

Students Give Back in Record Numbers



Twenty-five dollars may not seem like a lot these days, but UC San Diego students are demonstrating how small gifts can make big impacts. Just a few weeks into the school year, approximately 700 students have made a donation of \$25 each to the UC San Diego Student Foundation’s “Give. Invest. Gain.” Initiative, which supports student scholarships and programs. That translates to more than \$17,000 raised—a record start to the school year for the foundation.

“If it weren’t for financial aid, I wouldn’t be at UC San Diego,” said Billy Jamili, a fourth-year cognitive science major and president of the UC San Diego Student Foundation. Like Jamili, most of the Student Foundation’s 15 trustees are on financial aid or scholarship support.

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“We’re a small group, but we are all very dedicated and very passionate about creating a better future for UC San Diego students.”

The annual “Give. Invest. Gain.” initiative launched with the UC San Diego Bookstore’s Welcome Party during move-in weekend. Members of the Student Foundation were stationed at the bookstore and other key events throughout Welcome Week to talk with new and returning students about the initiative and Society 60—a donor recognition group named in honor of the university’s founding year (1960) that provides donors with access, privileges and benefits uniquely designed for students. “The partnership with the bookstore this year has been great for the Student Foundation,” said Jason Karavidas, assistant director of outreach engagement for Alumni Affairs and advisor to the foundation. “It’s given them a lot of exposure at one of the most highly trafficked places on campus.”

One of the foundation’s goals this year is to increase the number of returning donors. About 20 percent of current donors gave to the Student Foundation last year, an increase in retention from previous years. To encourage students to continue giving back throughout their UC San Diego career, the organization is creating new ways to engage and thank students for supporting scholarships.

“This year, we want to do more access events—special opportunities for our donors such as a speakers series or networking reception with UCSD Alumni,” said Jamili. “Especially for upperclassmen looking towards graduation, this could be a valuable service, and one that strengthens our community.”

Established in 1999 with a gift from UC San Diego alumni Patricia, ’83 and Marc, ’79 Brutton, the UC San Diego Foundation is the first of its kind in the University of California system and one of just a few similar organizations nationwide. Its mission is to promote a culture of philanthropy on campus by teaching students how to invest, fundraise and manage an endowment—all to support student scholarships. Last year, the Student Foundation was able to award 19 scholarships to UC San Diego students thanks to donations to “Give. Invest. Gain.” and the Senior Class Gift. For more information about the Student Foundation and student philanthropy, visit gig.ucsd.edu.

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