

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### New Beginnings

Cal Poly Pomona is a launchpad to career success and a home to students who dream of a bright future full of possibilities. Every spring, we celebrate the Broncos who worked tirelessly to earn their degree from our university, a celebration years in the making, and yet, as soon as one class graduates, the next is right around the corner.

Before we completely turn the page on the 2022-23 academic year and focus our attention on what lies ahead, I want to take one more opportunity to celebrate our most recent graduates. This May, about 7,000 Broncos crossed the stage during Commencement ceremonies – each carrying their own unique stories of triumph and perseverance, struggle and achievement, fortitude and unwavering commitment to their dreams.

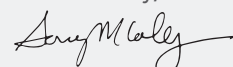
Congratulations to all our recent graduates, and congratulations to their families, friends and loved ones who supported them along the way. To our alumni and friends of CPP – I invite you to reflect upon your graduation day, who you were before you crossed the graduation stage and who you have become.

Whether you graduated one year ago or 50 years ago, your talents and gifts are still in bloom. I urge you to continue to pursue your dreams, big and small, and allow them to unfold and evolve.

Be open to new experiences and make choices that further your curiosity and passion. Never stop learning.

I hope you stay connected to CPP and find ways to give back, whether that's through events and activities, volunteer programs and philanthropy, or simply celebrating one other's successes. We value your experiences, stories, perspectives and gifts. You have the power to make a difference in our students' lives, by helping them grow and feel affirmed in who they will become.

Thank you for your commitment and support.

Sincerely,  


Soraya M. Coley, Ph.D.  
President

# The Road to Success



## Class of 2023 Forged with Grit and Determination

They arrived on campus uncertain and inexperienced, but with a hope that they would discover their purpose and passion.

A few years later, the graduates in the Class of 2023 crossed the University Quad stage to receive their degrees, confident in their capability to define and achieve the success they seek.

Cal Poly Pomona celebrated the trials, triumphs and resiliency of the university's newest alumni at the Commencement ceremonies in May. About 7,500 graduates from spring 2023, fall 2022 and summer 2023 received their undergraduate and graduate degrees to the roar of thousands more family members, friends and supporters.

Commencement featured several student and guest speakers, including honorary doctorate recipients:

**Sean Yu** ('99, political science, management and human resources), a successful finance entrepreneur, and **Clark Rucker** ('83, engineering technology), who retired after a 43-year career in aerospace engineering.

However, the stars of the stage were the students who crossed it with diplomas in hand, smiling, dancing and waving to the crowd of beaming loved ones. That final moment on stage, as well as the thousands more throughout their journey at Cal Poly Pomona, will stay with them for a lifetime.

"To see my brain and heart open up here has been so surreal," said **Emily Quinton** ('23, marketing management). "Getting the opportunities I've gotten through being at Cal Poly Pomona have been the most amazing things I've ever experienced in my whole life."

— Melanie Johnson



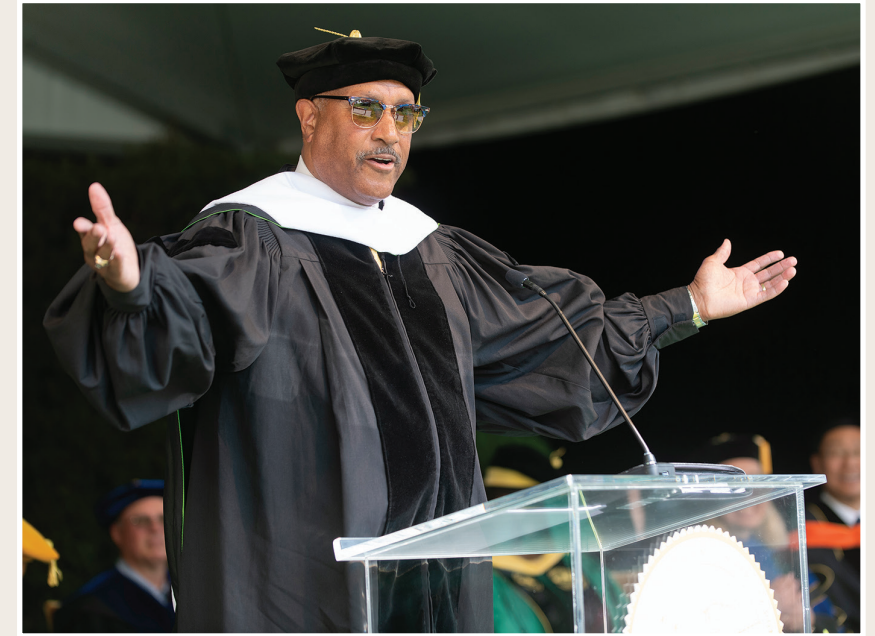
"Getting the opportunities I've gotten through being at Cal Poly Pomona have been the most amazing things I've ever experienced in my whole life."





**"You are not who you were when you began your Cal Poly Pomona journey, nor are you an empty vessel waiting to be filled. Rather, you brought hopes and aspirations, and that you are preparing to cross the Commencement stage is a testament to your self-determination, your resiliency in facing your fears and meeting and overcoming challenges."**

**- PRESIDENT SORAYA M. COLEY**



**"No matter what anybody says, no matter how many people try to categorize you, put you in a place, tell you what your limits are – you can be whatever you want to be. All you have to do is push yourself and put your mind to it."**

**— CLARK RUCKER**  
(’83, engineering technology), honorary doctorate recipient





**“Remember to honor those who came before you and those who will come after you. Use your education for good and never forget where you came from, your roots. We have a professional, ethical and moral responsibility to serve our people.”**

**— DIANA AGUILAR-CRUZ**  
('23, biology), CSU student trustee





# CAP-turing the Moment



## THE PUBLIC SERVANT

### Aspiring Police Officer Finds Purpose on Campus Beat

By MELANIE JOHNSON

Growing up, Kyle So believed in keeping his career options open.

When he was little, he wanted to play Legos for a living. When he got to sixth grade, he wanted to be a musician, later an athlete and an engineer.

"Throughout my life, I have jumped from interest to interest," says the criminology senior. "I didn't really stick to anything. I asked myself, 'Why is that?'"

When he was 15, a burgeoning interest in police work developed into a solid career plan. He joined the local Police Explorers, a program to introduce youth to careers in law enforcement. He convinced his parents, who were concerned about the dangers of the job and wanted him to pick a career in STEM, to support him in realizing his dream.

"On my 16th birthday, they said that was their present for me was, 'We will let you become a police officer,'" So says.

Cal Poly Pomona's criminology program, which is heavily enmeshed with the sociology major, has helped So home in on a future career in law enforcement.

"The more I got into the program, the more I realized this major was what I was interested in," he says.

He particularly connected with Paul Vernon, a Cal Poly Pomona alumnus and part-time lecturer who teaches criminological theory, exploring both the historical and contemporary reasons for crime. Vernon ('84, history), a retired police captain with a 30-year career with the LAPD, has stayed in touch with So, checking in periodically to see how his courses are going and his plans after graduation.

"He was a great professor and really helped to connect what we learned theory-wise with what we would learn with practical experience," So says. "For many, it was a review course, but he beefed up our knowledge in each section. He really helped us understand a lot."

In his sophomore year at Cal Poly Pomona, So applied for a community service officer (CSO) job at the University Police Department. For the past two years, he's responded requests for an escort and helped new CSOs learn the ropes. His desire for a career in law enforcement is tied to the core of who he is as a person.

**"With the leadership system here, there are opportunities to move up, opportunities to learn more."**

"Being a CSO at this campus, you get to interact with students. Every time I get a chance to talk to students, I do," he says. "I love interacting with people. I am honest, value integrity and think rules are important for us to uphold. It also fits with my passion to serve the public."

So will continue working at UPD in the fall while he completes the final courses needed to earn his degree. The job also gives So an opportunity to connect with police officers who have worked for city departments, something he aspires to do, and to grow.

"With the leadership system here, there are opportunities to move up, opportunities to learn more," he says.





# THE EQUESTRIAN

## Lifelong Love of Horses Spurs Grad's Career Pursuits

By MELANIE JOHNSON

At 4, when most children are transitioning from a tricycle to a bicycle with training wheels, **Hannah Esqueda** was atop a horse.

Riding horses was something Esqueda and her grandfather bonded over. Their family has leased or owned horses her entire life.

"Me and my grandpa would ride together," she says. "He would take me riding and I really enjoyed it."

Those early rides sparked a lifelong love of horses for Esqueda, who graduated in May with a degree in animal and veterinary science.

When she arrived at Cal Poly Pomona as a transfer student from Fullerton College in late 2020, she found out about the live-in positions at the **W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse Center**, and she knew she had to apply.

Live-ins are just that – students who live at the horse center around the clock. They help with breeding and foaling, muck stalls, feed the horses, give them their meds, and keep the grounds clean and tidy. During the pandemic, she continued to live and work at the horse center, which augmented her experiential learning opportunities.

It was a unique opportunity for Esqueda to gain hands-on experiences that will be vital when she becomes an equine veterinarian.

In the classroom, the veterinary science program provided Esqueda with a firm foundation for her future in the field, but the COVID-19 pandemic did alter the way classes were typically conducted for a time.

"I enjoyed the program and feel that I learned a lot," Esqueda says. "I got the program from a different perspective because a lot of the classes were online. Even so, the professors were good and were understanding of our circumstances."



**"The most rewarding aspect of being a live-in is being able to take care of the little foals."**

As a live-in, a typical weekday involves rising early for the 6 a.m. chores. The horses get their meds at 8 a.m., followed by lunch at 11 a.m., time out in the pasture, and a 4 p.m. dinner of grain, alfalfa and Bermuda grass.

"The most rewarding aspect of being a live-in is being able to take care of the little foals," she says. "We stay up all night watching over the mares. The most rewarding thing is new life."

Esqueda has seen more than 20 foals born at the center, and she also does some breeding off campus.

She feels fortunate to have a job working with the animals she connects with the most.

"Their personalities can be loving at times, but they can also be spunky," she says. "They are like big dogs."

Post graduation, Esqueda is working in Pasadena with equine veterinarians and plans to apply to veterinary schools in the fall.

