

Community Relations Efforts Takes Chancellor Fox Throughout Region

From “An Evening with UC San Diego” to presentations at diverse organizations, Fox has expanded the university’s Campus and Community Relations programs

Marye Anne Fox, chancellor at the University of California, San Diego, runs one of the nation’s top 10 public universities—an academic powerhouse and economic engine with more than 29,000 students. Part of the chancellor’s job is to connect with the region’s community groups, governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations, as well as prospective students and their families. Outreach efforts convey the positive impact and benefits of having a world-class university right here in San Diego, and let the community know that a UC education is attainable.



From the San Diego Unified School District, Chancellor Fox visits Chula Vista High School, San Diego.

Since she was appointed chancellor in 2004, Fox has expanded UC San Diego’s community engagement and outreach programs to include an increased focus on higher education access and affordability for historically underrepresented and first-generation college students. Mentorship and tutoring programs targeted toward K-12 students have also been strengthened.

“Enhancing the ‘town and gown’ relationship for any university is of key importance,” noted Fox. “I would like the external community to view our campus as a resource for healthcare, education, jobs, research, performing arts and so much more. I also think that it’s critical to connect with local students, showing that they, too, can be a UC San Diego Triton—regardless of their social or economic background.”

A popular Chancellor’s Campus and Community Relations program is “An Evening with UC San Diego.” Fox, partnering with Student Affairs staff, visits high schools to speak to students and their families, offering information on accessing the UC system, navigating the college preparatory process, admissions timelines and requirements and financial aid, among other information. On Feb. 15, the chancellor will be at Chula Vista High School, offering optimism to students and families hungry for information on how to make college a reality.

On Feb. 16, the Mexican American Business and Professional Association (MABPA) will feature UC San Diego Chancellor Marye Anne Fox and San Diego State University President Elliot Hirshman presenting their vision for the success of Latino students striving towards a higher education. Both leaders will share information on how the current economic challenges have affected diversity initiatives.

Irma Velasco, director of the Chancellor's Campus and Community Relations program, serves as an internal consultant and departmental resource to help accomplish the chancellor's community relations goals. "In my job, I can make a difference," Velasco said. "Our programs target a diverse range of middle- and high-school students and their families. If I can help inspire even one underrepresented student to come to UC San Diego, then it's worth it to me."

A 19-year veteran of UC San Diego, Velasco's passion was sparked by a community relations internship under Robert Dynes when he was chancellor at UC San Diego. Dynes, a first-generation college graduate himself, went on to be president of the University of California system in 2003.

Velasco will be working with the Chancellor's Office, Student Affairs and other UC San Diego staff to present a free program during the campus April 7 Triton Day Experience entitled "Charting the Course: College Planning for Future Tritons." UC San Diego invites middle school, high school and community college students and their families to come to campus to learn how to plan for, get into and pay for college. Events will include a college planning session, campus tours and a student organization fair, among other activities. For information and reservations, call (858) 534-6862.



High School Students from the Sweetwater Union High School District, Administrators and Chancellor Fox at Eastlake High School, Chula Vista

A typical year's calendar of community outreach events for Chancellor Fox could involve Celebration of Abilities Month, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, International Week, Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade and Day of Service, Black History Month, Kiwanis and Rotary meetings and Chavez Celebration kickoff—to name just a few.

Velasco noted that the general reaction to the chancellor in the community is positive, including appreciation that a high level administrator is taking the time to reach out to students and their families. In fact, results of a survey conducted last year after an "Evening with UC San Diego" reported that 84 percent of respondents said they were "likely to apply" to UC San Diego.

Measureable success from the outreach efforts includes a record number of applications to UC San Diego from highly-qualified students from all backgrounds and cultures. Diversity among applicants continues to increase. For example, in fall 2012, there was a 17.2 percent increase of

underrepresented freshmen applicants. A total of 2,803 African-American freshmen (up 28.3 percent from last year) applied. Applications from Latinos surged this year, with 2,975 applicants from freshmen (up 15.6 percent). And applications from Mexican-American freshmen rose 14.7 percent from last year with 9,398 applications. In addition, 375 Native-American freshman students applied, up 15.7 percent from last year.

Although Fox is stepping down as chancellor in June 2012, Velasco added that UC San Diego is committed to community engagement and outreach efforts, and feels confident that the program will continue to enhance relations between the campus and the community.

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