

Students Encourage Underrepresented Admits to Discover Educational Opportunities at UC San Diego

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Current University of California, San Diego students are working hard to recruit recently admitted underrepresented students to attend the university. Students, such as Thurgood Marshall College junior Alyssa Peace, are involved with new UC San Diego admissions programs that encourage first-generation and low-income students from fourth and fifth quintile schools to enroll.

"Personally, I feel the responsibility to lift as I climb," Peace said. "Providing students with resources and encouragement to succeed as I have at UC San Diego is really important and as a current African-American student, I'm best equipped to do that work - I know what it's like to go to class, sit in the library, create friendships and get involved. I feel like I should use my experiences and knowledge to help other students have a similar experience."

This spring, UC San Diego embraced enhanced yield initiatives to help to ensure a more diverse student body and healthier campus climate. These programs, along with existing programs, encourage students to accept their admittance to UC San Diego. They include an early calling campaign involving students, faculty, staff and alumni; overnight programs; and affinity group sessions.

The UC San Diego initiatives kicked off with the early calling campaign where current undergraduates called more than 400 recently admitted students to personally let them know they had been admitted to UC San Diego. Peace was one of the callers who alerted students of their admittance. "The students were excited to hear they got in and were happy to talk to current students to ask us about classes, the campus and what we do on the weekends."

Students who participated in the calling campaign also invited the new admits to the university's overnight programs. The programs, which are open to all prospective students, provide a glimpse of what it's like to attend UC San Diego. Students will spend the night April 9 in resident halls and participate in special events and activities before attending Admit Day on campus, April 10. Participants get to visit classrooms, tour the campus and meet with faculty members. In addition, students get to socialize at mixers and dances.

More than 2,100 first-generation and low-income students from San Diego, Riverside and Los Angeles and for the first time, the Bay Area were invited to participate in the Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Services (SPACES) overnight program. In addition, the Black Student Union (BSU) will host an overnight program this year.

Both programs were organized by students including Peace and Angelica Perez, a John Muir College senior. The students collaborated with student affairs and residence life staff to coordinate these programs. Perez and Peace were involved in last year's SPACES overnight program and had such positive experiences that they became instrumental in planning this year's events. "I am from a fourth and fifth quintile school," Perez said. "I believe it is my purpose to reach out to underrepresented students and help them in any way possible to achieve access to higher education."

Peace added that it was fun for her to share her experience as an undergraduate with the participants in last year's program. "Many of them had been admitted to other prestigious universities, so I was able to tell them how I made my decision to come to UC San Diego. Overall, it was a great success."

Peace said that although recent racial events have impacted the campus climate, she has noticed that many UC San Diego students, faculty and staff have been inspired to come together to recruit underrepresented students to attend the university. "The more students who decide to come to UC San Diego and work together to create change, the better and more welcoming UC San Diego will become to all," Peace said.

The UC San Diego Scholars Society, a distinguished student organization comprised of student scholarship recipients, is hosting an additional overnight program for newly admitted Regents Scholars. Regents Scholars are selected from among the very top applicants with the most outstanding academic records and personal achievements. The Regents Scholarship is the University of California's most prestigious scholarship award.

On Admit Day, UC San Diego will host welcome sessions for admitted African-American, Chicano and Native American students and their families, so they can meet with faculty, staff and alumni to learn about the educational opportunities available to students who attend UC San Diego.

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