At the University of California San Diego, challenging convention is our most cherished tradition. The Campaign for UC San Diego is our $2 billion university-wide comprehensive fundraising effort to empower the next generation of innovators to blaze a new path toward revolutionary ideas, unexpected answers, lifesaving discoveries, and planet-changing impact.

For more information about supporting the UC San Diego Innovation Ecosystem or making other contributions to advance our vital work, please contact:

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UC San Diego is one of the most productive universities in the world. Each year, our researchers collectively drive a $1 billion discovery enterprise, fostering a climate of exploration, growth, and audacious aspiration. Our forward-leaning culture encourages innovation of all kinds, making UC San Diego the fourth-best university in the nation in terms of startup creation (The Milken Institute, 2017).

With innovation and entrepreneurship a top strategic priority of Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, UC San Diego seeks a collaborative ecosystem of programs optimizing the experience and impact of global leaders in the making. The Basement, a campus-wide incubator, provides valuable resources to student entrepreneurs during their earliest exploration. Accelerators operated by specific professional schools or academic divisions splice specialized research expertise with guidance on advancing revenue-generating concepts.

Combined with our campus’s exceptional technical resources, these programs constitute the elements of what may become the world’s most effective generator of inspired startups. Student enrollment will surge in coming years, and with it more hours spent ideating, trying, building, failing, fixing, perfecting, overcoming. With resources helping students connect one immersive experience to the next, their profile as entrepreneurs catalyzes long before graduation. It begins as they create.

Through partnership with visionary philanthropists in the Campaign for UC San Diego, we seek to alchemize our Innovation Ecosystem from a portfolio of high-performing but dispersed endeavors into a comprehensive continuum of startup development, reaching across stages of individual growth and learning as well as the full spectrum of human activity. More students means more opportunity. And opportunity is what we make of it.

Ultimately, innovation is about more than differentiation—it’s about value. The ideas of our students, faculty, and alumni offer unlimited chances to create value—every conceivable sphere of human endeavor stands to thrive. By making a gift to UC San Diego’s Innovation Ecosystem initiative through the Campaign for UC San Diego, you cultivate visionary leaders driving society to exhilarating heights. You level up what’s possible.
Experience as foundation

UC San Diego is home to many of the world’s best-regarded leaders in innovation and entrepreneurship. Jacobs School of Engineering and Rady School of Management have teamed up to create the cutting-edge Institute for the Global Entrepreneur (IGE), and UC San Diego Health leads in innovating health care management and delivery. Innovation and entrepreneurship programs provide students and faculty with the tools to launch promising companies from within the campus context, with resulting solutions as far-ranging as sleep-promoting ear buds to a coastal-parameter measuring surfboard.

Innovation is distributed across campus, a fluidity reflected in the diversity of our innovative alumni. For example, Nick Woodman ’97, who graduated with a degree in Visual Arts, founded globally ubiquitous GoPro, while Elena Foulkes Lucas, MPIA ’12, has already gained serious traction with her School of Global Policy and Strategy degree for her social enterprises in the clean tech and energy sectors.

“I WOKE UP ONE MORNING, AND THE COMPANY I STARTED WITH MY COLLEGE FRIENDS WAS NOW THE FASTEST GROWING DIGITAL CAPTURE COMPANY IN THE WORLD.”

Nick Woodman ’97
CEO of GoPro
We invite donors committed to empowering UC San Diego innovation to consider a number of options for philanthropic contribution. With your support, we can provide students, faculty, and alumni supportive services and resources for moving high-potential ideas from the workbench into the lives of users around the world.

Confident, well-prepared entrepreneurs will graduate ready to start up companies and, importantly, secure the funding necessary for job creation. Mentorship at all stages of startup creation will better position emerging entrepreneurs to market-test prototypes, develop strong business plans, and represent their vision and objectives with clarity and purpose. As important, they will improve the communication skills and resilience vital to forming partnerships in our ever-changing, interconnected world.

Your support will not only improve the future prospects of our students and the span of opportunity for our innovative faculty, but with a ripple effect will benefit the regions where they hire, the businesses servicing their missions, and the wider communities enriched by surges in prosperity.

“EVERYONE HAS TALENT, IT’S JUST MOST PEOPLE PREFER TO TAKE THE ELEVATOR OVER THE STAIRS.”
Taner Halıcıoğlu ’96
CEO of SEED and Keshif Ventures
The Basement

Originally funded with seed support from three alumni, The Basement is UC San Diego’s undergraduate accelerator and provides space along with mentorship for students to develop their business and product concepts. Ultimately, we hope to engage UC San Diego innovators and entrepreneurs regionally and globally starting with the undergraduate student population and continuing on through our alumni network.

The Basement offers students the experience of launching real startups, learning from mentors and peers and developing capacities beyond the reach of traditional academic studies. For our student entrepreneurs, learning and doing harmonize, an apprenticeship in lifelong growth. For our alumni mentors, their UC San Diego journey continues in a rewarding network that nourishes student discovery.

With visionary support from our philanthropic partners, The Basement will continue to expand as a cross-campus resource, familiar to our entire student population and alumni community. Through The Basement’s growth, we will stimulate economic development and opportunity in the community and region by increasing the number and diversity of startups spun out of UC San Diego, and through them redefining the outer limits of societal possibility.

“STARTING YOUR OWN COMPANY TAKES A WILLINGNESS TO FAIL. SOME PEOPLE HAVE IT, AND OTHERS DON’T.”

Raj Krishnan ’06
CEO of Biological Dynamics
Accelerating Innovations to Market (AIM) provides support to advance UC San Diego technologies to commercial impact. Coordinated by the Office of Innovation and Commercialization (OIC), the program invests in milestone-based projects that develop proof-of-concept and de-risk early-stage technologies. Rather than speculating about industry priorities, projects engage with industry stakeholders at the outset, positioned for relevance and an informed sense of value. AIM provides UC San Diego graduate students, postdoctoral associates, researchers, and faculty up to 12-month awards in two tracks: 1) software-based technologies and 2) devices and materials. The program provides additional opportunities to build industry relationships and move technologies toward commercial application.

IGE Tech and Business Accelerators The Institute for the Global Entrepreneur (IGE) is a joint endeavor of Jacobs School of Engineering and Rady School of Management, offering crucial resources to prepare the next generation of entrepreneurial engineering leaders. IGE blends the Jacobs School’s dynamic, hands-on approach to technical innovation with the Rady School’s rising reputation for generating entrepreneurial success. Participants in IGE programs finish with a global set of competencies, complementing original discovery with powerful business acumen.

Many ideas focused on the prediction, treatment, and prevention of disease show great promise but stall far too early due to a lack of funding for translation to a product. Proof of concept funding can boost researchers during the earliest phase of exploring a marketable discovery. To improve the odds that promising ideas meet their potential, UC San Diego Health offers a two-phase program milestone-driven seed funding to add commercial value to medical technologies, bringing them closer to commercialization or company formation. The combined Medical Entrepreneurship, Education, and Training (MEET) program attracts student trainees as well as faculty and post-doctoral innovators in various areas of health sciences. Submitted applications are prepared as a first stage toward a final goal of forming a business. Grants are awarded to the top ideas that support venture formation and job creation, with business leaders and investors participating as jurists on award panels, and faculty from both UC San Diego Health and Rady School of Management serving as mentors throughout the venture acceleration process. Further support of new ventures may be offered in the form of operational space in either the Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute (ACTRI) or Rady School of Management.

California Institute for Innovation and Development (CIID) The California Institute for Innovation and Development (CIID) at the Rady School was founded to support and catalyze the University of California’s innovation leadership and entrepreneurship initiatives. CIID programs, along with many other unique and experiential learning programs at the Rady School, help students and alumni explore the opportunities available through entrepreneurship and innovation by way of campus-wide business accelerators and incubators, student-led venture funds, and business plan competitions. Many of CIID’s offerings explore innovation and entrepreneurship for underrepresented groups such as female entrepreneurs or veterans.

A central element of these opportunities is the availability of mentors, who provide feedback and guidance to teams in the early phases of their startups. Mentors come from a variety of different backgrounds with experience in startups either through building their own companies or providing financial support to growing businesses. Open to the entire campus, mentors may be paired with entrepreneurs who are students, faculty, or even non-academic university employees.
Rady Venture Fund

The Rady Venture Fund provides both investment capital to entrepreneurs but also education opportunities and hands-on learning experience for Rady MBAs and other UC San Diego graduate students. Students gain exposure to the investment process through courses in venture finance, investment analysis, and venture capital fund management, where the fund offers a real-time view of investment opportunities and results. Students screen investment leads, perform due diligence, make investment recommendations, and monitor portfolio companies. Held by the UC San Diego Foundation, the fund is evergreen, and any investment returns are reinvested in the fund.

Triton Innovation Challenge

The Triton Innovation Challenge, now in its sixth year, is a business competition focused on fostering creativity and bringing to the spotlight commercially promising, environmentally focused technologies generated by the finest minds at UC San Diego. The program is presented as a joint partnership of Jacobs School of Engineering, Rady School of Management, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

The competition awards cash prizes to support new and innovative ideas that relate to the environment — comes from, inspired by, or directly impacts nature. Social innovation ideas and teams with or without a prototype are encouraged to apply. All participants are also eligible to compete for investment funding from the Rady Venture Fund and Triton Technology Fund. Anyone (students, faculty, and staff) affiliated with UC San Diego is invited to apply.

StartR Inclusion

The StartR Inclusion program is a one-of-its-kind accelerator that was created to increase and encourage diversity in entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on increasing the number of women founding startups. As statistics compiled by the Center for American Progress attest, the need is pronounced: only 6 percent of venture capital firms featured female partners in 2015, down 10 percent from 1999. In 2014, women were just 20 percent of executives, senior officers, and management in U.S. high-tech industries. As recently as 2016, 43 percent of the 150 highest-earning public companies in Silicon Valley had no female executive officers.

Participants take part in StartR Inclusion workshops focused on various aspects of launching startup — team building, leadership, performing a market assessment and obtaining customers’ feedback, creating a value proposition, validating business models, and understanding financing strategies needed to launch the business. Each startup works with a mentor and meets regularly with advisors to monitor and encourage their progress.

Social Venture Accelerator

The Social Venture Accelerator (SVA) is designed to support students of all levels at UC San Diego who are interested in creating social impact through entrepreneurship. SVA helps them to pursue their dreams of starting innovative, scalable, companies addressing important social issues. Faculty ventures notably include Rady School partnerships with The Preuss School UC San Diego, focusing on startups in the education sector with an emphasis on students from underserved communities; and Scripps Institution of Oceanography, focusing on environment-sustaining startups such as Surya, which links the international carbon credit market with developing communities.

SVA teams participate in workshops where they explore social entrepreneurship and focus on the various aspects of launching a startup. They are supported by a team of mentors and advisors with experience in social entrepreneurship.

Veteran Venture Accelerator

Veterans comprise a critical segment of San Diego’s population, offering superior leadership ability and a commitment to mission success. Data suggest that veterans have an especially strong track record of success within venture capital and investment bank portfolios; however, they are constrained in the earliest phases of startup development by a lack of financing and private-sector and business design experience. The Veteran Venture Accelerator provides mentorship and consultation to veteran startup founders, and awards seed grants to those aspiring to create job-producing ventures.

Custom training programs specifically help veterans refine and develop business ideas and formulate a business plan for commercialization and venture formation. UC San Diego is committed to connecting veterans with all components of our Innovation Ecosystem, fostering their greater success individually and as powerful drivers of our dynamic economy.

StartR

StartR is a nonprofit accelerator program for Rady School of Management students and alumni designed to provide entrepreneurs the tools needed to start and grow their businesses.

Founded by a group of Rady students in 2013, this free, six-month long acceleration program held on the Rady School campus accepts up to six teams per cohort. The program includes workshops, mentoring, advice, and access to other resources for early-stage companies. At the conclusion of the program, teams present their pitches at Demo Day, attended by investors, industry experts, and the San Diego community.
With your gift, you join UC San Diego in advancing our Innovation Ecosystem through the Campaign for UC San Diego. You bolster great ideas by investing in those who generate them, giving the practice and patience to see their successes through. Ultimately, our goal is to improve the rate for translating great ideas into great transformations and to become the institution of choice for people with ideas. Providing resources here on campus lets our entrepreneurs pursue multiple aspirations at once. Students who launch a startup during their undergraduate experience emerge with both a degree and firsthand knowledge about planning, customers, and growth. Faculty and graduate scholars generating market-worthy applications can continue with their research and academic service. And alumni enjoy a more comprehensive relationship with the university key to their early, individual transformations.

Even when an idea never makes it to market, campus entrepreneurs learn to be resilient while tapping their creativity. The value of a university innovation ecosystem is not so much the bottom line, as it is the corollary returns on high-achieving individuals and their cascading successes in a prosperous, healthy, and hope-inspiring society. We move always to what comes next, learning along the way.

The Campaign For UC San Diego

Help us continue the nontradition.