UC San Diego
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July 10, 2019 | By Judy Piercey

Four UC San Diego Professors Receive Presidential Early Career Awards

Professors Padmini Rangamani, Darren Lipomi, Piya Pal and Eric Chang, M.D.

President Donald J. Trump recently announced recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), including four faculty members from the University of California San Diego. The PECASE is the highest honor bestowed by the United States government to scientists and engineers in the early stages of their independent research careers.

UC San Diego recipients include: Darren Lipomi, professor of nanoengineering; Piya Pal, professor of electrical and computer engineering; and Padmini Rangamani, professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering—all at the Jacobs School of Engineering. Also honored is Eric Chang, M.D., who is with the San Diego VA Healthcare System, Department of Veterans Affairs and a clinical professor of radiology at UC San Diego Health.

“Our efforts to attract, retain and grow nationally recognized, top-quality, diverse faculty at UC San Diego are paying dividends to our students as well as our community,” said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “Through leadership in their respective fields, dedication to accessible public education, and commitment to community engagement, these four early-career faculty members demonstrate UC San Diego’s vision to be a leading student-centered, research-focused, service-oriented public research university.”

Lipomi was recognized for his work on the chemistry of electronic materials with properties inspired by biological tissue for health sensing, medical touch and human-machine interfaces, and for his efforts in public outreach. He was nominated for the award by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Pal was recognized for her fundamental contributions to signal processing by designing innovative geometries and developing new optimization techniques that overcome bottlenecks of traditional array designs, and for enhancing fundamental performance limits of sparse inference problems. She was nominated by the Department of Defense.

Rangamani was recognized for her exceptional research accomplishments in the advancement of Theoretical Biophysics in physical biology and medicine, and for fundamental contributions to the physical understanding of lipid bilayers. She was nominated by the Department of Defense.

Chang was recognized for the development and clinical translation of novel magnetic resonance imaging techniques to better understand, diagnose and manage painful musculoskeletal diseases, including post-traumatic osteoarthritis and tendon pathologies resulting from active duty injuries. He was nominated by the San Diego VA Healthcare System, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Established in 1996, the PECASE acknowledges the contributions scientists and engineers have made to the advancement of science, technology, education, and mathematics (STEM) education and to community service as demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education, and community outreach. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy coordinates the PECASE with participating departments and agencies.

MEDIA CONTACT

Judy Piercey, 858-534-6128, jpiercey@ucsd.edu