Saura Naderi  
Program Representative II  
Academic Affairs: Calit2

I submit this nomination on behalf of the students, parents, teachers, members of the UCSD community, and countless others who have benefited from the multitude of education outreach activities created, managed and coordinated by Saura Naderi. As founder and director of the myLab Program at Calit2, Saura’s passion for teaching and mentoring began when she was an undergraduate at UCSD in Engineering physics where she saw a need for practical applications of her studies as part of the total learning experience. Her desire to bring Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) educational opportunities to marginalized youth led her to develop electronics and robotics hands-on projects that are fun, inventive and engaging. In less than three years, she has worked with over four hundred K-12 students and their teachers, from more than eight schools in the San Diego Unified School District, including Lincoln and Morse High School in southeast San Diego and the Town and Country Learning Center in central San Diego.

“Saura has infused energy and excitement into my classroom by providing a hands-on real-world project that I would not otherwise be able to do. Students are able to take what we've learned in the classroom and not only apply it, but experience what engineers do in the lab for both hardware and software development. Students are excited to see her and can’t wait to continue work on their Arduino projects. She has made an invaluable impact on their lives and creating future engineers.”

-Shirley Miranda, Computer Science Teacher at Morse High School, SD Science Fair

Saura has designed unique projects to teach basic robotics principles in her Moonbots workshop and the highly successful “Girls Hat Day” where girls from underrepresented communities learn how to make robotic hats originally displayed at the opening day of the Del Mar Races in 2011. The project has now become an annual event at Calit2 where the girls showcase their hats in a robotic hat runway show in front of their peers, parents, sponsors and the general community. A tireless advocate of STEAM education, she’s presented locally and nationally to garner advocates for STEAM hands-on education as in her TEDxSanDiego 2011 talk entitled “Engaging Our Youth”.

Saura has also taught, trained and mentored over 40 undergraduate students through robotics and Arduino classes and myLab internships where these students, in turn, learn how to encourage and develop tomorrow’s engineers and scientists. Her highly popular “Make your own Guitar Pedal” workshop allowed for a creative application of science and engineering concepts and appealed to undergraduates from not only engineering disciplines, but also undergraduates from music, visual arts, and other non-engineering majors.

Additionally, Saura has worked with girls from the San Diego Girls Rehabilitation Center, Girls Scouts, Urban Leagues, and serves as a National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE) mentor.

Though the impact of an individual in society is difficult to measure, Saura’s contribution to expanding access to Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics educational opportunities for K-12 and undergraduates in our community cannot be understated. As UCSD looks for ways to creatively engage with the community and explores methods for enhancing the undergraduate learning experience, we should look to Saura’s example and commitment to STEAM education for answers and inspiration.