

Professor Christine Alvarado



Professor Alvarado is a member of the Sixth College Faculty who serves on the Practicum Committee.

She is a **teaching professor** in Computer Science and Engineering and the Associate Dean for Students for the Jacobs School of Engineering.

She will now be the **Associate Dean** for the Division of Undergraduate Education at UC San Diego.

What's your favorite aspect of teaching at UC San Diego?

Working with the students... Everyone has their own path and approach and way of getting into computer science, and things that they're struggling with and liking and loving. I really like to think about how I can reach everybody in a class and make it something that will inspire them to continue.



What's the most exciting thing you've done while at UC San Diego?

Developing and teaching CSE 194: Race, Gender, and Computing together with my colleague Joe Politz, based on a class that Dr. Nicki Washington developed at Duke. The class looks at the historical discrimination that exists in the US and in the field of computing, and talks about how we might break down some of those inequities by understanding where they came from... It was exciting to see the class go from idea to implementation.



I see that a lot of your research surrounds computer science education. How did you get started with researching this topic?

I taught at Harvey Mudd College, and it had a strong focus on education. I was interested in looking at ways we could make computer science education more inclusive and diverse. ... It was a gradual shift that arose from my teaching efforts at Harvey Mudd, and a desire to understand if they were working.

What is your favorite class to teach?

Data Structures (CSE 12), because it's a class where students go from being beginners to more confident programmers and computer scientists. It starts to tie in what it means to be a computer scientist all together. Students come in knowing just the basics of how to program and they come out feeling like "I'm an actual computer scientist"!



Is there any academic advice that you think students should hear more?

First, don't stress about grades! Grades are not the be all end all, and they do not define your self worth. ... They aren't a reflection on your potential or your self worth or anything like that. It's just a comment on where you are at any given time.

The second thing is that everybody struggles and feels like they don't belong. And if you feel that way, it's not true. You do belong, you can do it, you will succeed. Your path might not look like other people's path and that's fine! But try to focus on your own path rather than comparing yourself to others.

