

The Physical and Biological Sciences 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award

The Physical and Biological Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award honors graduates of the division who have gone on to extraordinary accomplishments in diverse fields. Three awards will be presented this year—one to a former graduate student and two to former undergraduate students. Awardees were chosen based on careers characterized by sustained and exemplary contributions to society through research, practice, education, policy, or service. The award winners bring enduring honor to their alma mater as practitioners and as citizens.

Honorees



Ian Walton

- Ph.D. in Mathematics, 1977
- Retired faculty member, Department of Mathematics, Mission College

A prominent leader in California higher education, Ian dedicated his career to helping California's most under-served students overcome barriers to their dreams posed by mathematics requirements. After receiving his Ph.D. in mathematics from UC Santa Cruz, he served for thirty years on the faculty at Mission College, including five years as President of the local academic senate. For 12 years he was a member of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, where he served two years as president working for the statewide adoption of enhanced English and mathematics graduation competencies and the creation of the Basic Skills Initiative. Although retired for a decade, he has just completed a two-year term as Chair of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

Honoring UC Santa Cruz's 2021 Distinguished Graduate School Alumni

Five honorees distinguish themselves in the humanities and sciences

UC Santa Cruz's graduate student alumni are helping to shape 21st century feminist thought, fostering inclusion and creativity in the theater arts, conducting pioneering cancer research, and much more.

As part of this month's all-virtual Alumni Week celebrations, the five recipients of this year's Distinguished Graduate Student Alumni Award will be honored for their achievements during a Zoom-based webinar award ceremony on Saturday, April 24.

Graduate Studies Division Professional Development Coordinator and Event Organizer Sonya Newlyn had high praise for this year's honorees.

"Their achievements range widely, reflecting the diversity of the divisions and programs they represent, but the theme of working for the common good, for a better world, runs through each of their stories and their work," Newlyn said. "Each of them *educates*, and their life work has continued the mission of UC Santa Cruz since they left this campus with their advanced degrees."

The five graduate alumni honorees and the academic divisions they represent include the following:

Ian Walton (Ph.D. '77, mathematics), an independent educator, consultant, and former president of the statewide Academic Senate for the California community colleges system, came to UC Santa Cruz in 1973 as a Fulbright Scholarship graduate student in mathematics, after graduating from St. Andrews University in Scotland.

Walton said that his time in the graduate program gave him "the best possible preparation" for serving in the Academic Senate. While on campus, he served as graduate student resident preceptor at Crown College, "leading an independent, articulate group of peers," he recalled.

He also credits his years at UC Santa Cruz with providing "the perfect mix of introductions for" his later career: research and teaching in his graduate program with the Math Board that included technology and under-served students, and peer leadership as a resident preceptor at Crown College. He also received "a glimpse of the intricacies of academic politics" while serving on the Regent's Chancellor Selection Committee for UCSC.

In 1978 he began a 33-year career as a faculty member at Mission College (then Silicon Valley's newest public community college) that focused on helping California's most under-served students to overcome barriers to their dreams that were posed by mathematics requirements.

His educational leadership experience led to five years as president of his local Academic Senate, followed by 12 years elected to the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

(ASCCC), representing California's 115 accredited community colleges, 60,000 faculty, and 2.1 million students on academic and professional matters.

During his two-year presidency of ASCCC, the organization helped to bring about the statewide adoption of enhanced English and mathematics graduation competencies and the creation of the system Basic Skills Initiative.

After retirement in 2011, he continued his educational leadership and was elected as a public member of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)—the body that accredits all two-year colleges in California, Hawaii, and the U.S. Pacific. Walton has just completed a two-year term as chair of the commission.