

THE *Current*

June 10, 2003

Joan Magruder

UCSB Chemist Receives Chancellor's Award for Mentoring

Samir Mitragotri, assistant professor of chemical engineering at UC Santa Barbara, will receive this year's Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research at the College of Engineering graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 14 at 1 p.m.

The award is presented annually to a faculty member with a distinguished record of mentoring undergraduate researchers.

Mitragotri has mentored 46 undergraduate research projects since coming to UC Santa Barbara in 2000 and actively recruits students from various departments to work on their own projects in his lab.

Mitragotri's research is defined as bioengineering, an interdisciplinary approach to utilizing engineering concepts to solve biological and medical problems. Because classroom teaching materials and textbooks in this emerging field are still scarce, "research, the hands-on experience, is an effective mode of teaching an interdisciplinary subject to undergraduate students," said Mitragotri.

At the end of the students' internships, Mitragotri encourages them to give presentations on their work to his research group and to prepare manuscripts for publication.

Undergraduate research in his laboratory has led to nine publications with undergraduate students as co-authors. Nearly one-third of Mitragotri's interns go on

to pursue advanced degrees in graduate or medical school.

"Although success may be quantified by the number of students and/or publications, the true success is to be measured by the impact that the research experience has had on the students' lives," said David Pine, chair of chemical engineering, who nominated Mitragotri for the award.

"His undergraduate research activities have been extremely successful in this regard, and are a proud element of our undergraduate program."

About 25 percent of all undergraduates at UCSB are involved in organized research efforts, working on teams with graduate students and faculty mentors.

The campus distributes approximately \$200,000 per year in undergraduate research grants.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.