

Academic Convocation for New Students Sept. 17 Marks Start of UCSD School Year

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Pat JaCoby

A first-ever academic welcome convocation will mark the start of the school year and Welcome Week activities Sept. 17 for approximately 4,550 new freshmen and 1,500 new transfer students at the University of California, San Diego.

The new students, gathering on the Sun God lawn at 3:30 on a Sunday afternoon, are among an estimated total 26,970 students who will begin fall quarter classes Sept. 21 on the La Jolla campus. The preliminary enrollment figure, to be finalized in October, shows an expected growth of some 1,000 students over last fall's enrollment of 25,964.

Kicking off Welcome Week activities, the convocation will include greetings by UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox and Associated Students president Harry Khanna, and a keynote speech by climate change expert Ralph Keeling, Scripps Institution of Oceanography professor. The convocation will introduce a theme, *Uncommon Scholars, Global Citizens*, which planners say defines the UCSD community and will be played out in other activities during Welcome Week and the academic year. A reception for the students will follow in the Faculty Club.

The traditional spirited "Triton Power Hour" is scheduled at 11 a.m. Sept. 18, followed by a Student Services Fair on Ridge Walk, during which Chancellor Fox will individually greet students and pass out cookies.

"The academic credentials of UCSD's entering freshman class are among the strongest we've seen," said Mae Brown, assistant vice chancellor, Admissions and Enrollment Services, "with an average high school GPA of 3.92 and a SAT Reasoning Test score above 1239." The new transfer students are entering UCSD with an average college GPA of 3.34.

Approximately 2,200 international students are projected to attend UCSD this fall, representing about 100 countries, noted Mary Dhooge, director of the UCSD International Center. An estimated 1,280 UCSD students will study abroad in 2006-07, an increase of 60 students over the 1220 who studied abroad last year.

Of this year's students, 585 will be overseas on the UC Education Abroad program and 560 in UCSD's Opportunities Abroad program, including more than 100 UCSD students doing volunteer work in developing countries. "The world situation isn't deterring students from both going and coming from abroad," said Dhooge, "Participation in overseas programs continues to increase as well as the number of international students choosing to come to UCSD."

As for campus housing this quarter, Mark Cunningham, director of Housing and Dining Services, notes that a total 9,907 students, faculty and staff will be accommodated. This includes housing for 7,636 undergraduates, 1,749 graduate/medical students, 152 faculty, and 77 staff. This year, a record 94.2 percent of all freshmen will be housed on campus.

While incoming students will be able to enjoy a number of recently completed building projects, they'll also have to find their way around several major construction sites scattered throughout the campus. High on the student anticipation list is the \$35 million Student Academic Services Center located in the heart of the campus--UCSD's "downtown"--and designated as a "one stop" for student services scattered throughout the campus. Designed by renowned architect Rob Quigley, the facility not only will provide convenient access to services such as financial aid and the Registrar, but include restaurants, convenience stores and other services.. The 102,000 square foot, five-story structure replaces a number of World War II Camp Matthews barracks buildings and is expected to be completed in April, 2007.

Also high on the anticipation scale is the \$30.6 million Hopkins Parking Structure located near RIMAC Field. The six level structure, with parking for 685 vehicles, is expected to be completed in May, 2007. Other major construction projects due for completion in 2007 include the \$78 million East Campus Graduate Housing project, with accommodations for 806 graduate students, and Phase 1 of the \$43.5 million Rady Management School Facility. Expansion and renovation of the Faculty Club is expected to be completed in December, although dining service will begin Sept. 18.

Newly completed facilities on the campus include the Student Health and Wellness expansion, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center, the Women's Center, and a doubled-in-size Biomedical Library.

Meanwhile, students will find the popular free bus zone program with the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) expanded to an unlimited number of trips on all six MTS routes that serve the UCSD main campus and the UCSD Medical Center, Hillcrest. Additionally, UCSD has recently partnered with Flexcar to provide a new car sharing service for students as well as add to its program for faculty and staff.

Media Contact: Pat JaCoby, 858 534-7404