Positionality & Pedagogy: "How Do These Shape the Way I Teach?"

James Crawford, M.A. | Ph.D. Candidate Education Studies
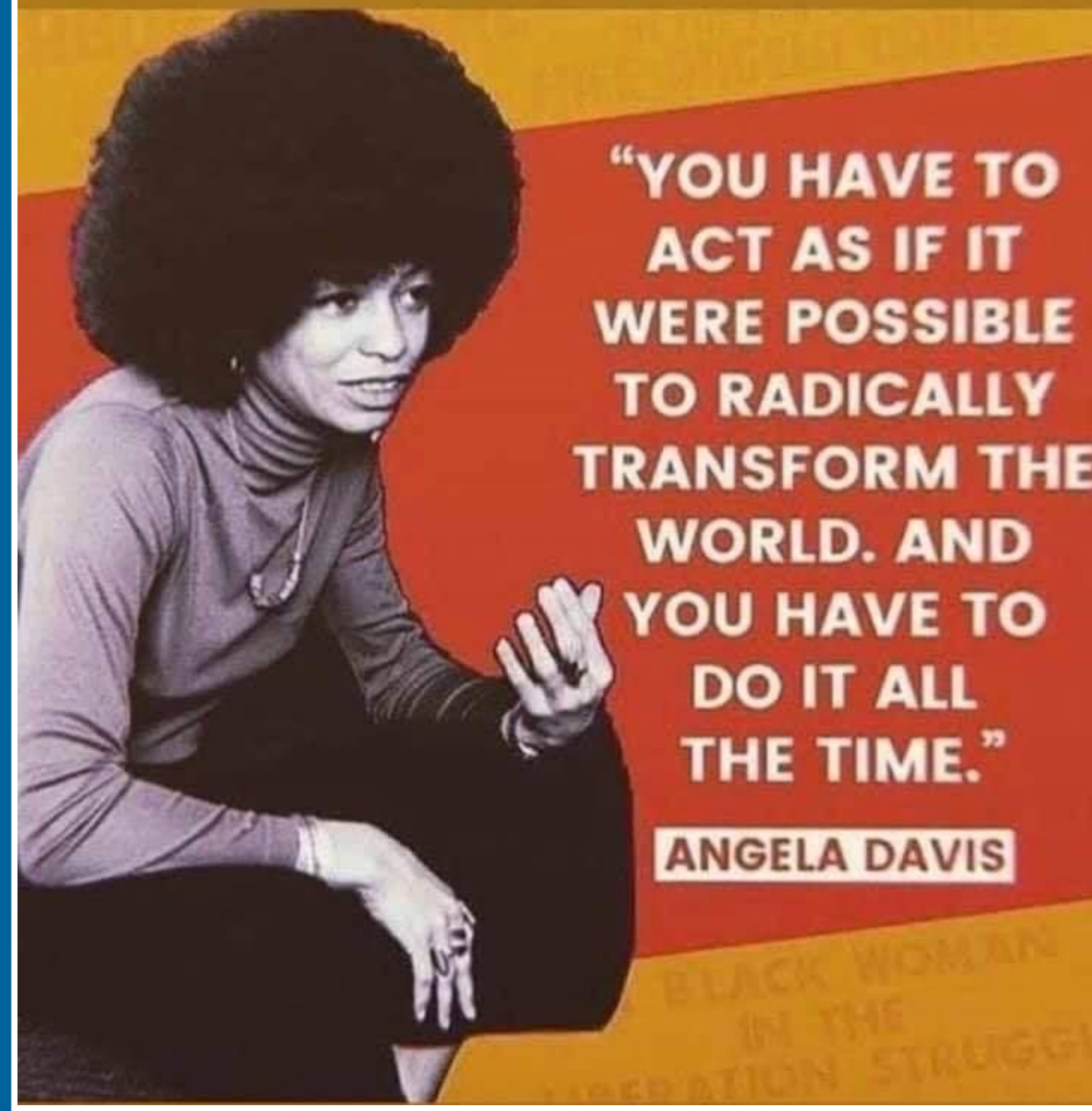**Graduate Assistant, Teaching and Learning Commons Engaged Teaching Hub**

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Welcome

- Facilitators' introduction

- Participants' introduction
  - Name, discipline, the course you're teaching this quarter or next quarter.
  - In a few words, what motivated you to come to this workshop?

- A little bit about anti-racist pedagogy workshops

"YOU HAVE TO ACT AS IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO RADICALLY TRANSFORM THE WORLD. AND YOU HAVE TO DO IT ALL THE TIME."
ANGELA DAVIS

Our time together

10:30 a.m. - 10:40 a.m. | Welcome

10:40 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. | Levels of racism

10:45 a.m. - 11:25 a.m. | Positionality and identity mapping

11:25 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. | Pedagogical choices through positionality

11:45 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Exit ticket and future workshops

Guiding principles

- Lean into discomfort
- Listen deeply to learn
- Engage with humility
- Engage through dialogue
- Be fully present
- Consider air time, elevate marginalized voices
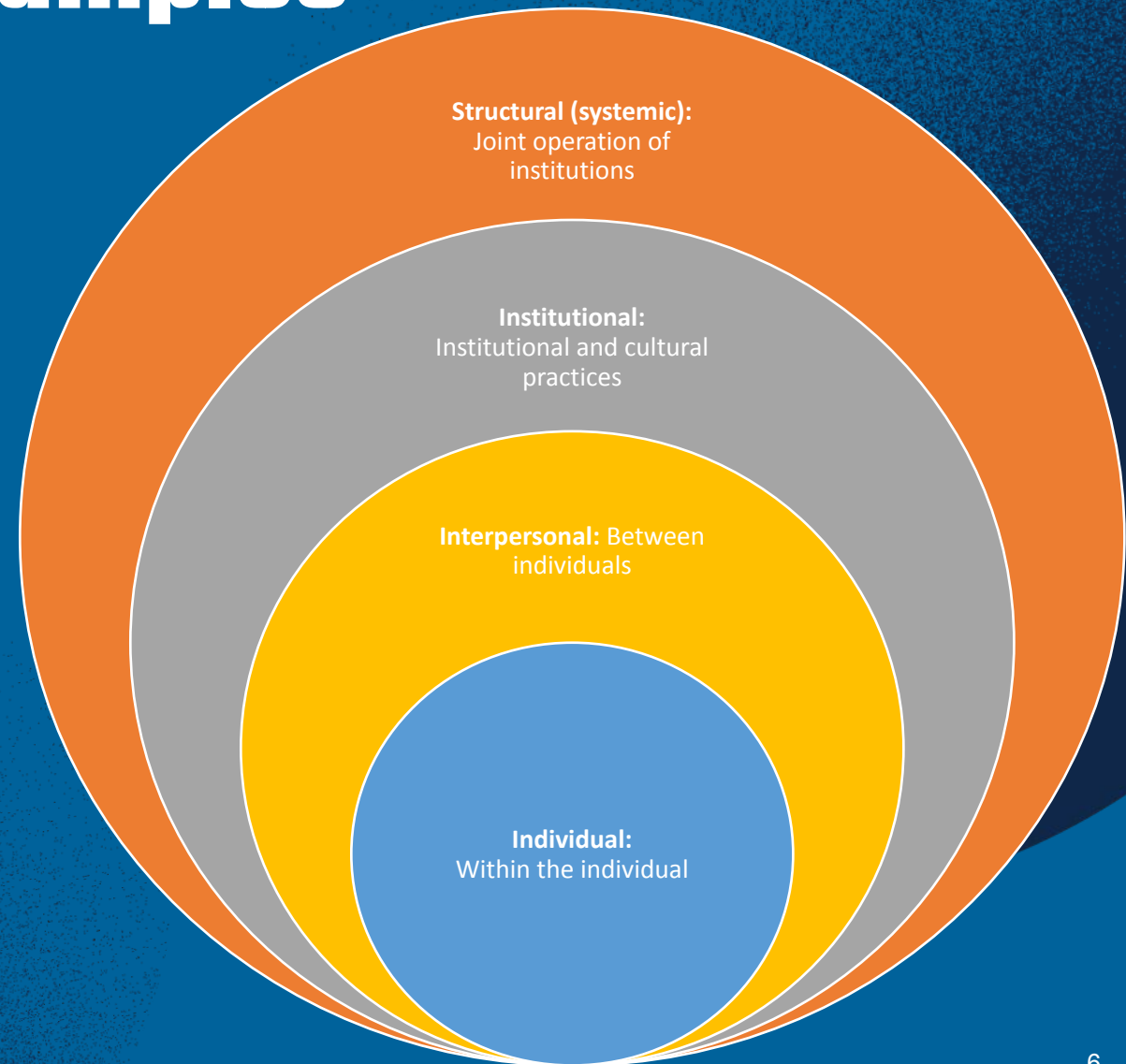- Maintain confidentiality

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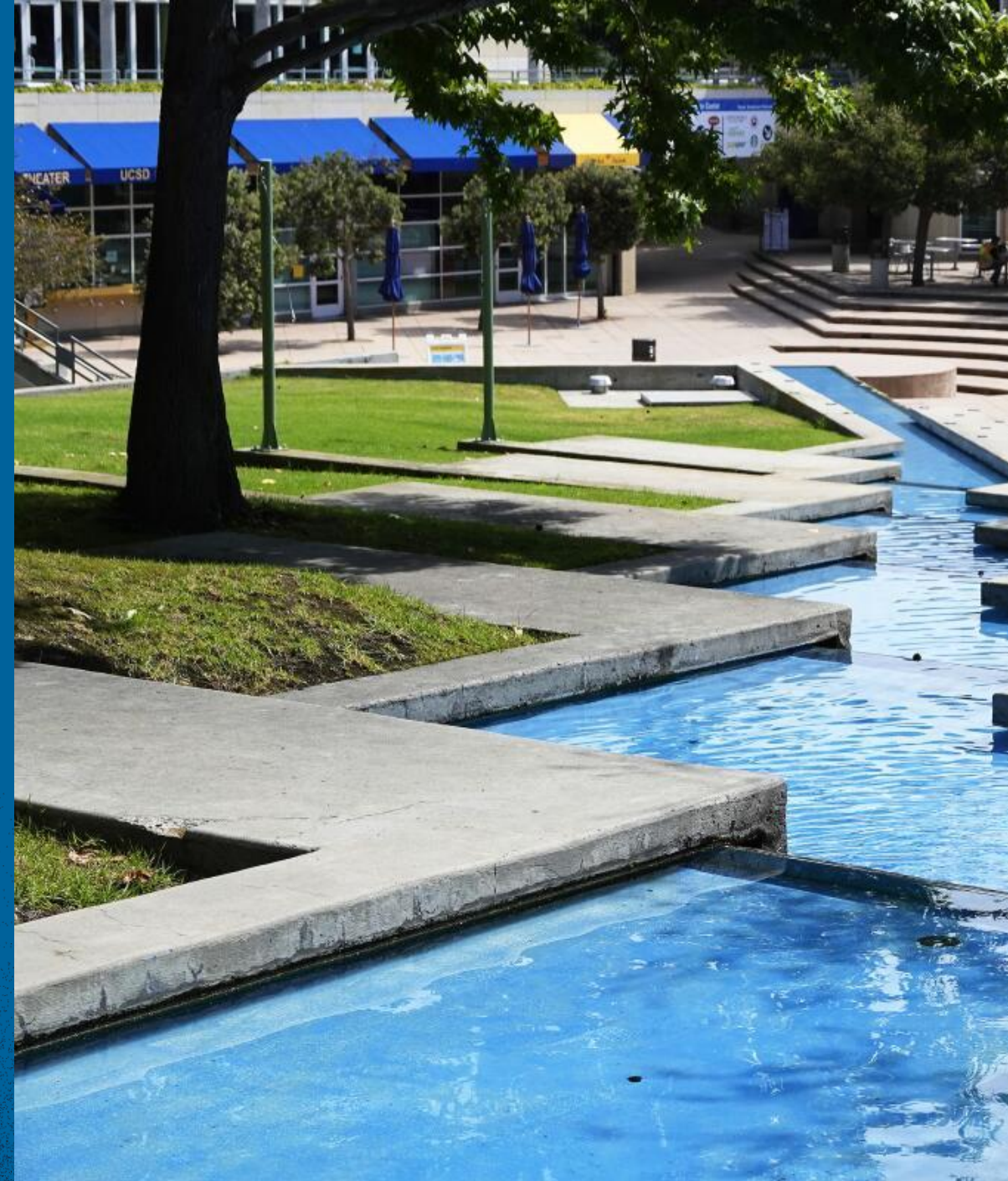
Learning outcomes

- We will be able to articulate our positionality by exploring our intersecting social identities.

- We will be able to describe how our positionality informs our worldview and impacts our teaching choices.

- We will be able to describe how our positionality can foster or hinder a sense of belonging for students in the classroom.

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Levels of racism and examples

- **Individual Level** - Model Minority vs. Presumed Deficiency

- **Interpersonal Level** - Professor-Student Relations

- **Institutional Level** - Curriculum & Resource Gaps

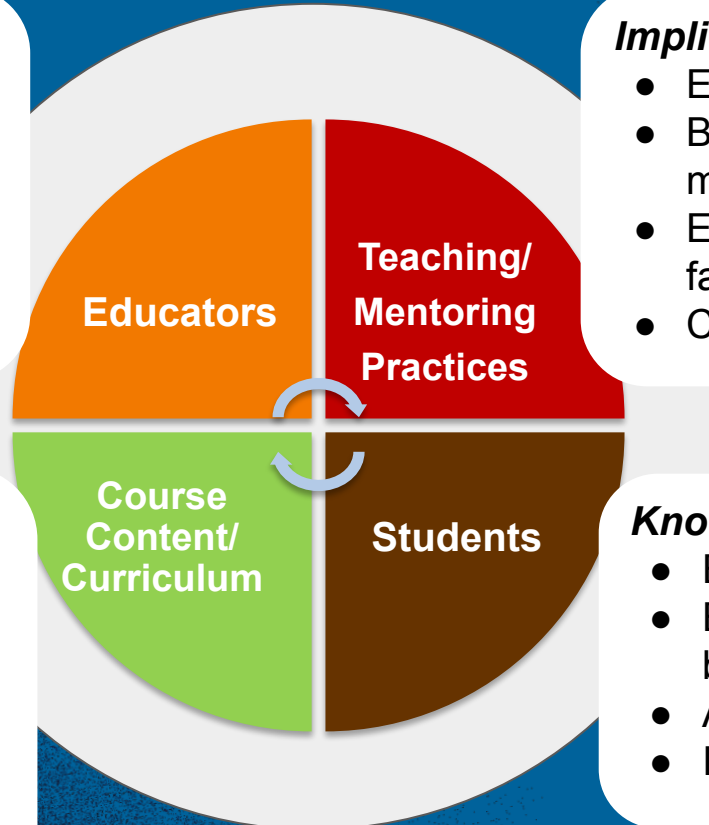- **Structural Level -** Perpetual Cycle of Underrepresentation

Structural (systemic): Joint operation of institutions

Institutional: Institutional and cultural practices

Interpersonal: Between individuals

Individual: Within the individual

Teaching for social justice

Know oneself
- Examine identity and socialization
- Examine assumptions and stereotyped beliefs
- Examine impact on teaching/mentoring and interactions with students

Implicit messages
- Examine the culture of the classroom
- Broaden your repertoire of teaching methods
- Establish norms that emphasize respect, fairness, and equity
- Create a sense of belonging

Educators

Teaching/ Mentoring Practices

Course Content/ Curriculum

Students

Explicit messages
- Use a curriculum of inclusion
- Represent diverse perspectives
- Draw examples and illustrations from diverse life experiences and perspectives
- Create a sense of belonging

Know your students
- Examine identity and socialization
- Examine assumptions and stereotyped beliefs
- Attend to student interactions
- Identify readiness and assets

Our work is informed by Adams and Love (2009) faculty development framework

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Positionality

Positionality: The reality that our various social and cultural identities and economic position shape our consciousness, commitments, and actions.

Reflexive positionality: "Understanding our position, particularly… the social position of our participants [and *students*], helps us to better understand the power relations imbued in our research [and *teaching*] and provides an opportunity to be <u>reflexive</u> about how to address this (Day, 2012 as cited by Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019, p. 2)."

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Zoom poll question

How close are you to the term "positionality" from which to learn how your social identities inform how you view the world and, in the teaching context, how you teach, including how you view your students?

- Option A: I **have not interacted** with the term to reflect on my teaching.
- Option B: I **am familiar** with the term but I have yet to reflect on my teaching through my positionality.
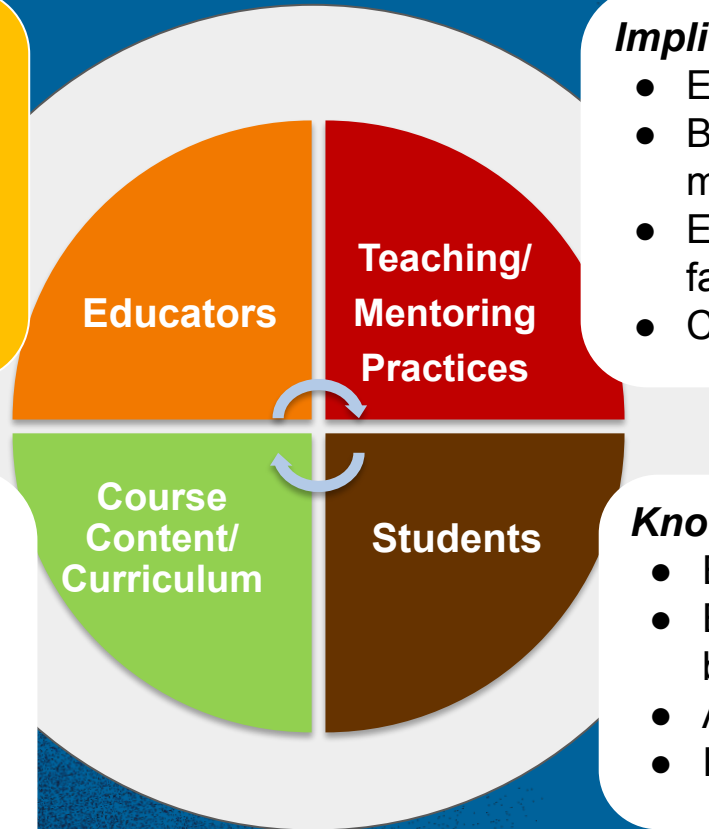- Option C: I **am aware** of my positionality, which informs my teaching.

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Teaching for social justice

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Identity mapping

Examining our positionality helps us to consider how social positions and power shape our identities and how we view and experience the world (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019).

Instructions:

Tier 1: Identify social identities

Tier 2: Impact of social identities on our lives

Tier 3: Details that are tied to experiences related to identity (e.g., emotions)

1. What does it mean to be a person of color or a white person in a dominant system of power and privilege?

2. How does my racial identity influence my beliefs about teaching and learning, teaching practice, interactions with students, and beliefs/assumptions about students?

3. What does this mean for me as a member of my department/UC San Diego community?

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Pedagogical choices through positionality

Purpose:
Align your syllabus with your positionality and principles of inclusivity & social justice

Focus Areas:
- Introduction
- Course Objectives
- Reading Lists
- Assignments & Assessments
- Participation & Collaboration

Steps:
- Select focus
- Reflect
- Annotate
- Redesign
- Discuss

Reflection Questions

- **In what ways does your syllabus reflect your positionality?**
- How do you introduce yourself on the syllabus, if at all?
- Do the course materials and readings represent diverse perspectives and voices of scholars?
- How does your syllabus foster a sense of belonging among students of diverse identities?
- In what ways do your course policies or assessments support academic success of students, especially marginalized students?
- How does the syllabus layout, language, and tone communicate your teaching philosophy and approach towards inclusivity and social justice?

Exit ticket and future workshops

Exit ticket

Please take a moment to tell us about your experience.

Future workshops

Grading for Equity: Antiracist Assessment Strategies | Wednesday, November 15 | 2:30 - 4 p.m. | Register Here

All workshops for Fall quarter https://engagedteaching.ucsd.edu/educators/workshops.html

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Questions?

Contact University Communications at brand@ucsd.edu.