

Nathan Fletcher Named First ‘Professor of Practice’ at UC San Diego



Photos by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

UC San Diego has created a new type of position to complement its existing series of academic appointments: The Professor of Practice.

The first appointment – in the department of political Science in UC San Diego’s Division of Social Sciences – is veteran U.S. Marine and former California State Assemblyman Nathan Fletcher.

Designed to bring to campus distinguished professionals who are leaders in their fields but do not have the academic backgrounds typically required for a faculty appointment at the university, the Professor of Practice series adds not only to UC San Diego’s teaching but also to its research and service missions.

“Professors of Practice will contribute to the academic program at UC San Diego by providing students with a deeper understanding of the practical application of a particular field of study, and help promote the integration of academic scholarship with practical experience from applications professionals,” said Suresh Subramani, UC San Diego executive vice chancellor for academic affairs. “Professors of Practice will bring great value to the university and students by extending the range of course and research offerings beyond that achievable by appointments in other series. They will provide students and faculty additional opportunities to interact with, and to benefit from, the experienced individuals who have distinguished professional accomplishments. I am delighted that Nathan Fletcher will join our faculty as UC San Diego’s first Professor of Practice.”



Fletcher is beginning his appointment this winter quarter by co-teaching a class on “California Government and Politics” with Thad Kousser, associate professor of political science. In future quarters, over the course of his appointment through June 2015, he will be developing courses related to his extensive practical expertise in such areas as local government, campaigns and elections, international democratization, military relations, counterterrorism, and public policy.

He will also be deeply engaged beyond the classroom. Plans and possibilities include: advising and mentoring students as well as connecting them with internship and employment opportunities. He will also collaborate with faculty on public policy projects, in the UC San Diego Center on Global Justice, for example, and will help to develop and advance the proposed UC San Diego Center on California and Comparative State Research.

The appointment is part time, at 28 percent, and Fletcher will simultaneously continue in his new role as senior director of corporate development at Qualcomm.

Fletcher’s position is supported by non-state funds. All future positions must be similarly supported.

Early in his career, Fletcher worked for non-governmental organizations seeking to build and improve democracies around the world. This work took him to East Timor, Cambodia and Serbia. Fletcher next served in the U.S. Marines, on active duty and in the reserves, including a tour in the Sunni triangle region of Iraq and counterintelligence deployment in the Near East and the Horn of Africa. A decorated veteran and an advocate for veterans, Fletcher was elected to the California Assembly in 2008 representing the 75th Assembly District and reelected in 2010. His record includes 30 pieces of legislation signed into law and a reputation for bipartisan cooperation. He ran for San Diego Mayor in 2012 and made national headlines when, partway through the race, he decided to quit the Republican Party and run as an independent.

“I am excited to have Nathan join UC San Diego’s community,” said Jeff Elman, dean of UC San Diego’s Division of Social Sciences. “He is exactly the kind of individual the university had in mind when designing this new series. With his extensive practical knowledge and wide-ranging professional experiences, he offers our students expertise and insights that will be invaluable both academically as well as to their career development. He will also participate in a number of campus research activities focusing on global justice and comparative state governance.”

Fletcher, for his part, said he is thrilled to join a “world-class institution,” especially one celebrated for its public service. For the third consecutive year, *Washington Monthly* has named UC San Diego the nation’s top college in rankings that measure “[what colleges are doing for the country.](#)”

“I have enormous respect for UC San Diego,” Fletcher said. “I’ve always wanted to teach, and I’m really looking forward to the research and mentorship aspects of the role.

“We have a tremendous generation of young people in this country,” he said, “so many who have a desire to be of service. I hope to connect these students with career and volunteer paths they might not even know are available to them. And if I can engage and motivate even a handful who didn’t previously think they wanted to serve the public, then this will have been a real opportunity to give back. We need good people in all branches of service and all aspects of government.”



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