

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

November 05, 2013 | By Christine Clark

UC San Diego Dedicates Student Veterans Resource Center Nov. 7

Campus salute to military service men and women includes presentation of 14th annual Veteran of the Year award



Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

The University of California, San Diego will salute current and retired military service men and women from 11 to 11:30 a.m. on Nov. 7 with the dedication of the campus's new Student Veterans Resource Center (SVRC) and the awarding of the 14th annual Veteran of the Year presented by the UC San Diego Veterans Association. The event, which will commemorate Veterans Day, is free and open to the public and will take place on the west side of the UC San Diego Student Center.

UC San Diego currently has 251 students who are veterans and active duty military, up from 221 last year. The UC San Diego Student Veterans Resource Center was established to support the campus's growing student veteran population by providing opportunities for students to connect with groups and resources.

"At UC San Diego, we are committed to supporting our student veterans," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "These men and women have served our nation and they bring diverse life experiences and perspectives to our campus, and that's part of what makes UC San Diego an exceptional institution."

Located on the 2nd floor of the Student Center on the UC San Diego campus, the Student Veterans Resource Center includes 1,600 square feet of lounge, meeting, office and kitchen space. A full-time staff member will provide support services to student veterans in this location. Following the UC San Diego Veterans Ceremony, free tours of the center will be offered, guided by UC San Diego's student veterans.

According to Dennis Garland, president of UC San Diego's Student Veteran Organization, the establishment of the Student Veterans Resource Center was made possible through a collaborative effort among student and staff veterans and campus leadership.

"I feel very fortunate to have so many dedicated and passionate people on campus that are willing to step up for student veterans," said the Muir College senior. "It will be great to have a physical place on campus so that we can continue to foster a sense of community and inclusion. The center will provide a place for student veterans to meet and talk, giving them a place to interact with other people that have similar experiences while easing their way into the UC San Diego community."



Members of UC San Diego's Student Veteran Organization participating in San Diego's annual Veterans Day Parade.

As part of the dedication event, UC San Diego's 2013 Veteran of the Year, Billiekai Boughton, will be honored as well as one outstanding veteran student, senior Richard Gilbert.

Boughton served as chair of the Veterans Association for two and a half years, representing veterans on campus and was one of the individuals instrumental in getting the Student Veterans Resource Center established at UC San

Diego. Boughton served as a Switching Systems Operator team lead in the U.S. Army from

1989 to 1992, where she provided telecommunications and radio support during operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield. At UC San Diego, she is an executive assistant at the San Diego Supercomputer Center.

“I am both honored and proud to receive recognition for the work I have done at UC San Diego on behalf of our veteran population,” Boughton said. “It is one of my greatest joys to be part of an institution that allows me to pay forward my gratitude with such depth, intention and impact.”

Gilbert, who also will be honored, is a veteran sniper in the U.S. Marine Corps who was deployed twice to Iraq; on his second deployment, he was wounded and placed in the Wounded Warrior Battalion at the Balboa Naval Hospital. After being medically retired, he took classes at Mesa Community College where he served as the Student Veterans Union president. After transferring to UC San Diego’s Sixth College, Gilbert served as president of UC San Diego’s Student Veteran Organization for two years where he worked to refocusing the group towards their slogan, ‘veterans helping veterans.’

“It’s an honor to be acknowledged for my efforts supporting the veteran community here at UC San Diego,” said Gilbert, who is graduating this fall with a Bachelor of Arts in communication. “Student veterans are incredibly involved. In my time at UC San Diego, I have seen the Student Veteran Organization really evolve, to become much more involved in the lives of the veterans on campus and more involved with the campus in general. Our team of student veterans is highly dedicated and motivated to serving our country and community.”

As a result of increased outreach efforts, the campus has seen an increase in the number of students who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Earlier this year, UC San Diego was ranked among the top 15 percent of the nation’s military-friendly schools by G. I. Jobs magazine for embracing veterans as students. The results are based on university initiatives to assist student veterans including: financial aid benefits, additional support to the campus’ Student Veteran Organization, special orientations for new student veterans and early enrollment privileges.

Garland added that having a fulltime staff person at the Student Veterans Resource Center to serve as a point-of-contact for student veterans from the point they enter the university, throughout their academic program and beyond will help build upon UC San Diego’s efforts to support student veterans.

For more information on the Student Veterans Resource Center, go [here](#).

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