

UC San Diego

# UC San Diego News Center

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## UC San Diego's Division of Arts and Humanities Wins Its Largest Foundation Grant



*UC San Diego arts and humanities students. Photo by University Communications*

The University of California San Diego's Division of Arts and Humanities took a leading role to secure a \$2.59 million grant award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The award supports a joint program with the San Diego Community College District (SDDCD) that helps humanities transfer students transition to UC San Diego—a top 10 public university. According to Dean Cristina Della Coletta, it is the largest foundation award the division has received in support of the humanities.

“We will be presenting the humanities as a viable and valuable course of study that offers many professional opportunities beyond college,” noted UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla in a letter.

Della Coletta and her team worked closely with SDCCD’s Chancellor Constance Carroll and staff to propose, “Activating the Humanities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Collaborative Path for Transfer Students from Community College to Research University and Beyond.” The project connects faculty and students from both institutions through shared programs, teaching and support activities.

UC San Diego receives \$1.42 million of the funding, which will be administered through the Institute of Arts and Humanities (IAH), a cultural hub with a commitment to the humanities and arts, and a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.



*Dean Cristina Della Coletta. Photo by Farshid Bazmandegan*

“The institute is the perfect home for this collaborative initiative since it reflects the Mellon Foundation’s mission to support, in a broad cross- and interdisciplinary framework, the public’s understanding of the humanities and the arts. It also responds to the foundation’s goal to ensure that underrepresented communities participate in higher education, the arts and the humanities,” explained Della Coletta.

According to the Humanities Council of Washington D.C., the “humanities” include disciplines that explain and identify cultures and human experience. Typical subjects include history, anthropology, literature, art history, ethics, philosophy and jurisprudence. Many colleges and universities differ in how they group these disciplines. Regardless of categorical differences, UC San Diego and SDCCD share a common vision of the humanities as actively engaged and forward-looking. Their aim is to ensure that humanities students graduate with the skills needed for a successful career in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce.

“Across university campuses nationwide, humanities enrollments have declined recently because of the current trend toward STEM disciplines,” explained Della Coletta. “But I believe we are at a turning point. Our own scientists and engineers understand that society has a pressing need for flexible thinkers who are able to represent human problems effectively and communicate and advocate for ethically sound solutions. A humanities education is an excellent foundation for developing these talents.”

According to Della Coletta, humanism today, more than any other time in history, is about mobility and the crossing of boundaries and barriers at all levels—social, economic, cultural, disciplinary and institutional.

“In this socially responsible and holistic spirit of excellence, the UC San Diego Division of Arts and Humanities and SDCCD are ideal partners,” said Della Coletta.

UC San Diego offers comprehensive undergraduate, graduate and research study to more than 31,000 students. It is recognized by Washington Monthly for the seventh consecutive year as first in the nation for its contributions to the public good. Its Division of Arts and Humanities ranks among the top 33 nationally in the subject area. SDCCD educates a highly diverse student population of more than 100,000 students through three two-year colleges and San Diego Continuing Education.

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