



(from left) UC San Diego alumni Kimberley Phillips Boehm and Marcus Boehm, along with Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Becky Pettit and Senior Diversity Officer Glynda Davis, meet with PATHS scholars.

A Time to Step Up

UC San Diego alums make \$1 million investment in transformative new STEM program

As she navigated the pathways of a long and distinguished career in academia, Kimberley Phillips Boehm steadily became aware that one day she would need to step up and give back. This passion to make a difference blossomed during her days writing award-winning books and conducting research on the history and culture of African-Americans and U.S. workers. It flourished during her days earning a doctorate at Yale, as an endowed professor at the College of William and Mary and founding dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Brooklyn College-CUNY.



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Widening the Pathway to a STEM Career

At the moment he was born, the odds already tilted against Gentry Patrick. The percentages said an African-American from South Central Los Angeles was not likely to become a tenured neuroscience professor at a major research university ...

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Before all of that, she was a UC San Diego undergraduate earning her bachelor's degree in history. Inside Revelle College's dining halls, she met Marcus Boehm, a chemistry major who across several decades would become a biotechnology industry pioneer and entrepreneur.

"Over the course of my time as a professor, dean and provost, I saw increasing numbers of first-generation students with constrained resources," said Kimberley Phillips Boehm. "I saw increased tuition demands on family resources. All of it convinced me that alums and donors would really have to step up."

Now, Kimberley and Marcus have stepped up to deliver a \$1 million gift to the new PATHways to STEM through Enhanced Access and Mentorship Program (PATHS).

"Kimberley and Marcus have been exemplary alumni leaders in their fields with exceptional careers, and now they are giving back to UC San Diego with this generous gift that will touch the lives of scores of incoming STEM students," said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "I look forward

to watching their investment strengthen the university's ties to the San Diego community and deepen our commitment to making UC San Diego a place of opportunity for any student in our region."

Kimberley and Marcus dated at UC San Diego but eventually went their separate ways. After diverging in unrelated careers, they reconnected after a 29-year gap and married in 2014. They have reconnected with UC San Diego as well, with Kimberley serving as vice president of the university's alumni board, Marcus becoming a trustee of the UC San Diego Foundation and both serving on the Campaign for UC San Diego Cabinet and donating to the Campaign.



Professor Gentry Patrick (back row, left), Marcus Boehm and Kimberley Phillips Boehm (front) join with PATHS students during a recent visit.

The couple has donated to UC San Diego's Black Alumni Scholarship Fund, as well as to fellowship programs at Brooklyn College. Yet the Boehms found something *different* in PATHS. They fully embraced the vision for PATHS set by Biological Sciences Professor Gentry Patrick.

Drawing from lessons of his own impoverished upbringing in Southeast Los Angeles, Patrick structured PATHS to provide critical mentorship and financial support for undergraduate UC San Diego STEM students from under-resourced communities. A network of mentors and supporters ultimately helped propel him to

academic success and become a professor of neurobiology at UC San Diego.

"I was just like many of the students in our underprivileged communities," said Patrick. "Now, I want that pool to be expanded."

Today, he's implementing the same success and support system for new generations of disadvantaged students with STEM aspirations.

"That's UC San Diego," said Kimberley, "breaking the mold, charting a new path for making things happen and helping people do what they need to do."

As a UC San Diego student, Kimberley appreciated the discipline and rigor of her education, combined with complete freedom to forge her own career path. Today, she finds it "thrilling and moving" to have a hand in the future career successes of disadvantaged students.



During her distinguished academic career, Kimberley Phillips Boehm (with Professor Gentry Patrick) saw increased tuition demands on family resources. "All of it convinced me that alums and donors would really have to step up."

“I made my first gift to UC San Diego eight years ago and I’ve learned that students are truly grateful. I also learned that *every... dollar... counts*,” she said, putting a stamp of emphasis on each word. “This is a powerhouse university and it’s done so well to make sure that students don’t just survive—they thrive.”



Students from a variety of backgrounds come together as a cohort during their time as PATHS scholars.

PATHS is already making a monumental impact on students’ lives. Freshman Ronald Moreno embodies this change. Homeless for most of his life, Moreno shuffled from one place to another—from San Bernardino to Los Angeles to City Heights—in all attending 12 elementary schools before reaching the fifth grade. Moreno is the designated caretaker of his 16-year-old brother and the pair now live in a UC San Diego family housing unit, allowing him to pursue his passion for a neuroscience degree.

“I can’t imagine going to college without a PATHS scholarship,” said Moreno, who became

friends with Kimberley and Marcus through PATHS onboarding events and calls them “an amazing power couple.” “When the financial aid part isn’t supported it affects every aspect of your life, including your classes, your social life... everything. For the first time my brother and I have a place we call home—our first bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. It’s because of the PATHS program and because of Kimberley and her husband’s generosity.”

Since she left academia, Kimberley resolved to make a difference in the San Diego community by pouring her experience and passion into Reality Changers, a transformative organization founded by [UC San Diego alum Christopher Yanov](#) that prepares youth from disadvantaged backgrounds for college.

Reality Changers and the new PATHS program are driving a new model for success. Eleven of the 12 students in the newly arrived class of PATHS students are products of Reality Changers.

“I feel like I am part of a community of donors and gifts that have invested in the future—not just at UC San Diego but the future of higher education and this country,” said Boehm. “These students are the inventors of new medicine. They are the inventors of



Marcus Boehm and Kimberley Phillips Boehm have devoted themselves to helping students succeed at UC San Diego, where they first met as undergraduates.

ways to end hunger and cure diseases and start non-profits. I think we all have to think about how we can support our collective future.”

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