



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## UC Merced Hosts Two Commencement Ceremonies to Accommodate Growth

*Retired astronaut Jose Hernandez and award-winning author David Mas Masumoto  
will address the Class of 2013*

MERCED, Calif. — Retired astronaut and engineer Jose Hernandez and acclaimed author and organic farmer David Mas Masumoto will deliver keynote addresses at the University of California, Merced's eighth commencement exercises May 18 and 19.

With more than 900 students eligible to graduate, this year marks the largest graduating class in UC Merced's history.

As a result of such growth, the campus plans two school-based ceremonies to accommodate students and their families.

Hernandez will speak to candidates in the schools of Natural Sciences and Engineering on May 18, and Masumoto will speak to candidates from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts on May 19. Both events begin at 9 a.m. in the South Bowl on campus.

"This is an exciting time for our graduates and their families," Chancellor Dorothy Leland said. "Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Masumoto were born in the San Joaquin Valley

### Quick Facts

- Retired NASA astronaut Jose Hernandez and author David Mas Masumoto will address UC Merced's Class of 2013 at commencement.
- The campus will mark its eighth commencement with two ceremonies to accommodate the growing number of graduates and their guests.
- Roughly 900 students are expected to participate on May 18 and 19.

and embody the same pioneering spirit and passion to succeed that our students emanate. We are thrilled that they will take part in the celebration of their achievements.”



A child of migrant farm workers, Hernandez didn't learn to speak English until he was 12 and worked hard to overcome language and cultural barriers to graduate from high school. He joined NASA in 2001 as a materials research engineer at Johnson Space Center. He was promoted to Materials and Processes Branch chief in 2002 and served there until he was selected as a NASA astronaut in 2004.

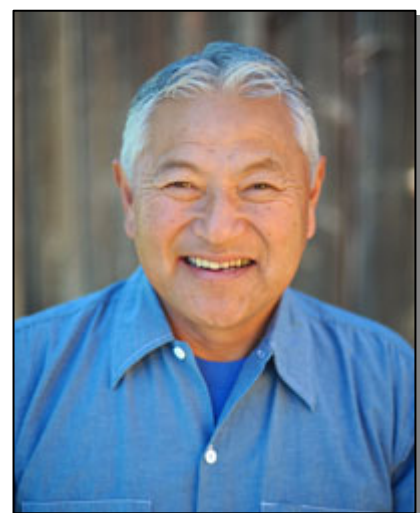
During the STS-128 shuttle mission in 2009, he was responsible for transferring more than 18,000 pounds of supplies and equipment between the shuttle and International Space Station and assisted with robotics operations. He also served as a flight engineer in the shuttle's cockpit during launch and landing. He retired from NASA in 2011.

Before working for NASA, Hernandez helped develop technology for present-day mammography machines while he worked at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Hernandez, from Stockton, holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of the Pacific and a master's in electrical and computer engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

A third-generation farmer, Masumoto grows organic peaches, nectarines and grapes for raisins on an 80-acre farm in Del Rey. He is a columnist for the Fresno Bee and a regular contributor to The Sacramento Bee. He has written for USA Today and the Los Angeles Times.

He authored several books, including "Four Seasons in Five Senses," "Letters to the Valley," "Things Worth Savoring," "Harvest Son," "Planting Roots in American Soil," "Epitaph



for a Peach: Four Seasons on My Family Farm” and “Wisdom of the Last Farmer.”

Masumoto received the James Clavell Japanese American National Literacy award in 1986. In 1995, “Epitaph for the Peach” won the Julia Child Cookbook Award in Literary Food Writing category and was a finalist for the 1996 James Beard Foundation Food Writing Award. It received the San Francisco Review of Books Critics Choice Award in 1995-96. He received the Award of Distinction from UC Davis in 2003 and the California Central Valley Excellence in Business Award in 2007. His book “Wisdom of the Last Farmer” was honored as Best Environmental Writing in 2009 by the National Resources Defense Council.

Masumoto serves on the board of the James Irvine Foundation, the Public Policy Institute of California and the National Council on the Arts. He served on the California Council for Humanities, California Tree Fruit Agreement Research Board, Raisin Advisory Committee Research Board and the California Association of Family Farmers.

Masumoto has a bachelor’s degree in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, a master’s degree in community development from UC Davis and attended International University in Tokyo.

For more information on commencement events, visit [commencement.ucmerced.edu](http://commencement.ucmerced.edu).

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*UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American doctoral research university of the 21st century. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of advanced research, a model of sustainable design and construction, and a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the region.*