

## Undergrads Discover Skills, Possible Career Paths at New Conference for Research in Arts, Humanities



*Photos by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications*

Arts, humanities and social science undergraduate students at UC San Diego are taking the initiative to develop faculty mentorships and engage in immersive research projects—from studying affirmative action to surveying the gestures of sign language and empowering marginalized youth. To support and showcase their efforts, Academic Enrichment Programs and the Office of Research Affairs have launched CRASSH—Conference for Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences—an opportunity for undergrads to gain confidence presenting their work and discover career paths.

“CRASSH offers students the chance to gain a valuable skill set—to think on their feet, approach ideas from different vantage points and inform each other’s work—a formative experience in their academic careers,” said Alan J. Daly, chair of the department of education studies at UC San Diego and one of the featured faculty speakers at this year’s conference.

The first in his family to attend college, Daly attributes all of his success to the mentors he had along the way. An advocate of forming networks across different levels—between undergraduates and postdocs, professors and graduate students—he believes students can gain immense confidence by being a part of a research team as well as engaging with other scholars through opportunities such as CRASSH.

“To prepare the next generation of high quality scholars we need to provide them with a wide range of experiences and teach them how to apply their ideas to solving some of the most pressing issues of our time,” said Daly.

The inaugural CRASSH event was held on Nov. 20 and drew more than 75 people, including students from regional colleges. Eight UC San Diego undergraduate students in the arts, humanities and social sciences were chosen to present their work, which included a special performance by Brian Bose, a theatre and dance major. In addition, two recent alumni were invited to speak to students about the career opportunities available as well as provide advice for finding success.



*Ricky Qi*

UC San Diego humanities alumnus and National Geographic Young Explorer Ricky Qi shared his personal journey about finding his path. After changing majors several times as an undergraduate, Qi realized passion is a vital ingredient for success. After graduation and leaving a job that he knew he was not suited for, Qi followed his intuition to the heart of the Himalayas. There he has spent the last 14 months working on his first feature-length film, “Under One Roof,”—a documentary about one of China’s last matriarchal societies as it resists the pressures of modernity.

“I was always second-guessing my major in the humanities when all of my friends were studying medicine and engineering,” said Qi, who was inspired to pursue filmmaking after taking a history class focusing on Shanghai film in the 1920s. “I have come to understand that you have to enjoy what you’re doing to be truly successful.”

An important goal of CRASSH is to encourage students to participate in undergraduate research, which is open to all fields of study—from psychology to ethnic studies and Spanish literature. Students are able to partner with faculty and graduate students on a variety of hands-on initiatives, ranging from collecting data to contributing to a publication. The experience can serve to ignite or reaffirm a

student's interest in pursuing graduate school. During the inaugural conference students were able to talk with campus representatives about their graduate school and career aspirations and the resources available to assist them.



“I gained a lot of knowledge of programs offered here to help me further my career goals, as well as a renewed appreciation for the brilliant research that originally persuaded me to attend UC San Diego,” said Elizabeth Hodgdon, a sophomore at Roosevelt College who would like to obtain a graduate degree in psychology with a specialty in autism. “I made connections with professors and coordinators and learned of the importance of developing research skills for graduate school and beyond.”

Set to become an annual event, next year CRASSH will be open to students from regional colleges in order to inspire potential collaborations amongst local scholars. In addition to the conference, Academic Enrichment Programs also offers assistance with securing fellowships and scholarships, matching students with faculty mentors and graduate school preparation. To find out more, visit their [website](#).

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