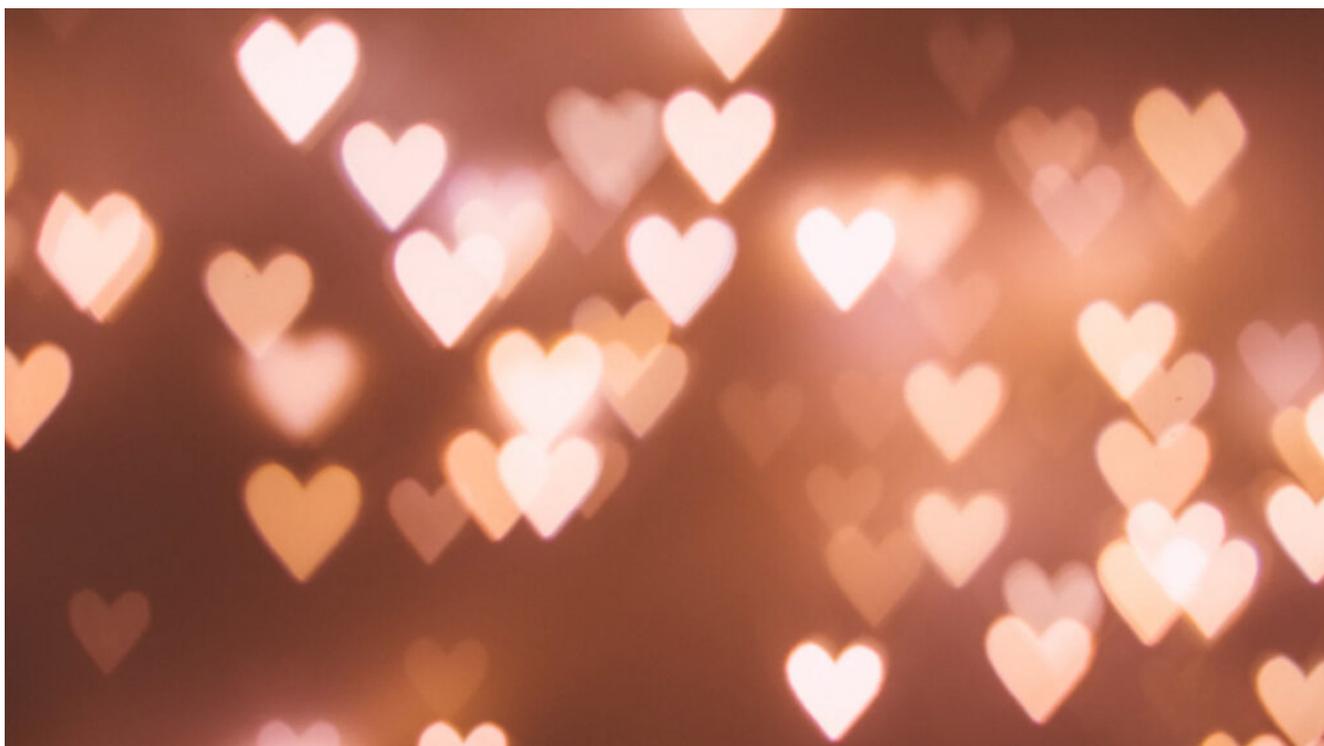


Love is in the air



In time for Valentine's Day, meet a few GPS alumni who found their partner before, during or after attending the School

Rachel Hommel | GPS News

At the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), you find a community dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research and engagement. Sometimes...you also find your soulmate.

In time for Valentine's Day, we connected with a few alumni couples willing to share their stories and passion for both the school and each other.



Jean Tseng '13 and Tristan Mecham '10

She works as... a program manager working on labor and sustainability issues in Google's supply chains in Sunnyvale, California.

He works as... a product manager at Locus Technologies, building environmental compliance and sustainability applications in Mountain View, California.

Their family... is about to grow by one as a daughter is due in early March.

The proposal happened... after kayaking to a secluded beach on Catalina island and snorkeling.

Sharing mutual interest is what drew these two together, in addition to humor. Meeting during a summer internship at Tristan's work, the couple was struck by each other's sarcasm. They worked together for nearly a year before he asked her out.

"I was amazed by her professionalism and altruism. It took me awhile but I finally worked up the courage up to ask her out," laughs Tristan. "I'm pretty sure she also thought I looked remarkably like David Beckham."

While they never shared a class together, they shared a love of sustainability, complementary in their interests, with Jean on the social and human rights side and Tristan on the environmental side.

"Tristan would often offer moral support and provide advice during my stressful second year. Almost a year later, we started dating and the rest is history!" said Jean.

Laughing a lot together, they are grateful for the GPS connection, offering a sound piece of advice to any GPS graduates.

“Don’t forget to use your GPS toolbox!” said Jean. “I use my toolbox at work and in real life all the time.”



Renata Pinedo '14 and Nathaniel Jones '14

She works as... account manager at Voestalpine Nedcon in Washington, D.C.

He works as... cyber security specialist at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C.

Their family... will hopefully grow in a couple of years.

The proposal happened... in Paris in November 2016. Renata was working in Germany and Nathaniel had had enough of the long-distance relationship, so he took a flight and popped the question. The wedding is next March in Tijuana.

Most of the time, love does not work on your timeline and that can be a very good thing. The couple met their first year, though Renata was not single at the time and barely surviving Quantitative Methods I during her first quarter, plus always stuck in the library.

“Once that class was under control, I started to socialize a bit more and started talking to Nathaniel at a party. We clicked immediately and became inseparable

soon after. He definitely made my GPS experience more fun,” said Renata.

Once spring quarter came around, the couple started dating, even though Nathaniel was about to head to Beijing for a summer internship. They quickly fell in love and continued a long-distance relationship.

“I remember telling my older sister that Renata was the one after only 5 months of dating. David Robertson had warned me that lots of couples were made at GPS. At the time I thought that wouldn’t be me...how things change,” laughs Nathaniel.

After nearly three years and living in varying time zones, they finally moved to Washington, D.C. to be together and are excited to grow their family and careers, thanks to GPS.



Tiffany June '08 and Antonio Gonzalez '08

She works as... a senior business analytics manager at a mobile game studio in Irvine, Calif.

He works as... remote sales strategy and operations senior manager at Equinix in Redwood City, Calif.

Their family... includes 3 children, Natalia, Eva and Rafael, and their 2 dogs, Marrom and Areia.

The proposal happened... during our second year at GPS one evening. Nothing fancy and neither was our wedding. We just wanted to get married and get on

with our lives together - no fuss, no frill - we just wanted to be together. We got married the summer after graduation.

The GPS Prep Program is designed to equip students with the skills and abilities to succeed in the demanding environment of graduate studies. Little did they know it would also help with finding a life partner. The couple met their first summer in class and, needless to say, it was pretty instant.

“We ended up being like magnets from that point on. We literally went through GPS together, working together whenever possible, and definitely studying and helping each other throughout,” Tiffany shared.

That theme has been their mode of operation to this day. While at GPS, Tiffany encouraged Antonio to pick the International Management career track, as well as focus on Portuguese and Latin America. To this day, it has influenced his trajectory and career success.

“Many GPS alumni rely on the alumni network for feedback on resumes, interviewing and general career advice. I have been very fortunate to have that network in my spouse...Tiffany has been my sage. I would not have experienced the joys and successes without bouncing ideas off of her first,” said Antonio.

After moving around every few years for most of their marriage, the couple has settled in Orange County, grateful to have met that fateful summer day in San Diego.

“We are a lively bunch! I feel extremely blessed to be married to Antonio,” said Tiffany.

Miyoko Koike '96 and David Freitas '97



She worked as... an executive for Sony for over 10 years in San Diego and now is the primary caregiver for their daughter.

He works as... diplomat for the U.S. Department of State. They've served in Nepal and Brazil, and will head off next to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in June 2018.

Their family... includes a daughter Marisa (6) and two cats that have been with them since they were in San Diego.

The proposal happened... in Tokyo on Christmas Day 2000 on a visit to see her parents. David had a hard time keeping the ring secret during the long flight!

Meeting on the first day of orientation, their first date was at the annual Dean's Welcome Reception but they still debate who asked whom first about a ride to the reception. Since graduation, they have moved eight times cross country or internationally.

"We have found the key to success is staying in touch with the community back in San Diego and connecting with the local GPS community wherever we are. There is always someone with a connection," said David.

Sharing a love of language and travel, Miyoko continues to take language classes alongside David in each country they are stationed. As a diplomatic family, they enjoy getting to know a specific country in-depth, including bringing their cats

along for the ride.

“The cats should get an honorary GPS degree for the amount of countries they have visited!” laughs David.

They continue to own a home in the South Park area of San Diego and hope to retire there in the not too distant future. They will celebrate their 15-year wedding anniversary next fall.