

# Jordan Bunch

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*IDEA Center's Spotlight on UC San Diego's Future Black Engineers*



## Quick Facts

Grade: 2nd Year

Major: Nanoengineering

Outside Interests: : Enjoy time with friends, discover new foods, spend time with family, listen to music

## Questions about your experiences:

**What personal significance does Black History Month have for you? Why is it important to celebrate it?**

Personally, Black History Month has become more impactful for me in recent years. I think it is a great way for me to connect and learn more about my culture. It is important to celebrate Black History Month because this gives others an opportunity to learn more about African American history and its culture.

**What has been the best part of being an ACES scholar?**

The best part about being an ACES Scholar is that I am able to engage with peers that are just as driven and motivated as I am. I love the community that we have built and how I have gotten to know other scholars over the years.

**What inspired you to pursue research as an undergraduate student?**

I decided to pursue research because I wanted to gain hands-on experience in a lab. I desired to build upon the foundational knowledge I had from previous courses I took in the past. I also thought that undergraduate research would allow me to have a better understanding of how my major, Nanoengineering, applies to different ideas, concepts, and applications in the real world.

## **How would you describe your experience at the Lipomi Research Group? What is the biggest lesson you have learned there?**

My experience joining the Lipomi Research group has been a learning curve. I joined the spring quarter of my freshman year and have learned lots since then. It is fascinating to learn about different topics every single day from my fellow group members. My mentor has been a great influence and has taught me invaluable lessons and techniques. Professor Lipomi, my PI, has been an incredible inspiration towards my research journey; his work, dedication, and motivation are inspiring. One of the biggest lessons I have learned from joining this group is that perseverance and motivation are crucial to research. Some days an experiment will not turn out as planned or something I dedicated a significant amount of time to does not go as expected. When things go the wrong way it is slightly disheartening, however, this drives me to learn more from what my mistakes and what not to do in the future. This motivation and perseverance that I have gained from research is unlike any other

## **Why do you find it important to join organizations like NETS (Nanoengineering and Technology Society) and NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers)? How do they impact your UC San Diego experience?**

Joining other organizations at UCSD is a great opportunity to become more engaged and involved with your community. NETS has allowed me to connect more with those that are within the Nanoengineering major. NSBE has allowed me to understand the experiences of being black in STEM and connect with other people who are like me. It is important for me to gain exposure from these different organizations so I am able to gain a better understanding of the world and other people's perspectives. Because of these organizations, I am able to find a community within this school and connect with others.

## **What has been your proudest moment at UC San Diego? Why?**

My proudest moment so far in my undergraduate career would probably be when I was offered a position with the Lipomi Research Group. Entering into the world of research was important for me because this gave me an opportunity to interact with others and learn from them as well!

## **As a Black, woman, engineering student, do you feel supported by UC San Diego / Jacobs School of Engineering? What could they do better?**

If I am going to be honest, there are times when I do and do not feel supported as a Black woman at UCSD. I think the most supported and included I have ever felt was when I participated in Muir College Academic Advisor Mya Hines' research project. I had an opportunity to interact and discuss a certain topic with other black students on campus. This opportunity made some things about UCSD more apparent. I do not run into many people that look like me on a daily basis. The amount of black faculty is fairly minimal in the engineering department. The acceptance rate of people who identify as black falls below 5% each year. The amount of classmates that look like me could be counted on one hand. Organizations like the BSU and NSBE have made me feel more welcomed, however, a lot of the members are already close with one another so sometimes it is harder to make friends in these communities. I think JSOE reaching out to other students who identify as black and asking this question is a good way to make other black students feel supported. I would say that being an ACES Scholar does let me feel more supported as a black student that is in the engineering field.

I feel like seeing other people who look like you could greatly impact the way each individual navigates their way through college. I think it could be important for black students who are applying to be exposed to other black students who already attend UCSD. A program could be implemented for prospective students that are interested in attending UCSD or considering applying. I think panels that include Black professors could also be interesting as well. I know that UCSD only has so much funding and resources available, but if other individuals do not feel welcomed at this institution, there is an issue. Additionally, I feel that it is more important to reach out to other black students that are from different departments so you could get a greater variety of opinions.