# UCI becomes an American Physical Society Bridge Partner Institution

The designation recognizes the role the Department of Physics & Astronomy plays in guiding students from underrepresented groups into academic careers.

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UCI's now a place where physics students who want to pursue a Ph.D., but who didn't have good access to the right resources, can come.

Picture Credit:
Tiffany Kuo

On June 25, the UCI Department of Physics & Astronomy added another milestone to its efforts to transform itself into a department whose doors are open to people of all backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups, when it became a Bridge Partner Institution of the American Physical Society (APS) — the second UC campus after UCLA to receive the designation after a rigorous vetting process. Becoming a Bridge Partner Institution means the department's now a place where physics students from underrepresented groups can come and get the experience they need to get them ready to apply to doctoral programs. This includes completing coursework the students may not have had access to before, as well as getting the kind of research experience they need to start an academic career. The Bridge designation follows in the wake of an on-site visit by APS Bridge officials to UCI on June 10 to assess the fitness of Physics & Astronomy to fulfill these student needs. The officials met with physics students, many of whom are fervently engaged in student support efforts, like the Physics & Astronomy Community Excellence program, which aims to help new graduate students find their footing in their field. The win adds to other milestones in Physics & Astronomy to augment its inclusion and diversity efforts, including it joining the APS IDEA network — a collection of universities that meets to share ideas about how best to conceive and then execute new ideas about how to better amplify inclusion and diversity efforts — as well as a published statement from the department that features detailed plans about how to plans to overhaul its access, diversity and inclusion efforts.

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