

# Anthony Omole

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



## Quick Facts

Intended Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Nanoengineering

Outside Interests: Reading novels, portrait photography

## Questions about your experiences:

**Could you tell us a little bit about yourself and how your experience at UC San Diego has been so far?**

I would, first, like to thank Sinai Cota for this nomination, I am grateful. I am Anthony Omole, currently in my second year of graduate school. I started out my academic career at El Camino Community College and transferred to UC Berkeley where I graduated with a Chemical Biology degree. I spent a year at the NIH as a postbaccalaureate fellow before moving to San Diego to start this program. I like to read realist fiction, dance and geocache (although I hardly do these days). UCSD has been a phenomenal experience so far.

**Congratulations on being a recipient of the prestigious Sloan Scholarship! How has this helped you in your graduate education?**

Thank you! Being a recipient of the Sloan Scholarship has been a blessing. The financial support has been helpful for funding my education. The Sloan family too (Sinai, Shana, and all the other recipients) have been supportive in terms of resources for graduate life and community. I thank them all!

## **Tell us about your experience as a Mentor with TEAM and the Sloan Scholars. Why was it important for you to be a Mentor?**

I have mentors in different paradigms of my life with more life and educational experience that provide guidance to me. Had it not been for the mentors I had as a transfer undergraduate student and a postbac, I doubt that I would have decided to pursue a graduate degree. And so, with the little knowledge and experience I have gained, I find it important to lend myself to students who are looking for support. I have volunteered on panels for TEAM, I currently mentor Sloan Scholars, and an undergraduate research assistant in my lab. Support from me in these areas range from explaining how viral nanoparticles are used for biomedical nanotechnology to editing resumes and cover letters. I have these students to thank for trusting me enough to be their mentor; I am learning so much myself from this experience and looking forward to more opportunities.

## **What does Black History Month mean to you?**

To me, Black History Month is a month dedicated to celebrating African-American history, stories, and achievements. However, I am always inspired by and celebrating black history, stories and achievements– I don't think it should be confined to a month.

## **As a Black Student, how welcoming has UC San Diego been to your ideas and interests?**

I am fortunate to find myself in spaces that have been immensely supportive of my ideas and interests. I work in the Steinmetz Lab where we repurpose plant viral nanoparticles for applications in cancer immunotherapy and nanotechnology. It is encouraging to work with labmates who are friendly and collaborative; and a principal investigator who champions me to think about science creatively and is holistically interested in my success. I cannot express my gratitude enough for them and an environment like this. It is a blessing to work with them. I am also thankful to the staff in the department who have also been accommodating to me and other students.

## **Are there any activities that interest you outside of academics? How do you unwind?**

I sing and dance when I am free. Other times, I take portrait photography and write short stories. I like to hike... in the city (ha!). I am not much of a 'nature' person although I read novels at Mt. Soledad, La Jolla Shores, and Sunset Cliffs– surreal.

## **What would be your advice to prospective students who wish to pursue research at UC San Diego?**

I believe that a good researcher is a good reader of research. So read. Read expansively about your interests. Curate research journals and scientists, so that you're constantly inspired, motivated, and aware of the latest breakthroughs that are seeking to advance the kind of science that you are interested in. Find mentors and don't be scared to ask for help. I am still learning how to be a good researcher :)

## **What are your plans after you graduate?**

Graduation feels like forever away; I may change my mind tomorrow, but as of today I would like to pursue an academic career.