

Karla Covarrubias

*IDEA Center's Spotlight on UC San Diego's
LGBTQ+ Engineers*



Quick Facts

Grade: 1st Year

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Questions about your experiences:

Does Pride Month hold personal significance for you? How do you celebrate it?

This is actually the first year that I get to celebrate pride! For this first pride month, it has been a time of reflecting and overcoming my past obstacles, and looking ahead to a more open and honest future. It holds a personal significance for me because it is an entire month where I get to celebrate the freedom to be who I am and feel a strong sense of community.

What does being lesbian mean to you? How does it impact your experience at UC San Diego?

It is an important part of who I am. A part of me that was hard to accept at first, but with time, is now what I'm most proud of. Living on campus has been a learning experience. Gaining that sense of independence helped me to really grow more into myself and become the person I want to be. It has made me come to terms with my sexuality and fully embrace it.

How do you deal with feelings of belonging and other challenges related to being lesbian in an engineering field?

Being in a male dominated career field, there is an unconscious bias towards women. Being lesbian just adds another challenge. I always knew that as a first generation lesbian college student would come with its hardships, but I know that there will also be opportunities to come, as well.

Have you struggled coming to terms with your identity at UC San Diego? How have you grown confidently into it in the past few years?

Before college, I struggled to fully accept who I was in fear of the judgment I would face by my friends and family. Now, I feel the exact opposite. Being at UCSD and living on campus has been an impactful experience for me because it felt like a fresh start. Away from home, I was able to grow and become more of myself, and be able to truly be proud of who I am.

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

My proudest moment at UC San Diego has been completing my first year because it's an important milestone for me. College has truly been such a great experience, meeting new people and learning more about myself. There is more to it than just the academics. I am excited for all it has to offer in these next 3 years.

As a lesbian student, do you feel supported by UC San Diego and its programs? What could they do better?

I haven't really heard much about UC San Diego's programs, it's not really advertised or showcased much. They could do better by ensuring safer spaces and creating a community for LGBTQ+ students. Most students who join programs and get support are those who actively looked and sought it out, but it should be like any other programs.