

A photograph of a woman in a dark blue UC San Diego t-shirt looking at a tablet computer. She is smiling and appears to be in a collaborative setting, possibly a classroom or lab. A man is partially visible on the right, looking at the tablet. The background is blurred, showing other people and equipment.

Advancing teaching excellence and student success

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am pleased to share the 2020-2022 UC San Diego Teaching + Learning Commons Impact Report. The Commons' stellar team of professionals and students daily shape a dynamic teaching and learning ecosystem. We do this work in partnership with individuals and organizations across the campus, with local and state communities, with the University of California System, and, most importantly, with you.

The Commons came into existence in 2015, an outgrowth of the collaborative, multi-year Education Initiative (educationinitiative.ucsd.edu). Led by Dr. Gabriele Wienhausen at its inception, the idea of The Commons, then, as now, was to develop an organization that combines and aligns instructional support with student academic support. This idea remains largely unique, and certainly unmatched, in public higher education.

Looking forward to 2023, we take stock of our successes and challenges. We build on our social justice foundation. We value the expertise, experience, diversity, and contributions of individuals and groups. We align our work with the University's Strategic Plan (plan.ucsd.edu), the Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence (diversity.ucsd.edu), and the Executive Vice Chancellor's Charge to Erase Opportunity Gaps Using Collective Impact (collectiveimpact.ucsd.edu).

Through strategic planning with our partners and collaborators, we have strengthened our sense of shared purpose. We have established specific targets and goals to realize our campus impact more fully. We have committed to a theme that guides us: Everyone is an Educator. In this, we honor the reality that each of us in the campus community contributes to our students' academic, professional, and lifelong success.

Public higher education is one of the world's best mechanisms for innovation and change, as well as for advancing social equity. UC San Diego, one of the world's premiere public universities (univcomms.ucsd.edu/campus-profile), continues as a leader in this space; at The Teaching + Learning Commons, we continue to support Chancellor Khosla's vision, realizing that not only is everyone an educator, but that every one of us is also a learner, traveling together with collaboration and courage toward new heights in educational equity and excellence.



David Ruiter, Ph.D.
Faculty Director
Teaching + Learning Commons
Associate Professor, Theatre and Dance

Closing opportunity gaps

Expanding existing programs and implementing new approaches that promote holistic student success

2021-2022 Anti-Racist Pedagogy Learning Community

- 21 Faculty Fellows
- 19 Graduate Student Fellows
- Fellows taught more than 8,000 students during the 2021-2022 academic year
- Fellows represent academic units across the Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, & Social Sciences



At UC San Diego, we attract top-notch faculty, staff, and students. Our goal is to ensure that every member of our community is included fully in university life.

Belonging

Building inclusive learning spaces requires not just an equity-focused mindset, but also cultivation of pedagogical practices that promote the well-being and learning of students, particularly from communities who have been historically underserved by higher education.

Today, more than 40% of the students who visit the Commons identify as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and/or first-generation college students. Combined, these students visited the Commons more than 20,000 times during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Led by the Commons, the Changemaker Fellowship Anti-Racist Pedagogy Learning Community brings together graduate student and faculty fellows as co-learners in a mutually supportive environment where they critically examine teaching practices through a racial equity lens and espouse anti-racist teaching practices to promote

Summer Bridge 2021

- 700+ incoming students
- 76% first-generation college students
- 72% of students identify as Black, Latinx, and/or Indigenous
- Up to 8 college credit hours earned per student
- Zero cost to students

the well-being and learning of students, particularly Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and minoritized students.

Transition

Moving from high school to college can be exciting, and, occasionally, disorienting. The Summer Bridge Program, hosted annually by the Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) and the Commons, helps ease the transition for students who are members of underserved groups or are first-generation college students.

Peer instruction and peer tutoring at the Commons offer support in academically challenging courses, with a focus on learning how to learn and building a network of peers and mentors.

Access & Affordability

No- and low-cost course materials mean greater access for low-income students. The Commons joins campus partners in the Open Educational Resources (OER) Working Group to develop a pilot project to encourage instructors to adopt more affordable materials.

Basic Needs

The pandemic disrupted housing, food security, and financial stability for many students, making it harder to learn.

With the leadership of the Basic Needs Hub, the Commons surveyed and interviewed students about these experiences. The research highlighted student needs for greater instructional flexibility, community building in the classroom, and stronger connections from academic units to student support services.

Resource Center Liaisons

The Commons has created Learning Strategist liaison positions in partnership with the Triton Transfer Hub and the Student Veterans Resource Center. Each liaison hosts appointments, drop-in hours, and customized workshops with the Resource Centers, recognizing the strong existing community bonds as a way to promote greater educational equity in Commons programs and services.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

Student Spotlight



Angela Chapman '23

Psychology, Muir College, 2021 McNair Scholar

"The Plug truly helped me with finding my voice and my story within the personal statement I was writing."

Psychology major Angela Chapman was selected as a 2021 McNair scholar on the basis of her academic achievements, solid faculty endorsement, and compelling personal statement.

Angela drafted and workshopped that personal statement with peers and mentors at The Plug, a writing workshop series hosted by the Commons and the Black Resource Center. The Plug supports students like Angela to pursue funded academic opportunities and to tell their stories.

The federally funded McNair scholars program identifies talented undergraduate students who plan to pursue graduate studies and eventually earn a PhD.

Our pandemic response

Over the last two years, the Commons has increased its services, reaching more students than ever.

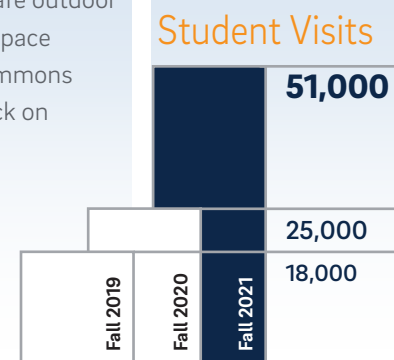


Instructional Resilience

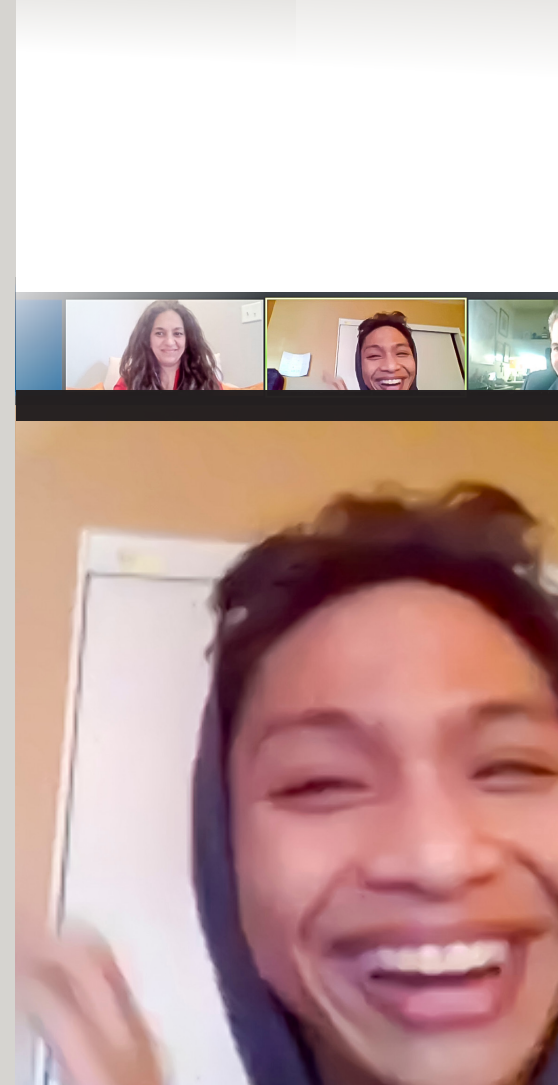
During the pandemic, an instantaneous shift to emergency remote instruction prompted an increased focus on building instructional resilience. The Commons has supported instructors with tools and training, underscoring the value that our instructional designers bring to learning.

2020		
Spring 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commons shifts to a remote model for all programs and services offered to students and faculty. Commons provides training, workshops, webinars, and technical support for instructors as all university courses go remote. Commons launches Keep Teaching website, with a focus on designing for inclusion and fostering community across the university. 	Summer 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) and the Commons convert the 43rd Summer Bridge Program to a remote learning experience for over 500 students transitioning from high school to college. Commons rolls out asynchronous appointments with writing tutors, offering students greater flexibility in accessing our services. 	Fall 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commons launches the Changemaker Fellowship Anti-Racist Pedagogy Learning Community, with the financial support of the Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion, to support faculty and graduate students in bringing change to their classrooms.

2021		
Summer 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer Bridge expands to support 700+ students and is offered online, in-person, and hybrid. Outdoor tents go up, offering a safe outdoor classroom space to bring Commons services back on campus. 		Fall 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students return to campus for in-person instruction, and we continue to offer flexibility via our remote services.



Student visits to the Commons have increased year-over-year during the pandemic.



Liz Ajuzie and David Borgo perform for "Blues: An Oral Tradition," an online course developed in partnership with the Commons.

ONLINE LEARNING REIMAGINED

Through digital innovation, we bring a UC San Diego education to learners across California and the world.

Accessing courses online can make the difference for students who work, live off campus, or have caregiver responsibilities – granting them the flexibility they need to stay enrolled and complete their degrees.

The Commons has been innovating in online instruction since 2017. In partnership with UC San Diego faculty, we have developed open access online courses available to learners worldwide. We have also developed online courses that serve students from UC campuses system-wide through UC Online. Today, instructors collaborate with the Commons to create engaging online courses and programs benefiting UC San Diego students.

Dr. David Borgo's online course "Blues: An Oral Tradition" engages students in the history and artistic practices of this musical genre. Combining live instruction and recordings of blues performances, this course exemplifies what online learning can deliver.



Broadened Access

With support from the Commons, UC San Diego is set to launch its first fully online degree. In fall 2022, the Halicioğlu Data Science and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering will jointly launch the Master of Data Science program.

Instructional designers from the Commons partner with our world-class faculty to create online courses and design flexible learning pathways that suit each learner's unique needs and goals.

Through increased flexibility and access, programs like these bring a UC San Diego degree within reach for working professionals, returning students, and international students.

Our model for change

Our impact is felt throughout the university as a ripple effect. Our peer-led learning support is designed with this in mind.

Annually we employ more than 300 undergraduate and graduate students who serve as consultants, tutors, and mentors for their peers.

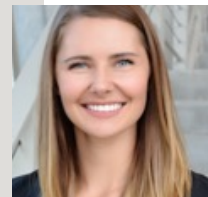
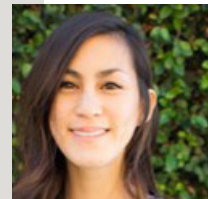
Our professional staff work to support our student staff, serving in roles that develop program structure and coordinate services across and beyond the Commons.

Undergraduate student **Bryan Espinoza** is a writing consultant with the Commons. Each of our 40 undergraduate writing consultants works with upwards of 75 student peers per year to strengthen their writing and critical thinking skills.

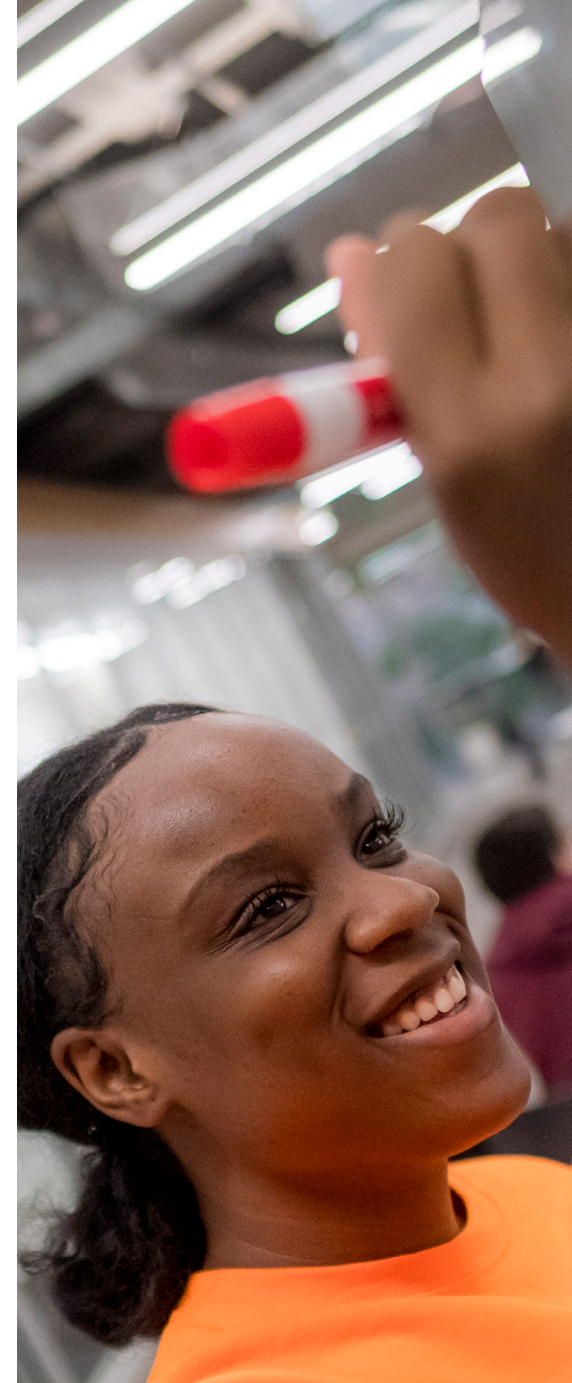
Graduate student **Avaneesh Narla** is a teaching consultant at the Commons. His support for instructors advances a culture of equity-focused and evidenced-based teaching practices.

Staff outreach specialist **Melissa Campbell** works with more than 150 faculty and staff members each year to structure student learning beyond the classroom. This approach lives up to our shared Commons commitment: EVERYONE AN EDUCATOR.

As one of two staff coordinators for Supplemental Instruction at the Commons, **Marie Schier** oversees up to 150 student instructional leaders who serve over 8,000 students per year.



At the Commons, over 300 undergraduate student tutors and consultants support more than 12,000 of their peers in a single year.



ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING

Belonging

A feeling of belonging is critical for students to flourish.

Our academic success model connects students to services and, more importantly, to other students.

When an undergraduate makes an appointment with a tutor or a writing consultant, they are signing up to work with a fellow undergrad with special training in peer-to-peer instruction.

Undergraduate Student Resources

- Drop-in peer tutoring
- Peer-led Supplemental Instruction
- Learning strategies workshops
- 1 on 1 writing consultations
- Writing workshops

What Students Are Saying

"I appreciate that the Commons has remote services for writing. It can be challenging for me to make it to main campus, and the flexibility of remote sessions means I can attend from just about anywhere. For me, this means fewer barriers to writing and more progress!"

Student Peer Leaders

- 20 Learning Strategists
- 50 Writing Consultants
- 90 Content Tutors
- 150 Supplemental Instruction Leaders

12,000

Students Supported Annually

"After working with a graduate consultant for three weeks, I saw my writing grow so much! The consultant gave me action points and insights that have improved my work tremendously."



Academic Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy means knowing what you know, knowing what you need, and knowing you can succeed.

Through our Supplemental Instruction program, students with past success in a course and special training in learning theory partner with faculty to identify concepts and topics that require review. Student instructors then lead their peers in sessions that promote content mastery as well as 'metacognitive' skills — learning how to learn.

Closing Opportunity Gaps

For large introductory courses, pass rates may vary widely, sometimes falling below 90% for students underserved in higher education.

90%

98%

With regular attendance at Supplemental Instruction sessions, pass rates climb as high as 98%, with comparable success across student groups, regardless of pre-college experience.

Learning beyond the classroom

The Commons supports experiential learning – in the form of internships, service learning, research, and leadership training – to cultivate skills for lifelong success.

High-Impact Practices

Learning beyond the classroom is a high-impact practice, which promotes student success. In particular, high-impact practices benefit students from communities who have been historically underserved by higher education, including racially minoritized students, low-income students, and first-generation students.

Experiential Learning

The key to building transferable, life-long skills is to pair experiential learning with reflection.

Our networks help to connect students to service learning, research, and internship opportunities. Students forge new relationships with faculty and peers as they learn by doing.

At the Commons, we scaffold experiential learning by creating opportunities for students to make connections and identify the skills they are building through the Co-Curricular Record.

What is the Co-Curricular Record?

Students have an academic transcript to record their coursework and academic progress. The Co-Curricular record is a different kind of transcript – one that records student learning and development outside of the classroom.

Supervisors and mentors document the skills developed, and students have a record they can share with graduate schools or potential employers.

Alumni Spotlight

McKenzie Richardson

Master of Public Policy, School of Global Policy and Strategy '22, Thurgood Marshall College '20

UCDC Peer Advisor 2019-2022

"When I returned to campus following my internship in D.C., I applied to become a UCDC Peer Advisor at the Commons. I had no idea I would love the job so much that I would stay on the team through grad school."

Strengthening the connection between academics and high-impact co-curricular experiences.

Graduate students at UC San Diego are the faculty of tomorrow. These instructors-in-training build confidence in themselves as scholars and in the undergraduate students they teach.

At the Commons, writing retreats, writing rooms, and one-on-one writing consultations cultivate an intellectual community of graduate students grounded in peer support.

These graduate scholars support one another in their professional development as educators through participation in our Introduction to College Teaching course, Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars mentored teaching program, and support of departmental TA training programs.

Graduate Student Resources

- Writing retreats
- Skills development workshops
- Writing & teaching consultations
- Introduction to College Teaching
- Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars program

TEACHING FOR CHANGE

Alumni Spotlight



Dr. Kirk Rogers, Jr.

PhD in Education Studies from UC San Diego
2021 Ford Dissertation Fellow

Assistant Professor of Teacher Education
California State University, Dominguez Hills

Inspired by his participation in the Introduction to College Teaching course offered at the Commons, STEAM educator Kirk Rogers, Jr. joined the Commons as a Graduate Teaching Consultant.

As a graduate student, Kirk was central to developing curriculum and leading facilitation for the Anti-Racist Pedagogy Learning Community. He also served as primary instructor and curriculum lead for Introduction to College Teaching – the very course that introduced him to the Commons.

Kirk's ability to reimagine curricula in ways that engage with race, power, and privilege has deepened our collective work with educators in advancing equity-minded and anti-racist teaching practices.

Dr. Huihui Qi

Assistant Teaching Professor,
Department of Mechanical
and Aerospace Engineering

Dr. Huihui Qi and her colleagues in Engineering were looking to improve on the standard written exam model. Through a collaborative curricular research project with the Commons, they have experimented with oral exams, in which students have an opportunity to describe a solution and the thinking that led to it. This model, which encourages higher-order thinking, was so successful that it earned funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and is being rolled out to courses across Engineering.



"Every conversation I had with the Teaching + Learning Commons colleagues has been thought-provoking and has inspired me to explore more educational innovation. I look forward to more collaborations in the future."

Rethinking curriculum and pedagogy to improve retention and graduation rates and increase student and faculty engagement

The Classroom Reimagined

Instructional self-efficacy describes the curiosity and motivation to innovate, as well as the confidence to meet new challenges in the classroom.

UC San Diego faculty model self-efficacy in the classroom as they revisit the cost and content of their course materials, leverage technology to enhance teaching, and foster open, constructive dialogue in the classroom.

Our Instructional Designers in the Commons partner with faculty to create online learning environments that are engaging and inclusive for all.

Strategies for Inclusive Teaching

- Diversify instruction
- Set clear expectations
- Demystify the profession
- Enlist broad support
- Promote interdependence

Advancing Equity in the Major: Inaugural Cohort



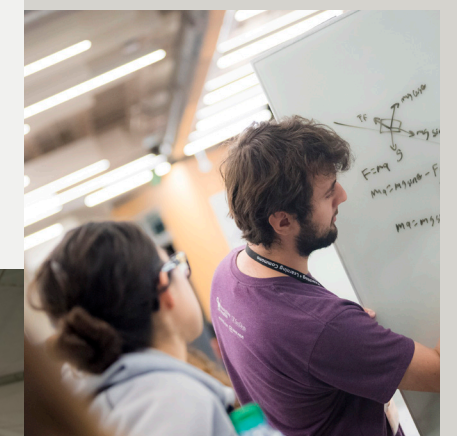
Equity-Minded Curricula

The Advancing Equity in the Major workshop series is a cohort-based faculty program, designed to support faculty in re-envisioning academic programs. Organized via a partnership between the Commons and the Division of Undergraduate Education, this pilot workshop series shifts focus away from student performance and onto the effectiveness of course and program design.

We guide faculty in thinking about assessment through an equity-minded lens, which includes disaggregated analysis of outcomes for students of distinct racial, economic, social, and educational backgrounds.

Faculty Resources

- 1 on 1 consultations
- Course design & redesign
- Program assessment
- Collaborative education research



“Cultivating a diverse and inclusive university community

that encourages respectful open dialogue, and challenges itself to take bold actions that will ensure learning is accessible and affordable for all.”

UC San Diego Strategic Plan

Teaching + Learning Commons Shared Outcomes

ADVANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

- Equity-minded practice
- Student belonging
- Access to experiential learning
- Academic self-efficacy

OUR TEACHING MISSION

- Equity-minded practice
- Faculty belonging
- Equity-minded curricula
- Instructor self-efficacy

Core Values

AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

We value and honor our community's diversity of thoughts, identities, experiences, expertise, and aspirations as strengths. We do this by providing multiple means of engagement and access, knowing that understanding and expanding our community enriches our lives and helps us discover more opportunities for success.

BELONGING

In all interactions, services, and spaces, we strive to create an environment where people's identities and experiences fundamentally shape how the Commons evolves, in the hopes of cultivating a sense of belonging for all members of our campus community. We welcome, honor, and affirm all members of our campus community by valuing the whole person.

A LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH

We value the whole person and recognize and appreciate the unique lived experiences, identities, perspectives, and strengths of those we serve. As learners ourselves, we approach our work from a place of support and collaboration to assist learners with building on their existing strengths.

COLLABORATION

We value intentional collaboration to build meaningful and trusting relationships that achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. We are committed to honoring and respecting individual experiences and diverse perspectives by inviting the expertise and contributions of others. We engage in collaboration driven by defined objectives to serve students, faculty, and staff.

TRANSFORMATION

We value an optimistic commitment to individual and systemic change done in connection with an intentionally broadening community. We root this approach in our belief in the capacity to change one's world view, challenge assumptions, adapt to new circumstances, and discover creative solutions in service of an equitable and thriving campus learning community.

LOOKING FORWARD

“We aspire to be as proudly innovative in education as in scholarship — and to empower every Triton to succeed.”

*Elizabeth H. Simmons,
Executive Vice Chancellor*

