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Dual complexes of unirational varieties.

The dual complex of a semistable degeneration records the combinatorics of the intersections in the special fiber. It is natural to ask for connections between the geometry of an algebraic variety and the combinatorial properties of its dual complex. In this talk, I will explain one such result: The dual complex of an n -dimensional uniruled variety has the homotopy type of an $(n - 1)$ -dimensional simplicial complex. The key technical tool is a specialization map to dual complexes and a balancing condition for these specialization. (Received February 23, 2016)