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[Nora Drake](#)

Five UC Santa Barbara undergraduates named Goldwater Scholars

Five UC Santa Barbara undergraduate students have been named 2024 Barry Goldwater Scholars, a record number for the campus in an unprecedented year in which every UCSB student who was nominated received a scholarship.

Established by Congress in 1986 to honor Senator Barry Goldwater, the scholarships are designed to foster and encourage outstanding students to pursue careers in the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics.

The recipients are:

- Isaac Hair, who is majoring in computing in the College of Creative Studies (CCS) and aspires to become a professor in theoretical computer science
- Anika Jena, who is majoring in chemical engineering in UCSB's College of Engineering and plans to pursue a Ph.D. in biomolecular engineering
- Xuanwei Liang, who is majoring in physics in CCS and wants to pursue a Ph.D. in experimental atomic, molecular and optical (AMO) physics
- Riya Nilkant, who is majoring in biological sciences in the College of Letters & Science and aspires to obtain a Ph.D. in molecular biology
- Matthew Unger, who is majoring in biology in CCS and plans to get a Ph.D. in computational and systems biology

UCSB's recipients are among 508 sophomores and juniors nationwide to receive scholarships, selected from a pool of over 5,000. Of the total number of awardees, 17 hail from the University of California.

"I am delighted that our exceptional undergraduate students have received a record number of Goldwater Scholarships this year," said Michael Miller, associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education. "I congratulate all five of our awardees on this prestigious honor, and I look forward to their further success as they complete their time at UCSB and move into graduate study and beyond. I also want to acknowledge their faculty mentors for their unwavering dedication to undergraduate research on our campus."

Criteria for Goldwater scholarships include a nominated student's area of study, career objectives and, perhaps most important, the extent to which the student has the commitment and potential to make a significant contribution to his or her field. Recipients are awarded funds to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books and room and board up to a maximum of \$7,500 per year.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.