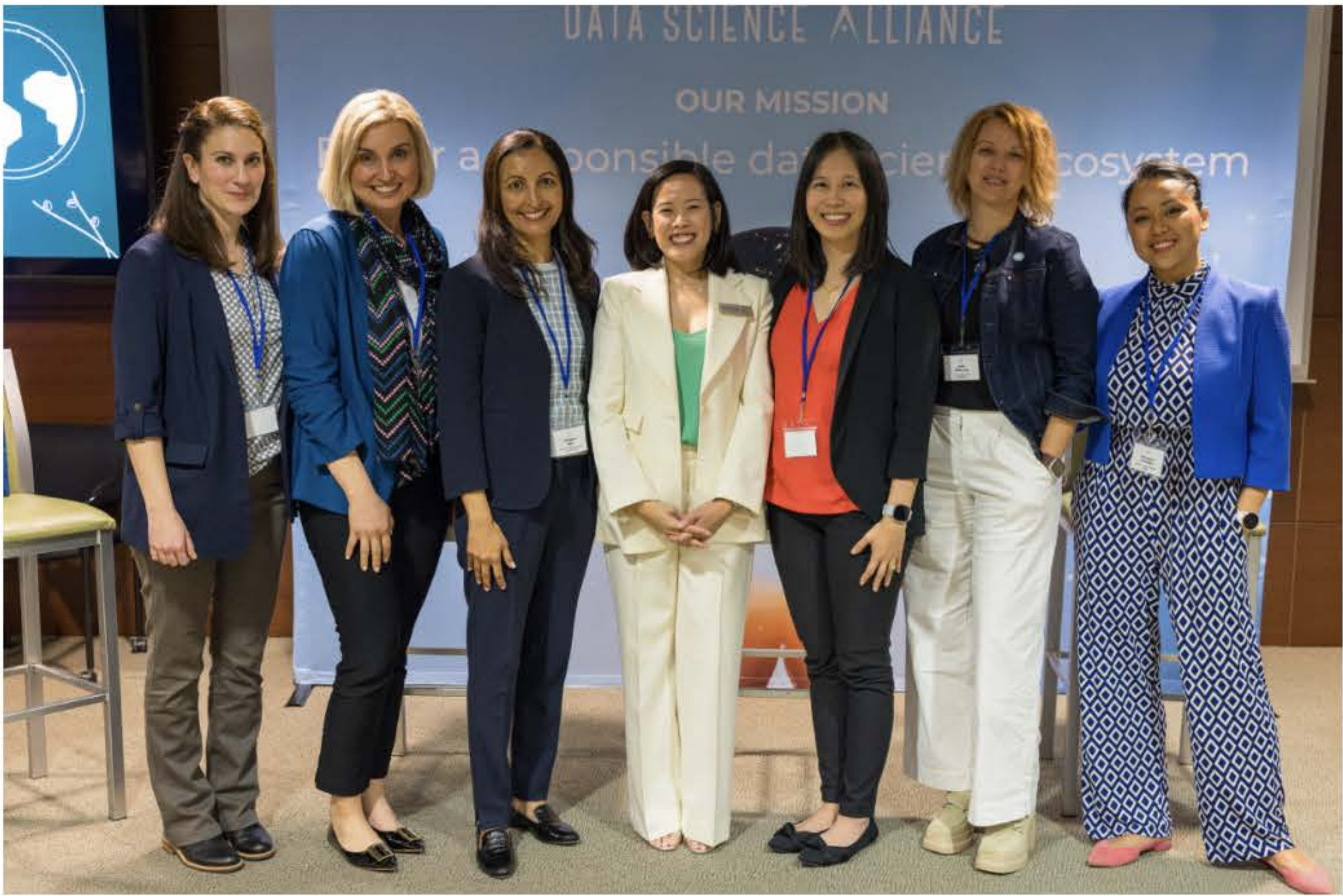


# Empowerment & Inspiration: Women in Tech 2024



(From left to right) Zaira Razu, Dr. Ilkay Altintas, Sandeep Aujla, Patricia Lopez, Marie Nguyen, Sofia Babanova, and Francesca Fernandez

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DSA's second annual Women in Tech event on March 7 was an outstanding success, leaving a lasting impact on all attendees.

## Empowerment & Inspiration: Women in Tech By Kallyn Hobmann

Hosted in partnership with UC San Diego's Rady School of Management and the San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC), the theme this year was "Impactful Climate & Environmental Sustainability Solutions." Our goal was to highlight how women are shaping a sustainable future while driving positive change, and our incredible guest speakers did just that.

Moderated by Zaira Razu (SDSC), an inspiring conversation was shared between Sofia Babanova (Aquacycl), Sandeep Aujla (SDG&E), Marie Chen Nguyen (Booz Allen Hamilton), and Francesca Fernandez (KPMG). The women shed light on their personal journeys—they all have a unique background, leading to a fascinating discussion about how they've seen gender diversity make a powerful difference in each of their fields. They talked about moments where they felt empowered and respected as female leaders, and moments when they had to work extra hard to be seen and heard. The need for a diverse team in all ways (gender, race, identity, abilities, experiences, etc.) was emphasized. Our attendees were given realistic, attainable ways to embody these values and become influential leaders in their own personal careers.



The guest speakers discuss their experiences in the climate tech and sustainability fields.

After the panel, the floor was opened up to the audience for questions. Students and working professionals alike were curious to learn even more. One student asked what inspires the speakers most in their current jobs. Many credited the collaborative, supportive environments of their coworkers and encouraged everyone to pursue and create similar teams. Another audience member talked with the speakers about how we can get everyone involved with empowering women, and another shared her own perspective on the challenges women face in being treated equally in the workplace.



Attendees engage with the panelists during the Q&A session.

Everyone then made their way outside to enjoy meaningful one-on-one networking with each other and our speakers. The air was buzzing with exciting conversations sparked by the insights provided by the panel. In the midst of the reception, lots of fun was also had as the winners of our raffle prizes were announced.

All of the raffles were donated by local businesses that are women-owned and/or are focused on promoting sustainability. It was a special moment of collaboration with our community as we worked together to promote the purpose of our annual Women in Tech event. The support DSA received this year was overwhelming and humbling—we are truly grateful for everyone's contributions to continuously building a Responsible Data Science ecosystem in San Diego and beyond.



The audience listens as the guest speakers share their stories.