

Mariana Gomez

*IDEA Center's Spotlight on
UC San Diego's Jacob Scholars*

Quick Facts

Grade: Second Year

Major: Chemical Engineering

Outside Interests: Reading, cooking, swimming,
traveling, and spending time with friends and family



Questions about your experiences:

In October, UC San Diego will be holding it's 3rd LatinX Heritage Month long celebration.

What has been your experience so far as a Latinx engineering student at UC San Diego?

As a first-generation Latina college student at UC San Diego, my experience has been one I am immensely grateful for. I was initially intimidated at the idea of how my ethnicity would impact my college journey, but my ethnicity has actually helped me gain a sense of belonging here. I was lucky enough to have found a student organization, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), that was meant for Latinx engineers. Meeting so many people that share the same background as me alleviated feelings of imposter syndrome and has solidified my goal of obtaining an engineering degree. Additionally, the welcoming staff within JSOE have been a great support for the Latinx community. The IDEA center has a strong commitment to diversity and with programs that demonstrate that commitment, like Summer Engineering Institute, it was easy to feel integrated. Now, whenever I find myself being the only Latina in the room, I embrace it thanks to the positive experience I have had thus far. I am proud of my heritage and the Jacobs School of Engineering has only encouraged me to embrace who I am.

You are currently a Class Representative for your Jacobs Scholars Board and a student leader in SHPE. How have these leadership experiences impacted your college experience?

Being a Class Representative and the SHPE Jr. Representative has greatly strengthened my college experience. Even before I became a college student, I knew I wanted to be involved in leadership positions, regardless of how major or minor that position was. Now having more than one leadership position, I have gained confidence within myself and in the work that I am doing. It has also taught me how to manage my time, allowed me to gain leadership skills, and be greatly involved in JSOE community. All of which are very important as an engineering student.

What are you most looking forward to accomplishing by being a part of SHPE?

Now that I am on SHPE board, I am looking forward to working with the rest of the board to create an inclusive and supportive environment for the Latinx community. It is important for a minority group within engineering to feel supported and have access to professional development and cultural enrichment with events like Professional Evening with Industry or Noche de Ciencias. I am especially looking forward to providing guidance to Latinx first-years as they transition into college through SHPE's Freshmen Committee. There is so much to learn within the first year of college and Freshmen Committee will aid in that learning experience. Lastly, I am looking forward to working closely with SHPE Jr. Chapters to further their development and plan Noche de Ciencias.

What advice would you offer current or future undergraduate students from historically minoritized communities?

My advice for current and future undergraduate students from historically minoritized communities would be to put yourself out there. It may feel lonely and difficult to find your place on such a large, diverse campus but you will find a space where you feel a sense of belonging. The best way is to join a student organization that you are interested in. There are so many organizations on campus and extra resources for people of any background. Whether it be SWE, SHPE, or NSBE, there is something for everyone. Just put yourself out there and be you! The people and opportunities along the way are a plus and something to look forward to. Just remember: you are here for a reason so make the most out of it, it will be a rewarding experience.