

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

This is a **DRAFT** news release. Content is subject to change and/or deletion. Do not share or link to this page.

October 01, 2012 | By Christine Clark

UC San Diego Students Gear Up for Election with Voter Registration Efforts and Mayoral Debate

Students are a driving force in election efforts including voter registration initiatives, adding campus polling places and sponsoring upcoming mayoral debate at UC San Diego



“Voting is not simply the bedrock of our democracy—it is also the most pure form of political expression,” said University of California, San Diego student Arshya Sharifian.

Sharifian is one of the many students at UC San Diego who are encouraging their peers to get involved in the November 2012 election through massive voter registration efforts on campus. In addition, students are organizing an issues debate between San Diego mayoral candidates Carl DeMaio and Bob Filner to be held Oct. 13 at UC San Diego. The event is co-sponsored by San Diego 6 and is free and open to the public. The forum will air as a one-hour special at 9 p.m., Saturday, October 13 and it will repeat at 9 a.m., Monday, October 15 on San Diego 6-The CW.

Sharifian, founder and executive director of UC San Diego's Student Organized Voter Access Committee (SOVAC), helped register more than 1,300 students to vote last year. This year, SOVAC plans to double that number. SOVAC, working with UC San Diego's six undergraduate colleges, helped make voter registration a part of the move-in process for entering freshmen. An estimated 2,000 students already registered during the campus's move-in weekend, Sept. 22-23.

In addition, SOVAC and other student leaders have worked with the San Diego County Registrar of Voters to add polling places to the campus on Election Day—there will be a total of eight locations where students will be able to cast their vote, a record number for UC San Diego.

SOVAC also partnered with representatives from the UC San Diego Graduate Student Association and campus leadership to sponsor the Oct. 13 mayoral issues forum at UC San Diego's Price Center East Ballroom. College Democrats and College Republicans are hosting the candidate's respective green rooms which will provide students an opportunity to interact with the candidates in person.



“Increasing student involvement is our goal and this debate is one of the best opportunities for students to get involved in the election season,” said Kyle Heiskala, a member of UC San Diego's Associated Students (AS).

At the event, which will be moderated by San Diego 6 news anchor Heather Myers, students will be able to directly ask both candidates questions. The topics of the discussions will focus on innovation, the economy, sustainability and civic engagement.

Heiskala added, “We want students to participate in the democratic process and this event will give them a reason to get out and vote and have an impact on our local community.”

As the election nears, students at UC San Diego will be able to register to vote at various events and at a voter registration booth inside Geisel Library until the Oct. 22 deadline. SOVAC and AS are also working to create a webpage where students will be able to register online, Sharifian said.

“One of the big messages we want to get across to students is that every time you move, you have to register to vote,” said Sharifian. “We hope our efforts help first-time voters become lifetime voters.”

To raise awareness about voting, SOVAC collaborated with the AS graphic studio to create “vote” wristbands with the word “vote” written in 13 different languages. AS graphics also worked with UC San Diego’s advocacy, state and local government relations office to create “I Support UC San Diego and I Vote” lawn signs that will be distributed at voter registration booths on campus.

“We want people to know that when they vote, they are not just voting for themselves—they are voting for their community,” Sharifian said. “Their actions can influence others to get involved and be a part of the political process.”

The Oct. 13 mayoral forum will be held at 3 p.m. in UC San Diego’s Price Center East Ballroom. The event will air at 9 p.m. Saturday, on San Diego 6-The CW.

For more information on SOVAC, go to: [facebook.com/StudentOrganizedVoterAccessCommittee](https://www.facebook.com/StudentOrganizedVoterAccessCommittee).

UC San Diego’s [Studio Ten 300](https://www.studio1030.com/) 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>.