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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas

52nd District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

RANKING MEMBER, TASK FORCE ON
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ILLICIT FINANCE, AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Meng,

I am requesting funding for the "Discover UC San Diego" project in fiscal year 2026, in the amount of \$2,160,000. The entity to receive the funding is the University of California San Diego, located at 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92092.

Discover UC San Diego (Discover) offers high school students the opportunity to explore and earn college credit in STEMM-related majors at UC San Diego. The requested funding will be used to develop three additional STEMM-related courses to help prepare students for the growing workforce demand for STEMM skills, including skills aligned with NASA's space- and earth-oriented missions and objectives.

This unique program allows high-school students to get a head start on their road to a college degree, explore and find interest in a college major, and prove to themselves that they can succeed at a world-class college. By providing online courses at no/low cost, offering wraparound supports, and focusing outreach on under-resourced schools, Discover expands access to college-level courses throughout San Diego and Imperial County. The requested funding will greatly expand Discover's impact, allowing the program to reach around 1,000 students a year and add three additional STEMM-related courses.

This project is a good use of taxpayer resources because the funding will greatly expand access to college-level STEMM courses while preparing students for their prospective major and helping them graduate on time. Discover courses will be offered online to high school students in California at no/low cost to the learner. The course curriculum aligns with actual required major courses at UCSD and are fully transferrable to any university accepting UC San Diego credit. Discover students will be able to complete up to three courses, earning 12 to 15 major-specific course credits that jump start their progress towards earning a degree.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by section 20102 of title 51, United States Code. In particular, the project will offer high school students the opportunity to explore and earn college credit in STEMM-related majors at UC San Diego, with a focus on coursework aligned with NASA's mission and objectives, including coursework focused on astronomy and the planet, as well as applied skills in engineering, technology, and international cooperation, all of which serve to advance NASA's core priorities under the Safety, Security, and Mission Services (SSMS) initiative.

This project has broad support from a large network of partners and stakeholders, including Urban Discovery Academy and the San Diego Unified School District.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Thank you for your consideration of funding for these programs. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Deputy Chief of Staff, Erin Chapman at erin.chapman@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juan" and last name "Vargas" clearly distinguishable.

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress