

ARCS ADVANCING SCIENCE IN AMERICA®

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

ANNUAL REPORT
2025 - 2026

ACHIEVEMENT REWARDS for COLLEGE SCIENTISTS MISSION

ARCS Foundation advances science and technology in the United States by providing financial awards to academically outstanding U.S. citizens studying to complete degrees in science, engineering and medical research.



Time and Dreams Intertwined

This surreal, dreamlike scene of swirling cosmic forms and fragmented clock-like elements suggests time dissolving into layered dreams and memory. Rob Healey used AI to create the image, which was then transformed into a unique work of art by ARCS supporter Janet Hubka, CEO of Ilus Art, and presented to Dr. Sonia Ancoli-Israel at the 2026 Scientist of the Year Celebration.

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SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By every measure, this past year has been remarkable for our Chapter. And none of our successes happened by accident. They were made possible by an extraordinary group of members who gave generously of their time, talent, energy, and resources to advance our mission. Here's what we accomplished together:

We raised more money than ever before to support next year's Scholars – an investment not only in exceptional students, but in the future of scientific discovery itself. Our Scientist of the Year event was an extraordinary success – not only raising much needed Scholar funds, but also significantly expanding awareness of ARCS and our mission.

In response to continuing federal reductions in scientific research funding, our Board unanimously approved a one-time supplemental award of $3,000 for each of our 50 Scholars to help sustain their critical research during a challenging year. Building on that commitment, the Board also voted to dedicate a prudent portion of our interest income to increase annual Scholar awards from $10,000 to $12,500 beginning next year – a meaningful investment in the next generation of scientific leaders at a time when support is needed most.

This year also marked the first time we reached out to our Scholar Alumni to help support current Scholars. While the initial response was modest, every meaningful journey begins with a first step. We have opened the door to a new and important source of engagement that we look forward to growing in the future.

Several members attended San Diego's Innovation Night, a premier networking event to build relationships that could strengthen our mission for years to come. Those efforts are already bearing fruit, including the establishment of an exciting new educational partnership with the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute. We will welcome two additional Scholars in 2026-27, bringing our total to 52 and look forward to many years of fruitful collaboration.

We also strengthened our operational foundation by hiring an assistant to support our Website and Electronic Communications Manager. This ensures continuity, provides essential backup in case of emergency, and positions us to grow even more effectively in the future. Further building our capabilities, we engaged a freelance grant writer to scout and develop funding opportunities that will further increase support for our Scholars.

Finally our Chapter became the first in the ARCS national pilot program to host a hospitality booth at a major scientific conference, the Biomedical Engineering Society Annual Meeting. This gave us the opportunity to reconnect with ARCS Scholar Alumni and elevate the visibility of ARCS at one of the scientific community's premier gatherings.

Taken together, these accomplishments reflect far more than a successful year. They demonstrate a Chapter defined by commitment, resilience, and vision. At a time when support for scientific research faces unprecedented challenges, we chose not to retreat – we chose to lead. We chose to invest more deeply in our Scholars, strengthen our partnerships, expand our visibility, and build a stronger foundation for the future.

We accomplished all of this together. My deepest gratitude goes to our dedicated Board and every member whose passion and commitment made this year both extraordinarily productive and deeply rewarding. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my professional and personal life to serve as your Chapter President these past two years, and I will always be grateful for the opportunity to lead this remarkable organization.



LESLIE K. BRUCE

President 2024-2026

WHO WE ARE: THE HISTORY of ARCS

October 4, 1957, was a game-changer. On that date, Russia launched Sputnik, a 183-pound satellite, roughly the size of a beach ball, into space. This surprise launch shocked the United States and forced it to rethink its place as the technological leader of the world. It also ushered in the Space Age and the Cold War. The Russian action touched all areas of America, including politics, patriotism, science, the military, and education. In response, the U.S. undertook an unprecedented push to educate Americans in science and math.

As part of that initiative, a group of women in Los Angeles saw the opportunity to make a difference by creating a partnership between science and society. Their goal was to re-establish and re-energize the technological superiority of the United States. They started the first ARCS chapter in September 1958. ARCS (Achievement Rewards for College Scientists) is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization founded and administered by women who volunteer their time and talent to support American advancement in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and in biomedical research. It is now comprised of 15 chapters across the nation.

In 1985, four San Diego women established ARCS Foundation, San Diego Chapter: Karen Bowden, Karon Luce, Barbara McColl, and Pattie Wellborn. Forty-one years later, ARCS San Diego has provided almost $14 million in financial awards to the brightest STEM scholars at four local academic institutions. By investing in these scholars, we are securing a better future for America and the world.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

101 CURRENT MEMBERS

1985 CHAPTER STARTED WITH 4 FOUNDERS

$13,952,000 FUNDED SINCE 1985

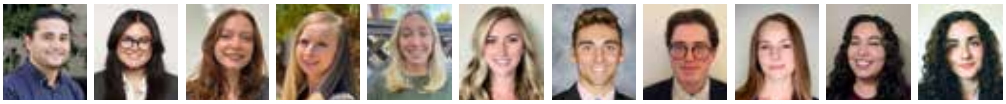
50 SCHOLARS AWARDED **$500,000** IN 2025-2026

98% GRADUATION RATE

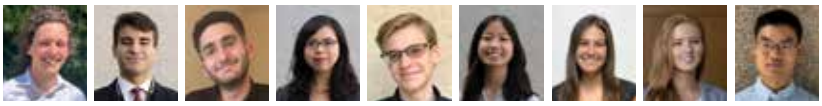
OUR SCHOLARS ... TOMORROW'S LEADERS

2025-2026 ARCS SAN DIEGO CHAPTER SCHOLARS

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY



SCRIPPS RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO



UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO



We continue to be amazed by our Scholars' talent, hard work, and dedication. We are also grateful for our academic partners - San Diego State University, Scripps Research, UC San Diego, and the University of San Diego – who choose our Scholars and who are approved by the ARCS National Board on the basis of excellence in basic science, engineering, math and medical research.

Our Scholars are all PhD candidates and are conducting research and making new discoveries that will lead to advances in global health and wellness, understanding and treatment of disease, national security, ecological improvements, space exploration and in many other STEM areas.

We are proud to volunteer our own time to promote scientific advancement in our country and to provide unrestricted funds to tomorrow's leaders. 100% of our contributions go directly to our Scholars, not to administration or infrastructure. ARCS is one of the largest contributors to basic science education of any private membership organization in the United States.

SCHOLAR SELECTION

Scholars must be U.S. citizens and meet ARCS-established academic criteria with a minimum 3.5 GPA, while pursuing graduate degrees in a wide range of scientific subjects. These Scholars are specializing in astronomy, biochemistry, botany, cell and molecular biology, chemistry, computer science, ecology, engineering, genetics, marine biology, mathematics, medical research, oceanography, physics and more.



EMILY ANNE DARIN

SDSU/UC SAN DIEGO
College of Sciences

Concentration: Molecular and Marine Biology

Specialization: Genetic Engineering in Marine Systems



STEPHAN MIGUEL FREEMAN

SCRIPPS RESEARCH
Skaggs Graduate School of Chemical and Biological Sciences

Concentration: Chemistry

Specialization: Organic Chemistry



RENNY KA HANG NG

UC SAN DIEGO/SDSU
Division of Biological Sciences

Concentration: Biological Sciences

Specialization: Olfaction



BASMA ADAMS

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science

Concentration: Nursing

Specialization: Diabetes



ALLOCATION of ARCS SCHOLAR AWARDS

The amount of funding available for ARCS Scholar Awards is calculated each year by using a distribution formula based on the percentage of eligible Scholars enrolled at each ARCS-approved recipient university.

The 2025-2026 academic year awards were allocated as follows:

SDSU San Diego State University — 11 SCHOLARS

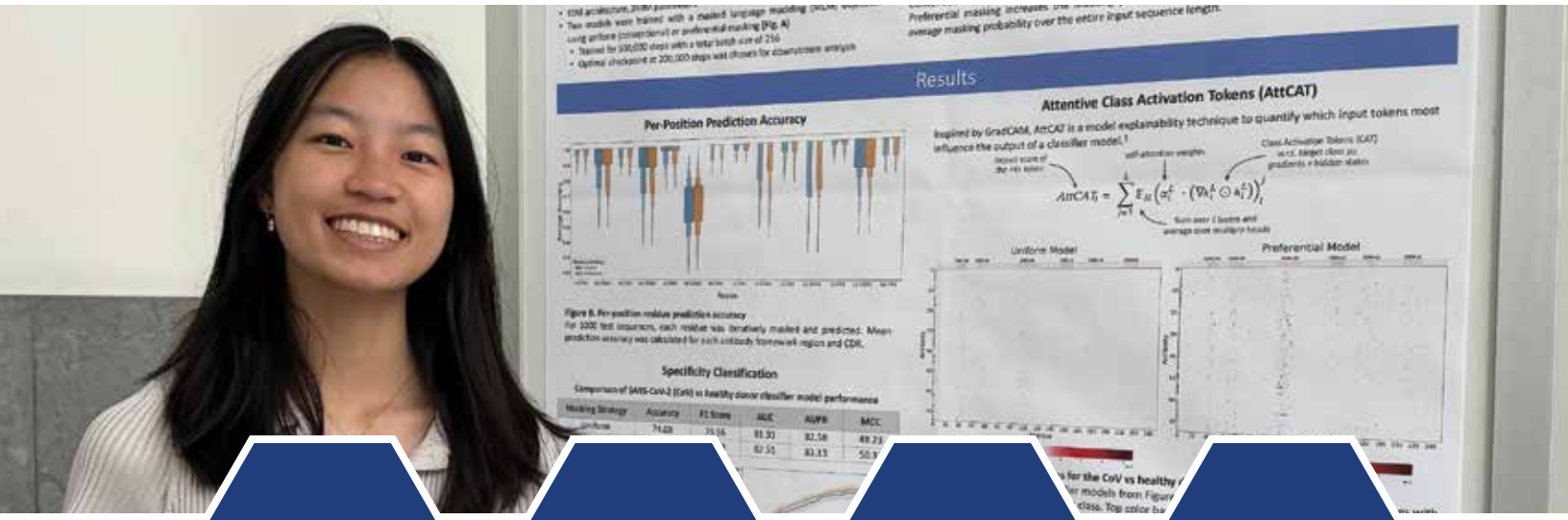
Scripps Research — 9 SCHOLARS

UC San Diego — 26 SCHOLARS

University of San Diego — 4 SCHOLARS

ARCS SAN DIEGO
CUMULATIVE FUNDING 1985-2026

TOTAL AWARDS GRANTED 1,784
TOTAL FUNDING $13,952,000



$4,067,500	$1,602,000	$7,455,500	$827,000
526 AWARDS	239 AWARDS	913 AWARDS	106 AWARDS
SDSU San Diego State University	Scripps Research	UC San Diego	University of San Diego

2026 SCIENTIST of THE YEAR CELEBRATION



Nearly 200 guests gathered at The Conrad in La Jolla on May 17 to celebrate Dr. Sonia Ancoli-Israel, the 2026 ARCS Scientist of the Year, whose groundbreaking research has transformed our understanding of sleep, aging, and health.

The evening began with a reception featuring 18 of this year's 50 ARCS Scholars, who shared their innovative research during a poster session. The main program followed with the traditional Scholar processional, a moving video tribute highlighting all 50 Scholars, and reflections from ARCS Scholar alum Noah Milman on the impact of his award.

Dr. Ancoli-Israel's keynote address was the evening's highlight. Drawing on a lifetime of research, she shared insights into the relationship between sleep, aging, cognition, and overall health, including the importance of treating sleep disorders and using light therapy to improve circadian rhythms. With warmth and humility, she credited the many colleagues and students who contributed to her success and accepted a commemorative artwork, *Time and Dreams Intertwined*, created by Janet Hubka of Ilus Art. The celebration concluded with dessert and conversation, leaving guests inspired by a remarkable evening honoring science, discovery, and mentorship.



SONIA ANCOLI-ISRAEL, PhD – 2026 SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR

Dr. Ancoli-Israel is a world-renowned leader in sleep and circadian rhythm research. A dedicated mentor and advocate for scientific discovery, she exemplifies the values and mission of ARCS Foundation. She has served as President of the Sleep Research Society and the Society for Light Treatment and Biological Rhythms, and has received numerous honors, including the National Sleep Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award, the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine Distinguished Career Award, and the SRS Distinguished Scientist Award. Her research on sleep, circadian rhythms, light therapy, and aging has been widely published and featured in national media.



NOAH MILMAN – ARCS OREGON SCHOLAR ALUMNUS SPEAKER

Noah is a graduate student in the Sleep & Health Applied Research Program (SHARP) lab at Oregon Health & Science University under advisor Dr. Miranda Lim. His research, using rodent species, focuses on the relationship between early life, sleep and autism or social behavior, and development and early life sleep in all mammals.

"STEM CATALYST" SPONSOR

UC San Diego

"STEM ENERGIZER" SPONSOR

SDSU San Diego State University

BENEFITS of ARCS MEMBERSHIP

ARCS members have the opportunity to actively engage with Scholars and academic partners at presentations, lab and site visits, and social events. Members also enjoy learning about cutting-edge technologies and establishing relationships with Scholars. Here are some of the presentations and field trips we enjoyed in 2025-2026.



SAN DIEGO ZOO SAFARI PARK | ARCS members and friends enjoyed an exclusive behind-the-scenes visit to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park's animal hospital and "Frozen Zoo." Traveling by flatbed truck, they toured areas normally closed to the public and learned how veterinarians care for animals of all sizes. The highlight was the Frozen Zoo®, a remarkable biodiversity resource preserving frozen living cells from more than 11,500 animals representing 1,300 species and subspecies to help protect wildlife diversity for the future.



SAN DIEGO WATER BOARD'S QUEST FOR CLEAN WATER | ARCS Scholar alumna Christina Arias-Liles, a Water Resource Control Engineer with the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, shared insights into the Board's vital role in protecting local water quality and reflected on her career path since receiving ARCS support as an SDSU civil engineering graduate student in 1999–2000.



SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY | ARCS members and friends visited UCSD's Scripps Institution of Oceanography to learn about the international Argo project, which SIO founded and leads for U.S. participation. Professor Sarah Purkey, PhD, explained how a fleet of more than 4,500 robotic floats collects critical ocean data on temperature, salinity, oxygen, and other measures, helping scientists track ocean changes and improve weather forecasting, climate research, and maritime safety.

BOARD of DIRECTORS 2025-2026



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Leslie Bruce



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Margaret Dudas, Linda Johnson

2025-2026 DONOR HONOR ROLL

JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026
GIFTS RECEIVED FOR SCHOLAR AWARDS TO BE MADE IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027

$70,000
Reuben H. Fleet Foundation

$40,000
Beyster Family Foundation
Hervey Family Fund

$30,000
Donald C. and Elizabeth M. Dickinson Foundation
University of California, San Diego

$20,000 - $29,999
San Diego State University
Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation
University of California, San Diego

$15,000
Danielle James

$10,000 - $14,999
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Karen Bowden
Toby Eisenberg
Dorothy Georgens
Laura Henson and Geoffrey Hueter
Robin Luby
Laura Mateo
Laurie Roeder
Elizabeth and Joseph Taft

$7,500 - $9,999
Kenneth and Marjorie Blanchard
Tanya Schierling

$5,000 - $7,499
Paul Bechtner Foundation
Karen Bowden
Elwyn Heller Foundation of San Diego
Cleo and Paul Schimmel
Scripps Research
University of San Diego
Mara Ybarrondo

$2,500 - $4,999
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Mapp Biopharmaceutical, Inc.
Arthur P. and Jeanette G. Pratt Memorial Fund
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Lisa Perich
Dolores Pretorius

UP TO $499

AMD
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Rachel Collins
Kelsey Dale
Nelly Dean
Suzanne Dixon
Kimberly Doren
Caroline Etland
Mary Fitz
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Deena Libman
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Grace Miller
Kimberly Miller
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Mary Lou Quick
Shari Schenk
Janice Shaw
Ann Siemens
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Barbara Vandervoort
Meera Venkatesh
Yolanda Walther-Meade
Pamela Werner
Gayle Wilson
Cindy Wollaeger

The amounts above indicate donations to the ARCS Foundation Scholar Awards Fund, Endowment Fund and Memorial Funds.

See an error or omission? Please send an email to: sandiego@arcsfoundation.org



OUR ALUMNI – CHANGING THE WORLD!

Thousands of ARCS Scholar alumni go on to make outstanding contributions to advance science and keep America competitive. Here are just a few standouts from our chapter.



ALBERT STRICKER, MS (1998–1999, SDSU), is Public Works Director for the City of Rancho Cordova, California, where he leads efforts to enhance safety, connectivity, and community spaces. He previously worked for the City of San Diego and engineering firms Ninyo & Moore and PBS&J. Albert holds a BS in Groundwater Hydrology and an MS in Civil Engineering from San Diego State University and is a member of the American Public Works Association.



KERRY HANSON, PhD (1993-1997, UCSD), earned her PhD in Chemistry from UCSD in 1997 and completed postdoctoral research at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she studied two-photon fluorescence imaging of UV-induced reactive oxygen species in skin. Since joining the University of California, Riverside in 2005, Dr. Hanson has focused on the photochemical and photophysical properties of sunscreen UV filters. She also has 15 years of consulting experience with sunscreen R&D leaders, has provided expert witness services in patent litigation, and is committed to community outreach and scientific literacy in Riverside.



WILLIAM REDMOND, PhD (2001-2004, SCRIPPS RESEARCH), earned his PhD in Immunology at Scripps Research and is now a Full Member at the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute in Portland, Oregon, where he directs the Immune Monitoring Laboratory. His research focuses on cancer immunotherapy, using advanced immune profiling and tumor models to identify biomarkers that improve understanding of treatment responses. Dr. Redmond's work has been supported by leading organizations including the NIH, American Cancer Society, and V Foundation.

INVESTING IN AMERICA'S FUTURE



Join us to support ARCS Scholars and invest in the future of science, technology, research and innovation in America. The Scholar Award Fund is supported by ARCS members, foundations, academic institutions, businesses, and individuals in the community.

Give online at:
san-diego.arcsfoundation.org

Donations by check may be mailed to:

ARCS Foundation, Inc. - San Diego Chapter
c/o Mother Lode Bookkeeping, Inc.
Attn: Christine Diaz
207 West D Street, Encinitas, CA 92024

All gifts are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated by our members, the Scholars and their academic institutions.

100% OF EACH DONATION GOES TOWARD SCHOLAR AWARDS

To make a donation of stock, create an endowment, include ARCS in your Estate plans, or request additional information, please contact:

Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins, President | ibenirschke@gmail.com
Kristin Boyd, VP Fund Development | kmgboyd@gmail.com
Paulette Roberts, VP Fund Development | paulejroberts@gmail.com

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SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

ARCS Foundation is a national nonprofit organization administered entirely by women.
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