



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## 2020 Irwin Zahn Spirit of Innovation Award

**\$25,000 prize**

For any graduating senior, any major!

This prestigious prize will recognize a student whose life exemplifies the entrepreneurial *spirit*, regardless of practical application and unrelated to any discipline.

Please nominate those who:

- Are passionate about solving a problem.
- Are persistent and uninhibited by roadblocks, naysayers, limited resources, or the fear of failure.
- Are determined to create a better way and have the moxie to make things happen against all odds.

**Your nomination should include a **one-page narrative** indicating:**

\*The student's name and major

\*A short description of the student's background and how they exhibit an entrepreneurial spirit

\*Why you would recommend them to represent your college as a '**Spirit of Innovation**'

*Please see accompanying information on the following pages.*

Please e-mail nomination to: [mmorihiro@sdsu.edu](mailto:mmorihiro@sdsu.edu), by 11:59pm (PST),  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

## Irwin Zahn Spirit of Innovation Prize

Irwin Zahn is a successful entrepreneur who believes strongly in the entrepreneurial spirit – not the various products that entrepreneurship might yield, but rather the personal characteristics that prompt individuals to action. The Irwin Zahn Spirit of Innovation Prize was established at SDSU in 2015/2016 to honor such zeal by **recognizing one graduating senior each year**.

### **Purpose:**

It is Zahn's belief that the "spirit of innovation" is the most powerful tool in the world and those who exhibit this spirit will in fact change the world. The spirit of innovation is driven by endless possibilities, uncharted paths, new ideas, and limitless creativity.

The objective of the Irwin Zahn Spirit of Innovation Prize is to honor and reframe the concept of the innovative spirit in a way that resonates with – and empowers – all students in different majors and on various career tracks.

This Prize seeks to spread the message that *innovation transpires everywhere*, by recognizing those who exhibit this spirit, and celebrating them in a very high-profile way.

### **Suggested Nomination Criteria:**

Please nominate those who:

- are passionate about solving a problem
- are persistent (perhaps relentless) and uninhibited by roadblocks, naysayers, limited resources, or the fear of failure.
- are determined to create a better way and they have the moxie to make things happen against all odds.

The ideal candidate is one who is an "unusual suspect" that models characteristics such as thinking outside the box, taking risks, and creative problem solving; however would likely not self-identify as an "entrepreneur".

This prestigious prize will **recognize those whose lives exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit, regardless of practical application and unrelated to any particular discipline.**

Each year during SDSU graduation, the Irwin Zahn Spirit of Innovation Prize will be **awarded to one student** who is selected based on the legacy of Irwin's own entrepreneurial spirit.

The following criteria for the Prize have been laid forth by the donor:

1. The Prize includes public recognition during graduation and also a \$25,000 cash prize. The prize money is intended to completely pay off the recipient's college loan debt, thus removing barriers to allow him/her to jump in with both feet to pursue dreams. If a selected student does not have debt, then a cash award will be granted instead.
2. A small and confidential selection committee, comprised of representatives from different colleges across SDSU, will identify the annual awardee. This committee will establish details for a confidential annual selection process.

3. The annual awardee will be an undergraduate graduating senior. He/she will be recognized during the graduation ceremony for his/her respective college.
4. The Prize is intended for a student from a different college each year. It should be thought of as an intentionally rotating prize with a goal that no two contiguous years would honor students from the same college.

**How to Nominate:**

- Please email your nomination to Marcie Morihiro at: mmorihiro@sdsu.edu by **11:59pm (PST), Wednesday, March 18, 2020.**
- Your nomination should include 1-page narrative indicating:
  - The student's name and major
  - A short description of the student's background and how they exhibit an **entrepreneurial spirit**
  - Why you would recommend them to represent your college as a 'Spirit of Innovation.'