

# Divya Gangaramani

*IDEA Center's Spotlight on UC San Diego's  
Engineering Student Leaders*



## Quick Facts

Grade: Sophomore

Major: Mechanical Engineering with a Specialization in Renewable Energy

Outside Interests: Entrepreneurship, Languages, Yoga

## Questions about your experiences:

**What has your experience as AS Campuswide Engineering Senator been like? What has been the most challenging aspect of the position, and what is the most rewarding part about it?**

My responsibility as a senator primarily includes representing voices of students in engineering, advocating to their needs and grievances in order to improve their academic and social experiences. My experience has been extremely pleasant and intriguing with opportunities to interact with other fellow individuals in the AS and understanding the operations of a student body government. I consider that one of the most challenging part is great responsibility that comes with the position—devoting time and commitment towards the expectations from the role. The most rewarding part is perhaps seeing the positive impact my efforts can make into life of the students.

**How can engineering students get involved with AS?**

An ideal way to be involved with the student body government would be to join the AS. There are various opportunities with vacant positions and upcoming elections in the Spring quarter. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to look out for (@asucsd) whether volunteering or interacting with members in the AS irrespective of your major.

**Recently you sponsored an initiative that seeks to recycle batteries on campus. How will it benefit the campus and students?**

I recently proposed a plan to the EH&S department at UCSD to offer feasible disposal of electronic waste for residents on campus. As someone who has been mindful about the environment, I personally encountered that there was no efficient way that a student residing on-campus could dispose of electronic waste. The proposed plan involved various solutions to disposing off e-waste on campus as well as educating students on the importance hazards of improper disposal. I firmly believe that with the initiative of proper e-waste disposal, the community will benefit as a whole as it will raise awareness on waste segregation and simultaneously have a positive benefit on the environment.

**In 2020, you created your own podcast, “Women as Engineers,” where you aimed to gain insight into the experiences of successful women engineers. What was that experience like? Who was your favorite guest and why?**

Creating my own podcast was a fun experience as it involved exploring an underrated platform for conversation. Apart from gaining a deeper insight into the experiences and perspectives of Women Engineers I was able to also appreciate that communication comprises of skills such as trust, confidence and listening in spite of it being one-sided platform. I consider that my favorite guest was my cousin—Natasha as I had a great experience of interacting with her about her experiences in college on a deeper and relatable point of view. It was engaging to listen to her anecdotes in college and the workspace about how she was personally impacted by being a minority of a Woman in STEM.

**As an international engineering student, do you feel supported by UC San Diego and the Jacobs School of Engineering? What could they do better?**

I indeed do feel completely supported by the university and the Jacobs School of Engineering. There are various services like ISPO that cater to international students whether it is advising, programs or even basic needs. This has been a great resource provided by the university as it administers to the needs of international students all under one roof in a systematic manner.

Moreover, engagement in organizations on campus catering to my culture’s values has sparked a sense of belonging with those in my community. Living in a community at I-House has not only enabled me to interact with like-minded individuals of my culture but also appreciate the diversity and values of other cultures.

Furthermore, it has been intriguing to see that there are interesting courses offered at UCSD pertaining to learning languages or even the history of different cultures. It would be appreciated if the university incorporated this in the General Education curriculum for all colleges and offered a greater variety of classes as it can provide a great insight into learning about your own or even other cultures! The regional specialisation requirement at ERC is a great example.

Another suggestion would be receiving credit for other curriculums followed internationally. I consider that doing the IB curriculum offered me a great advantage in university as I received a great amount of credit. However, my other peers who followed different curriculum were disadvantaged irrespective of possessing the same amount of knowledge as me. I firmly believe that the university must incorporate a system to grant credit for international students who were enrolled in different curriculums.

**From your experiences, what advice would you offer current or future women in engineering? Would you give the same advice if you knew you were speaking with a student who identified as a woman of color?**

My advise perhaps to current or future women in engineering would be to primarily have faith in yourself. If you are truly passionate about a field, nothing can stop you from excelling in it. Although, one might encounter hurdles in their journey it is important to stay determined and confident about what you are pursuing. Moreover, never hesitate to seek help, network as much as possible and take every opportunity that would help you evolve!

I also consider that irrespective of ethnicity, race, color or any social identity I would surely offer the same advise as I consider that each of us should indeed deserve equal treatment.