

Accessible Version of Each Faculty & Staff Spotlight

Kiki Araki-Kawaguchi

Preferred Pronouns: He/him/his

Email: harakika@ucsd.edu

Program Coordinator for Transfer Year Experience at UCSD

Hometown: Santa Maria, CA

Transferred From: Allan Hancock College

Transferred To: UC Berkeley & Santa Clara University

Time to Transfer: 9 years between all degrees

Research Interests: Literature, Creative Writing, Poetry, Fiction, Speculative Literature, Fantasy, Comedy

Hobbies: Writing, Netflix, Badminton

Advice for Transfer Students: “Find an on-campus job ASAP, preferably at a place like the Campus Community Centers, Basic Needs Hub, Academic Integrity Office, OASIS, Library (i.e. a team environment). On-campus work means you are pre-committed to working with staff (mentors) and student leaders (peers). Finding community is key. You’ll also be pre-committed to developing your professional, leadership and communication skills. The extra money is nice too.”

Grace Bagunu

Email: gbagunu@ucsd.edu

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Revelle College

Hometown: Kansas City, Missouri

Transferred from: University of Kansas

Transferred to: University of Missouri - Kansas City

Time to Transfer: I actually dropped out of college in my second year and took a full year off before transferring to my second university

Research Interests: Leadership, Career Decision-Making, Higher Education, Philippine-descent

Hobbies: Walks to the sunset, Pokémon Go, Gardening, art

Advice for Transfer Students: “Make the most out of the resources and opportunities available to you in college, including the programs and staff who can connect you to more experiences that will help you reach your goals!”

Tina Brill

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Study Abroad Financial Aid Counselor

Hometown: Seattle, WA

Transferred From: Shoreline Community College

Transferred to: University of Washington

Time to Transfer: 3 years

Research Interests: Economics, Business, Finance and Corporate Governance

Hobbies: I love all forms of art and am a huge Comic-Con fan!

Advice for Transfer Students: “1) Take advantage of all the opportunities on campus you can find. 2) get to know your professors and ask about opportunities that may be available related to your interests. 3) Start taking advantage of any networking opportunities you can as soon as possible. Get on LinkedIn and add your classmates, professors, etc. 4) You bring value to this campus! Remember that your lived experience is valuable and an advantage on your journey! :)”

Tori Bussey-Neal

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Student Success Coach

Hometown: San Diego, CA

Transferred from: CSU Long Beach

Transferred to: San Diego State University

Time to Transfer: 2 years

Research interests: students of color and college retention, college students of color and sense of belonging

Hobbies: Listening to R&B music, going to concerts, dancing, collecting vinyl records, trying new foods, attending arts related events

Advice for Transfer Students: “Be intentional with your time here, not just academically and preparing for your career, but also socially and personally. Join clubs, go to events, explore and adventure! The social experience in college is just as valuable as the academics and professional development. You belong at this campus too and the opportunities are endless! Time may be short, but take advantage of all that this experience has to offer you!”

Roberta Camarena

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Assistant Director, Admissions, Diversity Recruitment

Hometown: San Diego, CA

Transferred From: San Diego City College

Transferred to: UC San Diego

Time to Transfer: 1 year, this was prior to the 60 minimum transferable unit requirement

Research Interests: Biology & Education

Hobbies: Mentoring

Advice for Transfer Students: “Get involved early at both the community college and university. The splice through your undergraduate education makes it challenging, but not impossible to get involved in research and socially.”

Risa Farrell

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Program Coordinator, SIO Masters of Advanced Studies

Hometown: Sacramento, CA

Transferred From: American River College

Transferred to: UC San Diego

Time to Transfer: 2.5 years

Research interests: Global health, maternal health, immigration, art

Hobbies: surfing, camping, farmer’s markets, gardening

Advice for Transfer Students: “Get involved on campus as soon as possible, especially if it’s a work study or paid position in an area you’re interested in. Getting involved helps you to quickly establish community, get your bearings in a new environment, and strategize on how to make the most of your (relatively) short time on campus. Also, get to know your advisors well! They have so many ‘life hack’ tips and often know where the free food is.”

Aia Hawari

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Front Desk Coordinator at IFSO

Hometown: Fountain Valley, CA

Transferred from: Golden West College

Transferred to: UC San Diego

Time to Transfer: 2 years

Research interests: student success, marginalized/minority student experiences (i.e. first generation students)

Hobbies: writing, exploring San Diego, connection with folx

Advice for Transfer Students: “When it comes to friendships, it’s not about the quantity, but rather the quality. Seek community; it’ll make things so much easier.”

Natalie Ikker

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Undergraduate Student Affairs Advisor

Hometown: Oceanside, CA

Transferred from: Palomar College

Transferred to: UC Irvine

Time to Transfer: 2 years

Hobbies: Ceramics, spending time with friends and loved ones, exploring new places, and enjoying beautiful San Diego

Advice for Transfer Students: “Take time to explore your goals, academic strengths, passions, career interests, and the involvement opportunities you would like to take part in during your time at UCSD. Time goes by quickly, so don’t be afraid to ask questions and challenge yourself to make the most out of your time here!”

Jessica Kongthong

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Associate Director, Health Professions

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio

Transferred From: The Ohio State University

Transferred to: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Hobbies: Fitness, reading, mindfulness, traveling, music, volunteering with Guide Dogs or rescue dogs

Advice for Transfer Students: “Get connected! Know your resources and get involved in some extra-curricular activities. Know that you’re not alone!”