

Rosa Chavez - Assistant Director, Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence

Greetings. My name is Rosa Chavez, and I am the Associate Director at the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence. Welcome to your Virtual 2020 CMAE Graduation!

We are saddened we cannot celebrate you in person. You are graduating during a historical moment in time, where the world is awakening to the truth that Black Lives Matter. What was meant to be a celebratory spring term of gatherings with friends, and of graduation photos, became a remote learning environment filled with unique challenges. What should have been weeks of final projects and exams, became weeks of heartache, anger, and sadness.

We understand, that lately it's been hard to find the heart space to feel celebratory. But today, I am reminded of the Doctor King's quote that "Darkness cannot drive out the darkness: only light can do that." There are the injustices of the world, where Black Lives are stolen from us, and where systemic racism is a daily reality. But there is also the light of the world, which is every single one of you. We have watched you persevere through your time here at the University of Oregon. We have seen you grow into your voice, your passion, your talents. We have seen you be change makers in your clubs, sororities, residence halls, and recently in our communities. We know you are not just a student graduating, we know you represent an entire family of dreams fulfilled, and of new beginnings. So today, let us take a brief respite from the hardness of the world, and let us celebrate you! No pandemic can keep us from celebrating the beacon of light that you are. No social distancing can stop us from feeling the immense amount of pride we have in your accomplishments or embracing the joy you bring to your families.

Thank you, Vice President Alex-Assensoh for your uplifting words. I would now like to welcome University of Oregon President and Professor of Law Michael H. Schill

