

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Amanda Rubalcava

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UC San Diego Announces Launch of Changemaker Institute

The new campuswide initiative will champion, oversee and reinforce changemaking efforts throughout UC San Diego



Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Communications, taken prior to the pandemic.

From improving wildfire monitoring to developing biodegradable products for a more sustainable future, the University of California San Diego has distinguished itself as a leader in pushing boundaries and challenging expectations to promote positive change. Now, the university is poised to continue advancing its efforts to solve society's most urgent issues with the recent launch of the [Changemaker Institute at UC San Diego](#).

A changemaker is anyone who has the courage to do things differently and takes creative action to solve social problems. By envisioning a better world, we all have the potential to be a changemaker.

As the nucleus of the university's Changemaker programs, the new campuswide institute serves as a supportive infrastructure to champion, oversee and reinforce changemaking efforts throughout UC San Diego. Its mission is to advance UC San Diego's ecosystem for changemaker education, research and community engagement among the campus community including students, staff, faculty and alumni.

Because lasting change cannot be achieved alone, the Changemaker Institute is dedicated to equipping the community with the knowledge, skills and collaborators needed to step into action and drive significant impact. With its creation, students, faculty and staff will be supported with the resources and programming to channel their passions to make a real difference.

For the 2020/2021 academic year, the institute has selected a theme of, "Inspiring Changemaking for a Just and Equitable Future." This theme will be reflected across affiliated events, programming and initiatives such as the upcoming Oct. 21 [Global Ethics of Affirmative Action panel discussion](#) in observance of Global Ethics Day and the 2021 [Changemaker Week](#).

"As a community of Changemakers, UC San Diego is known for its rich history of cutting-edge research, teaching and action in the areas of social innovation, public service, environmental sustainability, and local and global engagement," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "I am confident that this initiative will magnify the impact of our staff, student and faculty's forward-thinking efforts towards creating a positive difference in our local community and around the world."

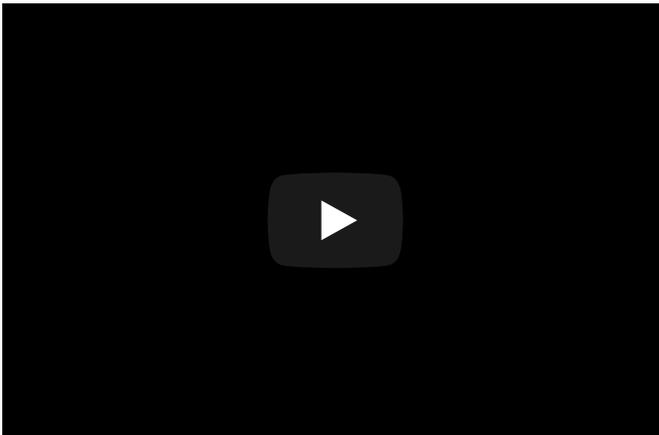
The institute is a natural outcome of [UC San Diego's Ashoka U Changemaker Campus designation](#), which was awarded in 2017 based on the university's commitment to social innovation, changemaking education and its ability to translate that into real-world positive impacts. UC San Diego is the only UC campus to earn the designation and is one of only 45 Changemaker Campuses in the world.



Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Communications, taken prior to the pandemic.

The Changemaker Institute is comprised of a network of affiliated centers and programs led by four founding units: the [Center for Global Sustainable Development](#), the [Center for Social Innovation and Impact](#), the [Teaching + Learning Commons](#), and [Student Life](#). A team of Change Leaders from these units will steer the Changemaker Institute forward, including:

- Mandy Bratton, Executive Director, Center for Global Sustainable Development, Jacobs School of Engineering
- Patricia Mahaffey, Assistant Vice Chancellor—Student Life
- Wendy Hunter Barker, Assistant Dean for Strategy and Operations, Rady School of Management
- David Ruitter, Faculty Director, Teaching + Learning Commons



“We want to lead by example as well as influence,” said Mandy Bratton, one of four leaders at the helm. “Changemaking is not accomplished alone, so we have created an innovative, collaborative model in which each of the Change Leaders shares responsibility for leading the institute. While these four units have founded the Changemaker Institute, we hope other units that are engaged in changemaker education or research will join us as affiliates.”

Honoring Triton Changemakers

Committed to Making a Difference

Over the last year amid the challenges of a global pandemic, racial inequality and other widespread crises, UC San Diego students, faculty, staff and alumni have risen to the challenge of finding ways to foster a better future for all. To kick off the creation of the Changemaker Institute, four members of the campus community have been honored for their efforts toward finding new and innovative ways to help others during this time.

The UC San Diego Changemaker honorees include:

Varun Govil | Bioengineering, Jacobs School of Engineering

- **Partners and Collaborators:** UC San Diego School of Medicine, SIM Center, headed by Preetham Suresh, M.D., with additional support by Alexander Norbash, M.D., and Atul Malhotra, M.D.

- **Project Description:** Govil served as the leader of Zephyr, a team of aspiring engineers at UC San Diego who worked to design a low cost emergency ventilation system. Using rapid fabrication techniques, Govil and his collaborators sought to mitigate the high costs of medical components while simultaneously providing solutions towards breakdowns in the local, national and global supply chain. With the support of their partners, they have developed a prototype to advance the DIY emergency medical design space.



Varun Govil

- **Impact:** “As of now, we are looking to push the boundaries of the DIY medical design space to show what is possible. By providing solutions to common and complex issues with supply chains, manufacturing and emergency operation, we hope to inspire others to realize their potential to aid in a global medical crisis,” said Govil. “In the future, with sufficient testing and refinement, we are interested in serving our community by working with our partners to provide essential medical supplies.”

Angela L. Scioscia, M.D. | Interim Executive Director of Student Health and Well-Being

- **Partners and Collaborators:** UC San Diego Health Information Services and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS).

- **Project Description:** In order to provide students with ongoing mental health support during the pandemic, Dr. Scioscia introduced the transition from traditional in-person counseling to tele-mental health visits. This remote support was achieved through a secure patient portal integrated with the electronic medical record platform shared with UC San Diego Health. UC San Diego Health Information Services and CAPS were critical partners, helping to secure and program 30 iPads to support tele-mental health and partnering with the CAPS providers to extend education and documentation tools used across the health system.



Dr. Angela L. Scioscia

- **Impact:** “Mental health support for the student body was uninterrupted despite a remote environment,” said Dr. Scioscia. “The electronic medical record platform allowed for CAPS to further develop as a cutting-edge counseling center with innovative execution of its functions and services.”



Nicholas DiGirolamo, Amir Hassan and Dr. Mark Schultzel (left to right)

Nicholas DiGirolamo, Amir Hassan, Mark Schultzel, M.D. | Rady School of Management

- **Partners and Collaborators:** Rady School of Management students, with donations from UC San Diego Health, UCI Health, George Washington University Hospitals, Mount Sinai Hospital, University of Virginia Hospital alongside national and international first responder groups and medical practices.
- **Project Description:** DiGirolamo, Hassan and Dr. Schultzel are founders of the Ethos Mask, which is distributed as a kit comprised of a 3D-printed mask body, a braided elastic strap, a standard surgical mask and a rubber seal. Utilizing the user-assembled kit model, the 3D-printed mask body can be molded to the wearer’s face, offering superior comfort and virus protection. The rubber seal improves comfort, allows facial protection and prevents the fogging of glasses. The mask can be cut into pieces such that one mask can be used up to 6 times, reducing mask waste. All proceeds from mask sales are used to manufacture and distribute masks to healthcare professionals in need.
- **Impact:** “We have been able to donate Ethos Mask kits by the thousands to health care and community service members across the country, free of charge, donating to hospitals, medical schools and first responders across the country. We have also sold Ethos Mask kits directly to members of the public, with sales coming from 24 states and four countries” said DiGirolamo. “We’ve supported our fellow Tritons in the UC San Diego Emergency Medicine department with a donation of 500 masks. Ethos Mask was also the recipient of the Global COVID Innovation Award after making it to the world finals at the 2020 Fowler Global Social Innovation Challenge Finals this July.”

The Changemaker Institute at UC San Diego invites the campus community to nominate individuals dedicated to channeling their talents and skills for the greater good. To nominate a Changemaker, visit the [Changemaker Institute website](#). Selected changemakers will be recognized and honored throughout the academic year by the institute.

