

## **CAMP ‘Bridge to the Doctorate’ Program Graduates 12 Doctoral Candidates in STEM Fields**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded \$972,000 to the California Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in Science, Engineering and Mathematics Program (CAMP) at UC San Diego in 2006. The fellowship, called the Bridge to the Doctorate supplement, would support 12 underrepresented graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Now, the last fellow has successfully defended his thesis, making UC San Diego’s Bridge to the Doctorate program the only in California with a 100 percent success rate.



*UC San Diego Bridge to the Doctorate scholars*

UC San Diego is the third of eight campuses in the University of California system to host a Bridge to the Doctorate program. The goal is to increase the diversity of students participating in graduate studies and on the path to careers in STEM fields. To that end, the program provides financial support

as well as academic and professional enrichment activities throughout each fellow's graduate career. In the long term, it is hoped that these efforts will help build and diversify the pipeline of future faculty.

"Bridge to the Doctorate helps students who are capable of becoming leaders in academia and research avoid some of the early pitfalls of the doctoral process," said David Artis, dean of Undergraduate Research Initiatives and director of Academic Enrichment Programs (AEP). AEP oversees CAMP at UC San Diego, which runs the campus's Bridge program in collaboration with the Office of Graduate Studies and other campus partners. "It is wonderful to see that each of our Bridge fellows has achieved the goal that he or she set out to accomplish. They are exceptionally bright, motivated scholars."

For Moses Tataw, who graduates this year with his Ph.D. in computer science, the program was a constant source of support and community. After earning his master's degree in computer science from UC San Diego in 2007, Tataw worked as a senior programmer at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in the Inland Empire. He stayed connected with the UC San Diego Bridge community and his faculty mentors, and after a year returned to pursue his Ph.D., this time at UC Riverside.

"The Bridge program helped put my foot through the door," said Tataw. "Dr. Vineet Bafna, Dr. Lenert and Dr. Papakonstantinou at UC San Diego were influential mentors who helped me to succeed."

The 12 fellows were selected from a pool of applicants who had accepted admission to a graduate program in STEM at UC San Diego for the fall 2005 term, and who had participated in the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation program at their undergraduate college. The NSF award provided funding for the first two years of the fellows' doctoral studies, as well as academic and professional enrichment activities. UC San Diego's CAMP, the Office of Graduate Studies and the respective departments of the fellows then worked together to ensure academic and financial support for the students as they progressed toward their doctoral degrees.

As part of the fellowship, Bridge to the Doctorate scholars also served as mentors to UC San Diego students participating in the undergraduate portion of CAMP, which aims to increase the diversity of undergraduate participation in STEM majors and to prepare underrepresented students to pursue advanced degrees in these fields.

"Partnerships like this between the Office of Graduate Studies and Academic Enrichment Programs strengthen the ties between undergraduate research and graduate school success," said April Bjornsen, assistant dean of Graduate Student Affairs. "We want our graduate students to be role models for younger students considering an advanced degree, particularly those from underserved communities."

In addition to on-campus partnerships, UC San Diego CAMP coordinator Jacqueline Azize-Brewer worked closely with the CAMP Statewide Office to facilitate the Bridge to the Doctorate program. According to Azize-Brewer and Marjorie DeMartino, co-director of the CAMP Statewide Office,

collaboration and a strong sense of community are key components of the success of CAMP and the Bridge program. Starting with entering freshmen, CAMP offers numerous research opportunities with faculty mentors, including an annual state-wide symposium where students present their work. Students can also take advantage of academic and professional development activities.

“CAMP, including Bridge to the Doctorate, helps to counter the anonymity that students may feel upon entering a large research university,” said DeMartino. “The students in the program have a strong sense of community, and our faculty mentors and program staff are very dedicated to the students’ success.”

The graduates of the UC San Diego Bridge to the Doctorate cohort are: Anthony Farina, biochemistry; Alicia Gamez, biochemistry; Pablo Garcia-Reynaga, organic chemistry; James Marshel, neurosciences; Cynthia Perry, molecular pathology; Kristina Pohaku, chemistry; Manuel Ruidiaz, bioengineering; Esmeralda Ruiz, biomedical sciences; Sergio Sandoval, bioengineering; Moses Tataw, computer science; Roberto Tinoco, biology and Melanie Zauscher, mechanical engineering.

CAMP is one of 42 Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation programs funded by the NSF in the United States. For more information about CAMP at UC San Diego, visit [camp.ucsd.edu](http://camp.ucsd.edu).

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