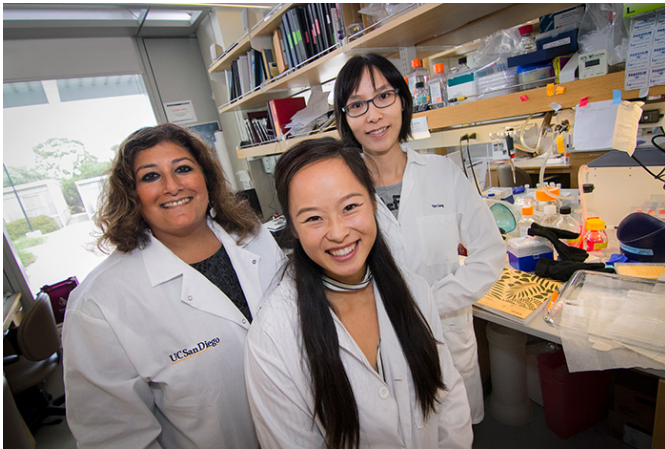


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Hundreds of Undergraduates to Speak at UC San Diego's Summer Research Conference Aug. 18

Region's largest undergraduate conference draws 378 students from San Diego and around the globe



This summer UC San Diego senior Mandy Che is conducting research in the Department of Medicine in the laboratory of Professor Farah Sheikh with mentorship from postdoctoral fellow Yan Liang. Photo by Erika Johnson/University Communications.

Her dream is to become a pediatrician and be the first in her family to graduate from college. Mandy Che, a senior at the University of California San Diego, is inspired by her parents who journeyed from Vietnam to San Francisco as refugees with no money and little English. She has learned to embrace all opportunities—like conducting faculty-mentored research over the summer at UC San Diego. On Aug. 18, she will present her findings along with 378 other undergraduates at the [Summer Research Conference](#), the largest regional undergraduate research conference in San Diego County.

The conference, free and open to the public, will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Price Center on the UC San Diego campus. The event is organized by UC San Diego's [Academic Enrichment Programs](#) and is designed to encourage students—with special emphasis on first-generation and underrepresented students—to consider pursuing graduate and professional school as well as to develop their capacity to communicate their work to peers and the public.

“The Summer Research Conference at UC San Diego has grown immensely over the past two decades into what is now our region’s most active platform for sharing undergraduate research,” said David Artis, Dean of Undergraduate Research Advancement and Director of

Academic Enrichment Programs at UC San Diego. “This program thrives because of the dedication of our faculty mentors who introduce students to the possibilities of research and new career pathways.”

More than 370 students who have conducted research in San Diego this summer will participate, representing over 75 institutions ranging from local community colleges to large state universities and Ivy League schools. Included are UC San Diego, University College London, Princeton University, UC Berkeley and College of William and Mary.

The scholars will have 15 minutes to share their work, moderated by a faculty member, as well as a five minute question-and-answer period. Over 50 panels will be held throughout the day on a diverse range of topics—from the use of technology as a tool for civic engagement, to detecting enzyme activity in coastal aerosol as well as apocalyptic literature and film.

Throughout the year, Academic Enrichment Programs helps connect undergraduate students with faculty mentors and research opportunities at UC San Diego. This summer, Che was among five students selected for a new Summer Undergraduate Fellowship, led in partnership with UC San Diego’s Department of Medicine and Department of Bioengineering. The fellowship includes a \$4,000 stipend—supported by the American Heart Association and Institute of Engineering in Medicine—and a 10-week research experience in one of five research laboratories focusing on cardiovascular health.

Che has been working in the Department of Medicine in the laboratory of Professor Farah Sheikh exploring laboratory techniques that are needed to decipher how a heart works—from the proteins that build the heart on the molecular level to functions of the heart on the physiological level—and how this knowledge can be translated into clinical solutions to treat cardiovascular disease.

With mentorship from Sheikh and postdoctoral fellow Yan Liang, Che is helping to advance molecular-based therapies for a sudden death syndrome that cause athletes to drop dead. The rare condition causes lethal arrhythmias—or electrical impulses that makes the heart beat



More than 370 undergraduates will have the opportunity to present their work to peers and the public through faculty-moderated panels. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications.

intolerably fast—in individuals who are considered to be in peak health. The research team is exploring family genetics as well as screening proteins at the molecular level to discover new protective therapeutics.

“Working in a laboratory and getting the chance to conduct experiments with the heart has solidified my desire to go to medical school,” said Che. “I am able to make connections to what I am learning in class and translate it into how it actually works in the human body. Also, building a connection with a faculty member while doing research is a really beneficial experience.”

The conference is made possible with support from UC San Diego’s Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Student Retention and Success team. For the full schedule, visit the conference website [here](#).

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