

A Message from the Chancellor

Dear Campus Colleagues:

As we continue to work together to build the UC Santa Cruz of the 21st Century, let us pause to take stock of all our accomplishments. Even as we strive to reach even higher goals, let us not fail to recognize and appreciate what we have already achieved. UCSC's students and alumni bring us distinction and pride. As we begin the last half of the spring quarter, I want to recognize some recent campus achievements, and also offer my perspective on student quality, especially as it relates to the current faculty discussion about student grading.

Banana Slug Spring Fair Was a Success

Everyone involved with the planning and presentation of Banana Slug Spring Fair 2000 deserves our applause and thanks. Both as an alumni reunion weekend and as a major admissions event for prospective students and their families, Banana Slug Spring Fair (BSSF) was particularly effective this year. Here are a few highlights.

BSSF provides a unique opportunity to inform and inspire prospective students. Nearly 7,000 highly qualified UCSC admittees and their families visited our campus, and we can expect to welcome a number of these talented and enthusiastic students in the fall. This success is the direct result of hard work and strong leadership by members of Student Affairs and the University Events Office, along with the willing participation of faculty, staff and students throughout the campus.

This year's BSSF also provided a wonderful context for the largest alumni/ae reunion in our history. In addition to reunions of the classes of '70, '75, '80, '85, '90, and '95, we celebrated:

► The 25th anniversary of Oakes College;

- The 25th anniversary of UCSC's acclaimed Women's Studies Program;
- The contributions of our distinguished colleague, John Dizikes, upon his imminent retirement;
- The first reunions of our Chicano/Latino Alumni/ae and African American Alumni/ae.

Our reunion classes presented checks to the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund totaling \$123,992. With these various class gifts plus our progressing alumni fundraising, we are quite certain to finish our first \$1 million Alumni Scholarship Endowment. This alumni/ae commitment to support our current students is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Both the 25th Reunion of the Women's Studies Program alumnae/i and the quarter-century gathering of graduates of Oakes College were filled with the joy of catching up with old friends and renewing connections with faculty and staff. Founding provost J. Herman Blake and his wife, Emily Moore, attended the Oakes celebration and the African American dinner dance, and their inspiring words highlighted both occasions.

Attendance at the Chicano/Latino and the African American reunions exceeded expectations—and a glance at the list of participating physicians, political leaders, artists, scientists, professors, and other alumni underscores how successful these alumni/ae are. In all, nearly 200 African American, 200 Latino/Chicano, and 200 Women's Studies alumni/ae attended their respective gatherings. In addition, hundreds of other graduates returned for the annual luncheon, college reunions, and other events.

At the special reunions I attended, alums repeatedly testified to the value of their education at UC Santa Cruz and to their positive experiences with faculty and staff. They also offered to help UCSC achieve its outreach goals and to mentor current students.

This enthusiasm is significant, since there is no greater tribute to the value of our work to educate students than their appreciation and their successes.

I extend congratulations and most sincere thanks to the staff of the Alumni Office, Admissions Office, University Events Office, the Colleges, and the myriad other staff, faculty, and students whose creativity and hard work made the events of Banana Slug Spring Fair so successful. Enjoying such a positive and exciting weekend reminded me of a few reasons for which we all can share pride in UC Santa Cruz.

Facts about Student Quality and Success

During the recent faculty debates on assessment policies, some statements were made and subsequently reported in various news media that suggested a lower quality of entering students and less ability to retain the best students. Some of our recent data do not support these impressions, and I urge all campus members to consider the following information.

Our retention of students after their first year has continued to improve. Of the students entering in the fall of 1998, 85.3% returned to campus in the fall of 1999. Furthermore, of the 437 incoming 1998 frosh with SAT scores greater than 1270, 84% returned to the campus this academic year.

No significant correlation exists between retention and SAT scores. In fact, our retention is similar to the other UC campuses, and it is significantly higher than other comparable public universities. Nevertheless, we must continue to work as a community to ensure that students admitted to this campus succeed.

Is UCSC becoming less selective in admitting undergraduate students? The claim that UC Santa Cruz was once a highly selective institution that has only relatively recently become nonselective is not accurate. It is true that UCSC was highly selective during

its first five years when thousands of highly qualified candidates applied to be one of the very few pioneering students. But, during the 31 years that have followed, due to planned enrollment growth, UCSC turned away qualified students in only three other years, 1982, 1992, and 1999.

The face of California is changing, and the leadership of the future must reflect those demographic changes. Along with the rest of the University of California, UC Santa Cruz is dedicated to preparing the leaders of the future. Our campus has launched highly successful and innovative outreach programs, in some cases taking the lead for the entire system, as is the case with the new UC College Preparatory Initiative.

These efforts have resulted in significant increases in enrollment among minority undergraduates. Specifically, during the last ten years, UCSC's minority enrollments have increased from 25.5% to a current 34.2%—and many of these students are among our most outstanding scholars and campus leaders.

Consider also a study released last spring from the UC Office of the President. This study compared all of UC's general campuses and 60 universities that are members of the eminent Association of American Universities. The focus was on the number of each campus's baccalaureate graduates who subsequently earned doctorate degrees within a specified time period.

This comparison showed that 8.3% of our undergraduates went on to complete doctorate degrees, whereas the average of all 34 public universities in this comparison was 4.4%, and the range in UC campuses was from 4.2% to 8.5%. The only public institution that had more undergraduates subsequently obtain their doctorates was UC Berkeley (8.5%). And if UC Berkeley's science and engineering students were excluded from the analysis (UCSC had not yet established our school of engi-

neering at the time of this comparison), UC Santa Cruz ranked as the top UC campus whose graduates subsequently obtained their doctorates.

I credit both the quality of our students, the dedication of our distinguished faculty, and the support of our excellent staff as key factors in this achievement. There are other indicators as well.

For example, a look at the success of our alumni underscores this point. Just last month, alumna Martha Mendoza received the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Journalism (and she is the third among UCSC alumnae to receive a Pulitzer Prize in the last five years). This award to a 1988 Kresge alumna and current instructor in our Writing Program is only the most recent example among thousands of successes and awards that our alumni/ae have earned, and I invite each of you to share my pride in their accomplishments.

More on Student Quality

Dedication to public service and an appreciation for the importance of community are additional distinguishing qualities of our students. A recent survey on the volunteerism of UCSC's students, faculty, and staff revealed that our campus members contributed close to *one million hours* last year as volunteers in our surrounding communities.

A large percentage of those hours, which total more than 890,000, represented student volunteerism. Students managed to give generously of themselves, while balancing their academic loads with paid work of up to 20 hours or more a week.

The culture of UCSC emphasizes the importance of community. From course work and by the example

of faculty and staff, our students learn that one person can truly make a difference in the lives of others. In this way, they begin to understand that helping others is deeply fulfilling, both personally and as part of a complete education.

UC Santa Cruz selects for and nurtures these altruistic attitudes. That may be the reason why so many of our graduating students join the Peace Corps. For several years, UCSC has been honored as one among the top 25 universities whose graduates volunteer for the Peace Corps. And after that experience, many students continue to serve others in public service careers, providing just one example of the meaningful difference that our alumni make in every field.

As I said at the beginning of this message, the individual accomplishments mentioned in this correspondence are merely representative of the amount and quality of distinctions that have accrued to campus members, and by extension, to UCSC as a whole.

I urge those who are engaging in discussion on our future policies to avoid arguments based on misinformation. Indeed, let us move forward in a positive manner, recognizing the excellence, dedication, and successes of students, faculty, staff, and alumni—for it is on their proud achievements that we build our future.



M.R.C. Greenwood
Chancellor
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