

Research Week: Celebrating the Exploration of Knowledge

Research is intellectual curiosity. Research is about finding answers to questions and expanding knowledge that can be to the benefit of all humankind. It is also, as the University of San Diego will demonstrate the week of April 16-20, an important celebration of fun.

The university's annual [Research Week](#) showcase, hosted by the Provost Office and the [Office of Sponsored Programs \(OSP\)](#) spotlights and enlightens the campus community, prospective students and their families and the community at large about the pursuit of research and the creative and important work done by faculty and students. Research Week celebrates what happens when external funding can enable USD to create and sustain critically important student academic programs and services, utilize vital equipment, hire additional outstanding faculty and to support current faculty and students in their research pursuits and so much more to enhance the value of a USD education.

"We're excited to celebrate the talented faculty and researchers who are collaborating across disciplines to explore and develop cutting-edge solutions to complex issues," says Traci Merrill, OSP director, about USD's Research Week. "Teams working on these multidisciplinary projects are representative of USD's commitment to confront the urgent challenges of our community and humanity in general."

Interdisciplinary Fun with the Demaines

Having fun while fulfilling a commitment to educational learning provides a welcome balance. Just look at what [Martin and Erik Demaine](#), a father-son professor duo at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, bring to the festivities.

Erik, the son, is a professor of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT and a MacArthur Fellow. Homeschooled by his father, Erik attended college, earning a bachelor's degree at age 14 and then a PhD and a professorship at MIT at 20. Martin is the Angelika and Barton Weller Artist in Residence at MIT. He's been called the "father of Canadian Glass" for his artistic glass blowing artwork. The Demaines also have a puzzle business, Erik and Dad Puzzle Company, that started when Erik was just six years old.

The two are Knapp Chairs of Liberal Arts in the USD Humanities Center this spring, working with students and faculty. During Research Week, they are giving two public lectures — Monday, April 16, 5 p.m., KIPJ Theatre ("[Playing with Art and Science: Origami, Glass and Mathematics](#)") and Thursday, April 19, 7 p.m., Humanities Center, Serra Hall 200 ("[Building with Math, Art and Community at USD](#)") — and an exhibition, "[Folding Borders, Making Unfoldings](#)," which runs April 16-May 18 in the Humanities Center. There will be a second opening ceremony, separate from Research Week, [April 27](#).

"Research Week is about exposing the community to each other's work and, I think, inspires us to go in a different way than before," says Perla Myers, PhD, a USD professor of mathematics. "People should come because the Demaines are amazing. They are the perfect example of people who look at the world in a completely interdisciplinary way. They combine many different disciplines to address issues and yet they focus on exploring and having fun. They do things that are fun to them, but, in turn, these things they do for fun have pretty incredible applications."

The Demaines will meet and work with USD Knapp student researchers, speak in a few classes, and will assist with an interdisciplinary USD student/faculty/community project at sites in San Diego and Tijuana. Math, Engineering and Architecture professors at USD and 30-plus USD students are involved in these projects that encompass folding, cutting and gluing.

"The Demaines bring a richness to this; having the disciplines coming together this week will make it even more meaningful," Myers says. "I think math is fun, it's about showing people what the possibilities are. I think people haven't felt that they are capable and because of this they haven't had access to the possibilities that are available in math. I hope this helps people engage in a fun way and realize that it is fun. There's no such thing as there are math people — we're all math people and it is accessible to everyone. I'm excited to see the community be inspired by the Demaines."

Research Week Highlights

[Research Week](#) is a prime opportunity for campus-wide exposure to all ways that research moves faculty and students to learn, to strive for answers and release and show off their creative talents.

Tuesday, April 17: Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award Mixer, 12:30 p.m., Founders Hall East Patio; [Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering](#) Research and Tour, 12:30-2:30 p.m., ASML Ideation Space, Loma Hall, Room 101; [Kroc School](#) Open House, 3-4 p.m., Wasson Social Innovation Lab, KIPJ 247; Faculty Recognition Reception, 4:15-6 p.m., Garden of the Sea.

Wednesday, April 18: Join USD Professor David Shirk and Octavio Rodriguez, program coordinator for the Justice in Mexico Project in an **11 a.m. Facebook Live discussion** on the progress and challenges of recent changes in criminal law; Attend the inaugural [Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice Showcase](#) hosted by USD's School of Leadership and Education Sciences from 12-2 p.m. in the Bishop Buddy Sala in Mother Rosalie Hill Hall where faculty, staff and students will display their work via interactive posters.

Thursday, April 19: A signature Research Week event is the [28th annual Creative Collaborations](#) from 12-2 p.m. in the Hahn University Center Forums. There are multidisciplinary presentations of excellence in undergraduate student-faculty research, scholarship and creative works. The event is hosted by the [Office of Undergraduate Research](#); Outside in the UC foyer from 12-2 p.m. will be information tables for the [School of Law's Legal](#)

[Clinics](#) and the [Military and Veterans Center](#); The USD Humanities Center hosts a 12:30 p.m. event, "[How to Get Yourself Killed in Antiquity](#)," which is part of the Political Ideas and Ideologies Lecture Series.

Friday, April 20: Go on a Research Lab Crawl from 12-2 p.m. to learn about student-faculty research in STEM at Serra Hall, Loma Hall and the Shiley Center for Science and Technology. Participants can collect stickers at each lab station redeem for free pizza and raffle entries.

Artwork Displays, Virtual Reality Experience

The creative, artistic spirit will be alive throughout Research Week as USD's multiple University Galleries spaces are open for free public exhibition viewings:

"Folding Borders, Making Unfoldings," Humanities Center Gallery, Serra Hall 200, Monday-Friday, 12-5 p.m.

"My Ewaa Ah: Johnny Bear Contreras' New Sculpture and Works from the May Collection," David W. May American Indian Gallery, Serra Hall, Tuesday-Thursday, 1-4 p.m.

"Art Cash: Money in Print," Hoehn Family Galleries, Founders Hall, Monday-Friday, 12-5 p.m., Thursday, 12-6 p.m.

"Between the Future and the Past: Photographs of Cuba by Virginia Beahan," Fine Art Galleries, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, Monday-Friday, 12-5 p.m.

The [Jacobs Institute for Innovation in Education](#), located in Mother Rosalie Hill Hall's Room 259, is open Monday-Friday from 2-5 p.m. The institute invites all to visit its virtual reality lab and explore how virtual reality can be used to address key education issues.

— Ryan T. Blystone