

## New Mentoring Program at Jacobs School of Engineering Connects Graduate and Undergraduate Students



When two UC San Diego graduate students set out to create a new mentoring program at the Jacobs School of Engineering that pairs graduate students and undergraduates, they didn't expect to be flooded with applications. They also didn't expect the massive turn out at the program's first meeting this month. But Margie Mathewson and Laura Connelly say they are now expecting the program to keep growing and building an even stronger sense of community at the Jacobs School.

The Jacobs Undergraduate Mentoring Program, or JUMP, brings together 10 graduate students and 60 undergraduates. They are divided into small groups of seven, comprised of one graduate student, two seniors and juniors and four freshmen and sophomores. The small groups are set to meet every other week. The large group will meet at least twice a quarter. Students also will be able to ask questions online through e-mentoring.

The program is a partnership between the IDEA Student Center and the Jacobs Graduate Student Council.

It was born out of Mathewson and Connelly's undergraduate college experience. As a female engineer at the University of Illinois, Mathewson received a good deal of support and mentoring. That, in turn, motivated her to apply to graduate school and become a bioengineer. By contrast, Connelly, who was an undergraduate at Cornell University, said she had little support. When she decided to apply to the doctoral program in materials science and engineering, she had no one to turn to for advice.

Connelly said she hoped the new mentoring program would help fill the gaps she had experienced as an undergraduate. Mathewson is hoping to replicate the successful program that supported her in Illinois. Both said they wanted to do their part.

"As a graduate student, it allows us to help and give back to UCSD beyond the lab," said Connelly. "It makes it more meaningful."

"We want people to keep coming back," Mathewson said. "We really intend this to be a place where you're not only learning, but you're also networking without realizing you're networking."

The ultimate goal is to build a sense of community among students, said Gennie Miranda, assistant director and retention coordinator at the IDEA Student Center. First generation college-going students and under-represented students are particularly encouraged to take part, she said.

JUMP is supported by L3-Communications. The company also helped establish the program's structure. "We can see this program growing by leaps and bounds," Miranda said. "But we want to make sure it's built on a solid foundation."

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