

Alumna Steph Barry Joins UC San Diego to Head Alumni and Community Engagement

Steph Barry, a UC San Diego alumna and global business executive, has been appointed Assistant Vice Chancellor of Alumni and Community Engagement, effective Jan. 29. Barry joins the campus Advancement team following her 19-year tenure at WD-40 Company, where she most recently served as Vice President for Strategic Projects. Headquartered in San Diego, WD-40 Company is a global organization that currently markets its products in 188 countries worldwide.

As vice president, Barry reported directly to the CEO of WD-40, leading a global project of significant (over \$200 million) impact to the business. Her extensive leadership experience also includes service as Vice President-Asia, in a role focused on driving growth and profitability of the Asia region, overseeing more than 20 countries, one regional office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and one wholly owned subsidiary in Shanghai, China.



Steph Barry

“Steph is a dynamic, visionary leader who brings a unique perspective to UC San Diego,” said Jerrilyn Malana, president of the UC San Diego Alumni Board of Directors. “She has a strong track record of developing, marketing and building a global brand. Those skills, along with her experience working abroad, will help us as we work to grow the UC San Diego brand locally, nationally and globally. It’s also powerful that she is an alumna and can speak from her heart about the campus.”

Barry graduated from UC San Diego in 1994 with a bachelor’s degree in political science. She also holds a master’s degree in international business from the University of San Diego. As an undergraduate, Barry knew she wanted a career with an international focus—it’s why she chose to attend UC San Diego. The general education philosophy of Eleanor Roosevelt College, with its focus on international understanding and rigorous “Making of the Modern World” core curriculum, fit with

her interest in the history and cultures of places around the world. She studied abroad in Germany as well as Mexico, where she learned to speak Spanish, and later got her first glimpse into the business world through the UC San Diego Career Services Center, which found her an opportunity to shadow a professional in charge of global sales at a local manufacturing company.

“It was my dream to do something international, and UC San Diego made that possible,” said Barry. “The campus gave me a great education with a global perspective. That foundation was so valuable when I began working in new countries.”

At WD-40 Company, Barry built diverse international teams, formulated and executed global-level strategy and identified and developed products to appeal across geographical borders. She excelled within the confines of tight budgets and limited resources, and she also learned a lot about what it takes to build and sustain a relevant brand; WD-40 is widely recognized for having a loyal brand, as well as for its unique company culture.

While she has lived and worked throughout the Americas, Europe and the Asia Pacific region, Barry considers San Diego her home. When she returned to the region last year, she started looking for ways to get involved and make a difference in the local community.

“San Diego is where my heart is. When I moved back, I was very impressed with how much UC San Diego has grown and how much innovation is happening here,” said Barry. “There is so much promise for the future of this campus, and I’m excited to have the opportunity to be a part of it.”

Alumni and Community Engagement, a unit within UC San Diego Advancement, is responsible for the comprehensive and meaningful engagement of all alumni and the broader Triton family of students, parents, friends, corporations, faculty and staff. As assistant vice chancellor, Barry will lead a university-wide alumni relations enterprise, its international programs, Board of Directors, and volunteer clubs and councils. She will also oversee career services and industry engagement, Triton magazine, alumni operating and scholarship endowments, and other alumni-driven fundraising initiatives.

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