

## A Step Closer to the Missing Link

### **UCSD Alumni LinkedIn group experiences steep growth as part of pilot program**

UC San Diego recently became one of 12 universities—and the only one in the University of California system—to start a unique relationship with LinkedIn, the world’s largest online professional network. Through LinkedIn’s College Pilot Program, UCSD Alumni, the university’s alumni association, is utilizing the website’s resources to chart the number of graduates in various industries across the country—including entertainment, law and marketing, among others. By digging deeper into the newfound data, UCSD Alumni hopes to better connect alumni within their respective fields.

“It’s been really interesting how the regions differ based on distribution,” says Brandon Buzbee, UCSD Alumni director of outreach and engagement, who fostered UC San Diego’s relationship with LinkedIn. “For example, in LA, we’re finding that alumni are spread out between many different companies across the city, whereas in San Diego, they’re primarily concentrated within a smaller number of companies; one being UCSD itself, another being Qualcomm.”

In order to raise more awareness of the partnership, the campus emailed graduates in late January, informing them of the official alumni group. Over the following weeks, the result was an exponential growth in members. More than 3,500 joined, with 28 percent of the new alumni members holding positions of seniority in their companies. The group now boasts a join rate higher than any other participating university.

“We’re delighted that our UC San Diego alums are joining the official LinkedIn group,” says Leah Ackerson, UCSD Alumni assistant director of project management. “Participating as one of the 12 universities in LinkedIn’s pilot program has been a tremendous opportunity for us to reconnect with our alumni all over the world. In the first few weeks, we’ve received more than 3,500 requests to join the group, and those new members are already participating in discussions, networking with fellow alums and sharing stories of life after UC San Diego.” LinkedIn would not disclose the other 11 higher education institutions involved in the pilot program, noting that the information is proprietary.

UCSD Alumni’s LinkedIn network is over 14,500 strong and graduates are mostly concentrated in areas such as computer software, biotechnology, research, information technology and financial services. This information has enabled UCSD Alumni to connect with influential alumni in numerous

industries. In the future, it will allow the group to offer networking events that focus on entertainment, science, law and other fields based on the demand for each in specific regions.

“That’s the biggest opportunity we have with this partnership—to grow a strong network for our alumni,” Buzbee says.

UCSD Alumni is working toward building profiles for the school’s top three regions— San Diego (34 percent), Los Angeles (14 percent) and the San Francisco Bay Area (21 percent)—while expanding their regional scope, and tapping into unexplored alumni markets.

“Utilizing the official UCSD Alumni LinkedIn group is only one of the ways that we’ve been reaching out to our alumni, and it has become an important social media presence for us,” says Ackerson.

Alumni interested in connecting with other grads in their field and regional area should go to [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ucsd-alumni) or visit [alumni.ucsd.edu](http://alumni.ucsd.edu), to learn about upcoming networking opportunities.

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