UCSD Alumni Association to Receive Six Awards for Excellence from CASE

Council for the Advancement and Support of Education to recognize UC San Diego's alumni group for its creative use of technology and new programs

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Raymond Hardie

Chocolate bars, golden tickets, a smart-phone app and a night in a Napa castle. Is this the opening chapter of a foodie-inspired mystery novel? No, these are actually some of the programs that netted UCSD Alumni six awards from the Council for Support and Advancement of Education (CASE). In competition with hundreds of colleges in the western states, UCSD Alumni will be recognized at the annual CASE District VII Conference on Friday, March 4 at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza in Los Angeles. In its drive to engage a greater number of alumni in the future of their university, UCSD Alumni has launched a number of innovative programs within the last year. Among the six award-winning programs, two received the highest gold medal honor: Willy Wonka-inspired "golden ticket" chocolate bars that support student scholarships and an iPhone app that keeps alumni connected to campus and each other. "We are thrilled to be recognized by CASE and UC San Diego's peer institutions for our work on behalf of our alumni community around the world," says Armin Afsahi, '90, executive director of UCSD Alumni and assistant vice chancellor for Alumni Affairs. "I couldn't be more proud of our team, as we continue to innovate and creatively engage with our deserving alumni."

The annual CASE Awards of Excellence recognize the best practices in alumni relations, fundraising, public/government relations, advancement services, special events and outstanding communications. UCSD is a member of CASE district VII, which represents higher education institutions in the western region of the United States, including Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah.

The CASE awards to UCSD Alumni include:

Gold Medal Award, Creative Use of Technology and New Media: UCSD Alumni partnered with alumnus John VanZandt and created an iPhone application that enables alumni to connect and communicate with fellow alumni based on geographic presence, affinity and interests, making UC San Diego one of the first public universities to launch an application for its alumni association.

Gold Medal Award, Collaborative Programs: UCSD Alumni partnered with local, alumni-owned company Chuao Chocolatier to create special edition "Golden Ticket Chocolate Bars," with $0.50 of each bar sold going towards scholarships. "Golden ticket" winners got a behind-the-scenes Chuao Chocolatier factory tour.

Silver Medal Award, Revenue-Generating Programs: The "Give. Invest. Gain." fundraising campaign was created to better acquire, as well as retain, student donors to support student scholarships.

Silver Medal Award, New Program Initiatives: The UCSD Alumni Entertainment Alliance was developed to strengthen the ties between the University and its alumni working at all levels in television, film, music, theatre, gaming, performing arts and media.

Bronze Medal Award, Individual Special Events (Anniversaries): This unique event and setting were created to appeal to the more than 20,000 alumni in Northern California. Located off campus, "A Night in Napa" at Castello di Amorosa, it featured a wine-pairing dinner reception with the Chancellor and pre-receptions with Deans from the various divisions.

Bronze Medal Award, Programming for Special Constituencies: UCSD Alumni launched the UCSD Surf Invitational, a unique event in conjunction with its annual Alumni Weekend, to appeal to the large number of alumni who are (or were) surfers. It culminated in teams of alumni competing against each other for the honor of "Best UCSD Alumni Surfers."

Media Contact: Raymond Hardie, 858-534-5630, rhardie@ucsd.edu