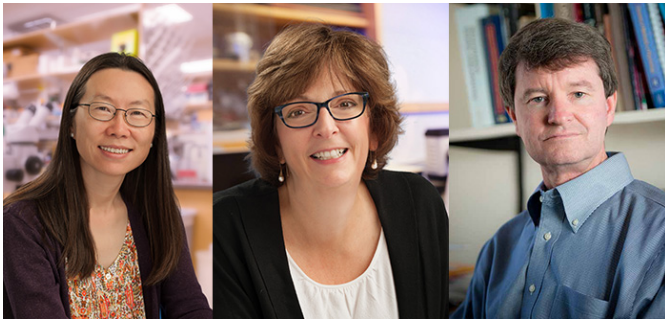


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American Academy of Arts and Sciences Elects Three UC San Diego Professors

New members include neuroscientists Susan Ackerman and Yishi Jin, and psychologist John Wixted



Yishi Jin, Susan Ackerman and John Wixted

Three faculty members of the University of California San Diego have been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, one of the country's most esteemed honorary societies and independent policy research centers.

UC San Diego's **Susan Ackerman**, **Yishi Jin** and **John Wixted** will join 200 new members in the organization's 2019 class that spans

academia, business, government and public affairs.

Founded in 1780 by John Adams, James Bowdoin and others, the Academy honors exceptionally accomplished individuals and engages them in advancing the public good. The Academy's dual mission remains essentially the same 239 years later with honorees from increasingly diverse fields and with the work now focused on the arts, democracy, education, global affairs and science. The 2019 class members range from poets to mathematicians and includes former first lady Michelle Obama and paleoclimatologist Lonnie Thompson.

"While the work of this class includes work never imagined in 1780—such as cultural studies, cybersecurity, disease ecology, nanotechnology, paleoclimatology and superconductivity—these members embody the founders' vision of cultivating knowledge that advances, in their words, a 'free, virtuous, and independent people,'" said Nancy Andrews, the chair of the board of the American Academy.

The new UC San Diego members, who will be inducted with [the full 2019 class](#) at a ceremony in October 2019 in Cambridge, Mass., are:

Susan Ackerman, the Stephen W. Kuffler Chair in Biology, is a professor in the Division of Biological Sciences' Section of Neurobiology and the School of Medicine's Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine. A Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator since 2005, Ackerman studies mechanisms underlying the loss of neurons in the aging mammalian brain by identifying and analyzing genes, pathways and networks involved in neuronal homeostasis. In 2018 her group led a team in identifying a gene that helps prevent the harmful buildup of proteins that can lead to neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. The study, published in *Nature*, revealed that the "Ankrd16" gene acts like a failsafe in proofreading and correcting errors to avoid the abnormal production of improper proteins. Ackerman received her Ph.D. from UCLA and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Illinois Medical School and the Wistar Institute. Before moving to UC San Diego in 2016, she was a professor at the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine, where she was a faculty member for 19 years.

Yishi Jin, the inaugural holder of Junior Seau Foundation Endowed Chair in Traumatic Brain Injury, is a professor in the Division of Biological Sciences and chair of the Section of Neurobiology. Her laboratory studies the mechanisms underlying the development of the nervous system and regeneration of wounded neurons. Much of her work employs genetic approaches in the nematode *C. elegans*. Her research has led to the discovery of numerous novel, evolutionarily conserved molecular pathways that instruct formation of neuronal connections and that protect neurons from damage. These findings have contributed to our understanding of human neurological disorders and brain injury. She has won several prestigious awards, including a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, an Alfred Sloan research award and a Jacob Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award. She was an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute for 16 years. She received her undergraduate education in Peking University, China, her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley and completed postdoctoral training at MIT. She has been a UC faculty member since 1996 and with UC San Diego's faculty since 2007.

John Wixted, distinguished professor and former chair of the Department of Psychology in the Division of Social Sciences, teaches classes and conducts research on the topic of episodic memory. Much of his work investigates the cognitive mechanisms that underlie recognition memory, often using signal detection theory as a guide. A related line of research investigates how episodic memory is represented in the human hippocampus, work that includes single-unit recording studies performed with epilepsy patients. In addition, much of his recent research has investigated the applied implications of signal detection-based models of recognition memory. The main focus of this research is on the surprising reliability of eyewitness memory when initially tested using police lineups. A member of the faculty since 1988, Wixted is an

undergraduate alumnus from UC San Diego (Revelle College) who received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Emory University. Some of his honors include the George A. Miller Award for an Outstanding Recent Article on General Psychology, the prestigious Howard Crosby Warren Medal for outstanding achievement in Experimental Psychology and his recent appointment to serve as editor-in-chief of the “Stevens’ Handbook of Experimental Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience.”

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UC San Diego’s [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via studio@ucsd.edu. To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.