

W.A.V.E.S.: Widening Access, Voice, Engagement & Service

UC San Diego

Led By: Alfredo Barcenas, Director Student Governments, Auxiliaries, and Services

Andrew Amorao, Community Service Program Manager

Catherine Lettieri, Assistant Director of the Changemaker Institute
Program Director of College Corps

Project Summary

UC San Diego is committed to empowering the next generation of leaders by inviting college students to take an active role in safeguarding democratic freedoms of expression, learn more about the advocacy strategies and best practices of civic engagement experts and organizations, and engage in civil discourse. In partnership with the University of California National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement through its VOICE award, UC San Diego was able to accomplish this goal through a changemaker cohort model of 7 undergraduate students that were selected to participate. The WAVES fellowship engaged this cohort of students by introducing them to local San Diego community partners, allowing them to hear from the experts who are leading the work in civic engagement including the Registrar of Voters, and by having them develop action plans for future discourse as we head into an election year. The cohort brought together a mixture of first year and graduating students and was led by facilitators who oversee student government, civic engagement, and leadership development at UCSD.

Impact

The WAVES fellowship at UCSD addressed the disconnect among students and our democratic process by providing them with a unique level of engagement that began with the introduction to community partners and local issues, followed by in-depth conversations about civic responsibility and professionalism, and concluded with an opportunity for students to take part in the democratic process as it leads into the 2024 election cycle which included participation in the Tritons Vote Initiative at UCSD which leads the voter engagement for the campus. The 7 students that were selected as fellows (who completed the program during Winter and Spring 2024) were invited to participate in dialogues with:

- Candice "DJ Kuttin Kandi" Custodio-Tan, Executive Director/Co-Founder, Asian Solidarity Collective
- Patricia Sinay, Commissioner, 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission
- Erin Tsurumoto Grassi, Associate Director, Alliance San Diego
- Itzel Maganda Chavez, Civic Engagement Director, Alliance San Diego
- Mackenzie Martinez, Advancement Manager, Alliance San Diego