

# UCSD PRIME PIPELINE PRESS



Fall 2007

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## INTRODUCING THE UCSD HEALTH SCIENCES INSTITUTE (UHSI)

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It is my pleasure to introduce to you the new UCSD Health Sciences Institute (UHSI). UHSI is a premiere science enrichment academy which prepares students to excel academically while actively addressing health issues in their communities. UHSI programs assist high school, community college and undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds to become experts in various fields, and advocates for change. The academy will officially launch in the fall of 2008.

UHSI is comprised of three pre-existing pipeline programs - The Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC), the UniversityLink Medical Science Program (ULMSP), and the UCSD Research Methodology Training Lab (RMTL) (these



Jose Cruz, Ed. M. is the UCSD Health Sciences Institute Director. He not only has extensive experience working with student enhancement programs, he was also a participant of various programs which helped shape his current success.

programs were described in our previous issue). UHSI will expand these programs by implementing a peer mentoring element, establishing a middle and high school "Doctor's Academy" including service learning and college preparatory components, reinforcing the students' commitment to social justice and interpersonal relationships, and expanding the evaluation to assess such skills, attitudes and behaviors.

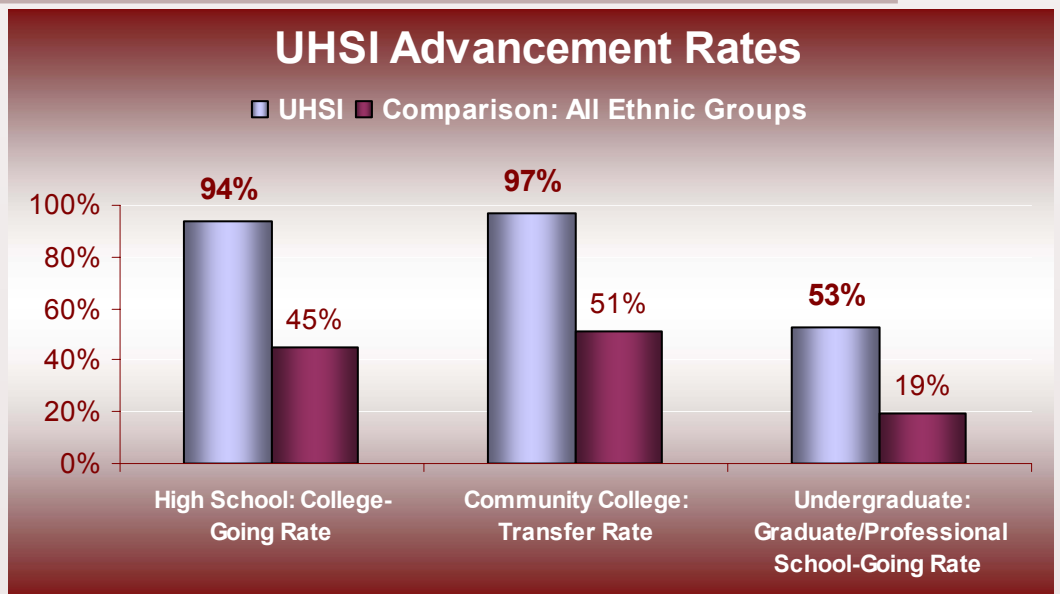
UHSI allows the University to remain focused on providing quality opportunities to diverse students; not only for their academic enrichment but also for their social empowerment.

Below are some accomplishments of our pipeline programs before integration into UHSI. Outcomes are expected to improve now that the programs have adopted a new mission and more explicit measurable objectives.

## The Impact of UHSI Programs

One of the main goals of the UCSD Health Sciences Institute (UHSI) is to ensure students advance to the next step in the pipeline. UHSI serves students at the middle and high school, community college, and UCSD undergraduate levels. UHSI students have advanced exceptionally well compared to their counterparts state and nationwide.

UHSI students also tend to remain and graduate in the biomedical sciences. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of high school students, 95% of community college students in RMTL, and 86% of undergraduates have graduated and/or been retained in these fields after their advancement.



Note: College-going rates for comparison are statewide, other rates are nationwide.

# Your Pipeline

The UCSD School of Medicine Pipeline Pump consists of programs at different

levels of the educational pathway to provide you with the tools you need to successfully address disparities affecting at-risk groups. You may transfer from one program to the next as you advance academically,

thereby going through your "Pipeline" of academic enrichment programs. Below is an illustration of this pipeline.

In this issue we are highlight-

ing our University Link Medical Science Program (ULMSP). For more information on a particular program, please contact the coordinator for that program.

## Health Sciences – Graduate and Medical School

\*(NCMHD & UCSD-SOM)

### Cognitive Strategies

SOM Support Program

Contact

Dr. Rosalind Streichler

[rstreichler@ucsd.edu](mailto:rstreichler@ucsd.edu)

(858)534-3958

### Allied Health Programs

Research Support Program

Contact

Dr. Gregory Talavera

[gtalaver@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:gtalaver@mail.sdsu.edu)

(619) 594-4086

## Post-Baccalaureate

\*(TCE & UCOP)

### Post-Baccalaureate

Med School Prep

Contact

Saundra Kirk

[sjkirk@ucsd.edu](mailto:sjkirk@ucsd.edu)

(858)534-4171

## University Undergraduate

# UCSD Health Sciences Institute

## Community College

### ULMSP

Health Sciences Transfer Guarantee Program

Contact

Milan Dang

[tvdang@ucsd.edu](mailto:tvdang@ucsd.edu)

(619)681-0524

### Research Methodology Training Lab (RMTL)

Training on Basic and Advanced Biology Laboratory Skills

Test Prep Courses for High School Students

Placement in other UCSD Labs

Serves

High School Juniors and Seniors  
Community College Students

UCSD and SDSU Undergraduates

Contact

Anita K. Williams

[akwilliams@ucsd.edu](mailto:akwilliams@ucsd.edu)

(858) 534-0127

## Middle and High School

### COPC

Science Enrichment Program

Locations

National City Middle School

Sweetwater High School

Contact

Carmela Arstill

[Carmela@ucsd.edu](mailto:Carmela@ucsd.edu)

(760) 815-1432

\* Programs in the pipeline are funded by the following organizations: The California Endowment (TCE), and The National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), University of California Office of the President (UCOP), and the UCSD School of Medicine (UCSD-SOM).

## Internship Opportunity

Are you an undergraduate at UCSD interested in making a difference in the futures of our brightest middle and high school students?

Then we've got the experience you need! Become a Doctor's Academy intern and learn the ins and outs of mentoring and program development and get class credit for it.

Contact Jose Cruz today!

(619) 243-1360

j3cruz@ucsd.edu

## ULMSP

The University Link Medical Science Program (ULMSP) is a health workforce development program that assists community college students from disadvantaged backgrounds to make a successful transfer to the university and to enter the health professions. ULMSP is an expansion and adaptation of the Stanford Medical Youth Science Program, which prepares high school students to pursue a college education and complete their study in the biological and physical sci-

ences. ULMSP students have a 94% transfer rate from community college to university after participating in a summer residential program and year-long program activities that include structured classes, individualized mentoring and health career counseling, standardized test preparation courses, study and time management skills training, and health-related internship opportunities. ULMSP is now a UCSD Health Sciences Institute program.

## Student Spotlight: Mirella Cobarruvia In Her Own Words

Throughout my high school career, I strived to be the best of the best. I was president of four clubs, a student body member, and an honor roll student. All my efforts were in hopes of being accepted to either UCSD or UCLA.

Community college was never seen as an option, and in the Imperial Valley, going to the community college when you're considered at the top of your class is seen as a shame. Everything was going according to plan. I was accepted to five University of California schools, including my two dream schools.

My final semester was a drag and I ended up with low scores and a low semester G.P.A. This shot my chances and my acceptance was declined in mid August. Devastated, I enrolled at Imperial Valley College and started my two-year journey. The first few months were dev-



astating, I thought my dreams of becoming a doctor were over because of the fact I wasn't at the schools all my friends went to. I soon realized that community college was just an alternate option and not negative at all. My classes were filled with students with similar stories.

Luckily, one day in my chemistry class I was listening to a presentation about a program designed just for

community college students. I was thrilled to hear about it and quickly applied. The UniversityLink Medical Science Program (ULMSP) proved to be all that I thought it was and more. Not only did I realize I still have a chance, but meeting twelve other fellow participants who are going through the same process made all the difference. The month long journey shaped my views about my academic career and gave me the tools necessary to achieve greatness.

During the course of the program, I learned essential tips on how to handle even the toughest situations on assignments. Even the smallest bit of advice has been useful. Spending time with seventeen individuals (students, counselors and associate directors) who attended community college, and are attending UCSD blew me away. In a way, all my self-doubts flew out the window. My test taking skills improved, and I came back to my community ready to

volunteer at the hospital and take charge at school.

Now, I'm not only a member of the student government, but I'm also secretary. I attend other important meetings such as college council and I am working to start a chemistry club. This year I would like to be a part of the volunteering program at the El Centro Regional Hospital. The volunteer coordinator at the hospital is looking for a leader with fresh ideas. I think he has found his girl.

Currently, I'm planning on taking all the great ideas I learned in the in ULMSP and implementing them for the volunteer programs at the hospital. Every Tuesday and Thursday during the ULMSP program, we were given the wonderful opportunity to job shadow physicians. I made it a point to ask how they thought volunteers could be used so I could come back home and present the ideas to the coordinator.

I just want to thank everyone in the ULMSP for this life altering opportunity. The ULMSP has strengthened my character and has revitalized my passion to pursue my dreams.

## Triumph: Zana Ahmad



Zana Ahmad immigrated to the United States from Kurdistan; where his family remains to this day. Although, he earned a two-year degree in electrical engineering, he decided to enroll in Grossmont Community College to pursue a career in medicine.

In the United States, Zana has

encountered a substantial language barrier as well as struggles with economic difficulties. However, Zana continued to pursue his goals and learned about the ULMSP program “by accident,” from a friend of a friend. Zana notes that he learned “everything” needed to succeed in college during that month-long summer program.

He recalls that the lectures were very informative and inspiring. Most importantly, with the help of ULMSP, Zana was able to shadow three physicians and get connected with the Faculty Mentor Program.

In 2007, Zana graduated from UCSD with a Bachelor’s Degree in Human Biology with 4.0 GPA and provost honors. Also, he worked with Dr. Weg Ongkeko as an assistant on three research projects studying cancer in various forms. With these experiences, Zana has found a passion for academic medicine and patient care. He hopes to unite these passions in his future medical career. After hearing that the ULMSP program might be discontinued, Zana said that he is “very disappointed” and that “I thought of ULMSP as a perfect program. Just maintaining and keeping it alive for at least 5 more years is important.”

## Connections: Vu Hong

Leaving his hometown in Vietnam, Vu Hong and his parents came to the United States of America in the spring of 2000. Like many other immigrants, Vu faced the challenges of language and cultural barriers. Understanding his obstacles, Vu took English as a Second Language classes at a local vocational school for over one year before enrolling in San Diego City College in the summer of 2001.

“Everything took place as planned.” Vu said, “If it were not for ULMSP, I would not have transferred to University of California, San Diego to finish my four-year undergraduate degree and then apply for pharmacy school.” Early in 2002, through support of a friend - Herpaul Lee (former ULMSP participant), Vu applied to the UniversityLink

Medical Science Program. From the four-week summer program, Vu obtained learning skills and approaches for taking standardized tests, which he never heard of in Vietnam. He also established a good relationship with former director Mr. Flynn and the executive director Dr. Daley, who later became his long-term mentor.

However, unlike other participants, the doctor shadowing experience did not reconfirm his interest. Vu’s plan had changed. He applied for other UC schools besides UCSD and was accepted to the University of California, Berkeley. Vu used his ULMSP connections to find new resources at Berkeley. Vu came back to San Diego in the fall of 2006 to obtain his PhD from the Scripps Institute.



For other disadvantaged students who want to pursue a career in health sciences, Vu suggests, “follow your heart and go for it, and you must ask what you want before figuring out whether the answer is ‘yes’ or ‘no’.”

## Take a Tip

We all look to those who have come before us to serve as good examples. As young professionals, we seek out mentors.

But, as with everything in life, we need to make good decisions and choices in selecting the people we want to emulate.



### MENTORING TIPS:

1. **Think about your needs and what you’d like your mentor to do for you**
2. **Think about and list possible mentors**
3. **Decide how you will approach the prospective mentors**
4. **Ask the person to be your mentor**
5. **Be patient**
6. **Obtain at least 3 mentors: An academic, a career, and a personal-life mentor.**

Source: [http://www.imdiversity.com/Villages/Careers/articles/whitehead\\_find\\_a\\_mentor.asp](http://www.imdiversity.com/Villages/Careers/articles/whitehead_find_a_mentor.asp)

## Words of Inspiration



“The future depends on what we do in the present.”  
~Mahatma Gandhi







## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### In His Own Words: Daniel Eskenazi

The University Link Medical Science Program was instrumental in preparing me for life as an undergraduate at University of California, San Diego and towards my goal of entering a combined MD/PhD program. Having struggled in high school because of the lack of education in my own home (my father never went to school, my mother only completed high school) and having moved to the United States from my birthplace, Mexico City, during high school, I began at the community college without a real sense of direction past that of wanting to improve my lot in life. Trying many subjects, I finally hit biology and psychology; beginning my interest in neuroscience and a growing desire to help serve my community.

I was torn between either setting a course towards research or towards medicine at the time of my graduation from San Diego Miramar College. My counselor at the community college, Jodi Corliss, suggested I try an exciting new program offered by the School of Medicine at UCSD for community college students, the University Link Medical Science Program to help gain experiences that might help me on my way.

This would be a perfect transition for me, Jodi said, in the summer between graduating



from community college and beginning at UCSD. Just the fact that such a program existed and that we were invited to stay on campus really made me feel for the first time that my pursuits of academia were possible. With the amazing support and reassurance from Dr. Daley and Michael Flynn I felt comfortable to speak up of my interests in pursuing such a rigorous program as the

MD/PhD program I am currently enrolled in. It was a home away from home where I could receive

the guidance necessary to navigate my time at UCSD, the MCAT and applying to medical school.

The lectures from Michael Flynn were pivotal in appreciating meta-cognition over study

habits and test-taking skills, taking time to develop myself as a lifelong learner. I later went on to become a Teacher's Assistant for upper division biology classes at UCSD and I now teach the Biology portion of the MCAT at a test preparation company remembering the enthusiasm with which Michael once taught me. The opportunity to shadow a physician lead to my first rigorous research experience: creat-

ing a culturally specific nutrition protocol for HIV positive individuals at the San Ysidro Health Center.

Now in the second year of medical school, I have been reminded in many ways, both large and small, of my time with the ULSMP. Foremost is the feeling that I am at a world class institution where I deserve to be and am received warmly. Any medical student in my class would tell you that, rigorous as the curriculum might be, we are an important part of the system; this is a feeling that can sometimes be lost in the informalities encountered at a large institution such as UCSD, especially where transfer students do not tend to reap the same benefits from the college system as do students who matriculate directly from high school and have the benefit of living on campus. The study habits and test-taking skills I learned have been very helpful in dealing with the daily challenges I face. The experience of having debated an ethical issue helps me understand and deal with the complex issues that physicians encounter daily. Having researched a topic and presented a poster aided me in practicing the skills that a researcher requires to collect and synthesize information and present it to others in a coherent way.

I would not be where I am today, both in terms of my position as an MD/PhD student and as a person, were it not for ULSMP.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

It is important that we maintain a network of dedicated people, like you, to share our ideas and help us all meet our goals. If you received this newsletter via email, please respond to the email with your current address. If you received this newsletter via regular mail please email **Jose Cruz** at **jbcruc@ucsd.edu** with any updated information. Please include your full name.



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