

For immediate release

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 High-res jpegs are available by request via email

What’s new?

* UAA’s first fall commencement ceremony in nearly 30 years
* Graduation returns to campus; was held at Sullivan Arena since 1987
* Guest speaker: Nobel Prize winner Vernon Smith

**UAA observes first fall commencement in nearly 30 years**

Graduation ceremony finds new home at Alaska Airlines Center

Next weekend, University of Alaska Anchorage commencement returns home to campus for the first time since 1987.

UAA celebrates Class of 2014 graduates from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14. This ceremony honors the accomplishments of more than 1,000\* undergraduate, graduate and professional school students, 300\* of whom are walking in the ceremony.

This is UAA’s first fall graduation ceremony in nearly 30 years. In 1987, the university outgrew what is now known as the Wells Fargo Sports Complex, moving commencement to Sullivan Arena and phasing out the fall ceremony. With the opening of the Alaska Airlines Center, students can graduate on campus once again.

“Reviving fall commencement is momentous, a marker of the university’s maturity and a testament to the opportunities provided by the new Alaska Airlines Center,” said UAA Chancellor Tom Case. “But at its core, this day is still about applauding our remarkable students. It’s my greatest honor to shake graduates’ hands and turn over those
hard-earned diplomas.”

(MORE)

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Nobel Prize winner Vernon Smith, an economics professor at Chapman University, is the event’s guest speaker. Smith shared the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2002. The following year he began a three-year term as UAA’s Rasmuson Chair of Economics and established UAA’s experimental economics laboratory. At commencement, UAA honors Smith with a Meritorious Service Award and the title of Honorary Doctor of Letters. This is the first time UAA has bestowed both honors on the same person.

Duke Kahumoku, who grew up in Kodiak, speaks on behalf of graduating students. The married father of two (with one on the way) earned Man of the Year honors from UAA’s multicultural student body, and helmed the university’s Model United Nations conference this year. Kahumoku earned his political science bachelor’s degree, and plans to stay at UAA to pursue a master’s degree in public administration.

Also during commencement, three retiring faculty members are receiving awards: Garry Kaulitz, Professor Emeritus of Art; Orson Smith, Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering; and Elisha “Bear” Baker, Dean Emeritus.

Learn more at uaa.alaska.edu/commencement.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

The University of Alaska Anchorage is Alaska’s largest university, educating more than 15,000 students annually and offering programs in more than 200 areas of study. UAA’s mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. Learn more at uaa.alaska.edu.

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*\*Final graduate statistics are not available until Monday, Dec. 8.*