



## Draft Agenda

# Competitiveness Conversations Across America: San Diego

## *Building the Next Economy's Strategic Innovation Stack — Compute, AI, Energy, Bio, Autonomy, and Security*

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

University of California San Diego  
Price Center - Ballroom East  
9500 Gilman Dr., La Jolla, CA 92093

### All Times Pacific

- 8:30 AM Registration and Networking Breakfast
- 8:50 AM Competitiveness Conversation Programming
- 12:00 PM Lunch and Keynote
- 1:00 PM Competitiveness Conversation Programming
- 5:00 PM Adjourn

San Diego:

*Building the Next Economy's Strategic Innovation Stack —  
Compute, AI, Energy, Bio, Autonomy, and Security*

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**8:30 AM REGISTRATION AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

**8:50 AM MAPPING SAN DIEGO TO AMERICA'S INNOVATION ECONOMY**

In an opening fireside chat, the Conversation's co-hosts will frame the San Diego edition of the "Competitiveness Conversations Across America," highlighting the region's distinctive innovation assets in an ecosystem of emerging and converging technologies.

- Dr. Pradeep K. Khosla, Chancellor, UC San Diego
- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

**9:10 AM SAN DIEGO'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES**

**9:20 AM DECODING SAN DIEGO'S INNOVATION DNA**

Panel:

- Mr. Mark Cafferty, President and CEO, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation

- Dr. Paul Roben, Associate Vice Chancellor, Innovation & Technology Commercialization, UC San Diego
- **Moderator:** Dr. Albert “Al” P. Pisano, Professor and Dean, Jacobs School of Engineering, Walter J. Zable Endowed Chair of Engineering, and Special Advisor to the Chancellor, UC San Diego

### **10:00 AM TRANSFORMATIVE COMPUTING: CODING AMERICA’S NEXT ECONOMY**

This leadership panel will examine transformative computing’s role in (re)shaping entire new applications, businesses, industries and jobs — from AI to quantum to beyond-exascale HPC. Panelists will showcase San Diego’s role as a hub for computational research driving breakthroughs across an array of sciences and sectors – from energy to biotechnology and more.

- Dr. Ludmil Alexandrov, Professor, Department of Bioengineering, Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine, UC San Diego
- The Hon. Dr. Patricia Falcone, Deputy Director for Science and Technology, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
- Dr. Rajesh Gupta, Dean, School of Computing, Information and Data Sciences, Distinguished Professor, HDSI Founding Professor, UC San Diego
- **Moderator:** Dr. Ramesh Rao, Director, Qualcomm Institute; Interim Director, Calit2; Professor, Electrical and Computing Engineering, Jacobs School of Engineering, UC San Diego

### **10:40 AM COMPETITIVENESS CHAT: FRAMING THE FUTURE OF AI**

As transformative computing – especially, AI – grows exponentially, what are the business, ethical, and/or policy dimensions policymakers should prioritize to enhance U.S. competitiveness in this space? How do leaders strike a balance between innovation and speed to market with, for example, privacy, accountability, and trust?

- Ms. Maria Anguiano, Regent – Vice Chair, University of California
- Mr. Gunjan Sinha, Founder & Chairman, OpenGrowth Ventures
- Dr. Lily Weng, Assistant Professor, HDSI, UC San Diego
- **Moderator:** Dr. Frank Wuerthwein, Director, San Diego Supercomputer Center

### **11:20 AM ENERGY IS EVERYTHING: POWERING THE NEXT ECONOMY — ADVANCED NUCLEAR, FUSION, STORAGE, AND MORE**

San Diego is an energy research powerhouse, driven by pioneering work in fusion and energy storage. This session will explore the dynamic ecosystem propelling San Diego, emerging regional and national competencies, and the underlying technologies at the heart of future energy innovation.

- Dr. Kimberly Budil, Laboratory Director, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
- Dr. Javier Garay, Professor, MAE, and Founding Director, Fusion Engineering Institute, UC San Diego
- Dr. Anantha Krishnan, Senior Vice President, Energy Group, General Atomics
- **Moderator:** Dr. Albert “Al” P. Pisano, Professor and Dean, Jacobs School of Engineering, Walter J. Zable Endowed Chair of Engineering, and Special Advisor to the Chancellor, UC San Diego

### **12:00 PM LUNCH**

### **1:00 PM BEYOND THE BASICS: EXPLORING THE HORIZONS OF BIO**

The bioeconomy is accelerating in San Diego, where world-class research meets a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. This panel will explore how breakthroughs in gene editing, synthetic biology, and precision medicine are moving from lab to market – creating new competitiveness opportunities.

- Dr. Alex Khalessi, Chief Innovation Officer, UC San Diego Health
- Ms. Phyllis Marquitz, Senior Vice President, Global Regulatory, Sustainability & Public Affairs, IFF
- Dr. Gene Yeo, Professor of Cellular and Molecular Medicine, Founding Member of the Institute for Genomic Medicine, and Founding Director of the Center for RNA, UC San Diego
- **Moderator:** Dr. Kit Pogliano, Dean, School of Biological Sciences, UC San Diego

### **1:40 PM THE FUTURE OF HEALTH TECH & COMPETITIVENESS – SENSORS**

In the portfolio of future healthcare advances, real-world implementation is underway. Some leaders are building better sensors and patches to produce high-resolution data – but fewer are building the clinically validated and workflow-integrated systems that promise to reduce healthcare costs and drive local, regional, and national competitiveness. This panel will explore the barriers to implementation – and the opportunities for fast-movers in this space.

- Dr. Kiana Aran, Professor of Bioengineering and Bioelectronics, Jacobs School of Engineering, UC San Diego
- Dr. Dinesh Bharadia, Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Klein Gilhousen Chancellor's Endowed Chair, UC San Diego
- Dr. Karandeep Singh, Chief Health AI Officer, UC San Diego Health; Joan and Irwin Jacobs Endowed Chair in Digital Health Innovation, UC San Diego
- Dr. Garrett Smith, Managing Partner, ReefHaven Ventures

- **Moderator:** Dr. Alan Moazzam, Hospitalist – Health Sciences Assistant Clinical Professor, UC San Diego Health

**2:20 PM INNOVATION BLITZ**

**A set of lightning presentations, highlighting emerging innovation capabilities on campus, in San Diego, and around the region.**

- **Session Introductory Remarks and Emcee:**  
Dr. Corinne Peek-Asa, Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, UC San Diego

**2:30 PM The Cutting Edge of Advanced Microelectronics and Semiconductors**

- Dr. Bill Lin, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, Jacobs School of Engineering, UC San Diego

**2:45 PM New Frontiers for Innovation and Competitiveness – Oceans and Polar Science**

**3:00 PM Microbial Solutions for Soil Health and Food Security**

- Dr. Sarah M. Allard, Project Scientist, Gilbert Lab; and Executive Director, Soil Health Center, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego

**3:15 PM The Future of Human Performance**

- Dr. Sam Ward, Vice Dean of Research, UC San Diego School of Medicine

**3:30 PM A NEW FRONTIER:  
SCOPING THE PARAMETERS OF AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS –  
FROM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO APPLICATIONS IN  
DEFENSE, SECURITY, AND SPACE**

San Diego is a national hub for innovation at the intersection of space technologies, defense capabilities, and national security solutions. This session will explore how agile approaches to satellite systems, advanced communications, human systems and biology, and defense R&D are shaping the future of technology deployment and strategic readiness.

- Dr. Catriona Jamieson, Professor, Medicine, UC San Diego
- Dr. Craig Martell, Vice President and CTO, Lockheed Martin
- **Moderator:** Mr. Scott Tait, COO and Director of Government Programs, Lumetec, and former Executive Director, San Diego National Security Innovation Catalyst

### **4:10 PM THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: SAN DIEGO'S INNOVATION PAST, PRESENT, AND POTENTIAL**

San Diego's innovation ecosystem is thriving, with a focus on strategic collaboration. What do successful partnership models look like – here and across the region? And how do they help drive growth, attract talent and investment, and boost global competitiveness?

- The Hon. Dr. Laurie Locascio, CEO, ANSI, and former Under Secretary of Commerce and Director, NIST, U.S. Department of Commerce
- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness
- **Moderator:** Dr. Pradeep K. Khosla, Chancellor, UC San Diego

### **4:50 PM REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

- Dr. Pradeep K. Khosla, Chancellor, UC San Diego
- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

**5:00 PM    ADJOURN**