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Summer research program provides pipeline to advanced degrees

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In labs and classrooms across the UC Santa Barbara campus this summer, 25 young scholars in the [Academic Research Consortium \(ARC\)](#) are pursuing projects, making connections and learning what it takes to earn an advanced degree.

The program — stewarded by the UCSB Graduate Division’s Admissions, Outreach, and Diversity team — provides undergraduates and master’s students with research opportunities, academic support and career development.

“These summer research programs are vital,” said Janine Jones, the university’s new Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Affairs and Anne and Michael Towbes Graduate Dean. “They don’t just offer students academic enrichment — they allow them to see themselves here, to envision a future at UCSB and beyond. It’s not just about access, it is also about aspiration. It’s crucial that the Graduate Division and our broader university community continue to invest in these opportunities.”

During the summer program, ARC scholars spend upwards of 35 hours per week engaged in research in their chosen field with a faculty mentor and affiliated

doctoral students. The program provides participants with stipends and covers the costs of housing, programming and graduate student mentors. UCSB graduate students from across disciplines serve as program mentors to provide feedback, support and insights into the graduate student experience.

Beyond the rigorous demands of the lab, students also engage in a weekly slate of academic and professional workshops on topics such as preparing for graduate school applications, writing, building faculty connections, self-care and leadership skills. The program also provides several social and networking events, including a mixer and beach barbeque.

Michele Johnson, who since May has served as the Graduate Division's Director of Admissions, Outreach, and Diversity, is helming this summer's programming.

"The partnerships we've built across campus allow us to offer ARC scholars more than just a research experience — they provide access to a vibrant, supportive community during their time at UC Santa Barbara," said Johnson, who has built on her experience in her former role as Associate Director of Graduate Diversity Initiatives and her continued leadership of UC Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees (UC LEADS). "Through these collaborations, scholars connect with mentors and peers from across disciplines that help them envision their future in graduate education. I'm excited about the energy of this year's cohort and look forward to their research presentations at the end of the summer."

This year, a new faculty lecture series was also added to the summer schedule, headed up by Karen van Gool, assistant director of outreach at the Graduate Division.

"We are very fortunate to have supportive faculty who are skilled mentors, from across campus and disciplines, who accepted the challenge to present this new component of our summer program," she said. "We asked them to do three things: present scholarly research to a general audience; discuss the role of graduate students in their research and how they approach mentorship; and answer questions. I have to say that it's been a huge success. The students are very engaged."

Participating faculty members include Michael Beyeler (psychological and brain sciences), Trevor Hayton (chemistry), Mattanjah de Vries (chemistry), Joseph Blankholm (religious studies), Shane Jimerson (school psychology), Jon Goodwin

(school psychology), Karen Szumlinski (psychological and brain sciences) and Zoe Liberman (psychological and brain sciences).

The ARC program coordinates research opportunities for students participating in [UC LEADS](#), [CSU/Sally Casanova Scholar Program](#), [Cal-Bridge](#) and [UCSB-California State University Summer Research Institute](#). This summer, ARC is also serving scholars from programs across campus, including the [University of California-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Initiative](#), [JSU-UCSB Mentoring Partnership](#), [McNair Scholars Program](#), [Tuskegee Scholars Program](#), [Office of Education Partnerships'](#) [College Advising Corps Post Baccalaureate Program](#), [UCSB AI Institute for Agent-based Cyber Threat Intelligence and Operation](#), [Promise Scholars](#) and the [Center for Science and Engineering Partnerships](#).

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