

BioSci Peer Mentor Program

Description

BioSci Peer Mentor Program

"Hello everyone, My name is Nathan Onpaeng and I am a Biology/Bioinformatics major from Murrieta, CA, and I am graduating this Spring.

I have been a peer mentor throughout my 3rd and 4th year and I have enjoyed it immensely. One of the things I enjoy the most is being able to give them knowledge I wish I knew my first year and hearing that they benefited from it in a positive way. I find a lot of pride that I am able to be a mentor in the BioSci Program, and hope that I can make a positive impact in their lives somehow. I look forward to seeing how this program continues to grow for years to come!"

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Nathan OnpaengBioSci Peer Mentor and Bio/Bioinformatics Major



“As a BioSci Peer Mentor, I have the privilege of extending my support, guidance, and resources to incoming first-generation students. Drawing from my own experiences as a 4th-year Biology major, I provide group workshops and one-on-one sessions to help my mentees thrive not just academically, but also as leaders beyond UCSD.”

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Ivan ChavezBioSci Peer Mentor and General Biology Major

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“Hi everyone! My name is Sophia Parmisano (she/her) and I’m a third-year (class of 2024) Human Biology major in Warren College. I’m from a town called Oxnard, CA and enjoy the outdoors! One of my favorite aspects of the BioSci Peer Mentor Program is being able to connect with first-year students and be a contact of support and guidance for them. Adjusting to college life and academics can be challenging, so it’s important to have a community and connections to cheer you on!”

Sophia Parmisano BioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major



“My name is Ashley Olvera and I am a 4th year Human Biology student interested in pursuing medical school in the near future. I am privileged to be chosen as a BioSci Peer Mentor and guide my students through their first year here at UCSD as it can be daunting, and even more so without any guidance. I hope to be a support system for my mentees and provide them with the tools to succeed in the STEM

field and future endeavors, whether it is academics or how to obtain a position in a lab. Can't wait to see my students succeed and to experience this before graduating in the spring!"

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Ashley OlveraBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major



“Hi! My name is Hailey and I’m a third-year human biology major in Marshall College! As a peer mentor, I’m grateful for the opportunity to be a resource for incoming students and have the privilege of passing on the lessons I’ve learned as a first-gen college student. I’ve really enjoyed working with the best team of mentors and mentees to build our community. I’m so excited to see all of my mentees grow and thrive during their first year at UCSD!”

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Hailey StanfieldBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major

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"I am Aracely Diaz, a third-year Human Biology major at Revelle College. As a first-generation student, I have had my fair share of struggles navigating my time at UC San Diego. Thankfully, at the beginning of my journey at UC San Diego, I came across various programs, which have introduced me to other students in their third and fourth year. They went out of their way to help me navigate campus on both a professional and personal level. These programs have played a large part in my life and inspired me to become a peer mentor. Being a peer mentor for the BioSci Program has been one of the best accomplishments in my undergraduate journey, as I can help other incoming students throughout their first year, just as much as I was helped by my fellow mentors."

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Aracely DiazBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major



"It has been a pleasure working with such inspiring co-mentors and mentees this year! I loved being able to relate my past experiences with each of my mentee's current struggles and triumphs. It has been very rewarding to give them advice that I wished I was given during my first year and watch them apply this knowledge. Whether it be a joint meeting, workshop, or a simple text check-in, I loved getting to know each of my mentees and watching them grow throughout the year. I'm so proud of them for all getting through their first quarter at UCSD and I'm so excited for what they are going to achieve in the future!"

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Rebecca GinBioSci Peer Mentor

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"Hello, my name is Shannon Barret and I am a third year General Biology major here at UCSD. College was a very lonely and isolating experience the first time for me, so becoming a peer mentor has allowed me to provide the support and assistance that I wished I had during my first year here at UCSD. I am so grateful to be able to connect with my mentees through this program and reassure them that each and every one of them are capable of reaching their goals no matter what!"

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Shannon BarretBioSci Peer Mentor and General Biology Major



“Hello my name is Anakaren Perez I am a fifth-year general biology major from Calexico. One of the greatest experiences at UCSD has been being a mentor to first year biology students. Being a first-generation student and having the privilege to mentor other first-generation students going through the same journey in higher education has been an enriching experience. I will never forget my time as a mentor and hope to have a lasting positive impact on my mentees.”

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Anakaren PerezBioSci Peer Mentor and General Biology Major

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“Hi everyone! I’m Jahnavi, a third-year Human biology major from San Jose, California. My favorite experiences while peer mentoring have truly been just getting to know my mentees and learning about their lives! In the past 2 years as a peer mentor, I have learned so much about myself, and meeting all my mentees has given me a greater sense of perspective and mindfulness. Starting college during the peak of the pandemic led to so much confusion, and it often meant that I had to figure things out alone. I’m just so glad that I can be someone to help other first-years feel less alone. I feel privileged to be able to use my first-year experience to help freshman navigate their first year on campus.”

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Jahnavi ShahBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major

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“My name is Lindsey China and I’m currently a peer mentor in the BioSci program. I’m a second-year neurobiology major with a minor in bioethics, hoping to pursue medicine in the future. I’m fortunate enough to have had a lot of support in getting to college. I wanted to pay it forward and help those who have not had the same experience figuring out how to navigate UCSD and getting through their first year. Being a mentor has been an incredibly rewarding experience, watching my mentees learn and grow both as students and as people has been great to see. They have all gained so much confidence in themselves and are so driven, it truly was a privilege to work with them this year.”

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Lindsey ChinaBioSci Peer Mentor and Neurobiology major



" I have been so blessed to have worked with such an amazing team of peer mentors, advisors like Onyeka and Janni, and most especially, my peer mentor group! They have been through so much this year and even though we were all busy with school and exams, we came together and found our time to support one another and enjoy each other's company. Thank you so much to the BioSci Peer Mentor program, I am fortunate to have this experience before graduating this spring!"

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Katelyn LeeBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major

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“: Being a peer mentor for first years majoring in biological science is one of the most rewarding positions I have held. I am able to not only connect with them over the similar experiences that I have been through and that they are currently going through but also I am able to give them advice that I wish someone told me when I was a first year: That getting into research is tough and it is okay to be faced with countless number of rejections before one acceptance, that the quarter system is extremely fast and difficult, and most importantly that I am enough and that I belong in the biological sciences. Watching my mentees grow each and every quarter (whether that be achieving their targeted GPA or getting a research position) is such a pleasure and privilege.”

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Albert NguyenBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology major

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Hello, I am Maximino Torres, a current 4th year Muir student in the BioSci mentor program acting as a mentor. My current experiences with this program and helping my mentees is that I give them a lot of resources that help them study for classes and support them when school gets overwhelming for them. I shared my experience to my mentees and they took the things I say to heart which led them to asking more questions scheduling classes for new quarters, what classes to take, my own class experiences, and other information regarding jobs and lab positions. The best way I support my mentees is by giving them the resources they need when they talk to me. I also tell them to make time for themselves and use it as a mental break so, my mentees don't get too overwhelmed by everything and can have fun within their college experiences. So far, I've done my best and helped my mentees with different situations such as feeling scared about exams to problems with roommates.

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Maximino TorresBioSci Peer Mentor and Neurobiology major



“When I first came to UCSD the first thing I did was create a 4 year plan for myself with the help of my academic counselors and now as a mentor in the BioSci Mentor Program I have the privilege of telling my mentees that creating a 4 year plan for themselves will be very helpful throughout their years here at UCSD.”-

Marwa Mohammad AzimBioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major



"I believe so much in mentoring because every successful individual at a point in their lives look up to those with experience to navigate every path and challenges they encounter. No man is an island not even when it comes to science. We live in a collaborative world where every ideas count. Mentoring therefore provides a platform for many to learn, adapt to big transitions and reach out when the journey gets tougher. "

Onyeka Chukwudozie Division of Biological Sciences, Doctoral Student, and assistant to BioSci Peer

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Mentor Program



“Being a peer mentor with the BioSci program has allowed me to guide and support students throughout their journey here at UCSD. I have had the privilege to connect with my mentees and provide them with resources that I was initially unaware of coming into this school. Hearing the same questions I had during my first year and being able to bridge that gap and provide tools for them to succeed has been such an honor. I can’t wait to see how all of our BioSci mentees thrive in the next upcoming years and beyond.”

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Alejandra Cueva-Becerra BioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major



“During my first year, I felt pretty lost. There were so many resources and events going on around campus that it felt overwhelming to keep track of everything. I wished there was someone to guide me and tell me about the resources I didn’t know I had access to. As a mentor, I hope to provide that help to my mentees so that they can not only achieve their academic goals but also find ways to enrich their student experience!”

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Ainha DinhBioSci Peer Mentor and Biology major

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Gaining acceptance into a STEM program at a major research university can come with challenges. Such challenges may include becoming part of a community, locating support and resources when needed, understanding the culture, navigating institutional processes, and specifically, developing an identity as a scientist in the discipline. Successfully navigating this can translate into academic success and persistence in a STEM career. The BioSci Peer Mentor program seeks to develop new student's sense of belonging, grow their self-confidence, and provide a space to learn to navigate the University and the academic world.



UC San Diego

SANFORD INSTITUTE FOR EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

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The BioSci Peer Mentor program was initiated in 2021. It pairs first-year BioSci majors with mentors of Senior or Junior standing. The focus is primarily on first-generation academic and students from groups who are underrepresented in STEM.

The program is offered in collaboration with the Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion, in particular the [Center for Empathy and Social Justice in Human Health](#).

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