

By Erika Johnson     Apr 20, 2017



*Local philanthropist David Gubser has established a \$200,000 endowment through his estate that will support scholarships for LGBT students as well as Critical Gender Studies majors at UC San Diego.*

## **A Will to Ensure Change**

### **\$200,000 planned gift supports scholarships for LGBT and Critical Gender Studies students at UC San Diego**

It was time to give back, he decided. As David Gubser started to revise his will, he began to think of the causes that meant most to him. In the wake of the hate-based shootings that occurred last year at an Orlando, Fla., nightclub with a largely gay clientele, Gubser resolved to offer support to local LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) programs. Among his plans, he established a \$200,000 endowment through his estate that will support scholarships for LGBT students as well as Critical Gender Studies majors at UC San Diego.

“We are inspired by Mr. Gubser’s commitment to increase access to higher education for the LGBTQIA+ community and to support education in Critical Gender Studies,” said Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Becky Pettitt. “Thanks to his generosity, opportunity will greatly expand for students who are already some of our society’s most impassioned change-makers.”

Gubser grew up and attended college in Glendale, Calif. He spent over 30 years as a nurse before retiring to care for his aging parents. After his parents passed, Gubser and his partner, Richard, moved to San Diego to be immersed in the downtown culture and enjoy the waterfront harbor.



*David Gubser with his partner, Richard Lieboff.*

Although Gubser had no prior affiliation with UC San Diego, he chose to “adopt” the university as a focus for his support in his new city, along with several other local educational institutions and LGBT community organizations. His endowment will provide continuous funding in perpetuity, supporting many generations of students as they grow to become dedicated advocates of equality and justice.

“I’ve never done anything like this; I was lucky enough to have something to give and wanted to make sure it is going to the right place, to someone who can use it,” said Gubser. “Education is so important. I want to support the opportunity to study and learn for as many young people as possible.”



*Gubser’s endowment will provide continuous funding in perpetuity, supporting many generations of students as they grow to become dedicated advocates of equality and justice. Photo by Erika Johnson/University Communications.*

Half of Gubser’s planned gift will go to support the LGBT Undergraduate Scholarship Program, which recognizes and supports the academic excellence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual students at UC San Diego.

“Too often, the reality is that LGBTQIA+ students lose family financial support when they come out,” said Shaun Travers, director of the UC San Diego LGBT Resource Center. “With this gift, students will feel, in tangible ways, the support of the broader LGBT community who have come before them, a new, caring family.”

The endowment will also boost scholarships for students majoring in Critical Gender Studies. The curriculum focuses on gender and sexuality, combining intellectual rigor with a commitment to social justice.

“Critical Gender Studies is a small but vibrant program that is constantly expanding, most recently through a graduate specialization,” explained Fatima El-Tayeb, professor of literature and ethnic studies and director of Critical Gender Studies at UC San Diego. “Our students are exceptionally engaged, smart and diverse. This scholarship will make a world of a difference to them and to our ability to continue our path-breaking work.”

In addition to the endowment, Gubser also provided a \$10,000 gift toward the internship program at the UC San Diego LGBT Resource Center last summer. The donation will fund two social justice interns, one for the 2017-18 academic year and one for the 2018-2019 academic year. Undergraduate students gain leadership experience through the yearlong internship program at the center. The program culminates in a queer student action project, a chance for students to take on an independent community-building project. Nine internship positions are offered, ranging from art and activism to liberation and healing to community engagement.



*In addition to the endowment, Gubser also provided a gift toward the internship program at the UC San Diego LGBT Resource Center. Photo by Erika Johnson/University Communications.*

Vanessa Villacorta, a junior majoring in microbiology, is currently a social justice education intern at the LGBT Resource Center. She believes that knowledge is a powerful means to create change. As a social justice educator, she describes her role as teaching others how to foster a society in which all people are given equal rights and opportunities.

“Mr. Gubser’s gift will tremendously help further expand the reaches of social justice education at UC San Diego,” said Villacorta. “The difference that this gift makes will be present in the inclusive campus environments that will be fostered at UC San Diego as our new social justice education interns facilitate educational workshops for student organizations across the university.”

---

**The Campaign For**  
**UC San Diego**

Continue the  
**nontradition**

---

Keep up with campus news by subscribing to *This Week @ UC San Diego*