

TECH CALIFORNIA ADVOCATES EVENT AT SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY: INNOVATION BEYOND BORDERS

On Tuesday, November 4th, I joined Lannie Medina, Lead of Tech California Advocates, who organised a gathering of Advocates at the San Diego State University Alumni Center to discuss innovation ecosystems.

Lannie, who has been leading Tech Bay Area Advocates, decided earlier in the year to expand the group to become Tech California Advocates and selected San Diego as the first location to do this.

We were also joined by Hala Madanat, Vice President of Research and Innovation at San Diego State University (SDSU). Hala delivered keynote remarks about the initiatives at SDSU to build a broader innovation ecosystem which included the following:

- The SDSU Mission Valley site, which will become one of the largest innovation zones in the world
- National Security-Connected Center of Excellence to focus on dual use tech
- Community Impact
- Translational Science Initiatives
- The 'Zip Launchpad' Incubator

We discussed ways in which Global Tech Advocates could promote the San Diego/Mission Valley innovation ecosystem, underpinned by SDSU's work. We also discussed collaboration with GTA on dual use tech.



After Hala concluded her remarks, I moderated a panel discussion with three AI founders and investors in Southern California and how they view the global AI ecosystem. They discussed the strengths and challenges facing tech and AI in California as well as their personal experience in driving innovation beyond borders. The three leaders on the panel were:

- **Enpei Lam**, Founder, Talent AI Now
- **James 'Dominic' Malone**, Founder, Agentic AI Platform promoting Mental Wellness
- **Joshua Lee**, Founder, Ardius and serial entrepreneur

We finished the event with the 'obligatory' selfie.

I also want to thank Spencer West who supported the event (Nate Garhart, Partner at Spencer West attended in person and James Klein supported from London). Matt Melling from the British Consulate in Los Angeles also joined the event and provided financial support. James Cummings and Persephone Godwin from London & Partners in Southern California also joined the event. Finally, a thank you to Steve McIntosh who has been an advisor to Lannie and Tech California Advocates for several years for making the journey from Portland.

So, overall, a great event with insights shared about innovation ecosystems and how AI is driving growth and making it easier for entrepreneurs to start businesses with limited funding and headcount.

