advancing teaching + learning

The Teaching + Learning Commons (the Commons) is UC San Diego’s innovative infrastructure for advancing student success and teaching excellence. It provides comprehensive faculty and student support for all learning environments, inside and outside the classroom, face-to-face as well as digital.
The Mission of the Commons is to:

• advance student success through teaching excellence and comprehensive academic student support
• be an incubator for innovations in teaching and student academic success
• increase access to education on campus and beyond
• actively promote equity and inclusion within the organization and through our programs and services

Student Success at UC San Diego is defined as maintaining or exceeding good academic standing; making steady progress toward degree completion; actively engaging in research, co-curricular opportunities and the campus and local community; and utilizing resources to intentionally develop the competencies to lead in a global society.

To promote student success and professional development UC San Diego developed the UC San Diego Competencies, which are aligned with the learning outcomes and competencies of:

• Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Value Learning Outcomes
• Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education Learning and Development Outcomes
• WASC Senior College and University Commission Core Competencies
• National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies

“The Teaching + Learning Commons is one of the best resources available on campus.”
—Undergraduate Student
The UC San Diego Strategic Plan established a shared mission and vision for the campus. The plan’s five transformational goals were collectively developed through a comprehensive process that engaged more than 10,000 campus and community members. The work done in the Commons supports each of the defined goals.

### the commons’ goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| **GOAL 1**  
Promote student academic success | Students supported by the Commons are more likely to receive higher course grades, maintain better GPA, be retained at UC San Diego, utilize academic resources, engage in research and co-curricular opportunities, and achieve expected learning outcomes |
| • Course grades  
• GPA  
• Retention rate  
• Academic success resource usage  
• Participation in internships, research, and co-curricular activities  
• Achieving UC San Diego Competencies workshops | |

| **GOAL 2**  
Promote excellence in educational research and practice | Redesigned 167 courses  
Engaged in 20 SoTL projects  
Improved teaching quality for Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars participants, based on their Course and Professor Evaluations  
100% English certification rate for international teaching and instructional assistants |
| • Teaching and course design  
• Contributing to Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)  
• Developing departmental pedagogical expertise development | |
“My leadership skills have changed for the better in many ways.”
—Undergraduate Mentor

<table>
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<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| **GOAL 3** Expand access to education | • Online course offerings  
• Online academic support for students  
• Revenue generation |
| **GOAL 4** Facilitate evidence-based educational innovations | • 75 Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on Coursera and edX  
• Free access to Coursera for all UC San Diego members  
• $1.8M campus revenue from MOOCs  
• 125 online tutoring sessions |
| **GOAL 5** Promote diversity, equity and inclusion | • Development of data-driven student academic success initiatives  
• Student academic performance in these initiatives |
| | • Developed 3 summer programs: Math Track, Triton Prep, Triton Sophomore Scholars  
• Initiated development of Math 2  
• Improved math skills, writing skills, and learning skills of 393 underrepresented minority (URM) students. |
| | • # of supported URM and 1st generation students  
• Resources to support inclusive teaching  
• ELPii support |
| | • Supported 3,815 URM undergrad students  
• Supported 4,853 1st generation undergrad students  
• Included diversity, equity and inclusion in Teaching & Instructional Assistant training |
**Student success** is a systemic challenge. It requires a collaborative approach to teaching and learning, which includes building a scaffold of interconnected academic resources for students and providing support for research-based pedagogical development for educators. Faculty participation in professional development activities positively affects student and faculty success, student retention, and students’ time to degree.

To implement this innovative approach, the Commons consists of five hubs: **Engaged Teaching, Digital Learning, Academic Achievement, Writing + Critical Expression**, and **Experiential Learning**. The hubs closely interact, inform, and mutually reinforce the goals of each unit. Together, they function as a single entity embodying the intertwined relationship of teaching and learning. Through its wide range of programs, services, and research, the Commons assists all members of the UC San Diego community in developing learning environments and experiences for their students that encourage engagement and foster student success.
Our Approach is:

- **Learner-Centered.** We endow educators with skills to advance students’ learning and agency by creating equitable and inclusive learning environments.

- **Advancing Educational Equality.** Our work supports the university’s goal to ensure the potential for academic success for every UC San Diego student.

- **Educational.** We help all educators AND also students gain a deeper understanding of how people learn; we do not just dispense tips.

- **Data-Driven.** We skillfully and ethically use data to measure student learning, track their progress through academic programs and inform the efficacy of our work.

- **Research-Based.** We distill, synthesize and apply research on learning and translate it into classroom practice and educational programming; we contribute to the body of new knowledge.

Our Values are:

Inclusion
Integrity
Collaboration
Being Constructive.
Usage of the Commons’ services has proven to support all students, at every level, as well as faculty and teaching assistants. The increase in unique users year over year is a testament to the need and desire for advancing learning and teaching through the Commons’ numerous programs.

**Users maximize use of services**

- 4 visits per Academic Achievement hub user
- 2.3 visits per Writing + Critical Expression hub user
- 23% of undergraduate users utilized services from 2 or more units
Unique Users for Academic Support Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hub</th>
<th>FA16–WI17</th>
<th>FA17–WI18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement hub</td>
<td>2,129</td>
<td>3,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing + Critical Expression hub</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>4,107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As an incubator for teaching and student success innovations, the Commons helps to prepare students for the rigors of university academics with intensive, goal-focused, summer programing.

- Three summer academic success programs: Summer Bridge Math Track, Triton Prep, and Sophomore Scholars Program, serving 393 students who are largely URM and 1st generation students
- A pre-calculus math course Math 2: enrolled seven cohorts (N=204), starting from Summer 2016
- Collaboration with the PATHways program

**Impacts**

**Program participants:**
- had high course pass rates (C- or higher grades) in math courses (Math 2, 3C, 4C, 10A, 20A)
- made continuous progress through their math sequence
- improved Math Placement Exam scores
- increased confidence in their ability to learn math
- improved writing skills
- improved study strategies
- engaged with academic support
THE HUBS

The Teaching + Learning Commons’ five hubs embody the intertwined relationship of teaching and learning. Each hub makes a significant impact on their respective goals, contributing to the overall mission of the Commons and UC San Diego.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hub</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaged Teaching</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Learning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing + Critical Expression</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENGAGED TEACHING

The Commons is a university-wide resource that supports and facilitates excellence in teaching and learning through integration, connection, and ongoing assessment of initiatives leading to an engaged and inclusive educational environment. Toward this mission, the Engaged Teaching (ET) hub promotes faculty and student success through programs and resources that support faculty and graduate students in their teaching roles. Our goal is to inspire and advance teaching excellence through evidence-based, learner-centered, and equitable teaching practices.
Advancing teaching excellence with:

**Teaching consultations**
One-on-one meetings helping with any aspect of teaching and learning.

**Educational technology**
Exploring effective and innovative strategies for teaching with technology.

**Workshops**
Learning about research-based teaching strategies and discussing teaching with faculty colleagues.

**Teaching observations**
Receiving confidential teaching and classroom observation feedback.

**Early course feedback – surveys**
Surveying students’ perspective for early teaching adjustments through surveys.

**Early course feedback – focus group**
Gathering detailed feedback on students’ learning through in class brief group interviews.

Supporting programs, departments and divisions’ educational initiatives with:

**Customized workshops**
Educational programming to assist with any aspect of teaching and learning.

**Major, course and curriculum review and redesign**

**Assessment**
Creating and linking a department's or school's teaching objectives to course design, assignments, and teaching practices for individual instructors.

**Educational innovations contributing to initiatives such as SAPD, CDIIP, ELTI**

**Supporting international instructors and TAs**

**Teaching and professional development of graduate students**
Collaborating with TA Faculty Advisors; developing pedagogy courses.

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**RESOURCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scholarship of teaching and learning research projects</td>
<td>teaching videos</td>
<td>blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10,000 views</td>
<td>&gt;1000 views</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Digital Learning (DL) advances teaching and learning excellence and increases access to education on the UC San Diego Campus and beyond using digital technologies. We contribute to student success by collaborating with UC San Diego educators to strengthen the quality and breadth of the university’s educational offerings.

75 massive open online courses (MOOCs)
Coursera: 56
edX: 19

FREE
FREE UC San Diego courses and specializations on Coursera for all UC San Diego students

2.65M global learners

$1.8M 2017 MOOC campus revenue
“Working in the Engaged Teaching hub has provided me invaluable growth in my teaching, interpersonal, and professional skills.”

—Alexander Meill, Ph.D. Candidate in Physics
Supplemental Instruction (SI) in the Academic Achievement (AA) hub provides academic support for students who are enrolled in courses that are notoriously difficult. SI leaders attend all lectures alongside enrolled students, so they always know what is happening in the class. In SI sessions, SI Leaders do not re-lecture or introduce new material. Rather, SI Leaders are trained to maximize active student involvement with the course material and to integrate how-to-learn with what-to-learn; as a result, students who attend SI sessions understand the material better.

### Frequency of SI Attendance vs. Average GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of SI Attendance</th>
<th>Average GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 times</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 time</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>3.22 *p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key findings:**

1. Supplemental Instruction attendees received significantly higher cumulative GPAs when they utilized SI services regularly. This impact is significant for URM and 1st generation students.

2. SI attendees (31% are URM students, compared with campus 18% URM) maintained a 96.2% retention rate (fall to fall quarter) at UC San Diego, 2.2% higher than the one year retention rate of all undergraduate students at UC San Diego.

3. Positive correlation between program attendance frequency and participants’ course passing rates, and students who attend regularly (4 times or more) are most likely to succeed in math/chemistry courses.
Increasing Student Agency through Mindset Motivation Study Habits

Metacognitive academic support develops independent learners, study skills, and the ability to reflect.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) maximizes active student involvement with the course material and integrates how-to-learn with what-to-learn. As a result, students who attend SI sessions understand the material better.

“I love the opportunity SI gives me to gain a better understanding of the material. The SI leader is awesome at giving us more practice.”

—Undergraduate Student
**Key findings:**
At the WCE hub, students get one-on-one support for writing projects from courses as well as writing connected to graduate and professional school applications, and scholarship opportunities. One-third to one-half of WCE appointments are with students looking for support in a college writing program course. Among students in these college writing program courses, WCE users are more likely to have higher course grades and lower DFW and incomplete rates than their classmates. This effect is most significant for freshman students whose first term GPAs at UC San Diego were below 2.0.
“My Writing + Critical Experience hub consultant really helped me break down and analyze what I was trying to say. Even though at first it was frustrating to keep hearing ‘why?’ or ‘explain more,’ in the end I left so much better off.”
—Undergraduate Student

Advancing writing excellence and critical expression with services for undergraduates, graduate students, and educators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Writing</th>
<th>Graduate Student Writing</th>
<th>Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• One-on-one writing tutoring</td>
<td>• By appointment one-on-one writing consultations—supportive, in-depth conversations about your writing, at any stage of the process</td>
<td>• Visiting classrooms so students can hear about our services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive, in-depth conversations about writing, the writing process, and writing skills</td>
<td>• Graduate writing retreats</td>
<td>• Writing Hub blurb for course syllabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walk-in tutoring</td>
<td>• Graduate Writers’ Room—supportive and focused community of writers</td>
<td>• Writing across the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workshops on key writing topics</td>
<td>• Workshops on graduate-level writing topics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Within the Experiential Learning (EL) hub, the Academic Internship Program (AIP) allows students to integrate academic theory and ‘real world’ practice, engage in research that explores the relationship between the two, and gain hands-on experience in professional settings.

Undergraduate Student Outcomes (SP17–WI18)

COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

- **Problem Solving**: 90% of students self-report increased ability over the course of the internship. 84% of internship supervisors rated students Very Good or Outstanding.
- **Teamwork**: 91% of students. 97% of internship supervisors.
- **Interpersonal Communication**: 91% of students. 92% of internship supervisors.
- **Adaptability**: 91% of students. 95% of internship supervisors.

95% of internship supervisors rated their academic interns’ overall performance Very Good or Outstanding.

87% of students said the clarity of their career goals increased.

72% of students said their motivation to learn in the classroom increased.

92% of students said their ability to apply knowledge from their field of study increased.
“UC District of Columbia office was the single greatest experience I have had in my life... It changed my life and I will never forget its impact.”
—Sociology Student

Also as a part of EL, the Engaged Learning Tools (ETL) help students develop the UC San Diego Competencies they need for their Co-Curricular Record.

1,815 Students CCR-Validated AY16–17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Validation Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Global Context</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ability</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Information Fluency</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,609 students | 205 students | 42 students |

Opportunity Validated
Opportunities Validated
Opportunities Validated
“The Engaged Teaching Hub workshops and events provide a great opportunity to learn from one another and share best practices without too much prep since we are all very busy. Little risk, big reward!”

—Assistant Teaching Professor, Education Studies