

Alberto Avalos
IDEA Center's Spotlight on UCSD's
First Gen Students

Quick Facts

Grade: Senior

Major: Nanoengineering

Outside interests: Reading, Gaming, Surfing,
Climbing, Camping, and Hiking




Questions about your experiences:

How has being a first-generation student impacted your experience at UCSD? What resources would you recommend to first gen students?

Being a first-generation student at UCSD was very challenging, I didn't know much about how to be successful in college when I first got here. However, one thing that has helped me so much since I started college was having mentors, and I recommend any other incoming First Generation Students to seek the same, you can seek mentors through IDEA, AEP, or the First Generation Student Success Program! Mentorship can really go a long way.

Could you share with us your experiences as an IDEA Scholar?

As an IDEA scholar I've gained access to an incredibly inviting and diverse community. I've developed connections with people I met a summer before even starting my freshman year and made many connections with people that I can only believe will remain lifelong friends of mine. Being an IDEA Scholar has also opened up so many doors for me through the connections I've made with other IDEA Scholars and through the IDEA Mentors.



Why did you get into research and what aspects do you enjoy? What advice would you give to students who are interested in pursuing research?

I got into Research because I wanted to deepen my learning and gain experience in the lab, what I most enjoyed was the feeling of accomplishing something that would go on to having greater impacts within the scientific community. I used to work in a medical devices lab and knowing that our work would help people with cancer and diabetes was very fulfilling. This experience also led to an internship opportunity so if you ever get the chance to, look to join a lab! I would recommend reaching out to many professors who have research projects that catch your interest and be persistent. Show the professors that you want to be a part of their team!

How did you know you wanted to get a PhD?

I knew I wanted to go to grad school when I realized how much I enjoy learning and understanding new concepts, and grad school is a great way to deepen your understanding in a chosen field of specialization.

From your experiences, what advice would you offer current students?

I would say, get involved in whatever catches your interest on campus as soon as possible, let that be a lab, a student organization, or a project group. UCSD offers so many opportunities for its students to take advantage of you just need to go out and look for them!

