



## Isha Gonugunta

July 2020 - UCLA Fast Track Program

### **Origin:**

I am from San Jose, CA and attended Santa Teresa High School.

### **Hobbies:**

I like sewing and crocheting as they are very good destressers. During quarantine I have also picked up sketching and reading. I also enjoy listening to R&B and Pop.

### **What are some things you are passionate about?**

I guess in terms of hobbies I like making clothes by sewing. It started with crochet, which I began in 6th grade by watching YouTube tutorials, and I enjoy it because it provides stress relief. In terms of school related activities, I am super passionate about Bruin Racing SMV (Super Mileage Vehicle), which is one of the clubs that I am in. I really liked being in the shop and working hands on with the hardware.

### **What made you choose UCLA and what do you like about it?**

I think that one of the reasons I picked UCLA was because of Fast Track because it sounded like a good resource for computer/electrical engineering, and it would mean having a small community at a big college. Besides that, I wanted to go to a UC for sure and UCLA had really good academics and good opportunities with clubs and social life, and I felt it would have a good balance for me. In terms of what I like, I like that there are a lot of things to do around LA, and LA is different from the Bay so it is also a nice change in environment. The food at UCLA is also good and I usually went to Feast with my friends after class or Rende West. BPlate was also a top choice. Living on the hill was also quite fun, but what I enjoyed the most was the people, with the majority of the people that I've met being pretty chill.

### **How was the transition from a small school to a big campus?**

UCLA is definitely bigger than high school, even though the high school I went to was decently sized. However, with Fast Track and being in a relatively small major, I feel like it has been quite tight knit, and I end up running into a lot of the same people. However, I don't see that many people outside of engineering in my classes except for maybe GEs.

## What has been your favorite class so far?

Even though CS32 was pretty hard, I enjoyed most of the projects. The applications were pretty interesting, particularly project 3, which was a videogame, and project 4, where we recreated UberEats. Testing the algorithm for project 4 against Google Maps and seeing how it worked was really cool.

## What clubs or organizations are you a part of?

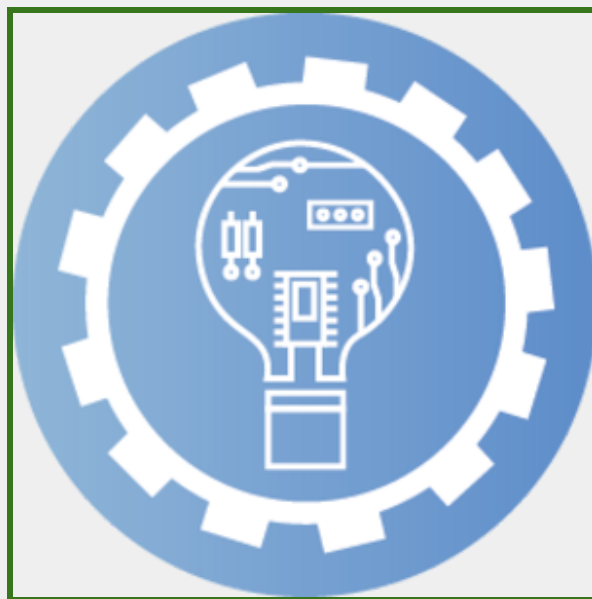


I am most involved with **SMV**, which is the branch of Bruin Racing focused on developing a long endurance race car. This year, I became Electrical Training Lead and guided projects for new members. I have also been involved with Creative Labs, where I've participated in 3 projects. I joined Creative Labs in Fall 2019, and my first project was "Br3w" which was a smart coffee machine. I was on the build team so I got to do all of the hardware. My next app was an AR tour

guide that gives an AR tour of UCLA's campus. Over quarantine, I have been working on

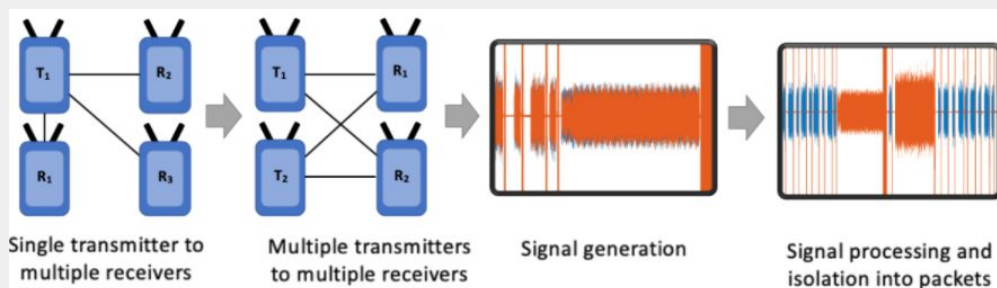
WeChews, which is also the project I have been most involved with out of the three. It is meant to be a sort of "Tinder for food" where if the majority of your group swipes right on a restaurant, you get a match. I recently joined CL board as a project manager. I also did IEEE OPS my freshman year. I am not doing a project this year, but I am on the **idea hacks** committee which is managed by IEEE. My position is in operations, and a lot of that is planning which parts to order, which is something I have had to do quite a bit of research on. It is a shame that quarantine has caused it to be held in a remote format because

committee members were supposed to get makerspace training, but we are not receiving it this year. I am also a part of WATT which stands for "Women Advancing Technology through Teamwork". I work on creating workshops, attending their events, and also mentorship, where I help provide advice for what clubs to join as well as classes.



## How was your Summer Undergraduate Research Experience?

This Summer I worked at the CORES lab with Prof. Cabric on classification of RF signals using deep learning. Basically we met together through zoom with our lab supervisors and reported on our individual projects and then Prof. Cabric and the other lab supervisors would give us advice. As a part of my research, Prof. Cabric sent me four Software Defined Radios (SDRs), which I used to collect data for my research. I was able to pick up about 20 more at a later point, and I am still working with them. My experimental setups involved a wide variety of configurations with the radios acting as receivers, transmitters, and sources of interference, and I also placed a variety of obstacles between the radios. I think it was really cool that I was able to have hardware at all considering that it was conducted remotely. However my house is not exactly lab conditions, and conducting clean experiments was hard. A lot of the experiments required lots of space so I had to get creative with how I used the space in my house. I also had to work around the interference produced by the WiFi in my house. I am still conducting work on similar research during the academic year, and I am using the SDRs to capture new datasets.



## What else do you do outside of school?

During quarantine, my extracurricular activities have mostly been reading, listening to music, and sketching. I like to read mystery novels, fiction, and classic literature. The music I listen to changes pretty frequently but I think I listen to R&B and Pop the most, with R&B being the genre that I come back to most often.

## What is your favorite aspect of the Fast Track program?

I think in general, it was really nice to know the people in my classes. Because we're all taking similar classes I end up talking to other students in Fast Track to get advice. At first it was pretty hard though because I was the only CE major, but now that there are more CE majors in Fast Track, it has been nicer.

## What are your career plans?

For the future, I am looking to apply to one of the Masters programs offered at UCLA (either through the Exceptional Student Admission Program, or by taking it concurrently). I am definitely planning on going to grad school. In regards to jobs, this summer I am going to be doing an embedded systems internship at Tesla, which is a field that I want to explore.