



GRAD

SLAM

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

gradslam.universityofcalifornia.edu

UC Student and Policy Center, Sacramento

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WELCOME

10:30 a.m.

Katherine S. Newman

Provost, University of California

OPENING REMARKS

Michael V. Drake, M.D.

President, University of California

GRAD SLAM PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION ORDER

Casey Vanderlip

Catching Alzheimer's disease before it starts — with a simple memory game

UC IRVINE **NEUROBIOLOGY OF BEHAVIOR**

Pablo Alvarez

Guarding the crown jewel: Stopping the viral invasion of the brain

UCLA **MOLECULAR BIOLOGY**

Jaquesta Adams

Illuminating oxytocin: How nanosensors 'listen in' on the brain's chemical conversations

UC BERKELEY **CHEMISTRY**

Yuting Ma

Will the lights stay on? Forecasting electricity demand in a warmer California

UC SANTA BARBARA **STATISTICS AND APPLIED PROBABILITY**

Angeliz Vargas Casillas

When math meets your skin: A multiscale model of keloid scar expansion

UC RIVERSIDE **MATHEMATICS**

Jenna Myers

A sticky situation: The age-related influx of clot-producing platelets

UC SANTA CRUZ **BIOCHEMISTRY**

Sophia Miliotis

Finding HIV: A swipe in the right direction

UC SAN FRANCISCO

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES AND PHARMACOGENOMICS

Jessica Zhong

Monitoring white sharks with environmental DNA

UC SAN DIEGO **MARINE BIOLOGY**

Adekunle "Kunle" Adewole

Zippering and unzipping peptide tiles: A targeted approach to medicine

UC MERCED **CHEMISTRY AND CHEMICAL BIOLOGY**

Yara Khatib

The road to recovery: Psychedelic-like drugs for improving mental health

UC DAVIS **PHARMACOLOGY AND TOXICOLOGY**

REMARKS

Government collaboration

Kathleen Fullerton

Associate Vice President, State Governmental Relations, University of California, Office of the President

PANEL DISCUSSION

Keeping California a world leader: The role of UC innovation

PANELISTS

Samuel Assefa

Director, California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

Bill Dodd

California State Senator (retired)

Lisa García Bedolla

Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Hitchcock Dean of the Graduate Division, Chancellor's Professor in the School of Education, University of California, Berkeley

Gillian Wilson

Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Economic Development and Professor of Physics, University of California, Merced

MODERATOR

Yvette Gullatt

Vice President, Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs, and Vice Provost, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, University of California, Office of the President

LUNCH RECEPTION

AWARDS PRESENTATION

1:45 p.m.

Michael V. Drake, M.D.

President, University of California

Katherine S. Newman

Provost, University of California

MEET OUR JUDGES



Riley Johnson

A sophomore at C.K. McClatchy High School in Sacramento, Riley Johnson

participates in the in Black Student Union and the MESA program and is the varsity cheer captain. She is passionate about the environment and plans to become an environmental policy attorney to influence legislation and policies that support healthy living conditions for marginalized communities. A devoted thespian, visual artist and entrepreneur, Johnson has received numerous awards for her commitment and dedication to both academics and community service.



Ahmet Palazoglu

is vice-chair of the UC Academic Senate and a distinguished professor of Chemical Engineering at UC Davis. Palazoglu

researches process systems engineering and has more than two hundred publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. He co-authored two books, “Chemical Process Performance Evaluation” and the undergraduate textbook, “Introduction to Process Control,” both published by CRC Press. Palazoglu is a Fellow of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.



Janet Reilly chairs the UC Board of Regents. She is the co-founder and board president

of Clinic by the Bay, a free, volunteer-powered health clinic for the working uninsured in San Francisco and San Mateo counties. A former executive producer and on-air television host for NBC Bay Area – KNTV, Reilly and her husband own the San Francisco Examiner and the Nob Hill Gazette. Reilly earned a B.A. from UCLA and an M.S. in journalism from the Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism.

Laurel Rosenhall writes about California politics for The New York



Times. Based in Sacramento, she has been a journalist in California for more than two decades,

mostly covering state politics and policy. Previously, Rosenhall led coverage of the state capitol for The Los Angeles Times and served for a year on its editorial board. She was also a reporter at CalMatters, a nonprofit news site she helped launch in 2015, and began her reporting career at The Sacramento Bee. Rosenhall studied journalism at UC Berkeley.



Michael Wiafe is assistant deputy cabinet secretary in the Office of Governor Gavin

Newsom, where he works on education cradle-to-career. He previously worked at the Inland Empire Community Foundation and was an adjunct professor at the University of Redlands. Wiafe got his start in policy as president of the Cal State Student Association, representing the over 480,000 students of the California State University system. He earned a B.A. from San Diego State University and a master’s in Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

GRAD SLAM IS A RESEARCH COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS DESIGNED TO MAKE THEIR WORK, ITS PURPOSE AND ITS VALUE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC. IN THIS TOURNAMENT-STYLE COMPETITION, GRADUATE STUDENTS SHOWCASE THEIR ABILITY TO PRESENT THEIR RESEARCH IN THREE MINUTES IN A WAY THAT ENLIGHTENS AND ENTERTAINS A GENERAL AUDIENCE. THE UC-WIDE GRAD SLAM FEATURES WINNERS FROM EACH OF UC’S 10 CAMPUSES COMPETING FOR THE SYSTEMWIDE PRIZE.

MEET OUR PANELISTS



Samuel Assefa directs the California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

Previously, Assefa was the director of the Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (2016–21), a senior urban designer with the City of Boulder (2010–16) and Chicago's director of land use and planning policy (2004–10). In California, Assefa served as director of special projects for the San Francisco Department of Planning and Development (1999–2002). Assefa earned a master's degree in City Planning from MIT.



Former California State Senator **Bill Dodd** spent 25 years in public service.

The fifth-generation Californian was a successful business owner before being elected to the Napa County Board of Supervisors, the state Assembly and the state Senate. During his tenure Dodd authored 126 bills that were signed into law. He is a partner in Dodd and Chaaban Strategies and serves as a director of a public company and two start-ups. Dodd and his wife live in Napa and have five children and thirteen grandchildren.



Lisa García Bedolla is UC Berkeley's vice provost for Graduate Studies and Hitchcock Dean of the

Graduate Division, and Chancellor's Professor in the School of Education. She uses the tools of social science to reveal the causes of educational and political inequalities in the United States, considering differences across the lines of ethnorace, gender, class, geography, et cetera. She believes an intersectional and interdisciplinary approach is critical to recognizing the complexity of the contemporary U.S.



Gillian Wilson is the vice chancellor for research, innovation and economic development at UC

Merced. Her administrative portfolio includes managing UC Merced's research administration offices, shared core research facilities, organized research units, Natural Reserve System, Agricultural Experiment Station and the Central California Small Business Development Center network. Wilson is a professor in the UC Merced Department of Physics and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society and the American Astronomical Society.

ABOUT UC GRADUATE STUDIES

The University of California offers outstanding graduate programs across a wide spectrum of fields with more than 735 degree offerings. UC enrolls nearly 65,000 graduate students (master's, Ph.D. and professional school students) across its 10 campuses. Alumni of UC graduate programs are responsible for hundreds of inventions, startups, published research and groundbreaking discoveries every year.

ADVOCATE FOR UC!

The University of California creates public benefits for California, our nation and the world. The UC Advocacy Network works with government officials and policymakers in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., to highlight the impact of UC's contributions. We need your help to spread the word.

Thousands of higher education advocates are already making their voices heard. Together, our letters, emails, phone calls and actions will help shape policies that will ultimately move UC — and California — onward. Please lend your voice to support UC. Together, we are making a difference.

Please go to ucal.us/ucan