UC San Diego
UC San Diego News Center

By Jade Griffin Nov 30, 2017

Franklin Antonio

UC San Diego Alumnus Gives $30 Million to UC San Diego

UC San Diego alumnus and Qualcomm co-founder Franklin Antonio is donating $30 million to the university in support of programmatic expansion of the UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering. In recognition of the generous gift, UC San Diego will name a planned building for engineering research and education Franklin Antonio Hall.

The gift, which is the second largest made by an alum, contributes toward the campus' $2 billion fundraising goal as part of the Campaign for UC San Diego. The campaign is focused on enhancing the student experience, enriching our campus community and sparking research and innovation. The gift brings total funds raised as part of the campaign to approximately $1.49 billion.

“We are so grateful to Franklin Antonio for his incredible generosity to UC San Diego,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “Mr. Antonio is a remarkable alumnus and visionary who has made transformational technological advances that have touched each of our lives. With this gift, he is now making a significant impact on the campus and beyond, fueling future research, collaboration and discoveries that will have a positive impact around the globe.”

“It’s been fun to watch the incredible growth and evolution of UC San Diego since my graduation. I’m privileged to be a small part of it,” said Franklin Antonio.

Franklin Antonio Hall

The approximately 200,000-square-foot building is being designed from the ground up to facilitate cross-discipline collaborations that are critical for solving the toughest health, energy, autonomy and security challenges facing society. Franklin Antonio Hall is scheduled to open by fall of 2021.

Slated to be LEED Platinum or equivalent, Franklin Antonio Hall will provide the Jacobs School of Engineering with collaborative research, education and industry-interaction spaces that are critically needed to accommodate the school’s ambitious growth. In the last four years alone, the Jacobs School has hired more than 75 professors and increased its graduate student population to 2,272, up from 1,715.

“We are designing this building to encourage more of the innovative collaborations that are a hallmark of the Jacobs School,” said Albert P. Pisano, dean of the Jacobs School of Engineering at UC San Diego. “I am so grateful to Franklin Antonio for his generosity. We are extremely fortunate that he recognizes the need to support the education, research and technology transfer mission of our engineering school.”

Approximately 25 percent of the Jacobs School’s faculty and graduate students are expected to be housed in Franklin Antonio Hall. The building will be located near the intersection of Voigt Drive and Engineer Lane, at parking Lot P502. A new parking structure will open across the street on Voigt Drive before ground breaks for Franklin Antonio Hall. The new parking facility will double parking capacity for this part of campus.

Collaborative Research and Education

Eleven collaborative research spaces will make up the heart of Franklin Antonio Hall. Jacobs School Dean Albert P. Pisano describes these collaboration-focused laboratories as “collaboratories.” Each collaboratory will house five to seven professors – and their respective research groups.

The professors within each collaboratory will come from a mix of different academic departments within the Jacobs School of Engineering. Co-locating diverse yet complementary research groups will encourage the interdisciplinary systems-level collaborations necessary for solving the toughest

challenges facing humanity.

At the Jacobs School, these kinds of collaborations are already happening. Wearable technology innovators, for example, are working with battery researchers who characterize and modify materials at the nano-scale. One outcome of this particular collaboration is Ocella, a flexible, rechargeable battery startup. Ocella is currently being incubated at the Jacobs School through a new technology accelerator run by the Institute for the Global Entrepreneur.

The gift was announced recently at the campus' Founders Celebration event, An Evening of Nonconventional Wisdom.

Franklin Antonio Hall will provide much needed space designed specifically to allow these kinds of unique research collaborations to flourish.

“It’s absolutely crucial that we provide our faculty and students with the resources they need to learn and to innovate,” said Pisano. “These are the people who will create the next Linkabits and Qualcomms.”

Successfully transferring innovations into the marketplace where they can do good for society is a challenge that the Jacobs School researchers—and their campus and industry partners in each of the eleven collaboratories—will take on. Successful technology transfer requires sustained interactions with networks of industry partners, in part, to ensure relevance.

“Collaborations that cross between academia and industry multiple times are critical for developing systems-level solutions to challenges in medicine, energy, security, robotics and more,” said Pisano. “I won’t be surprised when I see our industry partners starting to collaborate with one another in the new building.”

The Jacobs School faculty will be invited to submit proposals for collaboratories. In addition to the eleven collaboratories, the building design includes plans for:

- A large, approximately 250-seat auditorium for teaching classes
- Executive education spaces including facilities optimized for online teaching and learning as well as facilities for the Jacobs School’s master’s programs for engineers who are already in the technical workforce.
- Flexible meeting spaces for industry-academia collaborations
- A high-bay laboratory with flexible research space for projects that require high ceilings and access to the building’s loading dock
- Multipurpose classrooms, faculty offices, meeting rooms and a café

Franklin Antonio

Franklin Antonio is a co-founder of Qualcomm, where he currently serves as Chief Scientist. He graduated from UC San Diego with a bachelor's degree in Applied Physics and Information Science in 1974. After college, he worked at Linkabit for 12 years before joining Irwin Jacobs, Andrew Viterbi and four others to create Qualcomm in 1985.

Antonio led the growth of Qualcomm's engineering departments, served as project engineer for Qualcomm's OmniTRACS satellite communication system, and contributed to Qualcomm's code division multiple access (CDMA) technology and Globalstar low-Earth-orbit satellite system. He has provided strategic technical guidance and engineering mentoring across all of Qualcomm's engineering programs. He holds 378 granted and pending patents worldwide.