

Commencement season marks new chapter for ASU grads with California ties

By Katelyn Reinhart, ASU News
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For many students at Arizona State University, graduation represents a time of change. Every graduate has a unique story to tell — and that extends to the university's California graduates as well.

Whether they moved from their home state to Arizona, or took classes in LA or elsewhere in California, ASU continues to strengthen its ties with learners from the Golden State.

Each graduate may have attended ASU for a different reason, but they leave the university with a sense of community and a readiness to take on the future.

Here we dive into the stories of just some of ASU's graduating California students.

Voyager Scholar advances accessibility in travel and higher education

[Jessica Lopez](#), a recipient of the Obama-Chesky Voyager Scholarship for Public Service, is earning a bachelor's degree in business administration from her hometown of San Diego through ASU Online. As part of her scholarship, Lopez received a six-week travel stipend to use anywhere in the world during summer 2024, which she used to travel to Chicago, Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, New York City, and San Francisco and the Redwoods to study accessibility in travel across the United States.

Drawing on her experience as a woman born without hands and feet, Lopez also used the trip to conduct research for what became her honors thesis, "The Business Case for Accessible Travel" — the first comprehensive study to analyze both accessibility and financial performance in the

New LA classes

This year, the university announced a new LA-based course [taught by the musical and tech powerhouse will.i.am](#) and that the W. P. Carey School of Business would [expand its Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence in Business program](#) to Los Angeles, beginning in fall 2026.

travel industry.

LA fashion business student says ASU is ‘the right place to grow’

Fashion business student [Emily Vuduris](#) knew she would turn her creativity into a career. She graduates with a Bachelor of Arts in fashion (merchandising) this fall from ASU FIDM. She has already had a host of interesting professional experiences: While earning her associate degree, she interned with celebrity stylists, working with Sydney Sweeney, Ariana Greenblatt and Lucy Hale, and assisting on campaign shoots for Kylie Cosmetics and cover shoots for Numero Netherlands. But she said it was her time at ASU FIDM that gave her the skills and confidence to pursue a career in fashion media.

“It also shaped how I talk about my work and how I approach problem-solving, which made a big difference when I applied for my current internship at a women’s contemporary wholesale showroom,” Vuduris said. “It is a completely different side of the industry, but that is exactly why interning during school is so valuable. You get to experience different corners of the field and figure out where your strengths align.”

Grad translates immersive dreams into real-world impact through narrative and emerging media

[Ashley Buschhorn](#) had been interested in immersive journalism since she was in high school, and she found the opportunity to pursue her passion professionally at the ASU California Center. Buschhorn graduates this fall from the Narrative and Emerging Media master’s program, which is a partnership between the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication and The Sidney Poitier New American Film School. Working alongside faculty like Nonny de la Peña and Mary Matheson, Buschhorn covered the aftermath of the LA wildfires and produced an exhibition at the South by Southwest Film Festival. Located in the heart of downtown LA, Buschhorn said it was easy to find inspiration.

“My favorite spot on our LA campus is the Herald Examiner grand lobby, which is not only breathtakingly beautiful but a reminder of the rich journalistic history the building represents,” she said. “To find myself traveling the same halls as journalism greats in the home of one of the most impactful newspapers in history is inspiring every day.”

Journalism grad finds purpose in the ASU Charter

Having grown up in Southern California, ASU wasn’t exactly on [Hannah De Leon Bolick’s](#) radar. However, she was drawn to ASU’s journalism program and she hasn’t looked back. Bolick will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and mass communication, a minor in digital audiences and recognition from Barrett, The Honors College as a top graduate. She will also start working on her Master of Public Administration through ASU’s Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions this spring.

“I’ve learned so much at ASU, everything from hard skills like developing Meta ads and mastering AP style to soft skills like networking and identifying the experiences I need to become more

career-ready,” Bolick said. “But the biggest shift in my perspective was realizing just how empowered I am to make a difference.”

Film student’s passion for producing takes her across the world

With both of her parents working as producers in India, [Kiara Agrawal](#) grew up on film sets. Graduating with a BFA in film and media production from The Sidney Poitier New American Film School, she is ready to start a career of her own.

“I came to Arizona because ASU gave me the opportunity to be part of a great film program with amazing faculty that was affordable with my scholarship.” Agrawal was also drawn to the school’s Semester in LA program, which allows Arizona-based film school students to study and work in Los Angeles while staying on track for graduation.

After a revelatory internship with Fox Entertainment Studios, Agrawal is ready to pursue her dream career as a producer.

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Main image



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Text image(s)



Jessica Lopez



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