

## ARCS Foundation Names V.S. Ramachandran ‘Scientist of the Year’

V.S. Ramachandran, director of the Center for Brain and Cognition at UC San Diego, was recently honored as the 2014 Scientist of the Year by the San Diego chapter of the [Achievement Rewards for College Scientists \(ARCS\) Foundation](#). The award was presented April 4 at the organization’s annual Scientist of the Year dinner.

Ramachandran was celebrated for his impact on the way scientists—and the general public—think about the brain. His seemingly “low-tech” experiments in behavioral neurology have led to major scientific breakthroughs. At Walter Reed Army Medical Center, for example, Ramachandran’s “mirror therapy” is being used to relieve phantom limb pain in amputees.

The ARCS Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing science and technology in the United States. Led entirely by women, the organization provides financial awards to academically outstanding students working toward degrees in science, engineering and medical research. Since 1987, the San Diego chapter has given a total of \$3.9 million to UC San Diego to support students in their research and academic work. The 2013-2014 ARCS Scholars, including 31 graduate students from UC San Diego, were also recognized at the Scientist of the Year dinner.

“We are very grateful to the ARCS Foundation for their strong commitment to UC San Diego graduate students,” said Dean of Graduate Studies Kim Barrett. “Their support represents tangible recognition for the very best of our students pursuing ground-breaking research in science, engineering and medicine.”

For Aereas Aung, a UC San Diego bioengineering graduate student, support from the ARCS Foundation has enabled him to focus completely on his research of cancer metastasis. Aung studies metastasis from a biophysics perspective, trying to understand how cancer cells push, pull and tear



*V.S. Ramachandran. Photo by Beatrice Ring*

through endothelial cells (the cells lining the blood vessels) to escape blood vessels and migrate within the underlying tissues. By understanding these forces in connection with biological mechanisms, Aung's research may one day lead to better therapeutics to impede cancer metastasis.

“The support given by ARCS has allowed me to focus entirely on my research without being burdened by financial difficulties,” said Aung. “In addition, the events held by the ARCS Foundation have allowed me to see the pivotal role that current, renowned scientists play in shaping the world, while providing opportunities to create professional connections with fellow colleagues.”

Increasing fellowship support for graduate students is a strategic priority for UC San Diego. To learn more about the role graduate students play at UC San Diego, and how private support for fellowships is helping the campus to attract top students, visit the [UC San Diego graduate fellowships website](#).

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