

Competition Heats up for UC San Diego's Graduate Student Recruitment



Katrina Gooding Petersen

University of California, San Diego graduate student Katrina Gooding Petersen spent a week with a grassroots group called the Louisiana Bucket Brigade studying how smartphones, GPS devices and other technology were used to collect and share information in the midst of a crisis. Now, she is working with the San Diego Red Cross as they put together and begin to implement new disaster mapping software that draws on the same types of technologies and information sources so that they can better prepare for disaster response.

A Ph.D. student in communication, Petersen focuses on how information—coming anywhere from satellites to people with handheld radios—is used to provide the best maps and resources for dealing with disasters. Like many other UC scholars, she seamlessly merges high technology with a powerful sense of humanity.

“Working with Katrina encourages me and inspires me to push my own work in new ways,” said David Serlin, associate professor and chair of the UC San Diego department of communication. “It is thrilling to watch as Katrina finds new ways of putting together areas of scholarship that usually are not drawn together.”

Graduate students are vital to the success of top-ranked institutions such as UC San Diego. They generate new knowledge that will benefit humanity, create new companies and jobs and help solve 21st century global challenges. They also help prepare undergraduates for competitive careers—inspiring as much as they teach.

Outstanding Graduate Fellows

Graduate students become tomorrow's innovators, leaders, artists, teachers and entrepreneurs to make a difference locally, nationally and around the globe. A fellowship is a game-changing investment in these students' lives. Following is just a brief sampling of UC San Diego's outstanding graduate fellows:

Christina Frieder, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

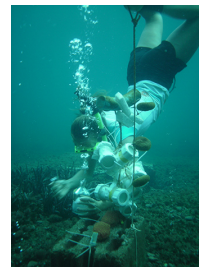
Serlin noted that fellowship support is critical for UC San Diego to attract and retain top graduate students, like Petersen. “The only reason we lose top graduate students is financial. It’s not for lack of faculty and programs, of which we have the highest caliber, or that we lack an extraordinarily rich intellectual graduate student culture. Those are not the issue. It’s that we can’t offer the kind of financial packages that our peer institutions can.”

As state and federal government funding decreases, private support for students is becoming increasingly important to the strength of the institution. Today, of the nearly 3,700 UC San Diego graduate students eligible for fellowships, only 17 percent receive a full fellowship package of \$30,000 or more per year.

The campus is challenged to compete for the best and the brightest graduate students when peer institutions can offer more generous financial packages. Findings from the 2010 Graduate Student Support Survey conducted by the University of California Office of the President showed that at UC San Diego, there was a nearly \$9,000 difference between a UC net stipend and a non-UC net stipend. The campus loses outstanding graduate students to Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern University and University of Southern California, among other peer institutions, because they can offer larger fellowships.

“To continue the campus’s transformative impact as one of the top public universities in the nation, it is urgent that we grow the population of graduate students at UC San Diego,” said Dean of Graduate Studies Kim Barrett. “Graduate students are incredibly important to universities. They want to change the world; they really want to make life better for everyone. Graduate students are the lifeblood at UC San Diego—from visual arts to philosophy to engineering to the sciences, and everything in between.”

To ensure that UC San Diego can continue to attract top minds to UC San Diego—and our region—the campus is urgently focused on raising funds for graduate fellowships. For more information, please visit www.inventthefuture.ucsd.edu or call [\(858\)822-6612](tel:8588226612)



The focus of Scripps Oceanography graduate student Christina Frieder’s research is to investigate how a changing oxygen and pH ocean climate will affect the early life stages of key marine species.

“My favorite component of my research is that it incorporates a great deal of field work, both going to sea and research-based SCUBA diving,” said Frieder, a recipient of several fellowships. “I hope that my research will make great strides in understanding how changing ocean climates will affect marine populations, with an emphasis on the local coastal habitats of San Diego.”

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