



**Marketing & Communications**

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## CSN Celebrates Graduating Class of 2026

*They'll bring their skills to the workforce, universities, and our communities*

**April 28, 2026** — CSN will celebrate its Class of 2026 with two commencement ceremonies on Monday, May 18, at the Thomas & Mack Center at UNLV. Ceremonies will be held at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Based on preliminary data, the college is projected to award 4,493 degrees and certificates to 4,280 students — one of our largest graduating classes ever. That includes 224 bachelor's degrees, 3,935 associate degrees, and 362 certificates. Final numbers will be available once spring 2026 grades are posted.

The ceremonies honor graduates who earned degrees and certificates in summer 2025, fall 2025, and spring 2026, many of them balancing jobs, families, and personal hardship to get here. For a lot of students in this class, walking across that stage represents far more than a diploma. It's a new start. Find out more about our students [here](#).

Media are invited to attend both ceremonies. Interviews with college leadership and some amazing graduates (featured below) are available. To coordinate media coverage or schedule interviews, contact [Alex@erickaaviles.com](mailto:Alex@erickaaviles.com)

**What:** College of Southern Nevada's 55th Annual Commencement Ceremony

**When:** 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday, May 18, 2026

**Where:** Thomas & Mack Center, 4505 S. Maryland Pkwy., Las Vegas

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***About CSN:** The College of Southern Nevada empowers our students and communities to achieve, succeed, and prosper. Founded in 1971, CSN is a nationally recognized student success leader specializing in two-year degrees and a select number of bachelor's degrees in specialized fields. Connect with the state's largest community college at [news.csn.edu](http://news.csn.edu).*

## 2026 Notable CSN Graduates

### Brenda Velasquez — 2026 Commencement Speaker

Brenda Velasquez will address the Class of 2026 at both commencement ceremonies on May 18, a moment she genuinely never saw coming. At 27, she was married, raising four children, and working full time as a cashier. As the youngest of nine children and the daughter of an immigrant father from Mexico, she was the first in her family to even consider college. She spent a decade wondering if that was as far as she would ever go.

The shift came when her son was diagnosed with autism. Watching his teachers meet him where he was and help him thrive lit something in her. She started working as a paraprofessional with the Clark County School District, and for the first time, college stopped being about proving herself and started being about purpose. She wanted to be that teacher for another child, another family. So she applied to CSN, and showed up, semester after semester, doing most of her homework after the house went quiet.

Velasquez is a Spring 2026 graduate and plans to transfer to UNLV to pursue her goal of becoming a special education teacher. She was selected as this year's commencement speaker through a competitive application and review process. Her speech title says it all: "I Didn't Almost Quit, I Almost Never Began."



### Joseph Warren Ogden — Sam Lieberman Regents' Scholar Award

Joseph Warren Ogden is this year's recipient of the Sam Lieberman Regents' Scholar Award, one of the most prestigious honors given to a graduating student in the Nevada System of Higher Education. Ogden's path to graduation was anything but straightforward. A native of England, he was involved in a serious car accident in 2019 that left him unable to walk properly for nearly three years. After years of navigating chronic pain and depression, he came to CSN as an international student at age 31, 13 years after leaving school — following his wife, Alinne, a DACA recipient and CSN student, to Las Vegas.

During his time at CSN, Ogden became deeply involved in campus life, participating in the International Students Organization, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and student government. He became a father in his first semester; his daughter Sofia was born during finals week. An economics major, Ogden plans to pursue graduate study in development economics with the goal of expanding access to education and economic mobility. His story of resilience, community, and second chances has already made an impression on everyone around him.



### Iltze Pimienta — Class of 2026

Iltze Pimienta returned to college 13 years after becoming paralyzed and quadriplegic — and she did it scared. A Chicana and first-generation college student, the daughter of immigrants, Pimienta came back to CSN wondering if she still had a place there, whether people would see her wheelchair before they saw her, and whether she could navigate campus life without her family nearby. She found her footing anyway.



For Pimienta, earning her degree is inseparable from the sacrifices her family made to give her opportunities they never had. She describes education not as something personal, but as something generational about breaking cycles, opening doors, and honoring the quiet endurance of the people who came before her. Her story is one of the most compelling in this year's graduating class, and she is a finalist for the 2026 commencement speaker selection.

**Brittany Stevenson-Sharp — Associate of Arts, Class of 2026**

Brittany Stevenson-Sharp's road to graduation spans nearly two decades. A Spring 2026 graduate with an Associate of Arts, she first took a class at CSN in 2008 and has been part of the college's community in one form or another ever since — as a student, a community partner, and a consistent voice for healing and hope. A 16-time award-winning artist, author, and speaker, Stevenson-Sharp has performed and presented at venues across the region, including a TEDxLasVegas appearance in 2025. In 2023, she received an honorary doctoral degree in humanities for her work using the creative arts to address domestic violence, human trafficking, and mental health. She walked in a CSN commencement ceremony in 2022, but a mix-up with her final course requirements meant her diploma wasn't in hand until this year. It is now.



**Kanapot “Dell” Srimongkol — Student Government Leader, Class of 2026**

Kanapot Srimongkol, who goes by “Dell,” came to the College of Southern Nevada as an international student and quickly became one of the most active members of the campus community. A participant in the Associated Students of CSN, Srimongkol found his footing in higher education through student government, where he developed leadership skills and built lasting relationships with fellow students. He credits his time at CSN with preparing him to step into the real world with confidence and a sense of purpose, and is determined to make an impact far beyond Nevada.

