

**Mayor and UC San Diego Chancellor slated to kick off city-wide civic design challenge on transportation and mobility Sept. 21**

Helping to solve complex urban problems in a way that puts people first, the UC San Diego Design Lab has launched a city-wide civic design challenge called “Design for San Diego,” or [D4SD](#) for short. The challenge seeks to harness the power of crowdsourcing and human-centered design to address concerns with transportation and mobility in San Diego.

The D4SD challenge will take place through a series of in-person events and a digital public platform, where participants can network with other innovators interested in improving the city around the central question of “How do we create a San Diego where we all move freely?”

Steven Dow, assistant professor of cognitive science at UC San Diego who is directing D4SD as part of the Qualcomm Institute-based Design Lab, said the challenge is focused on four related areas:

- enhancing the commuter experience,
- promoting walkable and bike-able communities,
- improving accessibility,
- and preparing for a future with autonomous vehicles.

The challenge is presented by the [Design Lab](#) in partnership with [SCALE SD](#) and the [Design Forward Alliance](#), with support from the City of San Diego.

On Sept. 21, SCALE SD will host the D4SD kick-off event at [Downtown Works](#) featuring San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla and Design Lab Director Don Norman. The challenge begins the next day, Sept. 22, with a design sprint and hackathon, also at Downtown Works, for participants to generate ideas, form teams and rapidly prototype a concept.

Teams that enter the challenge will showcase their solutions on Oct. 25-26 at the [Design Forward 2017 Summit](#) in Liberty Station.

The best solutions will earn prizes and private one-on-one meetings with startup investors.

Throughout the process, participants will have opportunities to work with and learn from UC San Diego Design Lab educators and the City of San Diego data science team, using the city’s [Open Data portal](#).

Dow, who received a 2015 National Science Foundation CAREER award to study collective innovation, hopes the D4SD challenge will productively bridge the best

aspects of collaboration and competition by “helping to bring people together to explore a problem space but also motivating them to enter their best innovations in the contest.”

A class that Dow taught at UC San Diego in the Spring quarter of 2017 helped identify the challenge topics, with students surveying San Diegans, attending meetups with city and community leaders, and conducting targeted interviews. Dow will also teach a [Civic Design class](#) this Fall. These students will take part in the challenge alongside the public signing up through the website.

“D4SD presents a unique educational opportunity,” Dow said, “both for university students and for the city’s residents – to gain hands-on experience with real-world issues and participate in San Diego’s innovation community.”

Dow also said the D4SD challenge is distinctive in being focused on local problems and solutions rather than national or global ones.

Daniel Obodovski, co-founder of SCALE SD, a smart-city accelerator, said, “We are excited to be co-organizing this initiative. This is a great way to mobilize the best entrepreneurial, engineering and design talent we have in town to address some of the most pressing transportation and mobility challenges in our city. Can’t wait to see what they come up with.”

James White of the Design Forward Alliance, co-chair of the Design Forward Summit, added: “Design Forward Alliance is proud to be supporting the inaugural civic design challenge. The challenge provides participants the opportunity to apply human-centered design and practice design doing, which is a fundamental tenet of the Design Forward Alliance. Our mission is to create a unified effort that promotes the value of professional design, design thinking and design doing for better outcomes in business, education, government and the San Diego community.”

To learn more about the challenge and to register, as well as for event details, visit <https://d4sd.org>.

---

*UC San Diego’s [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty. For more information, email [studio@ucsd.edu](mailto:studio@ucsd.edu).*

**UC San Diego News on the web at: <http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu>**