



**UC San Diego**  
SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

**Spring 2024**





# 01

## BUMMP's Year of Success: A Look Back at the Impactful Initiatives

The Bio-Undergraduate Mentorship Program (BUMMP) has had an outstanding year, marked by significant milestones and impactful events. Reflecting on the accomplishments, it's clear that the community of mentors and mentees has grown stronger, more engaged, and more productive than ever before.

The year began with a bang as BUMMP organized a Welcome

Lunch during the Fall quarter, designed to bring together mentors and mentees and kick-start the new academic year. This event was a tremendous success, with over 300 participants—the largest turnout ever for a BUMMP event. The lunch provided a fantastic opportunity to foster a sense of community and set the stage for a year filled with fruitful mentorship.

Momentum continued to build



throughout the year. BUMMP now has over 225 active mentees and more than 150 dedicated mentors. Together, they facilitated over 300 hours of mentorship during the Winter quarter alone. This impressive engagement highlights the commitment of members to fostering academic and professional growth.

The effectiveness of the mentorship is evident in the quarterly data collected from mentees. An impressive 96% reported that their most recent mentorship meeting was productive and meaningful. The mentorship sessions primarily focus on key areas such as research, academic planning and preparation, and career planning, ensuring that mentees receive comprehensive support in their educational and professional journeys.

To cap off an incredibly successful year, BUMMP hosted its third annual student symposium, BASS, on Tuesday, April 30th, in the Price Center East Ballroom. This all-day event showcased the impressive research being conducted by mentees and mentors. Attendees were treated to a keynote speaker and a banquet dinner, making it a memorable celebration of the hard work and achievements of BUMMP members.

The symposium was a fitting





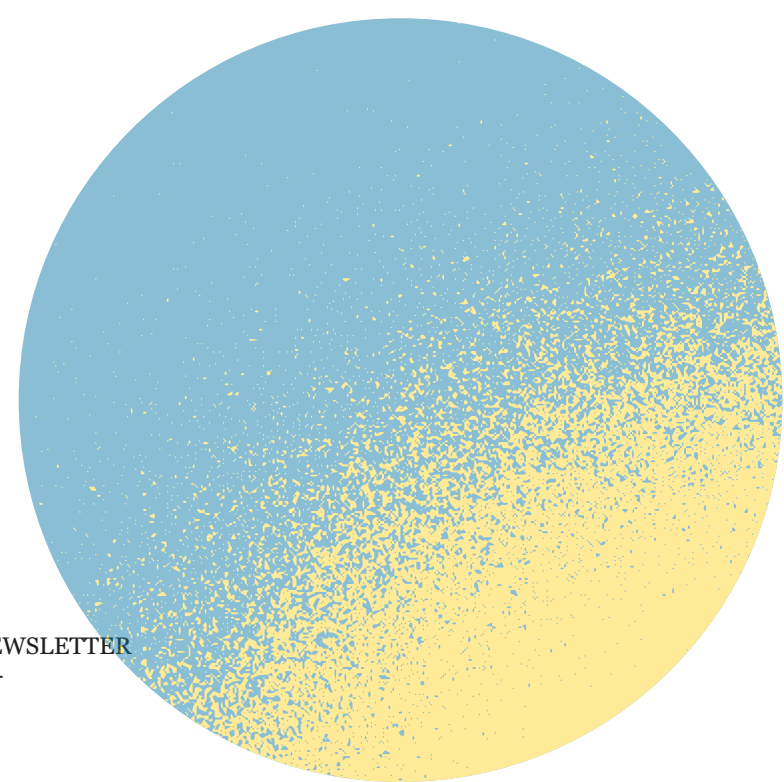
conclusion to a year of growth, learning, and community building. It provided a platform for mentees to share their research and for the broader BioSci community to celebrate the remarkable impact of the BUMMP program.

Building on this year's successes, BUMMP is committed to enhancing the mentorship program further. The goal remains to foster an environment where every mentee can thrive academically and professionally, with anticipation for another year of achievements and community building.

Special thanks go to all mentors, mentees, and supporters for making this year a resounding success. Their dedication and hard work are the cornerstones of BUMMP's

impact and growth. Here's to another year of excellence in mentorship!

To learn more about BUMMP, [visit their website](#) or contact them at [bummp@ucsd.edu](mailto:bummp@ucsd.edu).



UC San Diego proudly recognizes Ughbad Farah, a Ph.D. student in Biological Sciences, for her induction into the Bouchet Graduate Honor Society. Farah's research on algae as a biofuel source and her commitment to inclusivity in science highlight her exceptional achievements.



## UC San Diego Celebrates Ughbad Farah: 2024 Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductee

# 02

UC San Diego proudly announces the induction of five graduate students into the prestigious Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, a national organization recognizing scholars dedicated to social

justice, diversity, leadership, and academic excellence. Among these distinguished scholars is Ughbad Farah, a fourth-year Ph.D. student in Biological Sciences.

“ **Despite the negative inner monologues, despite the harrowing stories I heard, I decided to take a chance with everything and put myself out there despite my imposter syndrome being at its peak: grad school, a career as a scientist, you name it...And it has been the most beautiful and rewarding journey of my life so far.** ”

Farah's research focuses on the ecology and evolution of commercially important algae as a potential biofuel source. Her work investigates how limited light, nutrients, and temperature affect algal growth and productivity, aiming to incorporate ecological and evolutionary principles into building resilient, productive systems.

Farah's passion for science is driven by a desire to provide opportunities for students to succeed. "Being in the world of science can be a transformative experience," she says.

"Everyone deserves a chance to engulf themselves in science."

Despite facing challenges and battling imposter syndrome, Farah has embraced her journey in graduate school and a scientific career, describing it as the most rewarding experience of her life.

For more about Ugbad Farah and her inspiring journey, [read the full article](#).

To learn more about the 2024 inductees, [read the full article](#).

## Join the Upcoming CaSAS Monthly Seminar Series

# 03

The fourth installment of the Community and Science Advancements in Spanish (CaSAS) Monthly Seminar Series will be held on Thursday, June 20, from 4:00-5:00 PM, followed by a social hour at Bonner Hall, Room 2130. The June speakers are Christian Cazares, PhD, a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at UCSD, and Samantha Morales, an Account Manager at Leica Microsystems.

CaSAS aims to promote scientific discourse in Spanish within the UCSD and the greater San Diego/Baja California community. The seminars, conducted entirely in Spanish, highlight the work of scientists at various career stages, fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for local scientific interaction.

third Thursday of each month at the same time and location. Upcoming dates include:

- July 18, 2024
- August 15, 2024
- September 19, 2024
- October 17, 2024
- November 21, 2024
- December 12, 2024

For those interested in staying informed, learning more about CaSAS, or becoming a speaker, [please fill out the interest form](#). For any questions, contact CaSAS at [CaSAS-info-g@ucsd.edu](mailto:CaSAS-info-g@ucsd.edu).

Follow CaSAS on Twitter [@CaSAS\\_UCSD](#) and Instagram [@casas\\_ucsd](#) for updates and more information.

The seminar series continues on the



## UC San Diego Students and Faculty Awarded Prestigious HHMI Gilliam Fellowship

UC San Diego's School of Biological Sciences proudly announced that graduate student Andrea Sama and Assistant Professor Jazz Dickinson were awarded the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Gilliam Fellowship. This fellowship, awarded to only 50 advisor-student pairs nationwide, recognizes outstanding research and a commitment to creating an inclusive scientific ecosystem.

Sama, a third-year graduate student, investigated the impact of environmental stress on plant metabolism in Dickinson's lab. Her research aimed to develop stress-tolerant crops by understanding how metabolites help plants cope with stressors like climate change and drought.

The Gilliam Fellowship also supported the "Fireside Chat with Faculty" series launched by the UC San Diego chapter of the Society for the



Andrea Sama

Credit: Rachel Weinstein



Jazz Dickinson

Credit: Erik Jepsenv

“Our goal for this series is to demystify a scientific career, provide representation to students interested in science and build a strong community among students and faculty at UC San Diego.”

Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). This series invited underrepresented minorities to share their career journeys and the resources that helped them succeed in STEM fields.

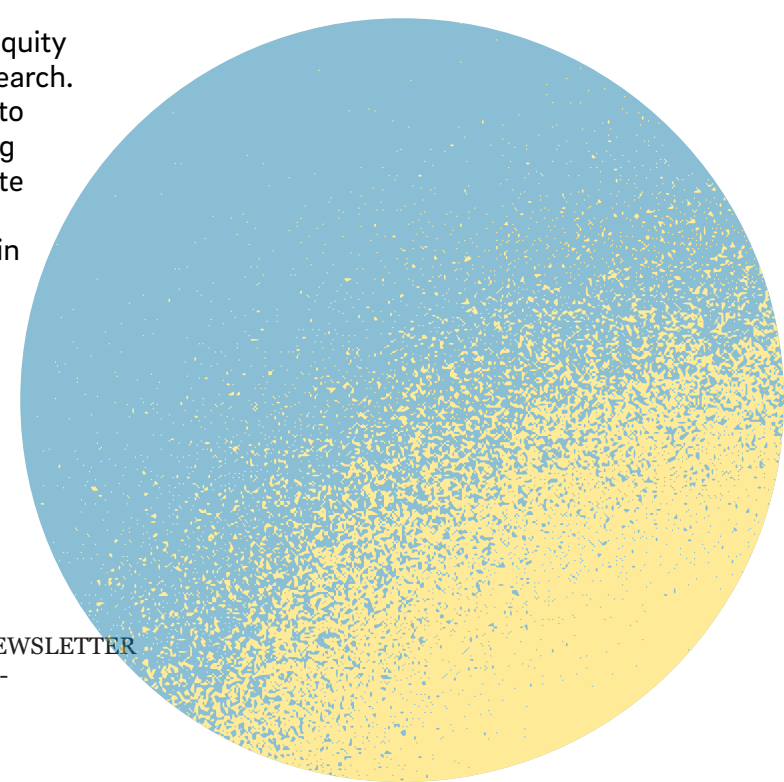
Assistant Professor Carmela Alcántara from Columbia University was the keynote speaker at the event on May 10, 2024, where she discussed how discrimination and stress affect the Latinx community's mental and physical health.

Sama's commitment to equity extended beyond her research. She organized programs to alleviate food and housing insecurity among graduate students and mentored undergraduate students in various programs.

HHMI's Gilliam Fellows

Program, honoring the late James H. Gilliam, Jr., emphasized the importance of mentorship in realizing students' potential. Advisors participated in a year-long mentorship development course, fostering a supportive scientific community.

To learn more, [read the full article](#).







## Torrell Foree: Leading Diversity Initiatives at UC San Diego

05

UC San Diego's School of Biological Sciences welcomes Torrell Foree as the first director of diversity initiatives. With a background that spans a career in education and a commitment to social justice, Foree aims to weave equity, diversity, and

inclusion (EDI) into the fabric of the school's culture.

Foree's journey began at California State University Fullerton, where his passion for education was ignited. His transformative experiences there, particularly influenced by the book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," led him to a career in fostering inclusive educational environments.

At UC San Diego, Foree

plans to enhance how community members access information and re-examine onboarding processes to ensure everyone feels connected and included. He also seeks to integrate personal identities with scientific pursuits, emphasizing that cultural and ethnic backgrounds should complement scientific endeavors.

Foree's initiatives include launching a peer mentoring



program, “People of Nia,” to support students academically and culturally. He envisions a future where race, gender, and income do not predict success and where EDI is integral to the academic experience.

The appointment of Foree is part of the School of Biological Sciences’ broader effort to achieve inclusive excellence, supported by Dean Kit Pogliano and Associate Dean James Nieh. Foree’s role is pivotal in creating a more inclusive scientific community at UC San Diego.

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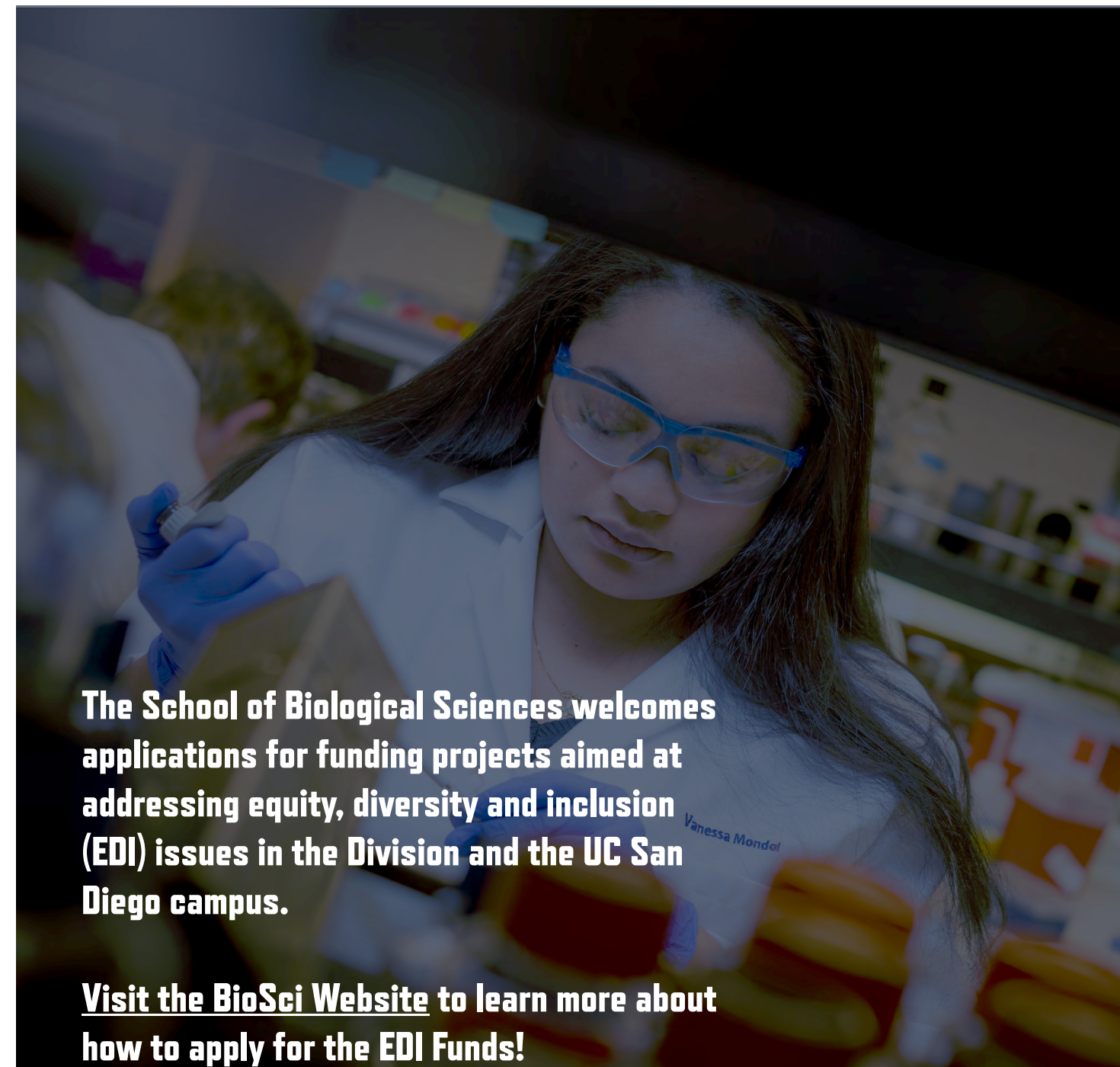
For more details on Foree’s vision and initiatives, [read the full article](#).



Torrell Foree, new director of diversity initiatives for the School of Biological Sciences

Credit: Rikako Ono

# BioSci EDI Funds



**The School of Biological Sciences welcomes applications for funding projects aimed at addressing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues in the Division and the UC San Diego campus.**

**Visit the BioSci Website to learn more about how to apply for the EDI Funds!**