

Delegation of 40 San Diegans will carry symbol of UCSD to Alcala de Henares, Spain, as part of official visit by the San Diego-Alcala Sister City Society

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A delegation of some 40 San Diegans will carry a symbol of the University of California, San Diego to Alcala de Henares, Spain, this month as part of an official visit by the San Diego-Alcala Sister City Society.

Under the direction of Alfonso de Bourbon, president of the San Diego-Alcala Sister City Society, the delegation will present Mayor Arsenio Lope Huerta of Alcala de Henares several medallions including a symbolic paperweight which carries a replica of the seal of the University of California. The seal is recognized throughout the world and has been used by the University of California for over 100 years.

In a letter to the mayor, UCSD Chancellor Richard C. Atkinson said, "It is a privilege and an honor for the University of California, San Diego to be affiliated with the great University of Alcala de Henares." In a reference to the young UCSD campus, Atkinson said, "We are just beginning - you have a history of 450 years behind you and the distinction of being the cradle of Cervantes."

Atkinson noted that the Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies is located at UCSD and that many of San Diego's faculty and scholars have visited the university in Alcala de Henares.

"It is with deep pleasure that I send you a small token of our esteem and a reminder of our cordial relationship," Atkinson said.

According to de Bourbon, Alcala is known as the cradle of America since King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella granted Columbus his first audience in that city. Also the Friar Diego served as the rector of the university there and was known for helping poor students.

The delegation left San Diego on May 10 and was scheduled to be honored at a reception and a luncheon at the Alcala city hall on May 12. The group will also visit the Spanish capital of Madrid on May 16 for a dinner reception with U.S. Ambassador to Spain Terrence Todman in the Ambassador's home.

The San Diego-Alcala de Henares sister city relationship was established last June. Alcala de Henares is one of seven cities from throughout the world with which San Diego is affiliated through the sister city program.

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