

2026

BeachBook





Welcome!

For more than 75 years, Cal State Long Beach has championed personal transformation and professional triumph. Here, we harness the energy and optimism that have made California a beacon of opportunity for generations and help lay the foundation for building a life of purpose.

The touchstones illustrated here through stories and points of pride define our Beach spirit and bring to life our remarkable university.

Through this edition of Beach Book, we hope you will join in our affirmation to our students and alumni to charge ahead, powered and inspired by Long Beach State:

Where California Dreams.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
LONG BEACH



Celebrated Reputation

The Beach is a top U.S. university, widely recognized for its academic rigor, empowering programs, rich diversity, athletic distinction and substantive community impact.



CSULB Is a Top Training Ground for California's City Managers

The work of a city manager rarely makes headlines. There are no stump speeches, no campaign rallies, no victory parties. Yet when CSULB Public Policy & Administration Professor Adam Butz talks about the role, he does so with reverence.

"It's a uniquely high executive-level position" — akin to a corporate CEO, Butz said, except city managers report to a city council and oversee everything from police and fire to libraries and parks. "The city manager stands alone. It's like the top of the mountain."

That mountain, as it turns out, has a familiar base. From Ventura to Oceanside, and from Indian Wells to Malibu, the road to city management often runs through Cal State Long Beach. A 2025 Rose Institute survey ranks CSULB as the No. 2 producer of city managers statewide. Most city managers share one credential: the Master of Public Administration (MPA).

Housed in the College of Health & Human Services and offered online through the College of Professional and Continuing Education, the program fits the workday realities of public



Professor Adam Butz

Among **'The Best Colleges in America'**
5 out of 5 stars
Money.com, 2025

Among the **top 50**
U.S. universities
Wall Street Journal, 2025

No. 9 in the U.S.
'Best Colleges for Your Tuition (and Tax) Dollars'
Washington Monthly, 2025

One of 27 institutions nationwide to earn both **High Research (R2)** and **Opportunity Colleges and Universities** designations
Carnegie Classification, 2025



Patrick Gallegos '06



David Roberts '98

service. Founded in 1973, CSULB's MPA program has graduated more than 3,000 students.

Asked what made CSULB stitch such a strong pipeline, Oceanside City Manager Jonathan Borrego '89, '99 credited the program's pragmatic approach.

"CSULB prepares students not to theorize, but to serve," he said. "A lot of the professors that I had in my MPA program were practicing government administrators [with] direct, real-life experience. Some of my classes were taught by practicing city managers. Just hearing their stories and their advice was super, super valuable. It wasn't just book experience."

Arcadia City Manager Dominic Lazzaretto '98 notes a pattern in the field. "Everywhere I go, I run into city managers who went to Long Beach. It's a

quiet program that turns out success."

So what, precisely, does a city manager do?

"I spend a lot of time responding to public inquiries and complaints," Borrego said. "No day is the same." The list extends from council briefings and policy memos to budgets, capital projects and the delicate business of balancing development with neighborhood expectations.

Carson City Manager David Roberts '98, a sociology grad, framed the paradox. "We're a not-for-profit, yet we have to make a profit. It's a really interesting duality."

Add to that being apolitical in a politically charged environment. City managers serve at the pleasure of elected officials — and are often the first to go when attitudes shift.

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My time at CSULB reinforced the idea that public service is ultimately about people. The program emphasized collaboration, communication and servant leadership, all of which have shaped how I approach my role . . . I'm proud to be an alum and grateful for how the program paved the way for my career.

"A lot of times, it's not because somebody is underperforming," Lazzaretto said. "It's just that there's a new group that wants to go in a different direction or just explore a different option."

For newly appointed Seal Beach City Manager Patrick Gallegos '06, the mandate remains the same: Lead "with humility and focus on service," he said.

"My time at CSULB reinforced the idea that public service is ultimately about people," Gallegos said. "The program emphasized collaboration, communication and servant leadership, all of which have shaped how I approach my role . . . I'm proud to be an alum and grateful for how the program paved the way for my career."

PACK Lab Director Tairan Liu,
Keaton Safu, Associate Professor
Oscar Morales-Ponce,
Fozhan Babaeiyan Ghamsari

Boundless Opportunity

The Beach is experientially expansive, boasting immersive learning, vibrant life outside the classroom and the broadest range of relevant and evolving educational programs.

Students Train Autonomous Robots for Real-world Rescue

Keaton Safu was nine when his mom brought home his first Star Wars Lego set. He poured out a scatter of pieces, opened the instruction booklet and clicked his way forward until he was holding an Imperial starship.

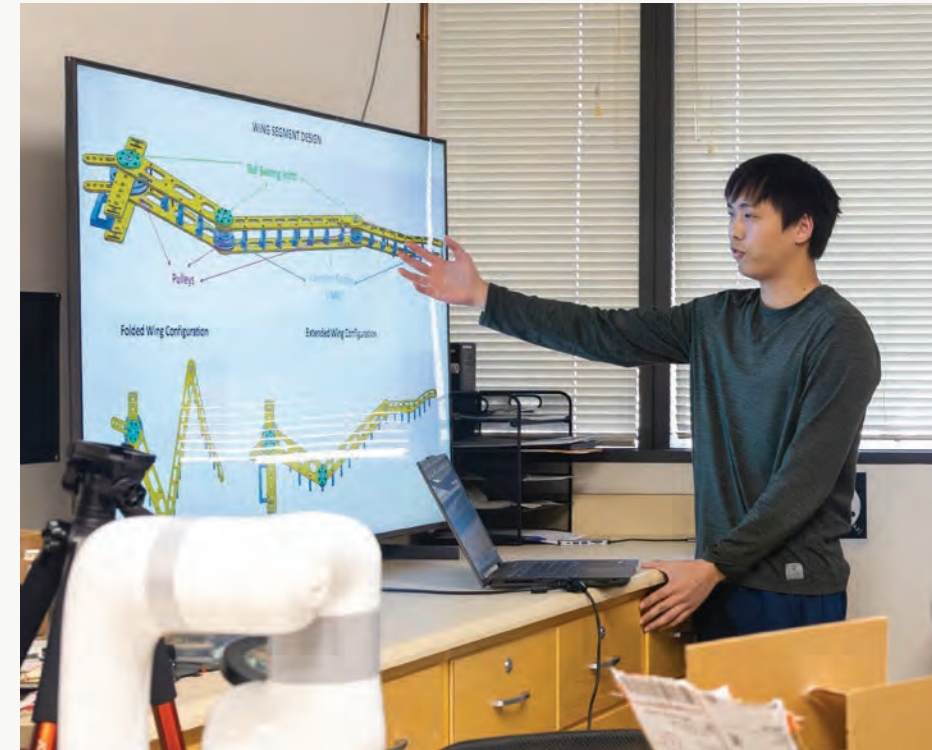
“It wasn’t the biggest one,” said Safu — nothing like the hulking collector ships that eat dining-room tables — “but it was definitely like I had a space-ship in my hands.”

Dozens of Lego sets, STEM courses and design projects later, Safu is finishing his mechanical engineering degree at Cal State Long Beach while working in the College of Engineering’s future-

forward PACK Lab — CSULB’s new testbed for multi-agent systems, where student-written code sends collaborative drones and robots into motion as cameras track everything in real time.

Named for the way wolves move together, PACK (Perception, Actuation, Control and Network) focuses on swarms of drones and fleets of vehicles that sense one another and make intelligent decisions together without a central computer. Think merging vehicles that negotiate the right-of-way the way flocks of birds change course midair.

The potential applications are as varied as they are exciting: fewer traffic collisions, faster



environmental monitoring, smarter search-and-rescues, safer wildfire response.

That last one hits home for Safu.

“We just saw the Palisades and Eaton fires,” said Safu, who grew up in Cerritos, less than 40 miles from burn zones. “What might have happened if you had an autonomous network of drones that could fly over those fires and extinguish them? You’re minimizing the risk at that point. That makes the job safer for everybody involved and potentially changes the outcome of the situation.”

Backed by a recent Department of Defense grant, PACK Lab Director Tairan Liu (Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering) and Associate Professor Oscar Morales-Ponce (Computer Engineering & Computer Science) have built out a scaled, netted flight cage with research-grade UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), a micro-swarm, ground vehicles, an optical motion-tracking system and an indoor test range for multi-car scenarios.



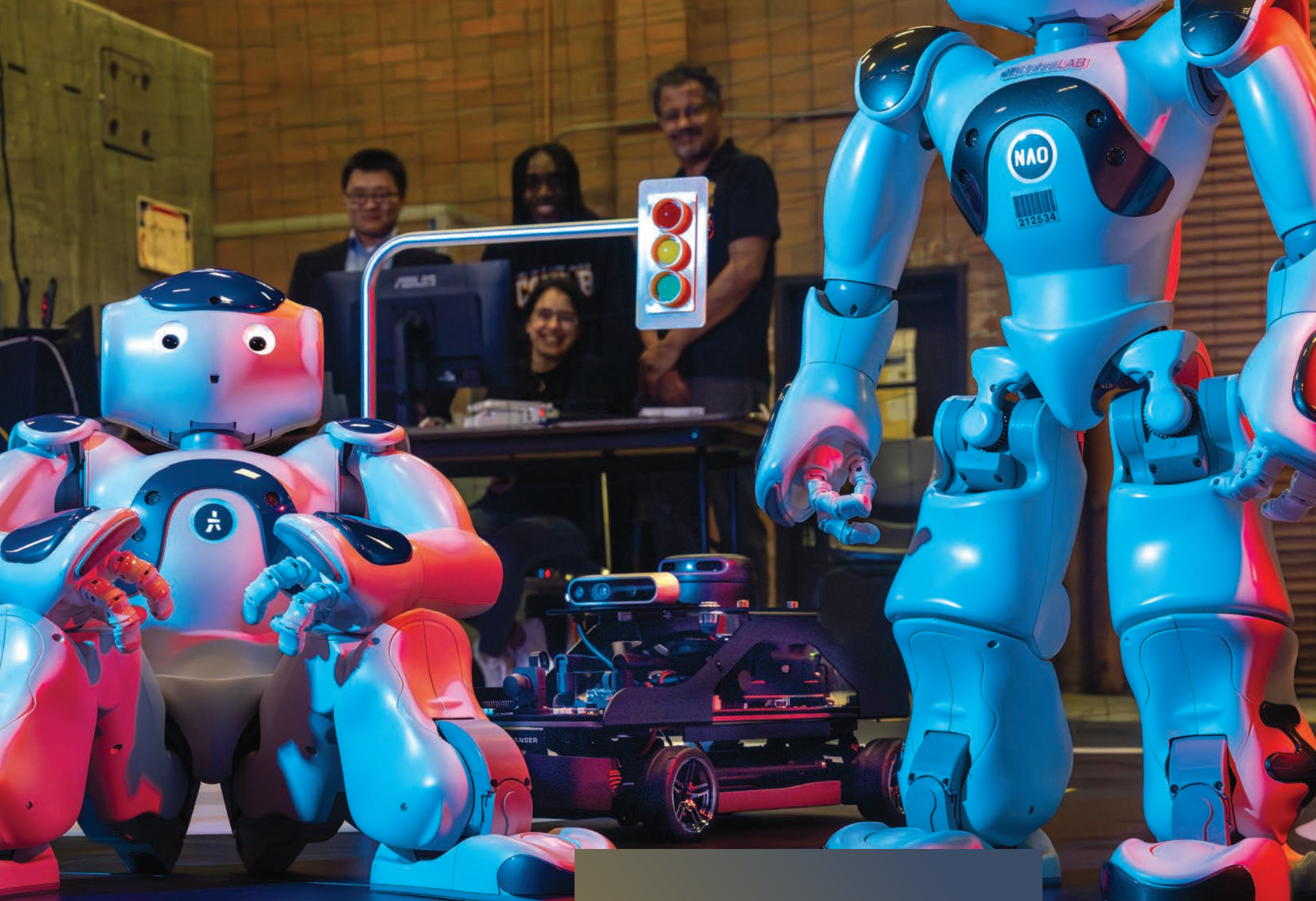
Immersive learning is a cornerstone of a Beach education. Among the many experiential opportunities for students:

The Mammal Lab is a hub for immersive student training, training tomorrow’s wildlife experts in data collection and field and lab experiments and research.

CSULB’s **Neuro Pro Bono Clinic** provides free physical therapy to individuals recovering from neurological disorders while training Doctor of Physical Therapy students.

Future engineers prepare for careers in the astronautics and aeronautics fields at The Beach’s **Rocket Lab**.

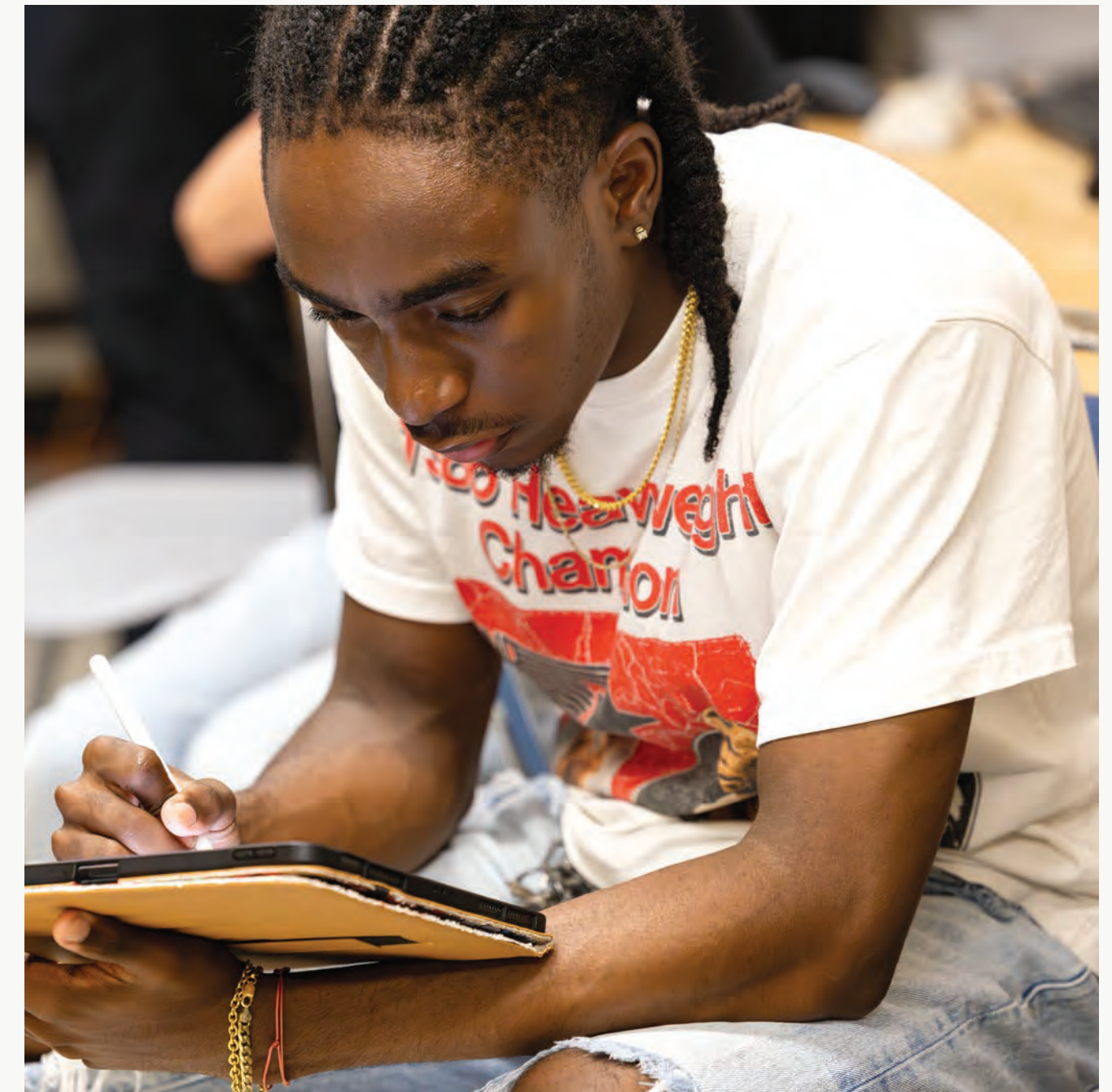
The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program offers free tax preparation services to students, low-income families and senior citizens while giving accounting students immersive training and industry exposure.



The payoffs are already showing up on résumés. Fourth-year computer engineering student Fozhan Babaeyian Ghamsari has presented research and earned campus recognition for her lab work with Morales-Ponce. And the bench keeps deepening, Liu said: “In the past three years, I have mentored more than 50 students,” including an undergrad who was admitted straight into a PhD program at the University of Notre Dame.

For students like Safu, who plans to pursue a master’s next, that trajectory matters.

“It always feels like I’m in a sci-fi movie,” he said of his time in the PACK Lab, turning futuristic ideas into fixes for real, complex problems that could make the world safer. “That’s what makes me feel like everything that I’m studying is worth it.”



What students do with it is the point. Undergrads turn class concepts into working systems — designing the logic that guides a robot’s decisions, testing it on hardware and running experiments that translate directly to internships, jobs and graduate study.

“I will design new lectures for my students to do some hands-on learning [and] design on their own,” Liu said. “We follow... physics rules, procedures, quality control.”

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What might have happened if you had an autonomous network of drones that could fly over those fires and extinguish them?



Trusted Outcomes

A Beach education is a proven catalyst for alumni excelling in their chosen fields, building lives of purpose and contributing to their communities.





Beach Alumni Are on the Frontlines of America’s Aging Boom

By 2030, for the first time in U.S. history, adults age 65 and older will outnumber children — a seismic demographic shift already reshaping healthcare, policy and daily life.

For years, Cal State Long Beach has been shaping its gerontology program for this moment, emphasizing real-world experience, adaptable careers and meaningful relationships — and graduating

professionals who understand the needs of an aging population.

Program Director Maria Carpiac stressed the importance of a specialized education in a field where misconceptions about aging persist.

“While older adults have unique needs, they also may have unique strengths,” she said. “And care



Frances Xavier Ginder '18



Desirae Moncayo '17

410,000
Beach alumni

No. 3 among national universities for promoting social mobility
U.S. News & World Report, 2025

In the **top 10%** of schools nationwide for return on investment
Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, 2025

The enhanced earnings of CSULB alumni attributable to their Beach degree support **51,000 jobs** and **\$10.6 billion** in economic activity every year.
ICF International, 2025

providers who haven't been trained to challenge their own stereotypes about aging and older adults may underestimate or miss these strengths completely.”

Three CSULB alumni, each carving a different path in aging services, share how The Beach gave them the tools and confidence to thrive.

The Frontliner
Frances Xavier Ginder '18 is a bilingual care planner for Independence at Home, a program for older adults. She visits clients in their homes and connects them to resources such as home-delivered meals, medical equipment and caregiver support. “I think, as gerontologists, we know the heart of

“

They were always like, ‘Hey, there’s this program opening. You want to volunteer here? You want to intern here?’ That’s what I loved the most. The (faculty) involved me in all these projects — volunteering, research, conferences. That’s how I figured out what I really wanted to do.”

older adults ... We see how older adults need to be cared for. We make sure they have all the safety nets they need.”

Ginder credits CSULB’s program with not just preparing her for the work but connecting her to it through faculty mentors who helped her build a network that eventually led to her current job. “They were always like, ‘Hey, there’s this program opening. You want to volunteer here? You want to intern here?’ That’s what I loved the most. The (faculty) involved me in all these projects — volunteering, research, conferences. That’s how I figured out what I really wanted to do.”

The Advocate

Desirae Moncayo '17 is a supervising deputy at the Los Angeles County Office of the Public Guardian, protecting vulnerable older adults who can no longer care for themselves. When she entered CSULB’s gerontology program, Moncayo wasn’t sure where she’d land — and that turned out to be a strength. “There might not be an exact title for you ... but that’s to your benefit. You can make yourself fit somewhere.”

The program helped her see her internships and volunteer work as real experiences. “They just made me so confident for this field,” she said.

Much of Moncayo’s work today involves complex probate conservatorship cases. “I feel like there’s so much knowledge to learn from [older adults] and their life experiences. Who would know more than someone who’s lived a full life?”

The Executive

Melissa Dillon '07 is vice president of memory care and resident engagement at Senior Resource Group, overseeing dementia care programs and staff training across 21 communities in seven states. When people hear she works in memory care, they often respond sympathetically. “That’s so sad,” they say. “How do you do that?” But Dillon laughs: “Are you kidding me?” she tells them. “I was just doing the twist to ‘Wooly Bully’ with, like, 24 people ... It’s not doom and gloom.”

Dillon’s master’s thesis at CSULB, which reimaged a company-wide dementia training program, became a career launchpad. Though a frontline worker then, her company adopted it as policy. “I really have this job because of my master’s with Cal State Long Beach,” she said.



Melissa Dillon '07



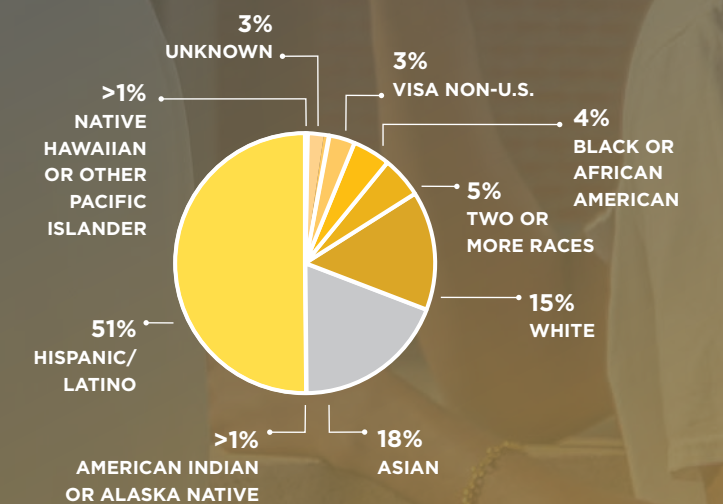
OUR IMPACT

11,305
degrees awarded
2024-25

42,174
enrolled students*

3.93
average GPA for incoming
first-time students*

The Beach benefits from its students' rich diversity of backgrounds.*



*Fall 2025

OUR IMPACT

\$369 million
in grant and scholarship awards*

49%
of undergraduates were
eligible for Pell grants.*

\$11,864
average need-based
scholarship award*
(full-time undergraduates)

71%
of full-time undergraduate
students receive some form
of financial aid.*

Long Beach State sponsors
19 intercollegiate athletic
teams and has won
16 Division I national titles.

\$2.4 billion
in economic activity statewide**

For every \$1 invested by the
state, CSULB generates **\$8.07**
in economic activity.**

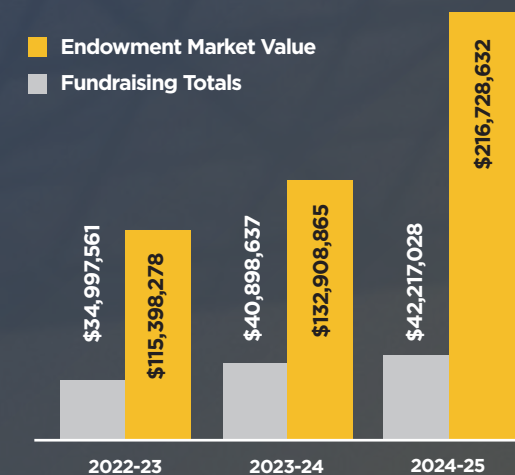
*2024-25 **ICF International, 2025



OUR IMPACT

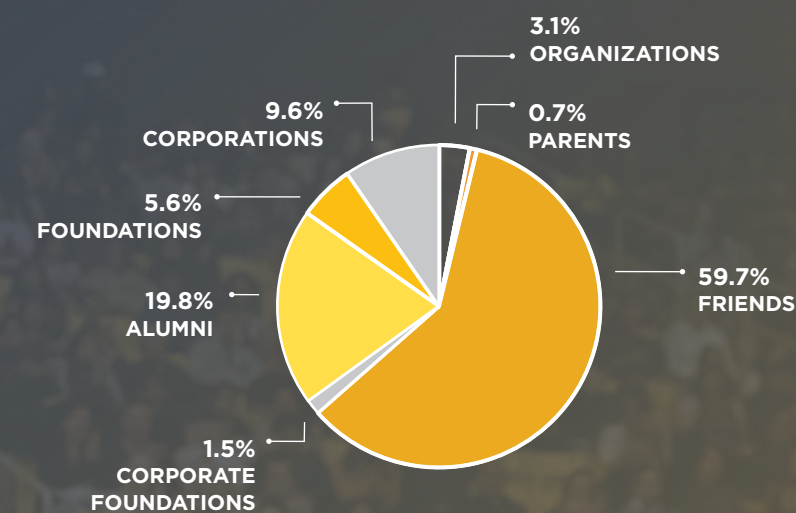


Endowment Market Value & Fundraising Totals



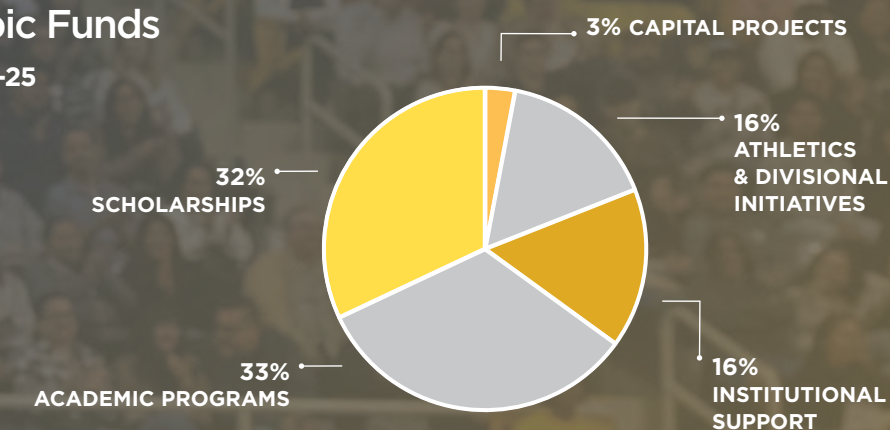
Sources of New Gifts

Fiscal Year 2024-25



Distribution of Philanthropic Funds

Fiscal Year 2024-25





*WHERE
CALIFORNIA
DREAMS™*