

#EngineerChange

October 2026



UCLA Samueli Welcomes the Next Generation of Bruin Engineers

The UCLA Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science kicked off the 2026-27 academic year with two days of welcome events at the Court of Sciences for its new undergraduate and graduate students.



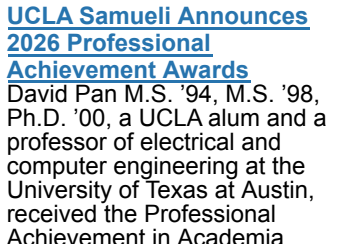
UCLA Samueli Honors 2026 Award Recipients at Annual Showcase

The 2026 UCLA Samueli Showcase & Awards, held Saturday, Oct. 3, saw more than 175 alumni, faculty members, students and industry collaborators attend to celebrate the school's annual award recipients and discuss

developments in technology and entrepreneurship.

UCLA Samueli Announces 2026 Alum of the Year

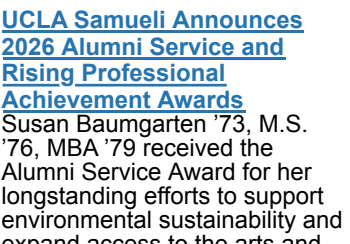
Mukund Padmanabhan M.S. '89, Ph.D. '92 has been named the 2026 UCLA Samueli Alum of the Year, recognizing his accomplishments as an engineer and researcher, as well as his longstanding philanthropic support of UCLA and social and educational programs in the U.S. and India.



co-founder of Siri and other companies, received the Professional Achievement in Industry Award.

UCLA Samueli Announces 2026 Lifetime Contribution Award

Theresa Maldonado, vice president for research and innovation at the University of California, received the 2026 Lifetime Contribution award for leading the U.S. scientific and engineering communities through academic research and administration, federal science leadership and efforts to connect scientific research with public benefit.



education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Di Wu '15, Ph.D. '17, director of Deep Learning Algorithm and Software at Nvidia, received the Rising Professional Achievement Award.

UCLA Samueli Announces 2026 Excellence in Teaching Awards

Lara Dolecek, a professor of electrical and computer engineering and mathematics, received the Eon Instrumentation Inc. Excellence in Teaching Award; Sanjay Mohanty, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, received the Robin B. Joshi Excellence in Teaching Award; and Daniel Schwalbe-Koda, an assistant professor of materials science and engineering, received the Boeing Excellence in Teaching Award.



Frog-like Hopping Robot Propelled by Twisting Elastic Rods

Co-led by Khalid Jawed, an associate professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, and colleagues at the University of Michigan, the study shows that elastic rods can be bent to repeatedly snap between shapes, releasing built-

up energy that enables small robots to hop, flip and swim.

UCLA Samueli to Join Applied Materials' EPIC Center to Accelerate Chip Innovation

At Applied Materials' new Equipment and Process Innovation and Commercialization Center, researchers will work on solving semiconductor materials and integration challenges with a focus on shortening the time it takes to bring breakthrough research to commercialization.



At 90, UCLA's Judge Pearl Is Still Asking the Big Questions
Judge Pearl, Chancellor's Professor Emeritus of computer science, has spent a lifetime transforming artificial intelligence and pursuing dialogue across divides, turning uncertainty into understanding.

UCLA SAMUELI IN THE NEWS



NBC NEWS

California Residents Are Waking Up to Their Homes Sliding into the Ocean. And the Worst Is Yet to Come.
Timu Gallien, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, shares her insights on the future of the Long Beach Peninsula and other California coastal communities as an intense El Niño looms this winter. Gallien also speaks to [CBS L.A.](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [KCRW](#) (beginning at 26:00) and [L.A.ist](#) on what storms this year could mean for the California coast.

The New York Times

A College-by-College Guide to Which Majors Pay Off — Or Don't
An analysis of federal earnings data by the H1A Group, a higher education research firm, found UCLA computer engineering graduates to be the sixth highest earners overall four years after graduation. The majors that top the list are computer science, mathematics and electrical engineering.

KNX1070 NEWSRADIO

Record-Breaking Hydrogen-Powered Race Car Rolls into UCLA
UCLA Samueli Dean Alissa Park and The Bruin Racing and Chem-E Car teams are highlighted in this piece alongside JCB's Hydromax at a campus event on sustainable energy, co-hosted by the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering and the Semel Healthy Campus Initiatives Center. The story is also picked up by [USN](#) and multiple Southern California News Group outlets, including the [Los Angeles Daily News](#), [Long Beach Press-Telegram](#), [Daily Breeze](#) and [Pasadena Star-News](#).

The Guardian

Go with the Flow: Do You Need to Filter US Tap Water?
Yoram Cohen, a distinguished research professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, discusses possible location-specific contaminants in well water and best practices for filtering drinking water.



BBC

The Surprising Ways Parkinson's Can Now Be Spotted Years Early
The story features a smart diagnostic pen developed by Jun Chen, an associate professor of bioengineering. The pen shows promise for detecting early symptoms of Parkinson's disease by using AI to sense subtle changes in a user's motor movements.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Nuclear Fusion's Moment of Truth

Mohamed Abdou, a distinguished professor emeritus of mechanical and aerospace engineering, raises concerns about the practicality of planned fusion power plants, arguing that radiation damage will cause regular system failures that will take months to fix.

INTERESTING ENGINEERING

Repurposing E-waste: 'PhoneBot' Uses Unused Smartphones as Robotic Brains
The article highlights UCLA robotics researchers led by mechanical and aerospace engineering professor Dennis Hong who used old Android phones as the electronic central nervous system for compact walking robots called "PhoneBot." The research is also featured in [USN](#), [36Kr](#), [European Central Station](#) and [RobotToday](#).

LIVESCINCE

Robotics Showcase Tiny, Frog-Like Robot That Can Hop Across Wet Surfaces and Swim

Khalid Jawed, an associate professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, and colleagues at the University of Michigan are featured in this piece for their palm-sized robot that uses twisting elastic rods to hop and swim. The robot is also highlighted in [Zoo Science](#).

Gizmodo

In What Ways Are We Not Prepared for the Big One?

Jonathan Stewart, a professor of civil and environmental engineering and holder of the Sabot-Scott Term Chair in Civil and Environmental Engineering, comments on California's critical weakness in earthquake-ready infrastructure despite progress made in structural retrofitting. Stewart also emphasizes the importance of prioritizing earthquake readiness in the Los Angeles Daily News article "[As Quake Threat Looms, LA County Joins Millions in Annual Shakeout Drill](#)," which is also featured in [Daily Breeze](#) and [Whittier Daily News](#).

The New York Times

Big Controversy Upends a Contest about Microscopic Videos
Aydogan Ozcan, a professor of electrical and computer engineering and bioengineering and holder of the Volgenau Chair for Engineering Innovation, shares his insights on the use of AI to help scientists improve the resolution and contrast of microscopic images and the need to disclose such use.

Forbes

Why Has Nvidia Launched in Spain?

Bahram Jalali, a professor emeritus of electrical and computer engineering, comments on the potential for optical switches, versus electronic ones, in data centers, following Nvidia's investment in the Spanish company iPhotonics, which makes general-purpose photonic chips. Coverage is in Spanish.

STUDENTS



Second-Year Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Master's Student Receives Best TA Award

Orchid Pyone's path through UCLA has taken her from an undergraduate student to a graduate researcher, a teaching assistant, and soon, she hopes, a Ph.D. student. After completing her Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering at UCLA last year, Orchid is continuing her graduate studies as a Bruin and conducting research in the lab of Samarwya Srivastava, an associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering.

ALUMNI



The New BFFs: Bruin Friends and Founders — Building Bots with Your Buddy

Coco Robotics co-founders and computer science alums Zach Rash '19 and Brad Squicciarini '19 met their freshman year at UCLA Samueli and stuck up a friendship through shared interests in surfing and building robots. Today, Rash and Squicciarini lead their L.A.-based company as CEO and CTO, respectively. The company operates more than 1,000 delivery bots across multiple cities, delivering takeout for more than 3,000 merchants, including DoorDash and Uber Eats.



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