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Exceptional graduating students profiled

May 15, 2009 -- One outstanding student from each academic college, from Liberal Studies/Special Majors and from Graduate Studies will be honored at SF State's 108th Commencement on Saturday, May 23. They will receive the symbolic investiture of the hood on behalf of their fellow students. In addition, Jessica Aguilar, hood recipient for the College of Ethnic Studies, will be this year's student speaker. SF State News is pleased to introduce these students to the campus community and friends of SF State:

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College of Behavioral and Social Sciences: Susan Estrada



major. "It introduced me to a sociological way of looking at the world and made me want to pursue a career in academia." Estrada plans to apply for doctoral programs in sociology so she can one day become a professor.

College of Business: Igor Ryvkin

Watching her parents work physically demanding jobs in the Los Angeles theatre scene made Susan Estrada determined to get an education. She is the first in her family to graduate from college and has excelled at SF State, appearing on the Dean's List every semester. "Taking a class in Variations in Human Sexuality changed everything for me," said Estrada, a sociology major. "It introduced me to a sociological way of looking at the world and made me want to pursue a career in academia." Estrada plans to apply for doctoral programs in sociology so she can one day become a professor.

Igor Ryvkin found his time at SF State to be a journey of self-discovery. Ryvkin overcame a language

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barrier after emigrating from Ukraine at age 9. At SF State, he began studying accounting after taking a wide range of business classes. He donated his time to the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) for two years, serving as a

volunteer shift supervisor this spring when he managed 20 volunteers. In his two years with VITA, Ryvkin assisted in preparing nearly 1,000 tax returns for low-income taxpayers in San Francisco. This fall, Ryvkin will pursue an MBA with a concentration in accounting at SF State. "I was content with the finance major, but as soon as I was able to take my first accounting class, things changed for me," Ryvkin said.

College of Creative Arts: Jonathan Dauermann



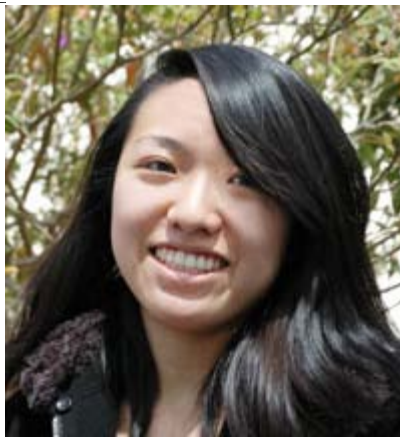
Jonathan Dauermann hopes to make his mark with his voice. Dauermann, who will graduate from the School of Music and Dance with an emphasis in vocal performance, was awarded the School of Music and Dance's Presser Award, which is bestowed annually on one exceptional student. Dauermann was also named the winner of the 2006 SF State Concerto

Competition.

During the 2007-08 school year, Dauermann studied abroad at a prestigious music conservatory in Southwest Germany where he learned German and polished his vocal skills. The Los Angeles native will return to Southern California where he plans to pursue a career in vocal performance. "Opera seemed to be the neatest synthesis -- being on stage, the languages -- it just fit for me," Dauermann said. "Education isn't something that stops when you step on the podium. It's lifelong. This will be the next phase of my education."

College of Education: Chikako Fujii

Graduating with a degree in communicative disorders, Chikako Fujii's academic achievement has been complemented by her community work, providing childcare for three autistic children and working as a



teacher's aide. Fujii and her family moved to the U.S. from Japan when she was 5. Her own cross-cultural experience has fueled her interest in how cultural

issues relate to communicative disorders. This fall, Fujii will begin a master's in communicative disorders at SF State, enabling her to become a speech-language pathologist. "I'd like to combine Japanese language with speech-language therapy," Fujii said. "I am also interested in how language and culture interact with how people diagnose communicative disorders and access services."

College of Ethnic Studies: Jessica Aguilar



Presidential Scholar Jessica Aguilar carried a double major in Raza studies and sociology while devoting the rest of her time to her community. For the past four years Aguilar volunteered as many as 40 hours per week for Clínica Martín Baro, a free clinic in the Mission. She has accepted a position at the Urban Promise Academy in East Oakland where she

has tutored Spanish-speaking students during the past year. Her plans also include advanced degrees in teaching and a career devoted to serving new immigrants and disenfranchised communities. "My volunteer work was my initiation to a life of struggle for social justice," Aguilar said. "I see education as the most important tool to elevate marginalized communities."

College of Health and Human Services: Annie Leong-Chan



Keet Yee (Annie) Leong-Chan's road to a college diploma took more than two decades. Although the native of Malaysia excelled in school and dreamed of going to college, all of her family's resources were devoted to her brother's higher education. Leong-Chan worked as a tutor and gradually built two

businesses that employed disabled workers before moving to the United States. Once Leong-Chan began her studies for a degree in kinesiology, she tutored fellow students until she and her husband began to provide long-term foster care for children who had been removed from their homes. The day before graduation, Leong-Chan and her husband will formally adopt a child they fostered. "I waited 19 years for my college education," she said. "What I've learned is you can do whatever you wish to -- just seek it out. And never give up."

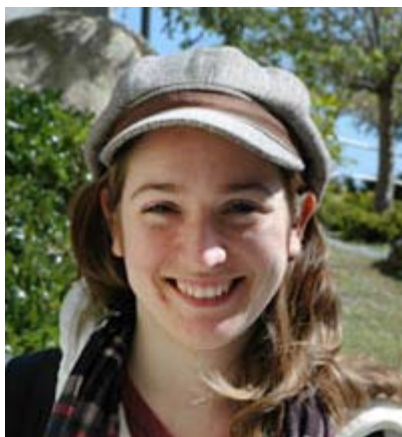
College of Humanities: Sarah Morris



Morris, a native of Maine, held dead-end jobs until she decided to pursue a college degree. She has since excelled in the journalism program, lauded by faculty for producing crisp, thoughtful and accurate articles for the [X]press student newspaper, where she earned a stint as the managing editor. "The Journalism Department

newsroom at SF State is possibly as close to racial and gender parity as any news staff in existence," Morris said. "When those human resources are coupled with pervasive editorial freedom, it creates an amazing place to work and learn. No job or internship could replicate that experience." Morris is also applying her passion for storytelling to a first novel.

College of Science and Engineering: Karina Roitman



A native of Argentina, Karina Roitman moved to San Francisco in 2006 and began studying physics and math at SF State. Her professors recognized her innate intellectual talent and natural curiosity, supporting her efforts to develop her abilities at the graduate level. While at SF State, Roitman conducted research alongside faculty at the Lawrence Berkeley

National Laboratory and the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, and has presented her research at a professional scientific conference. Graduating with a double major in physics and mathematics, Roitman wants to explore the questions that continue to challenge physicists. "What I love about physics is that you can explore theories that apply to both the tiny and the massive scale," Roitman said. "I am interested in searching for an underlying theory that would combine and reconcile the laws of quantum physics with general relativity theory." This fall she will begin a doctorate in

physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Liberal Studies/Special Programs: Stephanie Miller



Stephanie Miller chose to major in Liberal Studies so she could pursue her wide-ranging interests in art, architecture, science and the humanities. Raised in Germany by an American father and German mother, Stephanie moved to the U.S. in the 1990s, eager to experience life in America. The move interrupted her education and Miller was determined to return to

studying. After attending community college, she transferred to SF State where she has received outstanding results. "At SF State, I gained a deeper understanding of the world from various perspectives and I enjoyed the multidisciplinary approach of Liberal Studies," Miller said. She plans to apply to master's programs in either museum studies or humanities.

Graduate Studies, Humanities: Jordan Hayes



Jordan Hayes, a graduate of Oberlin College, will receive a master's degree in literature and certificate in composition. With a passion for teaching, Hayes was employed as a tutor for an educational consulting company before developing his own tutoring agency devoted to young, special needs learners. Throughout his graduate studies at SF State, he also volunteered

as a tutor at the University's English Tutoring Center. Hayes, whose master's thesis concerned how apartheid was covered and portrayed in South African media, has already presented his research at distinguished humanities and literature conferences. He plans to teach English at the college level. "I am committed to the idea that anyone who wants a college education should have the opportunity to pursue it," Hayes said. "I want to be in a position to help make that happen for others."

-- [Michael Bruntz](#), [Elaine Bible](#) and [Denize Springer](#)

