

## ‘Secret to Success’ is No Secret, Former Congressman Tells Students at Welcome Convocation



*Photos/Erik Jepsen*

The unexpected can lead to opportunity. You can achieve anything if you put your mind to it. Know what you want to do, love what you do and believe in what you’re doing.

These were the messages delivered to more than 4,500 new freshmen and transfer students Tuesday by Tim Roemer, Muir, ’79, at UC San Diego’s New Student Convocation ceremony.

Roemer is a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a 9/11 Commissioner and was the keynote speaker at the Sept. 20 ceremony. The former six-term Democratic congressman from Indiana, who most recently served as the U.S. Ambassador to India, was joined by Chancellor Marye Anne Fox; Suresh Subramani, senior vice chancellor of Academic Affairs; Penny Rue, vice chancellor of Student Affairs; Armin Afsahi, executive director of UC San Diego Alumni, and Alyssa Wing, president of Associated Students to welcome new freshmen and transfer students entering UC San Diego for fall quarter 2011. Convocation is the inaugural academic event of the year that marks the formal entrance of new students into the university community.

Roemer and the other speakers gave practical advice to students as they begin their college journey.



*r, Muir, '79, at UC San Diego's New Student Convocation*

“Here you will forge your future,” Fox said. “You make lifelong friends, study subjects you are passionate about and grow intellectually.”

Following Fox’s address, Subramani spoke about the caliber of UC San Diego’s new students and how the university’s faculty will guide them as they embark on the beginning of their intellectual lives at UC San Diego. “This campus might seem large, but the colleges will be your family and allow you to learn and allow us to teach,” Subramani said. “We welcome you to participate and look forward to working with you.”

Rue also emphasized the important role that campus community has in the UC San Diego student experience. “At UC San Diego your journey is just beginning,” Rue said. “I want to be sure there is a niche for every student here.”

Afsahi introduced Roemer as a fellow alum who’s dedicated his life to service and national security. Roemer earned his bachelor’s degree from UC San Diego and he attended Notre Dame where he received a Ph.D. in American Government.

Roemer addressed the students and revealed his experience as a UC San Diego freshman from Indiana and how the support of faculty and friends were key to his success as an undergraduate. “As a kid from the Midwest, I didn’t know anything about California,” he said. “Everyone on this campus helped me in some form. I interned for John Stewart, founding Provost of Muir College. I studied under great faculty who are still here, including Gary Jacobson, Sam Popkin and Susan Shirk.”

Roemer spoke about how some of his closest friends are the ones he met his first year at UC San Diego. “You will make the greatest friends you will ever have here,” he said. “Invest in those friendships. They will pay off.”

Roemer talked about the power of perseverance and the value of hard work. “The secret to success is that there is no secret,” he said. “You can do anything if you put your mind to it.”

He told the stories of J.K. Rowling, Michael Jordan and others who endured setbacks before they became legends in their field...“Walt Disney was once fired because he was told by his boss he lacked imagination.”

Roemer encouraged students to persevere in this time when public higher education is at risk because of state budget cuts. “State legislators might make cuts to higher education in the next budget,” he said. “This might impact you and your classes; don’t let this happen. Fight these cuts against this great school. Don’t let them take a part this treasure.”

Roemer has dedicated much of his professional career to improving education and strengthening national security.

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Roemer’s support of higher education was evident through his sponsorship of the Ed-Flex bill, which encourages states to seek innovative approaches to education, and the Transition to Teaching bill, which helped address teacher shortages. In addition, he was the lead sponsor of the five-year reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which reduced interest rates on student loans, increased Pell Grants, increased funding for teacher training and expanded aid to families.

Following Roemer’s speech, Wing, who served as Master of Ceremonies at the event, told students to take pride in their Triton spirit before the crowd flocked to RIMAC Field for a free dinner.

“This is such a vibrant campus,” Wing said. The opportunities are endless.”



*New Student Convocation ceremony*

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