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UC San Diego's 2019 Entrepreneurs in Residence Program Is Largest Ever

EIR program provides support and services to student entrepreneurs from industry experts



The University of California San Diego is growing. It's evident in the capital construction projects around campus, the largest ever student body (39,633) and the record-breaking sponsored research funding (\$1.35 billion). It's also evident in the university's Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) program, which has expanded to include 10 members, up from four in previous years.

Managed through the Office of Innovation and Commercialization (OIC), the EIR program helps unite student entrepreneurs with professionals who understand the startup mentality and the unique issues entrepreneurs face. This year's cohort has a broad range of skills and expertise, ranging from life sciences, consumable products, health and digital technologies, and social entrepreneurship.

The EIR program is a part of OIC's comprehensive innovation strategy, designed to promote interdisciplinary relationships and creative connectivity across campus units, departments and teams, as well as with local industry partners. The program places experienced entrepreneurs

“in residence” on campus, making them available to faculty and students who need help turning their ideas into viable startups and moving those startups to the next phase of business development.

The university recently [held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Design and Innovation Building](#), slated to open in 2021. Among the building’s many tenants will be [The Basement](#), UC San Diego’s incubator program for student-owned start-ups. During the ceremony, Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla emphasized the university’s vibrant entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to strengthen the connection with the community.

“Programs like Entrepreneurs in Residence really exemplify how we are providing unique opportunities for our students to grow and learn. In supporting our students, we are also supporting innovation and bringing our San Diego community onto campus in meaningful ways,” he later stated.

Eric Shnell, founder of Craitor — a rugged, portable 3D printer capable of being used in harsh environments shared that interactions with EIRs “were crucial to my development and the development of Craitor. They provided a lot of hands-on instruction on business development and helped me grow as an entrepreneur and as a presenter. They also helped develop our network with the defense industry and helped us understand different paths to success for an early-stage defense start-up.”

All EIRs have proven track records in launching or investing in start-ups. The appointed EIRs have the demonstrated ability to work productively with across segments — researchers, faculty, students and other innovators — to identify and solve issues. They also possess experience and insight in early technology commercialization, new-venture creation and fundraising — areas where novice entrepreneurs often need the most help.

Julie Fishman is an advisor for Digital Health Companies at Nex Cubed, an early stage seed investor and venture studio. She is also a member of new EIR cohort and says she is most excited to work with “students and faculty from multidisciplinary backgrounds to collaborate on initiatives that address challenges in healthcare and digital health — everything from streamlining inefficiencies to developing new modalities to help patients suffering from various diseases.”

Paul Roben, associate vice chancellor for Innovation and Commercialization, praised the incoming EIRs, saying, “The diversity of their expertise will help to drive innovation and the creation of new startup companies across all disciplines from robotics to therapeutics to social

innovation. The commitment of our Entrepreneurs in Residence to developing a culture of innovation on our campus is fundamental to us achieving our goal of becoming the world's most innovative university driving economic and social prosperity.”

One indication of that years-long impact is the record number of disclosures, startups and licenses the university recorded in fiscal year 2019 (ended June 30). Programs like EIR can produce a groundswell that crests 1-2 years after they've finished their cohort year, when the guidance they provided may result in company launches or disclosure agreements.

This is one reason this year's cohort increased to ten members. The greater breadth of skills and available consulting hours will allow for a stronger connection between OIC, the campus and the community. With student enrollment at UC San Diego setting new records for the past several years, providing ample access to programs like EIR is more important than ever.

The 2019-2020 Entrepreneurs in Residence

Debbie Chen, Founder and CEO, Hydrostasis ('05, B.S., Bionengineering)

Rachel Costello, Co-founder and CEO, Bonna Vita Ventures, LLC

Parand Darugar, Vice President, Service Architecture, Coupa ('95, M.S., Computer Science; '91, B.S. Computer Science)

Shahin Enayati, Managing Director, Made Noble Companies

Julie Fishman, Advisor, Digital Health Companies, Nex Cubed

Paul Grint, former CEO, Highgate Group

Dan Magy, Co-founder, Elevate Dynamics

Geraldine Ridaura, Founder and CEO, Holy Matcha

Paul Shockley, General Manager, Cannabiscopes

Prasad Sunkara, Chairman, Tech Coast Angels San Diego

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