

By Lily Chen May 28, 2020

Stories from Home

UC San Diego student employees share their experiences with working remotely

As a student employee at UC San Diego, I am one of many who have had to adapt to working from home while continuing to serve peers and department teams. As a marketing and communications intern in University Communications, my days have shifted from covering campus events and in-person interviews to relying completely on Zoom and Outlook to connect with people in order to write my stories. I've had to think on my feet and adapt to these new circumstances, and I am certainly not alone. Thousands of other student employees continue to serve in their roles remotely, from video production to advising first-generation students and providing online tutoring sessions.

With spring quarter in full swing, students have been adjusting to Zoom lectures, moving home and finding new hobbies to fill their newfound free time. In the midst of all this change, student employees are also learning to perform their duties in a remote setting, in a new environment like their bedrooms and living rooms. Left to their own devices and ingenuity, these student employees share what it's like to work from home.



Lily Chen in her at-home work setup.

Annie Chen

Fourth-year human biology major and First Gen Senior Peer Success Coach

Annie Chen, a First Gen Senior Peer Success Coach with the [Student Success Coaching Program](#), is still managing a cohort of around 30 freshmen first generation students, even though she is now working from her off-campus apartment in San Diego. Although the meetings are now virtual, she's still meeting with each student and providing resources, guidance and mentorship to aid their transition into UC San Diego.

“A lot of them have been telling me they have difficulty focusing on classes at home, probably because they’re having trouble separating work from personal life,” said Chen. “I make sure to check on them to see how their motivation levels and productively are fluctuating and coach them on ways to separate their work from personal matters.”

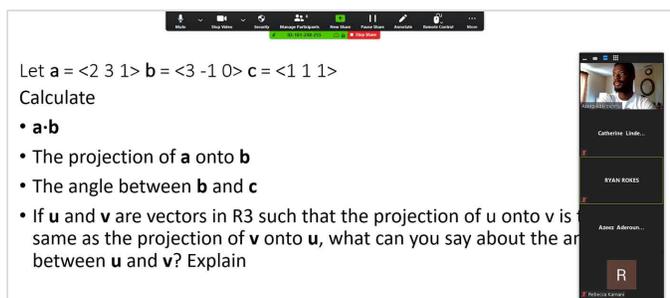
Although she thought she’d have more free time since she no longer had to commute to campus, Chen said she’s been feeling busier than ever. Juggling various work, student and lab meetings, she has been combating Zoom burnout by phoning family and friends more frequently and exploring new recipes. “The fact that this is my last quarter as an undergrad keeps me motivated to finish strong,” she said.

Azeez Aderounmu

Fourth-year structural engineering major and Supplemental Instructor

Azeez Aderounmu also continues to help his peers by hosting weekly tutoring sessions for students in MATH 20C as a Supplemental Instructor through the [Teaching + Learning Commons](#). “I have to make sure my session materials are available asynchronously since my students might be in varying time zones,” he said.

Back home with his family in Carson, Calif., Aderounmu has been facing difficulty in coming up with ways to ensure sessions are interactive. “I can’t see my students’ feedback in real time, so I have to anticipate them in advance,” he said. “But with the help of my supervisors and tools like Desmos and AWWapp, I’m working around those difficulties.” Since switching over to remote instruction, he’s been balancing club activities with school as well as job hunting. “It can be a lot,” he said. “But since being home, I’ve been finding it a lot easier to be healthy with homecooked meals and having exercise equipment in my room.”



The view from Azeez Aderounmu’s remote SI session hosted on Zoom.

Ally Lawler

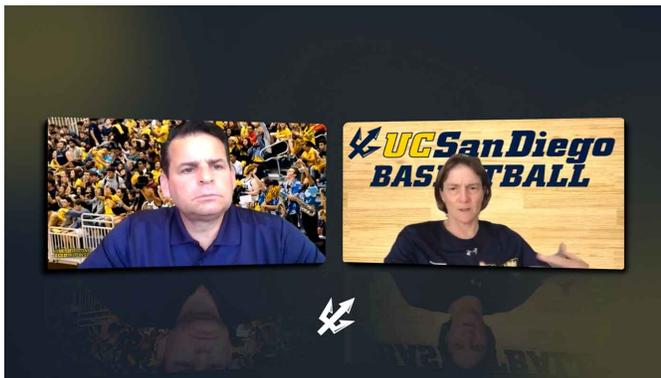
Third-year communications and political science double major and video intern

Since shifting to working remotely, [Athletics department](#) video intern Ally Lawler’s work has moved from pre-production to post-production. Rather than working with the ESPN crew at live broadcasted games as a camerawoman or audio engineer, she’s been helping Steven Calista,

director of video production, with editing footage for their new web segment called “Between Two Zooms,” where coaches are interviewed about their recruitment and what’s next to come for their respective teams, and even some content for ESPN talent.

“Adapting to being at home was more complicated than I thought,” said Lawler. “I had to work with the IT department to connect with the same servers as my colleagues since we’re often editing the same file from three different computers.”

Since she’s been back in the Inland Empire and in a new environment, it’s been difficult for Lawler to have the same motivation she did in the office or classroom, but she since has adapted quickly. She and Steven Calista have also been working on setting up Zoom lectures on video editing for others in the Athletics department interested in filming and editing videos, especially other interns. “Even though the work is new and challenging, I’m grateful to still have the opportunity to learn and grow,” she said.



An episode of “Between Two Zooms” featuring UC San Diego’s women basketball coach Heidi VanDerveer, edited by Ally Lawler.

Still feeling connected

For myself, every day working from home is just a little different than I’m used to. The stories I used to help write have changed slightly as there are no longer events held on campus to report on. However, I’ve been enjoying the shift to writing about the lives of UC San Diego students. Human stories have always been my favorite, and I feel connected with my fellow Tritons when I hear about how they’re adapting to these uncertain circumstances. Like Annie, I’m

also in my last quarter of undergrad and although it isn’t what I pictured, I still appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow even as I’m about to graduate.

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