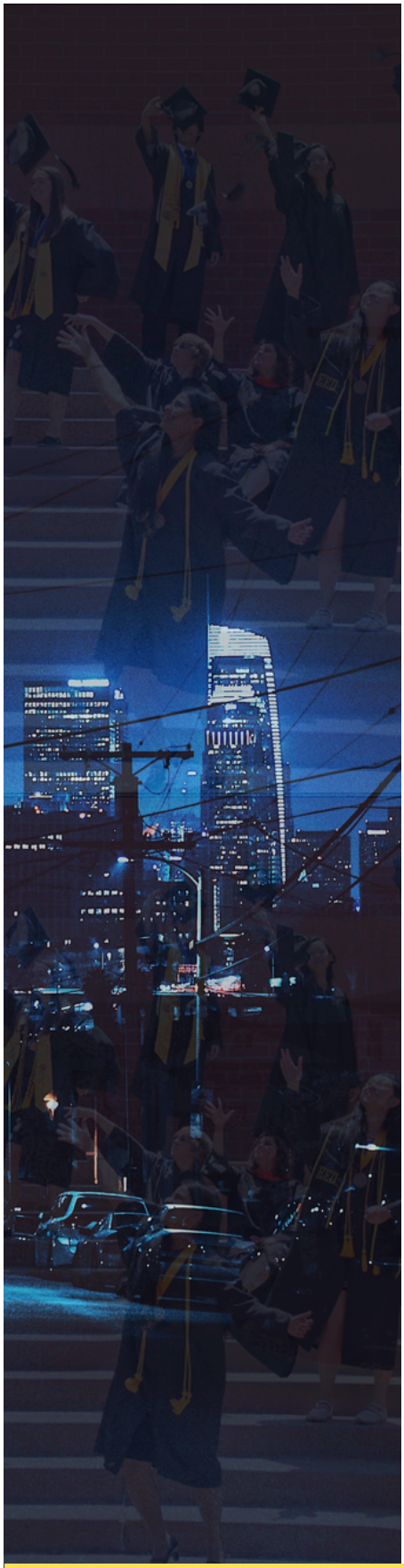
Panel 2: Numbers and Science

University Student Union - Los Angeles Room C

Moderator: Ariana Varela

Stephanie Diaz (Presentation)
Barnabas Novak (Presentation)
Mayowa Toyinbo (Presentation)
Sophie Peineke (Presentation)
Sarena Eworonsky (Presentation)
Chloey Montoya (Slide)
Ashley Pedraza (Slide)
Kara Yokoyama (Slide)
Jeffrey Antony Tam (Slide)





PROGRAM

2:30 – 2:45 PM

Break

2:45 – 3:25 PM

Poster session

University Student Union - Los Angeles Room A & B

Moderator: Dr. Michael McLendon

Marilyn Heidecker
Matthew Christmann
Rikka Tagayuna
Michelle Ho
Reese Wang
Daniela Salazar
Jacob Ramos

PROGRAM

3:30 Medallion Ceremony

Golden Eagle Ballroom

Opening Remarks

Dr. Kathy J. Cooke
Director of Honors College

Dr. Lara K. Schubert & Professor Emily Baird
Honors College, HNRS 4970 instructors

Presentation of the Medallions

Thank you to Mentors & Families

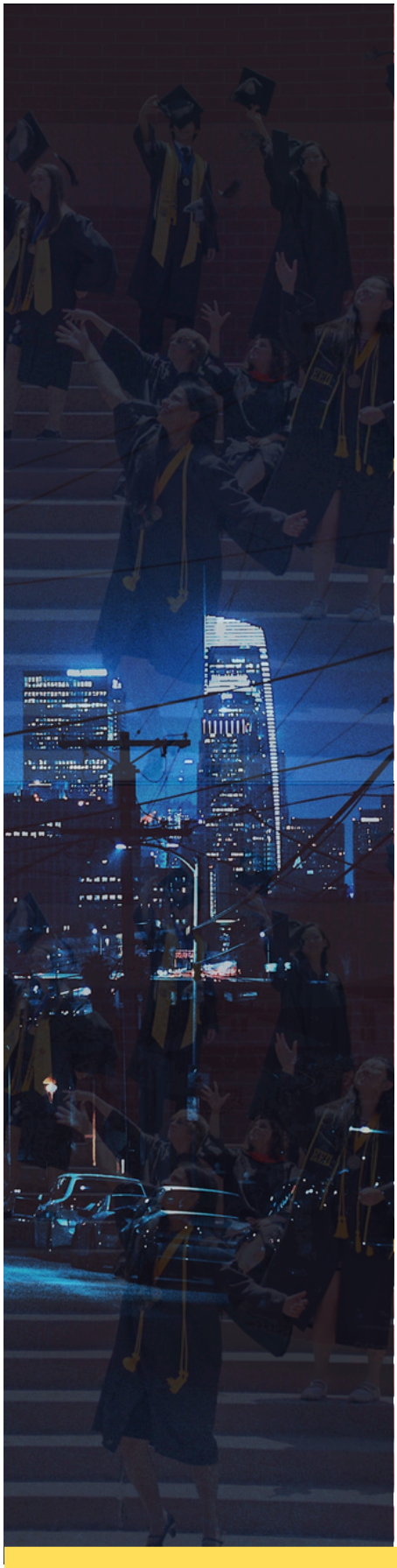
Reception Immediately Following

Light hors d'oeuvres will be served

Symposium will conclude at 5:00 PM



The Honors College
California State University, Los Angeles



Medallion Awardees

College of Health and Human Services

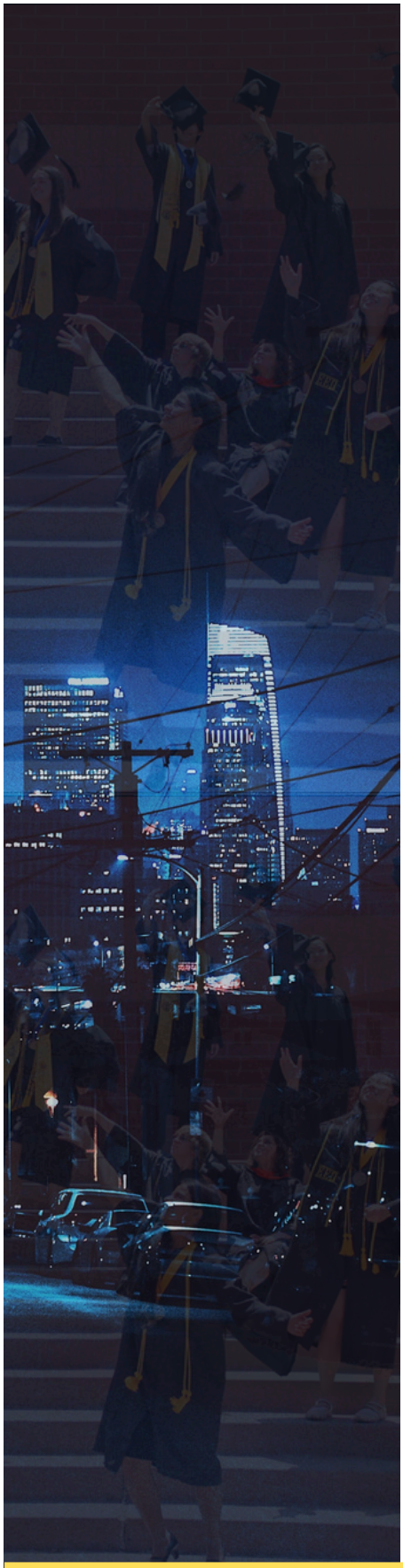
Mathew Christmann
Rosanne Shucjun Huang
Thea Patterson
Ashley Pedraza
Alexis Nicole Strom

College of Business and Economics

Kathlyne Alilain
Lea Campos
Gabriel Ismael Meza
Juan Carlos Santana
Jeffrey Antony Tam
Mayowa Vincent Toyinbo

College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology

Lynn Lee
Gabriel Linecker
Barnabas Novak
Bryam David Ochoa
Sophia Sherzai
Kaelyn Taing
Kai Wang
Chloey Montoya



College of Natural and Social Science

Narek Abelian
Zarife Agin
David Arredondo
Cliff Connors
Marisa Couto
Stephanie Marie Diaz
Sarena Marie Eworonsky
Marilyn Heidecker
Michelle Ho
Cindy Nguyen
Noomie Nystroem
Arya Patel
Jacob Joshua Isaih Freddy Ramos Jr.
Marcela Rejas
Daniela Salazar
Rikka Tagayuna
Lara Tseng
Reese Wang
Kara Yasuko Yokoyama
Triyahna Bealer

College of Arts and Letters

Sophie Katharina Peineke
Lizette Roman

THANK YOU

Thesis Advisors & Mentors

Alma Olaguez - Psychology

Ben Vincent - Biological Sciences

Charleata Battle - Management

Chengyu Sun - Computer Sciences

Christine Scoffoni - Biological Sciences

Corinne Bower - Psychology

David M. Krum - Computer Science

Elizabeth Corzo-Duchardt - TV, Film, and Media

Eric Wood - Biological Sciences

Howard Lum - Civil Engineering

Hyunsook Park - Biological Sciences

Ian Morton - Communication Disorders

Jaredd Abott - Political Science

Jie Zhong - Mathematics

John Pohl - Anthropology

Jose Ortiz - Information Systems

Patrick J. Krug - Biological Sciences

Khadija Monk - Criminal Justice and Criminalistics

Kimberly Kisler - Public Health

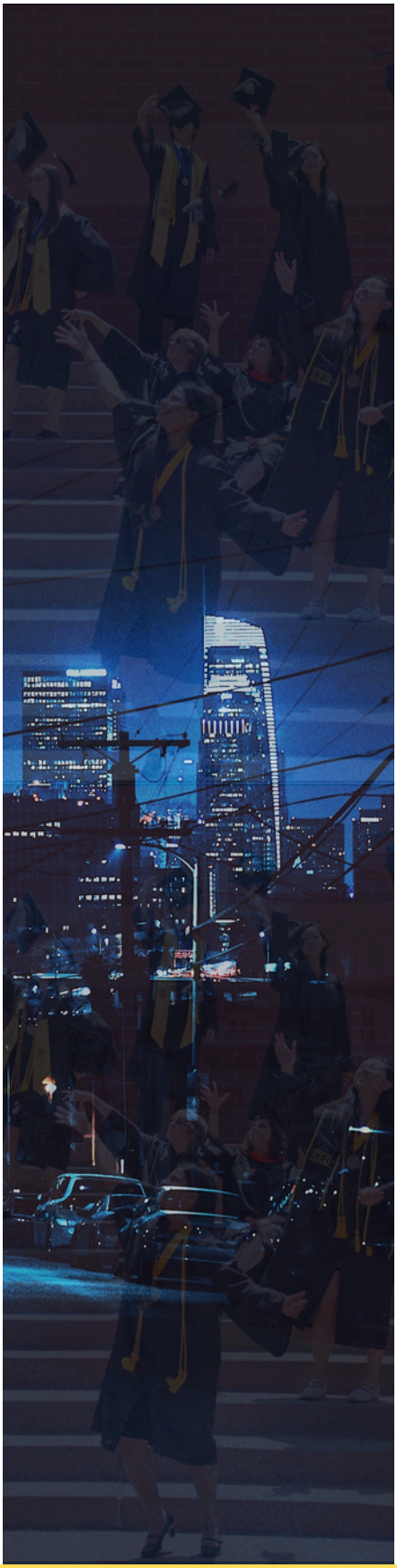
Kurtis Sawitskas - Computer Science

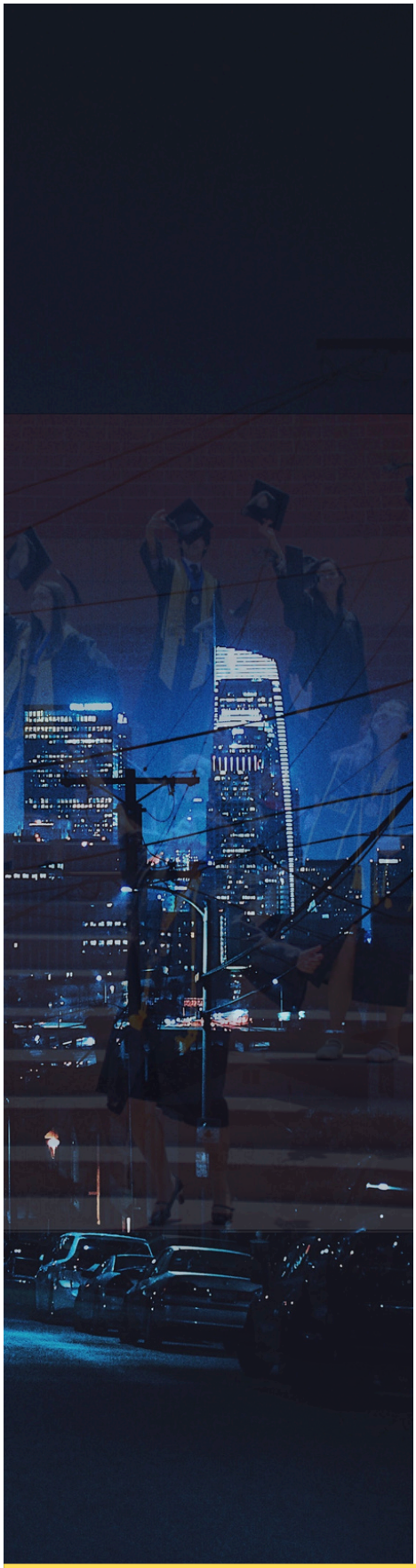
Mark S. Baldwin - Computer Science

Michael L. Hayes - Chemistry and Biochemistry

Michele L. Nicolo- Nutritional Science

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THANK YOU

Thesis Advisors & Mentors

(Continued)

Miles Finney - Economics

Molly Talcott - Sociology

Petr Vozka - Chemistry and Biochemistry

Robert Vellanoweth - Chemistry and Biochemistry

Rui Hu - Accounting

Shikha Upadhyaya - Marketing

Shilpa Balan - Information Systems

Sierra Bray - Communications

Stacey Warner - Nursing

Yangyang Liu - Chemistry and Biochemistry

Yixian Wang - Chemistry and Biochemistry

Yuqing Zhu - Computer Science

Yvette Szabo - Psychology



Honors College would like to thank Sonia Cruz-Magaña for serving as the Faculty Thesis Coordinator for the 2024-2025 academic year.

We extend thanks to our campus leadership, including President Dr. Berenecea Johnson Eanes, Provost Dr. Amy Bippus, Dean Dr. Stephen M. Trzaskoma of the College of Arts and Letters, Dean Dr. Tye Jackson of the College of Business of Economics, Dean Dr. Nancy Warter-Perez of the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology, Dean Dr. Marcos Pizarro of the College of Education, Dean Dr. Ron Vogel of the Ronxiang Xu College of Health and Human Services, Dean Dr. René Vellanoweth of the College of Natural and Social Sciences, and the Academic Affairs team for their continuous support of the Honors College.

We extend thanks to Dr. Kathy J. Cooke and Dr. Andrea Arias for your leadership throughout the year.

We extend thanks to Marylu Castillo for her stellar advising of our students throughout the year.

We extend thanks to Dr. Michelle Hawley, Dean of Undergraduate Studies and founding director of The Honors College.

We express our gratitude to our incredible faculty members, Professors Lara Schubert and Emily Baird, for their commitment to our students.

We also extend our thanks and gratitude to Samantha Solis for her unwavering dedication and exemplary efforts ensuring the seamless operations of the Honors College. We also thank our Student Assistants Vanessa Guzman, Ivanna Montalvo, Brissa Olivarez and Gabriel Meza for their flexibility, initiative and creativity.

Lastly, we extend heartfelt gratitude to the families of our Honors College community for their ongoing support of their family members and our students in pursuit of academic excellence.

Congratulations to our student community for your outstanding accomplishments!

Learn More about the Honors College

Community Engagement and Leadership: During 2023-24, Honors College students completed a record-setting 5,188 community service hours. This year we are on track to exceed that number. In their service, Honors College students joined the larger, incredibly engaged, Cal State LA student body by donating food staples to the Cal State LA Food Pantry, tutoring peers through academic student clubs, providing health and wellness education as certified health peer educators, and advocating for needs of underrepresented students. Honors College students also went into greater LA to create and distribute food packages; worked in local schools; served as first responders; supported youth writing; volunteered at PIH Good Samaritan Hospital and the Armenia Relief Society; collected clothes and feminine products for donation to the L.A. Mission; and distributed books to indigenous youth.

Campus Events: The Honors College builds networks and friendships that support student participation in unique Honors events—like group attendance at Shakespeare in the Park in Griffith Park—and campus-wide events like Career Center networking, lectures, and on campus music and theater.

Grant: The Honors College has a grant with historically Black Tuskegee University. We are working to explore the ways our universities approach and teach topics related to character and leadership and expect to apply for another grant in 2026.

Human Rights: Cal State LA is making a great impression—and building student opportunities—thanks to its relationship with the Oxford Consortium for Human Rights. Five students attended a workshop in Sonoma, CA, in January 2024, and 3 attended a workshop at Oxford University on Oxford, UK, in March, 2025. We have plans to attend another workshop in September, 2025.

Peace and the Nobel Prize: We are Partners in Peace! The Honors College was selected as an inaugural member of the National Collegiate Honors Council's Partners in Peace. We also participated in our first ever World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in September, 2025, traveling with 2 faculty and 5 students to Monterrey, Mexico, where we joined hundreds of students and peace leaders from around the world.

Consider supporting the Honors College and all it brings to Cal State LA and the larger community with any donation—no contribution is too small.

Scan to donate to the Honors College
Thank You!

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California State University, Los Angeles