

November 09, 2015 | By Cynthia Dillon

\$1.25 Million Legacy Gift Boosts UC San Diego's Department of Theatre and Dance

Teachers often inspire students, but students can move teachers, too. Such was the case during a recent visit to UC San Diego's Department of Theatre and Dance by long-time educator and arts supporter Lois Chant. Her \$1.25 million legacy gift will boost the department's efforts to continue its top-ranked theater training program. With an even distribution to occur between the *Lois Chant Endowed Scholarship Fund* in support of undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships in Theatre and Dance and the *Theatre & Dance Student Productions Endowment*, the return on the gift will help continue the valuable training experience theater students need, including funding actual productions and associated program expenses.



*Former educator and arts benefactor, Lois Chant.
Photo: Courtesy of Lois Chant.*

"I was most touched by the students; they were so enthusiastic about the program at the university," noted Chant, whose vision for the significant planned gift is to bring stronger students into the arts.

One such student is Jenny Grober, a senior theater major in acting and directing, who had lunch with Chant during her visit to campus.

"She was lovely," said Grober. "I told her that the faculty at UC San Diego and the experiences you get to create are really incomparable. It has been one of the most powerful experiences of my life."

A retired elementary school teacher, who along with her late husband taught in the Los Angeles city schools, Chant attended UCLA and Occidental College where she gained a liberal arts education to become a teacher.

"I think it is a great mistake to turn away from the liberal arts," noted Chant. "Students need to excel in some area, but not all will excel in science."

She said that she knew UC San Diego had a strong science and technology background, so she thought she would give theater "a boost."



Tim Barnett (left) and Jenny Grober (far right) were students who met Lois Chant during her visit to campus. Here, along with another theater student, they perform, "Doctored & Devised," (2013). Photo: Jim Carmody.

"You can enjoy theater your whole life, if you're exposed to it," explained Chant, who identified theater as a source of enjoyment for herself and so many others. "I am interested in theater—it's a necessary part of our culture, and I don't want it to fail."

Chant encouraged others to open their hearts and eyes to the need for excellence in the arts because, as she put it, "It is what makes us human."

Dean of the Division of Arts and Humanities Cristina Della Coletta said, "Lois's gift to the Department of Theatre and Dance is a welcome and timely reminder that we are here to serve our students by being models

of all that is extraordinary in our shared humanity: creativity, passion and the love for the common good. As a teacher herself, Lois understands this deeply and we are so grateful to her vision and generosity."

For more information about the Department of Theatre and Dance and the *Theatre & Dance Student Productions Endowment* visit the [website](#).

MEDIA CONTACT

Cynthia Dillon, 858-822-6673, cdillon@ucsd.edu

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