

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

August 10, 2017 | By Kristin Schafgans

UC San Diego Goes Behind the Scenes of SpaceX Rocket Launch Aug. 14

The campus was selected to be one of 40 social media ambassadors at the event

The University of California San Diego boasts more than 100 graduates who have gone on to work at NASA, including 38 alumni who work at SpaceX. This is the campus where Sally Ride—the first American woman in space—taught physics and where, just recently, scientists contributed to the discovery of the first-known system of seven Earth-sized planets around a single star. This rich tradition of space exploration and commitment to inspiring the next generation of scientists is one of the reasons UC San Diego was selected to send a social media ambassador to the upcoming launch of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. The launch will take place on Monday, August 14 at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.



Photo: NASA

As one of only 40 social media ambassadors invited to attend the launch, UC San Diego will have special access to NASA facilities not open to the general public; the opportunity to interact behind the scenes with engineers, technicians and other team members, and the chance to cover the launch of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft. Participating in the launch offers a unique opportunity for UC San Diego to engage alumni, faculty and students, many of whom are pushing the boundaries of space exploration.

“UC San Diego is a great institution for space careers,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “Two of our graduates have already made their mark in space: Kate Rubins spent 115 days at the International Space Station and Megan McArthur played a key role in repairing the Hubble Telescope. A third, Robb Kulin, was recently selected for NASA’s 2017 Astronaut Candidate Class.”

The Falcon 9 rocket, carrying the Dragon cargo spacecraft, will be the next commercial cargo resupply services mission to the International Space Station (ISS). Dragon will dock at the ISS port that Rubins installed last year, when she was in space for Expedition 48/49.

In addition to its alumni astronauts, UC San Diego is home to a number of scientists who are involved with projects related to NASA and space exploration. Researchers at the UC San Diego School of Medicine have been investigating [how space travel affects human health](#), including studies of the impacts of microgravity on cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems. At the Jacobs School of Engineering, researchers recently discovered a method for [making bricks out of Martian soil](#) without additives and without having to heat the material—which could make it possible for astronauts to build structures on the planet using minimal resources. Earlier this year, UC San Diego astrophysicists made headlines for their contribution to the [discovery of TRAPPIST-1](#), a planetary system that set new records for the greatest number of both Earth-sized planets and habitable zone planets found around a single star outside our solar system.

To go behind the scenes of the Falcon 9 rocket launch with UC San Diego, follow the campus on social media Aug. 13-14:

- UC San Diego on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)
- UC San Diego Alumni on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

MEDIA CONTACT

Kristin Schafgans, 858-822-3353, kschafgans@ucsd.edu

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>.