

# A Final Hoorah!

## Graduating Seniors Look Back at their Time at CSUEB and Share Their Hopes for Graduation Ceremony

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The end of the fall semester at California State University, East Bay, is steadily approaching. For students who are anticipating graduating within the next year, it is nearly the final stretch.

At this point, COVID-19 is one of the most ubiquitous and highly covered topics in all aspects of our lives. Graduating seniors feel this fatigue after being forced to transition to online school at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

The fall semester has been an interesting transition from being entirely online to gradually getting back to pre-pandemic life. This has especially affected students in their final years of college.

Jamie Zamora, a Strategic Communication major who looks forward to graduating in spring 2022, touched on some of the struggles of being a transfer student during the pandemic.

"Transferring during the height of a global pandemic definitely had some of its expected difficulties in terms of navigating through the process of educational plans and communication with our departments," Zamora explained.

While online school is convenient for many people, many students feel they missed out on certain perks of in-person learning, including developing a true connection with CSUEB.

Rosemarie Hernandez, a graduating Criminal Justice major, shared what she missed out on while attending school entirely online.

"I did miss out [on] on-campus activities such as guest speakers, career and major fairs, and the overall enjoyment of being on campus," she detailed.

Many graduating seniors share this sentiment, especially considering a great deal have never even stepped foot onto CSUEB's campus. Even those who did have the opportunity to take some classes on-ground look back at those memories wistfully.

John Villanueva, a graduating senior getting his bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing Management and a Minor in Japanese Language and Culture, recalled some of his memories from being on campus.

"I was only on campus for a short while, but my favorite memories were playing games with fellow students prior to the pandemic and practicing the piano at the University Union," recalled Villanueva.

On top of the lack of connection to



GRAPHIC BY ZOE COLOMBO

CSUEB, many students feel a serious lack of social connections to each other as well.

"Being behind a screen for the good part of two years has led to many of us experiencing social atrophy, and I wish I could have hung out with friends at least once since attending. All the students were just so busy," said Villanueva.

Regardless of the challenges that come with online school, many graduating seniors were able to make the best out of their last few semesters at CSUEB.

"I was lucky to have still managed to meet a handful of amazing people while online. Regardless of the screens that obstruct us, I was really grateful to have gotten to know the stories of other students from CSUEB through group work and other activities on Zoom," said Zamora.

Despite having to adapt to the struggles of online school, graduating seniors remain optimistic for the future.

Gerald Fermin, a graduating senior majoring in Communication with a concentration in Media Studies, looks back at his time

at CSUEB fondly despite taking all his classes online. He also offered advice to others pursuing an undergraduate degree.

"I'm sad to leave CSUEB for now, but I have a good feeling I'll be back... Get out there and do as much as you can while you're there! Get out and be active."

Looking forward, graduating seniors are both eager and feeling bittersweet about their upcoming graduation date. While safety is of the utmost importance when it comes to the graduation ceremony in the spring, it is also crucial to hear what students want for their final hoorah.

Here's what they had to say about what they hope CSUEB's graduation ceremony will look like:

Jamie Zamora: "I am looking forward to whatever our campus has in store for our graduation ceremony...I would love to walk in-person/socially distanced as I decided to not attend graduation in community college. However, I have known of friends from other campuses who have taken part in a car-mencement which I have heard was still a blast! I am

excited to celebrate any way we can."

Gerald Fermin: "I wish the ceremony could be in-person at the stadium! Socially distant, of course, but we need this thang active!"

Rosemarie Hernandez: "I hope the graduation for 2022 is safe and following COVID-19 regulations. Depending on how the rules change, it would be amazing to have the graduation ceremony in person, but if it is not possible, socially distanced is the best and most safe option for everyone."

John Villanueva: "I would like to have a genuine graduation ceremony, similar to the ones my parents and cousins have experienced. In-person traditionally styled would be fantastic. A Car-mencement sounds like a terrible time, honestly."

The consensus for what graduating seniors would like their commencement ceremony to look like is undeniably an in-person one. Safety, especially in times of COVID-19, is extremely important. However, hopefully, CSUEB will be able to provide graduates with the graduation that they deserve and hope for.



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