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UC San Diego Summer Programs Introduce College Life to Prospective and Incoming Students



The UC San Diego Triton STEM Academy offered local high school students the opportunity to take part in hands-on activities in biology, engineering and more.

For high school students contemplating college careers and newly admitted freshmen, their knowledge about university life and academic expectations may be limited. Numerous summer programs at the University of California, San Diego offered the opportunity for new and prospective students to experience living in a dormitory, explore campus programs and resources, as well as take part in hands-on social and learning activities. Whether they stayed for three days or more than three weeks, students went home with a better sense of what to expect in college and what it takes to

succeed academically.

Lighting Up the Possibilities of a STEM Education

Equipped with pennies, washers and electrical cables, a group of students hovered over a pile of lemons and potatoes. Their mission: to determine how many of each it takes to power a small lightbulb. They were learning about electrochemical energy in a workshop led by UC San Diego NanoEngineering professor Shirley Meng and several of her graduate students. It was just one of the numerous hands-on activities of the Triton STEM Academy—a weeklong residential program designed to inspire underrepresented high school seniors to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) in higher education and envision themselves at UC San Diego.

“I love the program; I’ve never been to UC San Diego for more than a day,” said Marcus, a senior at James Madison High School whose goal is to study kinesiology and nursing. “I’m doing as many college tours I can, but it’s different getting to actually stay at the university. I’ve gained a better understanding of STEM at UC San Diego.”

The program began as a partnership between UC San Diego Undergraduate Admissions, the Division of Biological Sciences, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Jacobs School of Engineering and the Division of Physical Sciences. This year the Triton STEM Academy received a \$5,000 grant from the Beckman Coulter Foundation to help support and sustain the program, which brings more than 30 high school students from Los Angeles and San Diego to take part at no cost.

Upward Bound Programs Boost Academic Potential

Also working to expose high school students to college life and potential career paths, UC San Diego’s TRIO Outreach Programs hosted 175 high school students from across the county for a series of five-week residential programs in June and July. The programs, called Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math Science, are designed to prepare low-income and first generation students for the academic rigors of college.



Upward Bound Classic program participants.

“Upward Bound was way different than I expected, it was so much more,” commented one of the participants, a sophomore from a local South Bay high school. “Academically I feel like I got a head start in math and I’m really excited about that. I also liked living in the dorms. I became really close to my suite mates which I’m very grateful for.”

Three sessions were held, including one focused specifically on math and science. Students had the chance to live on campus as well as take field trips to places like the Reuben H. Fleet Center in Balboa Park. The majority of their time was spent building a strong academic foundation in courses covering English, math, science, a foreign language and a seminar on college preparation. Many of the classes were taught by UC San Diego graduate students, who shared what life was like as a researcher or scientist. In addition, students also engaged in workshops covering a variety of topics, from mental health to financial literacy and developing interview skills.

Incoming Engineering Students Get Prepped For Fall



Incoming freshmen and transfer engineering students got the chance to design and assemble miniature buildings as part of the Jacobs School of Engineering Summer PrEP Program.

How do you build a skyscraper that can withstand the forces of an earthquake? Incoming freshmen and transfer engineering students got the chance to design and assemble miniature buildings using K'NEX—sets of interlocking plastic rods, wheels, gears and other components—and then test their team project on a small shake table. The activity was part of Summer PrEP, a five-day residential program for admitted freshmen from historically underrepresented groups. More than 50 students took part in the program, which is organized by the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Excellence and Advancement) Student Center at Jacobs School of

Engineering.

In addition to hands-on activities that expose new students to what it means to be an engineer, participants also engaged in academic-themed and professional development workshops, met alumni and industry leaders, learned about resources on campus and more. Throughout their stay they had the chance to make friends with other incoming students and learn directly from faculty and current students about the work being done at Jacobs School of Engineering.

Steve Silva, an incoming freshman who plans on studying nanoengineering, discovered that people were highly enthusiastic about what they do, and were very open to conversations about the possibilities that exist in engineering. “The faculty is simply amazing. Everyone here is so motivated. It’s humbling to meet people who are so passionate,” said Silva.

Chancellor’s Associates Scholars Receive Warm Welcome



In August, students who are part of the newest cohort of incoming UC San Diego Chancellor’s Associates Scholarship Program were invited to take part in a three-day, two-night orientation. As part of the event, students participated in group bonding activities, workshops and campus tours that were designed to help them better

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understand the campus and its resources. Topics covered ranged from acclimating to university life to maintaining a budget, and from studying abroad to academic advising.

“In this program, every person is valuable,” said Belen Hernandez Garcia, a Chancellor’s Associates Scholar and alumna of The Preuss School UCSD, a charter middle and high school for low-income students who strive to become the first in their families to graduate from college. “We all just met three days ago, but I feel like I’ve known this group for much longer than that. Everyone here is willing to help you.”

The Chancellor’s Associates Scholarship program was established in 2013 by Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla to improve the pathway for all qualified students to achieve a higher education. Through the program, the university provides eligible students with \$10,000 a year for four years—essentially providing a full-ride and loan-free financial aid package. The program initially served students from Gompers Preparatory Academy, Lincoln High School and The Preuss School UCSD. It has since been expanded to eligible community college transfer students from San Diego City College, Southwestern College and Imperial Valley College. Other additions include eligible students from federally recognized tribes statewide and Reality Changers, a non-profit organization that prepares underserved youth to become first-generation college students.

A Place for Active Summer Learning

UC San Diego’s Triton STEM Academy, Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math and Science, Chancellor’s Associates Scholars Program and Summer PrEP are just a few of the programs that engage prospective and incoming students during the summertime. Whether they spent a weekend or a month on campus, students got a chance to explore what college life is like at UC San Diego and learn about how to succeed academically.

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