

By Judy Piercey     Oct 10, 2011

## Campus Sees Positive Response to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts



*The 1st Annual UC San Diego Powwow took place May 21st and was hosted by the UC San Diego chapter of the Native American Student Alliance. Photo/Erik Jepsen*

During the 2010-11 academic year, UC San Diego enrolled the largest number of new transfers and underrepresented students in its history. From artwork to outreach, the university continued to institute programs and policies aimed at enhancing campus climate and welcoming a diverse community.

**BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
STEDMAN GRAHAM  
MOTIVATES STUDENTS WITH  
PASSPORT TO FREEDOM**

At the close of the UC San Diego OASIS Summer Bridge program last month, bestselling author, educator and

A powerful sign of positive change was the unveiling of the *Chicano Legacy 40 Años* mosaic mural. Originally commissioned as a temporary art project, the mural was made permanent as part of the initiatives to embrace diversity, foster cultural awareness and improve the campus climate at UC San Diego. “For people like me, I can relate to the imagery,” said student Mar Velez, who attended the ceremonial unveiling of the mural. “The mural gives me a sense of belonging and support.”



*o Legacy 40 Años mural, mural representing the movement and the historic struggle of individuals who human rights, was designed as an educational art work students as well as future generations. Photo/Erik Jepsen*

Summer Bridge, a program hosted by the university’s Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS), helps ensure that transfer and

underrepresented students succeed in their academic careers with a free program that helps them acclimate to the academic, social and cultural life at the university. In August, 140 graduates of the program were inspired by *New York Times* bestselling author, educator and businessman Stedman Graham, who delivered a message for success with advice for making their education relevant.

The Jacobs School of Engineering launched its IDEA Student Center to promote the culture of inclusion, diversity, excellence and advancement among students, faculty and staff. This summer, 22 incoming freshmen took part in the school’s first-ever residential program designed to increase retention and graduation rates for under-represented and first generation students at the Jacobs School. The official opening of the IDEA Student Center will take place Oct. 14 from noon to 2 p.m.

businessman Stedman Graham inspired students, sharing advice on how to succeed in the 21st century. Summer Bridge is an intensive four-week academic and residential program designed to acclimate incoming students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—many of whom will be the first in their families to graduate from college—to the academic, social and cultural life at the university.



Graham urged students to take charge of their education and focus on developing their identity and area of expertise. Before leaving the campus, Graham gave each student a passport labeled “Identity: Passport to Freedom” as a physical reminder of what it takes to be successful as an undergraduate at UC San Diego, and beyond.

### **Q&A with Stedman Graham**

*You talked a lot about identity development with the students. Why do you believe identity development is such an important part of higher education?*

It’s not a degree that determines your potential; it’s you with a degree. To be successful in the 21st century, students need to build their education around their own identity—their personal strengths, skills, goals and interests—and create their niche. Today’s student needs to become an expert in his or her field. Developing an area of expertise is what will make students relevant for today’s economy. It is how students can separate themselves and avoid becoming just a commodity in the marketplace.

Other efforts included an inaugural Teaching Diversity Conference, which brought together faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, post-docs, alumni and area high school students from varying disciplines to network, share ideas and learn about best practices. The 50th Anniversary Innovation Day Expo and Symposia featured UC San Diego alumnus Kip Fulbeck, a performance artist, video maker and writer who explores multiracial identity. Reviving an old tradition, the Native American Student Alliance hosted a Powwow on campus, the first since the early 90s.



ok part in the first-ever summer academic prep program  
bs School.

UC San Diego strengthened its diversity efforts by establishing the position of Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and moving forward with a national search for an

experienced leader. The VC EDI will report directly to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, is also accountable to the Chancellor and will oversee the AVC for Faculty Equity and the Diversity Office that includes the campus community centers (Cross-Cultural Center, LGBT Resource Center and the Women's Center.)

The campus created a new Director of Development for Diversity Initiatives position, recently appointing Antigone Blackwell to plan and implement strategies for the identification, cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of major gift prospects. Previously, the Associate Director of Development at DePaul University, College of Law, she also played an instrumental role in conceiving and implementing the annual giving, major gifts and events programs at the University of Chicago's International House. Blackwell recently completed her Master's in Public Administration from DePaul University and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

*Many of our students have overcome great challenges—be it personal or financial—to get to UC San Diego. What challenges have you overcome in pursuing your own education and career?*

My biggest challenge has been to change my way of thinking. I grew up with a race-based consciousness, thinking that my family, race, environment and background defined my identity and opportunity for success. It's not easy when the world defines you and puts you in a box—in a certain category. I've had to learn to transcend these labels and take ownership of my education, my development and my career path.

*What advice do you have for students as they pursue their educational and career goals, particularly in light of today's economic climate?*

Don't wait for the economy to turn around—take charge of your development now and become an expert. In the 21st century, just because you have a degree doesn't mean you will get a job. Just because you are smart doesn't mean you will make it. You either separate yourself by developing your identity and area of expertise, or you become a commodity. The key is to make yourself relevant to the 21st century economy. Today's students need to be more creative and innovative, to have a vision with a plan, and to take control of their own career path.

From May to August 2011, Melanie Cruz, Director of Development for the Division of Physical Sciences, was also the interim Director of Development for Diversity. During her tenure, significant progress was made in creating the program's infrastructure including developing a strategic plan, determining funding priorities, producing case statements and other collateral, reaching out to corporate and individual donors, and launching a diversity giving webpage ([giving.ucsd.edu/diversity](http://giving.ucsd.edu/diversity)) to offer diversity support information and access to online giving.

The campus established a diversity requirement for graduation. A knowledge of diversity, equity and inclusion is required of all candidates who begin their studies at UC San Diego in lower-division standing in fall 2011, or in upper-division standing in fall 2013.



*'more than 30 years ago at UCSD, Summer Bridge is a academic and residential experience designed to prepare freshmen, especially those from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, to successfully transition to UCSD. lepsen*

“I am proud of our diversity efforts. There has been a very positive response from students, faculty and staff, and there is an increased understanding of the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion to our success,” said Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. “We are a university that recognizes that incorporating a spectrum of backgrounds, interests and points of view into the fabric of campus life is essential to our success for the next 50 years.”

To view the progress that UC San Diego has made in addressing the diversity and campus climate initiatives, please visit <http://campusclimate.ucsd.edu>.

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