

November 26, 2019 | By Amanda Rubalcava

ARCS Foundation Awards \$225,000 in Fellowships to UC San Diego Graduate Students

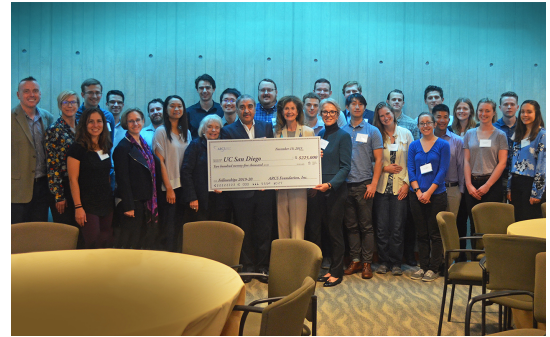
The Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Foundation has awarded a total of \$225,000 to 30 graduate students at the University of California San Diego for the 2019-20 academic year. The annual fellowship awards recognize exceptional students in the natural sciences, engineering and medicine. Since its San Diego chapter was established in 1985, the foundation has given more than \$5.5 million in scholarships to support over 700 graduate students at UC San Diego.

On Nov. 19, members of the ARCS San Diego chapter presented the check to Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla at an award reception held at the Ida and Cecil Green Faculty Club.

“We are grateful to the ARCS Foundation for their generous investment in our graduate students,” said Chancellor Khosla. “With this financial support, our scholars are able to focus fully on their research and academic studies, enabling them to break through society’s most pressing issues as the nation’s next generation of global changemakers,” he added.

Founded in 1958, The ARCS Foundation is a national nonprofit led entirely by women that aims to advance science and technology in the United States by supporting undergraduate and graduate scholars in the STEM fields.

“ARCS helps to address the nation’s need for those with advanced STEM training, and also supports UC San Diego’s commitment to becoming a national leader in the development of scientists and engineers,” said James Soto Antony, dean of the Graduate Division at UC San Diego. “Our past and present ARCS Scholars are consistently making strides towards positively impacting the world, such as UC San Diego alumna Jessica Meir who was part of the first all-female spacewalk this October. It is hard to overstate the importance of our partnership with ARCS and we look forward to our continued work together.”



Representatives of the ARCS Foundation San Diego chapter joined Chancellor Khosla and fellowship recipients for a special check presentation ceremony. Photo by Kyra Da Cunha.

The 2019-20 UC San Diego ARCS Scholars are pursuing industries ranging from biophysics and nanoengineering to molecular biology and mathematics.

Gabrielle Colvert is a first-time ARCS Scholar and fourth year bioengineering graduate student who is developing noninvasive tools that measure heart function. Her work focuses on advancing the fields of cardiovascular imaging and interventional cardiology to improve diagnosis and prevention of various heart diseases. One of her recent projects uses high-resolution, 3D X-ray CT images of the heart to create tools that quantify how well the heart muscle contracts during each heartbeat. She also applies the methods she has developed to monitor the cardiac function of cancer patients receiving chemotherapy.

“This award has connected me to an inspiring, innovative and supportive community which I am very grateful for,” said Colvert. “Every day I have the opportunity to work closely and collaborate with engineers, scientists, doctors and industry partners in a highly translational and interdisciplinary environment. I am in awe every time I see a beating heart in the CT images and am so grateful that I can contribute to the advancement of this field.”

In addition to the financial award, recognition as an ARCS Scholar offers students access to a wide network of leading researchers in academia and industry. Further, they are able to take advantage of the professional relationships well beyond the fellowship period and throughout their careers.

The fellowship has also been instrumental for Victor Or, a fourth year graduate student and returning ARCS Scholar studying analytical and atmospheric chemistry. Or’s research focuses on understanding the role surfaces play in relation to indoor air quality. While the indoors are often thought of as a safe haven from pollution, Or shared that the indoors are a prime exposure site for pollutants to form and persist. He hopes his research will inspire others to think of the indoors in a new light and start considering how their decisions directly impact the air they breathe, especially in their own home.

“The financial support from ARCS allows students to explore new avenues to sustain or even improve the quality of their research,” said Or. “The flexibility [of the award] lets students choose which pathways most benefit their research—whether that be to remain in the lab for longer periods of time, purchase new supplies or materials, or attend conferences to both share their findings and become more integrated with broader regions within the scientific community.”

The ARCS Foundation’s philanthropic gift also contributes to the [Campaign for UC San Diego](#). To learn more about supporting UC San Diego graduate students through fellowships, visit the website [here](#). For more information about the ARCS Foundation, visit san-diego.arcsfoundation.org.

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