Competitive Edge

Competitive Edge is a summer transition interdisciplinary program for incoming Ph.D. and MFA students. This year the program will expand to officially offer support to students throughout their first full year as a graduate student in the form of peer mentoring, periodic 1:1 check-ins with the coordinators, and community-building events.

MISSION
To foster an inclusive community of incoming diverse graduate students that will enhance their academic, personal and professional persistence & success throughout their journey at UC San Diego.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
The Competitive Edge program aims to:

• ease students with the acclimation and transition into their respective graduate programs.
• acquaint students with campus and department-level resources.
• grant students early access to research.
• promote interdisciplinary networking amongst members of the cohort.
• create spaces of open dialogue where opinions, views, and ideas contribute to the development of our students.
• identify and address gaps of resources supporting the graduate student community.

STUDENT BENEFITS
• Advanced introduction to UC San Diego faculty
• Advanced introduction to key UC San Diego campus resources
• Early move-in to graduate campus housing
• Acquisition of critical writing, teaching, and communication skills through workshops and lectures
• Access to peer mentors and a community of incoming graduate students
• Summer stipend of $4,000
• Health insurance during the summer

ELIGIBILITY
To be considered for the Competitive Edge program students must:

• Have accepted the offer of admission.
• Provide responses to at least three of the seven experiential questions found under the Additional Educational Experiences section of the online application for admission.
• Be in a Ph.D. or MFA program starting in the Fall quarter.
• Be a US citizen or permanent resident. DACA and AB540 students are also eligible.
• Nominees that you think could benefit substantially from this transitional/bridge program are preferred.

NOMINATION
The nomination period is now OPEN and will remain open until April 29, 2022. Please submit your nominations using this form: https://forms.gle/mZJxZAVmL4GKFDXr5

Graduate programs need to select 1 student for nomination through the traditional sharing of costs between the program and the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (DGEPA).

If you want to have additional students in the program, submit the same form for each additional student and select “Fully Sponsored by Graduate Program” under Type of Nomination.

FUNDING COMMITMENT
With the funding reform, last year’s mechanism of selecting students had to change for this year. Here are the TWO ways your incoming students can participate in the program in 2022:

1- **ONE Nominee Per Program** – Each graduate program will be selecting 1 student to be in the program and sharing the costs with the Graduate Division. Here’s the Spot Allocation for Competitive Edge 2022.pdf document.
Commitments include:
- Student’s $4000.00 stipend during the program ($2000 will come from the DGEPA and $2000 from the graduate program)
- Student’s Early SHIP Insurance during the summer ($300 will come from the DGEPA and $300 from the graduate program to pay for the cost of Early SHIP)
- Total due from the graduate program $2300

2- Additional Fully Sponsored Students – Graduate programs can fund additional students to participate in the program.

Commitments include:
- Student’s full $4000 summer stipend
- Student’s full cost of Early SHIP Insurance $600
- Student’s summer programming cost $358
- Total due from the graduate program $4958

FORMAT
We’re preparing for an in-person summer program that will include also some hybrid components.

HOUSING
This is not a residential program, therefore students are expected to find housing and secure an early move-in date. The stipend is designed to help students with housing and moving costs.

SUMMER PROGRAM DATES
Summer program dates are August 1 through September 10, 2022.

PROGRAMMING
In addition to the research experience, participants are required to attend workshops to acclimate them to the campus environment. Workshop facilitators are members of the UC San Diego community and serve as faculty, staff or continuing graduate students in various academic fields. In addition to the workshops, participants are expected to attend an orientation at the beginning and a luncheon at the conclusion of the program.

SUMMER FACULTY MENTORSHIP
Each Competitive Edge student is expected to work with a summer faculty mentor from their respective graduate program/department. The faculty mentor will provide guidance on a research project, new or existing. The project does not have to be completed during the 6-week program, which allows the scope of the project to span the entirety of the summer quarter, through the Fall quarter, or beyond. It is recommended that meetings between Competitive Edge students and their respective faculty mentors occur every other week. Ultimately, this depends on the nature of the project, the amount of oversight each student requires, and the level of mentorship the faculty member is able to provide. In addition to research, the faculty mentor can provide an introduction and guidance to the department, as well as any tips on how to make the most of the summer, first quarter, and first year of their graduate experience.

Students will be asked to work with the graduate program coordinator to identify a faculty mentor.

QUESTIONS
For additional questions, please contact the program director Edgar Beas (eabeas@ucsd.edu) at 858-822-1492.