

## Men's water polo manager reinforces team effort

BY SAVANNAH SHAPIRO  
Daily Bruin reporter

Fifty. Give or take an hour or two, Eitan Peled accumulates nearly 50 demanding hours a week working for the UCLA men's water polo team. When water polo season is in full swing from September to early December, the head manager runs around campus – from the pool to the coach's office to training – doing as much as he can for the team. As the pinnacle point of the water polo season begins to wind down and the shift turns to offseason, Peled works a “manageable” 15 hours instead of 50.

Fifteen. “During season we have 8 to 10 a.m. practice and 4 to 7 p.m. practice,” said senior manager Erik Najarian. “Eitan is always there, but even after that, (he) sometimes goes in the office or works with (coach) Adam (Wright). Eitan devotes so much time, I don't even know the hours.”

Often times, an overlooked position on any sports team is the manager. Ironic, however, is the importance that a manager plays on the team and the amount of hours he contributes to the team as a whole. The water polo team is essentially

comprised of the coaches, the players and the staff. The manager's job allows others to do what they do best – the coaches are able to coach and the players are able to focus on playing the game.

After enrolling at UCLA in the fall of 2012, Peled walked on to the men's water polo team, hoping to continue playing at a collegiate level. But after two quarters of balancing training and a full course load, he decided to forgo his water polo career to focus on his academics.

“Playing a Division I sport is an intense commitment,” Peled said. “After reflecting on it, I decided I didn't want to play anymore, that I wanted to focus a little more on my studies, focus a little more on other things, but I wanted to still help the team in any way that I can and the best way to help out was to be manager.”

Earning a managerial position in the spring of 2013, Peled had a powerful impact on the UCLA water polo team through other means, by organizing their operations and working behind the scenes.

He focuses on the smallest details, helping turn them into the bigger picture and allowing the team to function cohesively. Hotels need to be booked, conference rooms need to be reserved and restaurants to

accommodate both the large party and limited budget need to be found.

On top of a manager's external responsibilities, Peled attends every practice and sets up all equipment for practice.

Something as simple as setting up and cleaning training bikes and making sure they are ready to go for the players is just one thing that Peled does in addition to being a mentor to the other managers on the team.

“Everything that I know about being a manager, Eitan has taught me,” said freshman manager Tyler Fidler. “He really has started the managerial work that I've learned. He knows pretty much everything from working with the games on the computer to what we need to prepare for tournaments. He's just always there.”

The never-ending list of responsibilities continues to run throughout the course of the season. With the aid of other assistant managers on the team, Peled guides them in completing the day's tasks – preparing everything from game film and practice equipment. The day is always changing and there is no such thing as a normal daily routine for a manager.

“The most challenging thing is the irregularity,” Peled said. “Things come up all the time



MARLEY MARON/DAILY BRUIN

Graduating men's water polo manager Eitan Peled was part of two national champion teams during his time in Westwood. The fourth-year economics student also dedicates time to raising awareness for Palestinian activism.

and some of them are time sensitive, especially during season, (and) staying on top of everything is pretty tough because of that irregularity. It's a lot of stuff – there's a lot of stuff behind the scenes to set up for the guys so that they can practice and focus on that.”

One of the most important aspects of Peled's job is handling game video. Dartfish, a multifaceted program, allows UCLA water polo to analyze and break down opposing teams.

“When there is a game going

on we film it with a camera. Then when the coaches go back they sometimes want to watch specific things,” Peled said. “Let's say they want to watch all the frontcourt offense so they want to watch the offensive possession of our game from a specific tournament, or the defensive possessions of one game, what we do is called tagging a video with this app.”

Once the video is tagged on the computer, Peled clips specific sections for the coaches to study, allowing them to watch

specific aspects of a particular game they choose.

Every game played in Division I water polo throughout the year is a game that the managerial staff films. Although each team within the division conference uploads game video to a shared server due to budget constraints, the video breakdown is something unique to the UCLA program.

When Peled began managing in his first year, he searched for

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### SENIOR CLASS LEGACY

Take a look back at the accomplishments and legacy of the UCLA's senior class – including their win-loss records, All-Americans, and top-3 NCAA finishes.

#### TOP-3 NCAA FINISHES



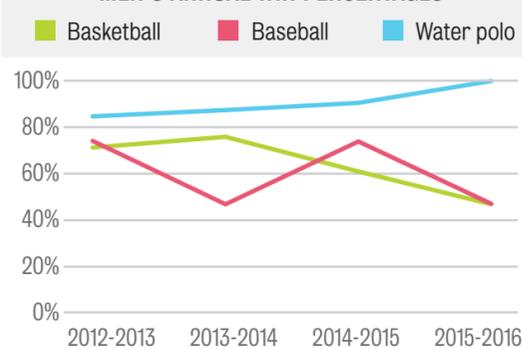
#### PAC-12 AND MPSF CHAMPIONSHIPS



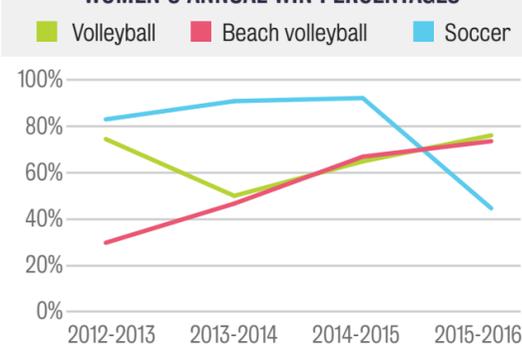
#### ALL-AMERICANS

Beach volleyball	Kamila Tan
Cross country	Lane Werley
Football	Jake Brendel, Ka'imi Fairbairn
Men's golf	Lorens Chan, Jonathan Garrick
Women's golf	Louise Ridderström
Gymnastics	Sophina DeJesus, Sadiqua Bynum, Danusia Francis
Men's soccer	Larry Ndjock, Grady Howe, Edgar Contreras
Softball	Allexis Bennett
Swimming & diving	Katie Kinnear
Women's tennis	Kyle McPhillips, Catherine Harrison
Track & field	Nick Hartle, Nicholas Scarvelis, Lane Werley, Kylie Price, Trinity Wilson, Sydney Lewis
Men's water polo	Anthony Daboub, Danny McClintick
Women's water polo	Alex Musselman, Charlotte Pratt, India Forster

#### MEN'S ANNUAL WIN PERCENTAGES



#### WOMEN'S ANNUAL WIN PERCENTAGES



SOURCE: UCLA Athletics. Graphic reporting by Tuanh Dam, Sports editor: Graphic by Rachel Guo, Daily Bruin contributor.

## Walk-on steps into 2016 spotlight

BY DAVID GOTTLIEB  
Assistant Sports editor

The first catcher on the depth chart wasn't going to be able to play. The second catcher on the depth chart quit. That left UCLA baseball with options three and four.

Redshirt junior Darrell Miller Jr. – the team's projected starting catcher – had his collegiate career cut short by a labrum tear just two weeks before the season. Freshman Michael Benson – California's third-best high school catcher in the 2015 class – opted to play at a junior college, compromising the Bruins' depth.

Coach John Savage was left with Jake Hirabayashi, a freshman who had no prior catching experience but had some upside offensively, and redshirt freshman Daniel Rosica. “The Rosica story,” Savage said before the season began. “That could be Rudy.”

Savage compared Rosica to Jerry Neuheisel – both players who knew the system but were unlikely to play. His 2140 SAT score and 3.97 unweighted high school GPA – 4.50 weighted – were what brought him to UCLA. An injury, a player quitting and some mid-season adjustments were what brought him behind the plate at Jackie Robinson Stadium.

Baseball and academics gave Rosica two avenues for success in high school. As his junior year approached, he honed in on one.

“I kind of decided with my parents that I was going to focus on academics,” Rosica said. “And then try to walk on to which ever school I chose and see if it worked out. If it didn't work out, then I would just move on and start my real life.”

Rosica only played two years of varsity baseball. He went to showcases earlier on in his high school career, but said he absolutely hated the process.

“Me, I'm not like a super physical specimen, so I'm not hitting home runs, I'm not out-running guys,” Rosica said. “I wasn't really attracting too much attention from coaches, especially in those one-day showcase deals.”

Rosica, who is listed at 5-foot-11 and 180 pounds, said he was not a standout on his high school team. He only took hold of the starting catcher's job at the tail end of his junior year. He would keep the job throughout his senior year, battling ninth.

He earned the trust of his coaches, who even allowed him to call his own games, but no Division I program was about to offer Rosica a letter of intent.

But he didn't need one. Rosica is one of the rare Division I athletes who applied and got into college just like an ordinary student. He applied to about 10 engineering schools, getting into UC Irvine, UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara. He didn't get into Stanford or Vanderbilt. The Commodores would win the College World Series just months after reject-



HARISH BALASBRAMANI/ILLUSTRATIONS DIRECTOR

ing Rosica.

Savage called Rosica a no-brainer to go play baseball for an Ivy League school, but that's not where the Fountain Valley, California, local wanted to be.

“I looked into that a little bit, but the (the Ivies) can't really beat SoCal,” Rosica said. “I didn't want to leave.”

A couple of Rosica's friends are playing Division I baseball now. They signed their letters of intent on National Signing Day, but Rosica would have to wait about a month before he could make his decision.

“I remember I had a game,” Rosica said. “All my friends and my parents and their parents went out to dinner, and I just went straight home to check if I got into UCLA.”

Rosica had completed half of the goals he had set out for himself before his junior year of high school. His academics got

him into the prestigious engineering school in Westwood. Now it was time to walk on.

Savage said that hardly anyone just comes out of the blue, but Rosica was as close as it gets. Rosica never had to try out, all because of a few phone calls.

“I had a couple calls from guys that I trust,” Savage said. “This guy won't play for you,” they told me. ‘And he will be an unbelievable bullpen catcher.’”

When Savage went to see Rosica play, he saw that the high school backstop could catch and throw the ball back to the pitcher in the bullpen, but he said that was where it ended.

Rosica spent his entire freshman year in the bullpen, listening to Savage and learning the system. He worked with James Kaprielian, a first-round pick by

BASEBALL | Page A17

### SUBMISSION – SENIOR SIGNOFFS

## Giving thanks to the UCLA community

BY SOPHINA DEJESUS

My college experience began when I was 17, but traveling for acting and gymnastics on top of going to school kept my social life to a minimum.

Which brings me back to the first time I stepped foot onto the UCLA campus – the incredible feeling of happiness and excitement as I walked into an orientation full of athletes and college students, with the expectation of making lots of new friends. I had a vision that life and everything in it would become much easier than before.

In my mind, collegiate gymnastics was going to be a cinch compared to elite. No strict schedule, specific meal or sleep plans or juggling

activities – life was going to be a breeze.

But it started as a nightmare that took me a while to wake up from. In my first two years, I kept trying to make my ideal image of college come true and couldn't understand why it was so difficult – my grades weren't high, practice wasn't easy and my social life was more like a dry, painful cactus than the blooming lotus I envisioned. I was bored and lonely. I missed my family, I missed dancing and acting, and I missed the structure I was accustomed to.

I realized it was time to make a transition. Adjust, adapt, change course. UCLA gave me the effective tools I needed to adapt to a new life that worked. At the surface,

UCLA may be a large and prestigious campus, but at the core, it provided all the resources I needed to become successful.

Things began to change: I formed study sessions with classmates, utilized the counseling resources, took advantage of office hours with my professors and joined a group of friends that I hung out with in between studying and traveling. During this time, I was also looking for something that was missing – I was looking for Sophina because somewhere along the way, she had become lost.

When I found her, I learned I could do anything when I believed in myself.

Once I made the decision to let UCLA be my surrogate family and trusted that I could

rely on the people around me as much as my own family, things improved. No matter how talented you are or how much you may have done in life, you still need a support system.

Life is a roller coaster – you can't always stay up, but you're not always supposed to stay down either.

Enjoy the ups, grieve the downs, but jump right back on and enjoy the thrill of the ride. After getting back on track, I became a better student, a better athlete and ultimately a better person.

In my senior year, I remember calling my mom and telling her how I had found myself – my grades were going up and I was having a

DEJESUS | Page A14



KEILA MAYBERRY/DAILY BRUIN STAFF  
Her first two years weren't what she envisioned, but senior gymnast Sophina DeJesus adjusted and adapted to get the most out of her career as a Bruin.

## DEJESUS

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great time at UCLA. I told her I was contemplating giving up gymnastics and doing my own thing. But she told me no – I wasn't finished. I needed to go out there this year and be me.

I knew she was right. The morning of our meet against our rival Utah, I woke up full of joy. Blue hairspray in my hair, sparkles on my eyelids, leo up, I was ready to perform for the right reasons, not for scores, not to fit in, and not for a medal but for myself and, above all, for God.

When they called my name that afternoon, I felt a rush go through my body. I stepped out on the floor

and when the music began to play, it sent a shiver of excitement down my spine. I can still hear the sound of my name being announced, feel the wave of empowerment as I performed my routine, and remember the amazement I felt upon learning my performance had gone viral.

I am blessed to have experienced all my sport had to offer. From my low points to my very high points, I can look back now with no regrets. UCLA was a perfect fit for me – it was my family, my educator and my friend. I will never forget the life lessons I learned here and how I grew from a child into an academically strong woman with the help of my Bruin support system every step of the way. All I had to do was ask.

*DeJesus competed for the UCLA gymnastics team from 2013-2016.*

## SUBMISSION – SENIOR SIGNOFFS

# UCLA thrower imparts wisdom, advice to fellow track mates

BY NICHOLAS SCARVELIS

I am so excited for the new Under Armour deal UCLA just signed, the athletic gear we all get will be so cool. ... But of course I won't be getting any because I'm leaving. The rest of the student-athletes will, and I keep forgetting that I won't be on the track team next year. These are things I've said: "I hope they go back to cotton for our workout shirts next year," and, "I'm so excited to go to Austin, Texas for regional championships next year," and, "Next year we'll be so good."

This isn't exactly looking backwards is it? It's not exactly being stuck in what's now my past. I'm still looking to the future, I just keep forgetting that it's not really my future anymore. But in throwing shot put, if you get too excited and try to watch where the ball will land, sometimes you lose your balance and fall out the front of the ring. That's a foul. No mark.

I mean, five years of athletic eligibility is a good number the NCAA came up with. For most it's exactly enough, and I am ready to move on. For Pete's sake, my future involves exciting things in its own right; in the immediate sense, it involves the Olympic Games in Rio. I just can't help but slip up and say these stupid things that make me sound like some letterman-sporting forty-something who peaked in the twelfth grade. Which is fine. I'm no sentimental chump. But the fact that I keep doing this, slipping up, means that this place and these people have meant a great deal. It also means that I, like a dad who gets into fights at Little League games, am going to

live vicariously through all my teammates so damn hard.

"That one, the one who just stole third, that's my son. That team, the one who just won Pac-12s, that's my team."

That kind of talk begs for action. What can I do to rest of the student-athletes will, and I keep forgetting that I won't be on the track team next year. These are things I've said: "I hope they go back to cotton for our workout shirts next year," and, "I'm so excited to go to Austin, Texas for regional championships next year," and, "Next year we'll be so good."

That being said, I'm old enough to have scraped up some wisdom of my own, and I'm going to share it whether my team wants me to or not. Visual aids be damned, I'm shooting from the hip. This is so my track mates (and anyone so inclined to hear me out) can go off and make me proud. I don't mean to preach, but I'm going to.

First, stay away from refined grains. I'm starting small, just like the Wizard of Westwood instructing his players on how to tie their shoes. So yeah, cut those out.

Second, perhaps more seriously, do your thing with passion. For my trackies, that means knocking down 200-meter repeats as if they owed you money. For the rest of you, that means avoiding lukewarm anything. Moderation has its place, just not in big life moves. Do something with everything you have.

Third, set good goals. Not just any benchmark, a



KORBIN PLACEY/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF  
Senior Nicholas Scarvelis ends a five-year run with UCLA track and field. The shot put and discus thrower looks back on his record-breaking career with humor.

good goal is one made with the understanding that our emotions are governed by expectations. Feelings are as subject to relativity as photons. Have a clear perspective of where you are and make a goal for yourself that you will, with all probability (at least 70 percent), achieve.

And fourth, purchase a reasonably priced creatine supplement from a trusted brand such as Allmax or Primaforce. Creatine loads your muscles up with water to aid in the ATP production process (We all took high school biology.) and lessen midworkout fatigue.

Anyways, four good blocks there. Maybe not a pyramid, but I could make a nice square with them. Draw it right out on a piece of poster board. Bring it with me to the first track team meeting of next year. Walk to the front of the room amid confused whispers, things like, "What is he still doing here?"

Tack the poster to the wall at the front of the room. Keep my balance. Exit through the back of the ring.

*Scarvelis threw shot put and discus for the UCLA men's track and field team from 2013-2016. He was an A&E contributor winter 2015.*

## PELED

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a way to reevaluate the way the program broke down the video.

UCLA had been using the program for a number of years. Peled took it upon himself to reorganize the breakdown process, which proved to be much quicker and efficient.

"It's a quicker turnaround for the coaches to watch more video and ultimately helps the team be more successful," Peled said.

The men's water polo team has been successful the past two years, securing back-to-back national championships, and capping off a perfect season with an undefeated 30-0 record.

"Honestly if (Peled) were not here these last few years, we would not have been able to win a national championship," Najarian said. "The amount of time he puts in and the amount of time he saves with just the behind-the-scenes stuff makes it tremendously easier on (coach) Adam so he can just focus on the water polo part."

Peled maintains the ambition of doing as much as he can do for the entire team. It's embedded within his nature to help the team in any way that he can.

"He always brings a positive attitude. If the guys are ever down or having a hard time, they come and talk to Eitan and he just lifts their spirits up and practice goes a little bit better," Fidler said. "He also brings

knowledge. If the guys have any questions about anything logistical or about game time or games, he's there. If you need help with video, he's there to help."

Najarian emphasized that one aspect that makes UCLA water polo special is how the team always comes first no matter what role you play on the team. Everyone does their part and that's what makes them so successful.

"The most rewarding part is really the team. That's what it's all about," Peled said. "It's all about being a part of the team and everyone doing their part so that the team can be successful. Even when things get tough or when there's a lot of work, keeping that in mind that it's for the team, it's not just for

me, it's for other people so that we can all be successful in the best."

The 50-hour weeks that Peled effectively managed to handle throughout his four years at UCLA translated into two national championship titles and a 115-12 record.

"The hard work and passion that Peled has placed into the water polo program is also evident in his work with Students for Justice in Palestine, a secular organization whose goal is to promote Palestinian activism. SJP puts on educational events throughout the year, where speakers are invited to come and present their viewpoints.

"One of the reasons that it is so important to have organizations like that on our campus is because the UC is actually

invested in some companies that actually make a profit off the military occupations that's going on," Peled said. "That's an example of something we would try to bring awareness to and then try to hopefully pressure the UC to not be invested in such a thing, because these are our tuition dollars and want them to go to humane things."

In between water polo and school, Peled continued his involvement in the organization and has raised awareness through outlets such as writing submissions for the Daily Bruin.

"It's obviously an issue that I am very passionate about," Peled said. "The more you learn, the more passionate you get, the more you want to get involved in something, and then that's what ultimately leads to

doing stuff like writing because you want to try to get the word out the best you can because people are halfway across the world suffering from very terrible things."

The total time he spends in the classroom and advocating for his organization only adds to the 50 hours of peak polo season, yet it does not make Peled stray away from advocating for something he believes strongly about.

"He's going to go do big stuff in this world," Najarian said. "He wants to help other people. He wants to others that didn't have the same opportunity as him."

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# YEAR IN REVIEW:

By TuAnh Dam, Sports editor

Relive the wins you will always remember and the losses you'd rather forget in this timeline of memorable UCLA athletic moments.

## NOV. 28 | UCLA football loses to USC



AUBREY YEO/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF

The cross-town rivals were headed in seemingly opposite directions. Starting the season 3-2, USC fired their second coach in three years, Steve Sarkisian. UCLA, led by freshman phenom quarterback Josh Rosen and coach Jim Mora, was ready to challenge powerhouses Stanford and Oregon for the Pac-12 title. But by their meeting in late November, both teams had racked up three conference losses and were tied for first in the Pac-12 South. The Bruins trounced the Trojans in the previous season and were looking to secure a fourth-straight win. Halfway through the second quarter, UCLA led 14-10. Then, USC exploded. The Trojans held their cross-town rivals to seven points over the rest of the game and put up 40 of their own to reclaim the Victory Bell and book a rematch against Stanford in the Pac-12 championship game. The Bruins? They were relegated to the Foster Farms Bowl and ended a once-promising season with a slew of missed opportunities and plenty of questions to answer.

## DEC. 5 | Women's volleyball comes back against Michigan



KEILA MAYBERRY/DAILY BRUIN STAFF

A second-round game suddenly got complicated. After closing out the regular season with a five-set upset of No. 1 USC and nearly upsetting No. 6 Stanford days later, UCLA women's volleyball was on the ropes against visiting Michigan. The Bruins led for most of the first two sets, but late comebacks by the Wolverines put the home team in a two-set deficit. On the brink of elimination, UCLA needed to sweep the next three sets to secure an NCAA regional semifinal berth. Behind junior Claire Felix, who set a career high in kills, and 35 assists and 12 digs from freshman Zana Muno, the Bruins clawed back and won their fourth 3-2 match of the year. Muno hurdled over a Michigan player who went sprawling under the net to keep her team in the game and ultimately in the tournament.

## FEB. 5 | Sophina DeJesus's modern floor routine goes viral



MACKENZIE POSSEE/ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

There are over 17 million reasons why this was a memorable moment. Senior Sophina DeJesus blew the world away with a gymnastics floor routine that incorporated the whip, nae-nae and dab. Oh, and tumbling as well. UCLA was trailing its Pac-12 rival Utah before the senior and her teammates mounted a comeback on their signature event. DeJesus helped secure not only the win behind her 9.925 but also overnight fame. The Temecula, California native appeared on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" and turned the spotlight onto women's college gymnastics. Although DeJesus capped off her four-year career with All-American honors on uneven bars and guided the Bruins to a fifth-place finish at the NCAA championships, she left her mark on collegiate gymnastics with an unforgettable and viral performance.

## MARCH 6 | UCLA baseball beats USC in 14 innings



DANIEL ALCAZAR/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF

Thirteen innings in and coach John Savage was still sitting at 399 wins. In the last game of the Dodger Stadium College Baseball Classic, UCLA and USC baseball were deadlocked in a 3-3 tie. The Bruins loaded the bases with one out in the top of the 14th and redshirt senior Christoph Bono stepped up to bat. His grounder barely slid under the glove of the Trojan shortstop, allowing two runners to score. With UCLA up 5-3, the bullpen finished off the game. After allowing three runs in the first two innings, the Bruin pitchers limited their cross-town rivals to just four hits over nine scoreless innings. The win secured a 3-0 sweep on the weekend – a year after they went 0-3 – and gave Savage his 400th win as UCLA's coach.

## DEC. 3 | UCLA basketball takes down No. 1 Kentucky



AUBREY YEO/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF

UCLA men's basketball season started inauspiciously – Monmouth anyone? With an unimpressive resume heading into a matchup against then-No. 1 Kentucky, few, if any, thought the Bruins could even compete with the Wildcats, especially after what happened last season. UCLA quickly fell behind 24-0 in the CBS Sports Classic, ending the half with only 7 points behind 3-37 shooting. This Bruin team proved naysayers and critics wrong, trailing the top team in the country for less than a minute. Led by much-improved sophomore Thomas Welsh, UCLA came away with the 87-77 win in front of a raucous and packed Pauley Pavilion. Freshman Prince Ali punctuated the upset with a slam-dunk and an and-one over Kentucky big man Alex Poythress. The rest of the season was dismal and lackluster and Pauley Pavilion never quite filled up again, but for that one night, UCLA basketball fans had something to cheer for.

## DEC. 6 | Men's water polo completes 30-0 season with NCAA championship



AUBREY YEO/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF

To put it simply, UCLA men's water polo dominated. Rarely challenged, the Bruins went 25-0 during the regular season, including an 11-0 thumping of USC on senior day. After dispatching California 12-11 in double overtime to win the MPSF championship, UCLA had a chance to win their second national championship since 2004. Their opponent? A Trojan team hungry to end a seven-game skid against the Bruins and reclaim the national title. Facing a rare deficit down 3-1 in the first quarter, UCLA scored four unanswered goals and didn't relinquish the lead. The Bruins capped off a perfect 30-0 season, extended the second longest win-streak in program history and lifted their second consecutive NCAA trophy and UCLA's 113th overall.

## FEB. 6 | Women's basketball hits buzzer beater in Pac-12 tournament



COURTESY OF ADAM EBERHART

Kari Korver had missed her last twelve three-pointers. But with a Pac-12 championship berth on the line, the junior made the one that mattered. With seven seconds left in the Pac-12 semifinal, then-No. 12 UCLA trailed unranked California. Kari, a cousin of NBA sharpshooter Kyle Korver, hit a fade-away three pointer and sent the game to overtime with the score at 61 apiece. Five minutes stood between the Bruins and their first conference final since 2013 when they fell 51-49 to the Stanford Cardinal. The Bruins ran away in overtime, outscoring the Golden Bears 12-6. Although Oregon State, the regular season champion, outplayed UCLA in the title game, the Bruins earned a higher NCAA seed because of their tournament run. They carried that momentum into the NCAA Tournament where they finished in the Sweet Sixteen for the first time since 1999 because Kari Korver hit a clutch shot.

## MAY 29 | UCLA softball upsets No. 5 Oregon in Super Regionals



JINTAK HAN/ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

UCLA softball almost didn't make it to the Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City. After losing the first game of a best-of-three series to No. 5 Oregon, the No. 12 Bruins were trailing 1-0 in game two. Down to their last two outs in the bottom of the seventh, junior Gabrielle Maurice launched a solo home run over the wall to knot the score at one apiece. The game then headed to extra innings. In the bottom of the ninth, senior Mysha Sataraka led off with a double and moved to third on a sacrifice bunt. Sophomore Madeline Jelenicki stepped up to the plate with the game on the line and pulled through, blooping a walk-off single into left field. The Bruins proceeded to win game three to advance to the Women's College World Series for the 26th time in school history.

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# DAILY BRUIN SPORTS AWARDS

The nets are cut, the buzzer has sounded and the accolades are ready. Bruins from all sports set records, won awards and made headlines throughout the country. To commemorate an eventful 2015-2016 year, the Daily Bruin Sports editors — ThuAnh Dam, David Gottlieb, Michael Hull, Grant Sugimura, Hanson Wang — have Daily Bruin Sports Performance Yearly Awards for the best, the worst and the most interesting highlights UCLA Athletics had to offer.

## BEST COACH: JOHN SPERAW, MEN'S VOLLEYBALL



BEST COACH

The coach of the year award goes to John Speraw. In his fourth year as UCLA's men's volleyball coach, he is widely considered one of the premier coaches in the country and has certainly shown his merits this season. Speraw's squad went from a 13-14 record, the worst season UCLA volleyball has ever had, to a 25-7 record and a final four appearance.

Speraw harnessed the energy and raw talent of his young team, one that had no starting seniors, and developed it into a serious championship contender. And with the same starting rotation returning next season, the future is bright for UCLA volleyball. Being a successful collegiate coach would be enough for most, but not for Speraw. As the head coach of the U.S. men's volleyball national team, Speraw has found even greater success. Most

recently, Team USA brought home championships in the 2014 FIVB Volleyball World League and 2015 FIVB Volleyball World Cup. Now they look forward to contending for the gold in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. And if the stats don't tell the story, then the approval of USA Volleyball will. Speraw just received a contract extension to helm the U.S. men's national team through the 2020 Olympics.

## MOST CLUTCH: BRYCE ALFORD, MEN'S BASKETBALL

Pauley Pavilion was all set up for "Westbrook Night," and to many in the stands, seeing Russell Westbrook and Kevin Durant was the main attraction of UCLA's game against then-No. 7 Arizona.

The Wildcats, however, slowly clawed into the Bruins' lead, tying the score at 84 with less than 15 seconds remaining. What happened next was like a movie scene.

Freshman guard Aaron Holiday dribbled across the road sweep at the hands of Washington and Washington State — the two schools picked to finish at the bottom of the conference, the Bruins faced a do-or-die game. Alford, much maligned as he is, scored 22 points as UCLA raced out to an early lead.

After a discouraging road sweep at the hands of Washington and Washington State — the two schools picked to finish at the bottom of the conference, the Bruins faced a do-or-die game. Alford, much maligned as he is, scored 22 points as UCLA raced out to an early lead.



MOST CLUTCH

## MOST UNDER THE RADAR: WOMEN'S GOLF

It's not often that a team has the player of the year, three All-Americans, and a No. 1 ranking for part of the season and still not have much recognition.

UCLA women's golf did just that. The Bruins started where they only won one of their first five tournaments. But as in every sport, success isn't about how you start — it's about how you finish.

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MOST UNDER THE RADAR



BEST FEMALE ATHLETE

## BEST FEMALE ATHLETE: JORDIN CANADA, WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Last year's Pac-12 women's basketball Freshman of the Year only got better.

As the Bruins' point guard, Jordin Canada led the team on both ends of the floor, registering 16.1 points, 5.7 assists and 2.3 steals per game — with the latter two good for second in the conference.

Coaches and the media named her to the All-Pac-12 and Pac-12 All-Defensive teams, and her high level of play throughout the season directly led UCLA to a runner-up finish in the Pac-12 tournament and its first Sweet 16 appearance in 17 years.

The sophomore also jumped into the national spotlight this season, as she was named to John R. Wooden Award Late Season Top 20 and an honorable mention All-American.

## BEST MALE ATHLETE: NICHOLAS SCARVELIS, MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

As an indoor shot put first team All-American, Pac-12 shot put champion, NCAA Western Regional shot put champion and with potentially two more All-American accolades coming his way in this year alone, Nicholas Scarvelis is far and away the best male athlete of the year.

He goes into his last meet as the fourth best shot putter to come through the legendary UCLA throws program that boasts the NCAA record-holder John Godina. The redshirt senior is a three-time Pac-12 champion, and his 67-7.50 rocket is the farthest throw in the nation this year by 9.5 inches.

That throw would have won 10th at the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London, and Scarvelis will get the chance to actually place in the Games when he throws for Greece in Rio de Janeiro this summer.

Over his five-year UCLA career, he's also made an impact on UCLA that's greater than just his individual achievement. When he committed to UCLA, his teammate, sophomore Braheme Days, said it provided "incentive for other talented people to come behind him."

Even as he leaves, the throws team will be getting another high-target recruit named Nathan Esparza, but it remains to be seen if anyone in the near future can contribute to the throws team as much as Scarvelis has this year and over his entire career.



BEST DORM DECOR

## BEST DORM DECOR: JOSH ROSEN, FOOTBALL

Very early on, there were signs that we were getting more than just a star quarterback in Josh Rosen.

He showed up on campus two quarters early, trading in the second semester of his senior year of high school for some time on frat row. Rosen joined Sigma Alpha Epsilon — one of the "top houses" at UCLA — in winter quarter. If you knew someone in a discussion section with him, even they told you he had a personality.

But before the P-k Trump Instagram posts and before Jim Mora compared him to Johnny Manziel, there was the hot tub.

In a way, the hot tub let the world know that Rosen would not

be content in only entertaining us on the field.

As one story goes, a young lady at the University of Arizona known only as @totallychristine on Instagram held a sign asking Rosen to call her. One way or another, she ended up in Westwood. Specifically, in Saxon Suites, sitting in the hot tub with Rosen.

Of course, all good things must come to an end. The hot tub violated UCLA's residential housing policy, and as far as we know, Rosen's dorm is now sans-hot tub.

Nonetheless, we applaud Rosen's effort and look forward to covering his antics as he finishes off his career as a Bruin.



BEST MALE ATHLETE

# Walk-on thrives on court with bedrock of commitment, passion

BY KYLE CARDOZA  
Daily Bruin contributor

Laura Luca sat in a classroom at UCLA waiting for a sign of hope. The third-year senior couldn't focus on the class lecture because her mind was completely occupied by something else.

When was he going to call back?

A few weeks earlier in the fall quarter, Luca talked to Rance Brown, associate head coach of the women's tennis team, about a chance to practice with the collegiate squad. This was the opportunity she had been working toward since she first arrived in Westwood in 2013. But her dream was slowly slipping away with every passing moment.

"I was devastated, I messaged him and he never got back to me," Luca said. "I had given up completely."

She felt her phone vibrate and quickly reached in her pocket. The message she received was not an ordinary emoji-filled text. It was from head coach Stella Sampras Webster asking to meet with her the next day. It felt too good to be true.

"I was shaking. I left in the middle of class and screamed," Luca said. "That night I didn't sleep because I was so nervous for the next day."

Less than 24 hours later it was official. Luca was a member of UCLA women's tennis — the first ever walk-on player during Sampras Webster's 20-year tenure in Westwood.

The Romanian native was hooked on tennis the moment she first picked up a racket 15 years ago. She spent Friday afternoons in Bucharest on the court with her parents and sister, casually rallying with one another. But then it became more than just a hobby.

By the time she was 10 years old, she had a coach, attended practices regularly and was set on competing in tournaments. Her coach said she wasn't ready, but that didn't stop her.

"For a year I kept saying, 'let me go, let me go,' but they wouldn't," Luca said. "So I went anyways. I made (my parents) sign me up without telling my coach."

After a few discouraging losses in her first tournaments, she realized her opponents had been much more prepared than her, so she was determined to get better.

"I was really furious and I cried, but I wanted to keep



HANNAH YE/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF

Senior Laura Luca, a Romanian native, played two years on the club tennis team before getting the call to join UCLA women's tennis this season as a walk-on.

doing it," Luca said. "So I switched coaches and started practicing six days a week."

With a new practice regimen and a renewed dedication, she surpassed her previous opponents' level of play. Once she turned 16, she claimed a spot in the top-40 rankings while competing with the top players in Tennis Europe — the equivalent to the United States Tennis Association.

Despite committing more than a quarter of her life to playing tennis, at 18 she had to face a harsh reality. She wasn't prepared for the professional world tour. But she didn't want to stop playing tennis.

"I knew at that point that I wouldn't choose tennis as a career but I started hearing that people play college tennis so that's what I decided to do," Luca said.

Luca couldn't get recognition from American colleges, however, because of an average International Tennis Federation ranking and because she was too far to hold showcases and flaunt her skills to recruiters.

UCLA's reputation as a prestigious university and its location attracted Luca during the

college application process. She didn't receive a scholarship for tennis, but it didn't mean she would stop playing the sport she loved.

More than 6,000 miles separated Luca from her home country when she first stepped foot onto UCLA's campus. During her first week of summer in Los Angeles, she knew exactly what to do to continue playing tennis. She marched right to the office of the women's tennis team, where she first met Brown.

Luca mentioned her previous experience and European ranking to Brown. He responded by letting her try out for the team.

There was one minor problem for the Romanian: she hadn't played tennis in six weeks. To get some extra practice in before the big tryout, Luca looked to the club tennis team.

The timing of the tryout was not in Luca's favor. Even after a successful set of rallies with alumna Kaitlyn Ray, Sampras Webster denied her a spot on the team because the roster was filled with a stack of veteran players.

Still, Luca continued to find other opportunities to keep

playing tennis on campus.

She found her way back to UCLA club tennis. The years of experience under her belt showed every time she took the court.

"Clearly she was one of the better players and we relied on her game a lot on the court," said freshman Johnson Chen, one of Luca's mixed double partners. "She hits very flat, but has a lot of power and she can really do damage from the back court."

The most memorable match for Luca came during her second year on the team at the USTA Tennis On Campus Spring Invitational in Tucson, Arizona.

The scorching desert heat caused trouble for Luca and her teammates. Dehydration kicked in after multiple matches each day. With her hands covered with blisters and her upper body red from sunburn, Luca managed to push through each game, leading the Bruins into the finals.

A matchup with crosstown contender USC loomed. She prepared for her first taste of the storied rivalry, but she pushed her body to the limit.

"I had something wrapped around my hand (for the blisters) and I couldn't even feel the racket," Luca said. "I was also cramping up. I kept thinking 'what's happening to me.'"

The minor injuries affected her play in doubles, but by singles, the adrenaline rush took control. "I had (other players) fix me up really quick because I needed to get back (on the court)," Luca said. "I told them I'd promised them we were going to win this."

The match wasn't even close, with Luca securing a 6-1 victory against her opponent and the tournament title for UCLA.

But even with her impressive resume in club tennis, Luca always had a certain aspiration in the back of her mind — playing for the collegiate team.

She became very persistent, spending a majority of her time practicing at the Los Angeles Tennis Center to make sure the coaches noticed her — and they did.

Sampras Webster sought out Luca last fall when the women's tennis team needed an extra player due to injuries. "I wouldn't add anyone

unless I thought they could really help us and I knew that she could play and practice and knew she was doing really well on the club team," Sampras Webster said. "We just didn't have a lot of depth this year so we needed her to come in."

Luca knew she couldn't let the opportunity slip away.

"I knew I wasn't at that level and I was really behind so I kept asking Rance and Stella to have some separate workouts so we could work on some stuff," Luca said. "It was so physically demanding."

Luca was supposed to be a backup but in UCLA's first dual match against UC Irvine, she was an unexpected addition to the starting lineup. That's when the senior's nerves started to get to her.

"There was a lot going on in my mind," Luca said. "For the first two or three weeks, I was so nervous about joining the team, I couldn't toss my ball for a serve. It was rough."

The length of the season tested the walk-on, with each week generating a much tougher opponent. It was difficult for Luca to keep up.

"Losing match after match took its toll on my confidence," Luca said. "These girls had been playing for so many years and they knew how to approach matches. There was too much going on in my head and more and more every match I kind of had this grim outlook."

The senior regained her confidence toward the season's conclusion, specifically after her final win of the year on the road in Colorado — a 6-3, 6-3 victory. A shoulder injury forced her to miss the final few weeks of the year, but by then, she had already made her mark on the tennis program.

"You have to have respect for her for what she has been able to do," Sampras Webster said. "I think it was just really neat for our players to get to know her, someone from a different country who had similar and different experiences playing in the juniors."

Persistence and commitment to tennis is what led Luca to accomplish her aspirations on and off the court. Although she said she will not pursue a professional career following graduation, she will find a way to get back onto the court in the future, just like she always has.

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## SUBMISSION — SENIOR SIGNOFFS

# Bruin owes resilience to challenges faced as student-athlete

BY DANNY MCCLINTICK

With graduation approaching quickly, we as seniors can't help but reflect on the past four years. Although for many this is the end of our journey at UCLA, we will be Bruins forever.

Comparing where I was — entering as a freshman — to where I am now — just a week away from graduation — I know I owe my growth and development as an athlete, student and most importantly, a person to the program that has defined who I've been for the last four years.

Joining the UCLA water polo team was more than just a commitment to play water polo; it was a commitment to be challenged and grow, to fail and then succeed, to be pushed and respond. Although my playing career has come to an end, the lessons I have learned will stick with me forever.

At UCLA, it is every student-athlete's dream to reach the pinnacle of college sports: the NCAA championship. In 2012,

my freshman year, we earned ourselves a spot in the final for an epic showdown with USC. However, one of the fastest lessons I learned here was that things rarely go as planned.

When we fell at the buzzer in the title game that year, we followed it with a grueling offseason to avoid the same result. Unfortunately, as is often true in life, there are no guarantees, and we failed to make the NCAA Tournament in 2013 after UCLA's best regular season in 20 years.

Heartbroken, some of us questioned our system, each other and ourselves. But coach Adam Wright never did. He led us when we were lost, he gave us life when we were deflated, he demanded our best when we were at our worst. We got back to the final in 2014 and again in 2015 and won both, cementing our place in UCLA Athletics history. When I reflect on these experiences, I realize the single greatest gift I received from being a student-athlete at UCLA was not a record, trophy

or award, but rather an opportunity. Each day brought with it a challenge: the chance to be pushed to the limit mentally, physically and emotionally. Each day presented the chance to find my personal boundary and try to go a little further than the day before, to succeed where I had previously failed and to find a way to thrive during times of discomfort or uncertainty.

While I leave my athletic career behind me, I know that as I move forward I will always carry what I have learned. I know I can always push myself to be better today than I was yesterday, and I know that while at times, failure is inevitable, I can always choose how I respond to it. As I leave this university that has done so much for me, I carry with me a mindset that will serve me forever. And as long as I have that, I will always be a Bruin.

McClintick played for the UCLA men's water polo team from 2012-2015.

## BASEBALL

from page A13

The New York Yankees in 2015, and David Berg, who was picked five rounds later by the Chicago Cubs.

Coaches told Rosica that his main goal was to help the pitchers improve and to be America's best bullpen catcher. Playing time was all but off the table, but Savage said there was still a possibility that Rosica could play senior year.

"The fact that he left it open just a little bit," Rosica said. "Even though it didn't seem like he believed the words that he was saying, kind of gave me a

little confidence."

When Miller went down, Rosica had a shot. Rosica had already begun to fight for the backup spot. He figured that because Miller wasn't very fast, he might be able to pinch run and stay in the game to catch a couple innings.

When Miller had surgery just weeks before the season, Rosica wasn't fighting for a backup spot anymore. He was fighting to be the starting catcher on the UCLA baseball team.

Because Hirabayashi had never caught before, he got more reps during intersquad play than Rosica. Hirabayashi's high school resume — four varsity years at Notre Dame High School — also gave him an edge.

When the season started, the two split time. Hirabayashi got a slightly higher share of the playing time for the first six weeks of the season, but he began to struggle offensively, collecting just two hits in his first 38 at-bats. Rosica felt like he was struggling at the plate, too.

"I was kind of a non-factor offensively," Rosica said. "It was kind of building up a little frustration. Not too much, because everybody was telling me: defense, defense, defense. Whatever you do offensively is a bonus."

Then he turned it around. Rosica cites the series against Oregon as his season's pivotal series. In the three-game set he went four for 11.



Senior Danny McClintick capped off his UCLA water polo career with two national championships. The challenges he faced his freshman and sophomore years tested his boundaries mentally and physically before molding him into a better person.

"Jake and I always alternated on the weekend," Rosica said. "Then when I caught Friday, Saturday and Sunday (against Oregon) I kind of realized, OK, I'm the catcher now."

Rosica said the adjustment had less to do with mechanics than it did with seeing more live pitching.

Whatever it was, it worked. From game one of the Oregon series through the last game of the season, he hit .313.

He took one day off the whole rest of the season. Rosica had won the job.

Rosica's Rudy-like narrative was a bright spot in an otherwise disappointing season for the Bruins, who finished second-

to-last in the Pac-12 and missed the playoffs.

His .264 batting average ranked sixth on the team, meaning he out-hit veterans like junior Brett Stephens, senior Trent Chatterton and redshirt senior Christoph Bono. His defense was serviceable, throwing out 34 percent of would-be base stealers, not far off from the Pac-12 average of 36 percent.

His academics are still in order. He's an economics student now and he hopes to add another major — psychology.

"I want to say that my parents are a little happier than I am," Rosica said. "I played, but that wasn't really the goal. ... It was a pretty bad year."

This could be Rosica's only year getting significant playing time. To a highly-touted catching prospect, UCLA's program would be very attractive because of a history of success and the lack of depth — a freshman could play right away.

The Bruins are bringing in three catchers for next year, Savage said. That means Rosica could be right back in the bullpen.

"I'm fine with that — to be honest — as long as we have a better season than this year," Rosica said. "Winning is a lot better than playing."

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# UCLA COMMENCEMENT CLASS — OF — 2016

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## THURSDAY

Ceremony	Location	Grid	Time	Date
Graduate Division Doctoral Hooding	Royce Hall	D2	3:00 PM	June 9
Athletics Graduation Celebration	Pauley Pavilion	C3	7:00 PM	June 9
College of Letters & Science Honors	Royce Hall	D2	7:30 PM	June 9

## FRIDAY

Ceremony	Location	Grid	Time	Date
Luskin School of Public Affairs	Royce Hall	D2	9:00 AM	June 10
Computational & Systems Biology	Faculty Center	E3	12:00 PM	June 10
School of Theater, Film & Television	Royce Hall	D2	2:00 PM	June 10
College of Letters & Science I	Pauley Pavilion	C3	2:00 PM	June 10
UCLA Anderson School	Wilson Plaza	D2	4:00 PM	June 10
American Indian Graduation	DeNeve Plaza View Room	B3	5:00 PM	June 10
Fielding School of Public Health	Royce Hall	D2	5:30 PM	June 10
College of Letters & Science II	Pauley Pavilion	C3	7:00 PM	June 10

## SATURDAY

Ceremony	Location	Grid	Time	Date
Psychology Undergrad	Pauley Pavilion	C3	8:00 AM	June 11
School of Nursing	Royce Hall	D2	8:30 AM	June 11
Integrative Biology & Physiology	Court of Sciences	D3	9:00 AM	June 11
Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology	Ackerman Grand Ballroom	D3	9:00 AM	June 11
Sociology Department	Wilson Plaza	D2	9:00 AM	June 11
Geography Department	Powell Courtyard	D3	9:30 AM	June 11
Institute for Society and Genetics	Carnesale Commons, Palisades Ballroom	B2	10:00 AM	June 11
Gender Studies	UCLAAnderson School, Korn Hall	D2	10:00 AM	June 11
Chicana/o Studies	Covel Commons Grand Horizon	B2	10:00 AM	June 11
Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences	Kerckhoff Hall, Young Grand Salon	D3	10:30 AM	June 11
Anthropology	Dickson Court North	E2	11:00 AM	June 11
Afro-American Studies	Fowler Museum, Lanert Auditorium	D2	11:30 AM	June 11
Graduate Studies in Psychology	Schoenberg Hall	E3	12:00 PM	June 11
Henry Samueli School of Engineering	Pauley Pavilion	C3	12:30 PM	June 11
Earth, Planetary and Space Sciences	Young Hall Patio	D3	12:45 PM	June 11
Lavender Graduation	UCLAAnderson School, Korn Hall	D2	1:00 PM	June 11
Humanities I	Royce Hall	D2	1:00 PM	June 11
Statistics	Powell Courtyard	D3	2:00 PM	June 11
Neuroscience	Ackerman Grand Ballroom	D3	2:00 PM	June 11
Humanities II	Royce Hall	D2	3:30 PM	June 11
School of Arts & Architecture at UCLA	Dickson Court North	E2	4:00 PM	June 11
Graduate School of Education & Information Studies	Wilson Plaza	D2	4:00 PM	June 11
Chemistry / Biochemistry	Court of Sciences	D3	5:00 PM	June 11
Economics	Pauley Pavilion	C3	5:30 PM	June 11
International Institute	Royce Hall	D2	6:30 PM	June 11

## SUNDAY

Ceremony	Location	Grid	Time	Date
History Department	Dickson Court North	E2	9:00 AM	June 12
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	Wilson Plaza	D2	9:00 AM	June 12
Mathematics Department	Court of Sciences	D3	9:00 AM	June 12
Physics & Astronomy	Ackerman Grand Ballroom	D3	9:00 AM	June 12
Political Science Department	Pauley Pavilion	C3	9:00 AM	June 12
Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics	Powell Courtyard	D3	10:00 AM	June 12
Asian American Studies	Schoenberg Hall	E3	10:30 AM	June 12
Communication Studies	Royce Hall	D2	10:30 AM	June 12
Army Commissioning	Covel, Grand Horizon	B2	12:00 PM	June 12
Institute of the Environment & Sustainability	Ackerman Grand Ballroom	D3	12:00 PM	June 12
English Department	Pauley Pavilion	C3	1:30 PM	June 12
Samahang Pilipino Student Celebration	Royce Hall	D2	2:00 PM	June 12
Asian Pacific Islander Student Celebration	Dickson Court North	E2	3:00 PM	June 12
Vietnamese Student Celebration	Powell Courtyard	D3	4:00 PM	June 12
Eagle Wing Club Senior Sendoff	Board Art 2160E	D1	5:00 PM	June 12
Raza Graduation Celebration	Pauley Pavilion	C3	5:30 PM	June 12
African Student Union Celebration	Royce Hall	D2	5:30 PM	June 12

**MAP LEGEND**

-  Driving Route
-  Ceremony Site
-  Parking Structure
-  Shuttle Pick-Up & Drop-Off
-  Shuttle Route (Friday only 11am-7:30pm)
-  Commencement Information Booth
-  Food
-  ATM
-  UCLA Store
-  Parking & Information Booth

