

Diversity & Engagement news



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Spotlight:



Dr. Becky Petitt
*Vice Chancellor for Equity,
Diversity and Inclusion
University of California
San Diego (UCSD)*

Becky Petitt was appointed in March 2015 as UC San Diego's (UCSD's) Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. She is a member of the Chancellor's Cabinet, and will lead UCSD in creating collaborative partnerships throughout the campus and with external constituents. Additionally, she oversees the Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, which collaborates with all campus units to address diversity across UC San Diego's mission, including outreach, recruitment retention and climate.

Dr. Becky Petitt brings to UC San Diego 24 years of progressive leadership experience in diversity work across the university community. She is the former Associate Vice President and Chief of Staff for the Office of Diversity at Texas A&M, where she provided vision and leadership for the Texas A&M campus.

Dr. Petitt is a nationally recognized consultant, specializing in diversity in higher education, leadership and organizational development.

A native of Texas, she received a Bachelor of Science from Sam Houston State University and both a master's and doctorate in education from Texas A&M University.

What led you to choose diversity as a subject for your academic and career path?

My mother was an activist, and my first role model demonstrating what it means to commit one's life to eliminating inequality. My brother is deaf and in the early 1970s, advocating for his education was a difficult process for my family. My parents had two choices: enroll my brother in a "special" school, or advocate for him to attend a regular school with the aid of sign language interpreters. They chose the latter, the same school my other older siblings attended, but meeting his needs was a constant challenge for the school. My mother relentlessly renegotiated and rearranged systems so they would be large enough to serve my brother well and rightly. Being conscious of what inclusion looked like at such a young age helped train my eye on equity, justice, and the importance of challenging exclusion of any kind.

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Your job has been described, in part, as “providing a holistic and integrated vision...to ensure that UC San Diego is a welcoming, diverse and inclusive campus community.” What’s been your first area of focus since joining UCSD in March?

While I don’t agree with all of management author Peter Drucker’s philosophies, one of my favorite quotes of his is: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” One needs to understand the culture of an organization to properly develop effective strategies. Under proper conditions, culture and strategy can be mutually reinforcing. So, my top priority was to invest time in developing relationships, understanding the UCSD culture, and learning how students, faculty, staff, and the broader community experience the university. With this knowledge, I’m better equipped to set key priorities for the campus and to

provide leadership. All of us — students, faculty, staff and administrators — are responsible for ensuring that UCSD is a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive campus. So, while I am charged with creating and helping to implement a comprehensive plan for diversity and excellence, I expect every member of the UCSD community to join me in making our university a welcoming place where everyone can thrive and reach their fullest potential.

What’s the longer-term plan for diversity at UCSD? UCSD will have a co-created strategic action plan for diversity that will be integrated into the way we go about fulfilling the university’s mission. Equity, diversity, and inclusion will be woven into processes and results, and every leader on campus, including student leaders, will be held accountable for achieving our shared goals.

You’ve said that inclusion doesn’t necessarily follow diversity, and that we have to be intentional in creating a welcoming campus environment. Can you expand on this idea, and on how it is accomplished? Diversity — difference of any kind — disrupts the usual. As our society and our universities become more diverse and we encounter people who are less like ourselves, there’s bound to be conflict. Conflict isn’t always unwelcome or unproductive. It can teach us a great deal about ourselves and open our eyes to other worldviews and other ways of life, and help strengthen our critical thinking skills. It’s important for us to be as intentional about inclusion as we are about diversity. Stated another way, when we invite diverse individuals to attend and work at UC San Diego, it is our responsibility to ensure that we create and maintain working and learning conditions in which they can thrive. This entails ensuring that proper structures and resources are in place.

What kind of partnerships with internal and external constituents are you looking to create? Do you plan to collaborate with other UC campuses? I’m looking to create transformative partnerships; partnerships that will ensure campus-wide collaboration, shared responsibility, and accountability; partnerships that will collectively guide the campus efforts, evaluate progress, consult where needed, and allow for creating shared recommendations to the chancellor and senior administration.

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UC System Accepted Into 100Kin10 Network



The University of California system has just been accepted into the 100Kin10 Network, a national movement unveiled at the White House last spring. The aim is to tackle one of our country’s most pressing challenges: Giving all kids access to great STEM (or science, technology, engineering, and math) learning by enriching America’s classrooms with 100,000 excellent STEM teachers by 2021.

UC joins a distinguished group of 280 partners comprising top US academic institutions,

nonprofits, foundations, companies, and government agencies committed to advancing public education.

The New York Times described 100Kin10 as the “most important effort” for improving STEM education for the next generation of American students. 100Kin10 is unwavering in its focus to get excellent STEM teachers in our nation’s classrooms and help them to succeed there, stay, and impact more students.

[READ MORE](#)



UC Riverside Receives Grant to Support New Graduate Student Fellowships

UC Riverside has received a \$4.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support graduate student fellowships. UCR will use the funds to increase fellowships in Native American studies and STEM fields.

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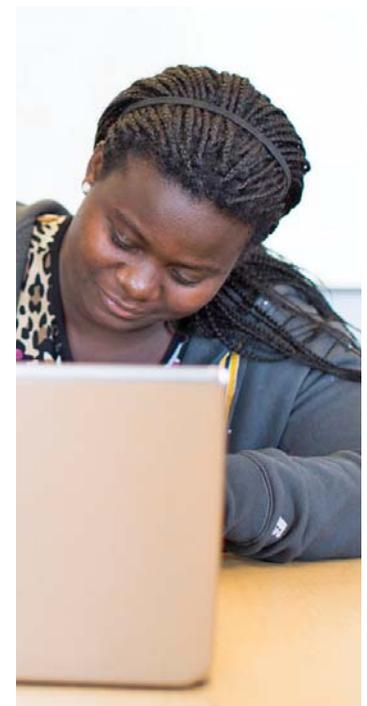
I am focused on internal partnerships with other vice chancellors, divisions, schools, the Academic Senate, students, faculty, senior leaders, and staff to implement policies, programs, and practices that create and sustain a culture of inclusion and work to eliminate intergroup disparities in faculty hiring, in enrollment, retention and graduation rates for students, and improve the climate and opportunities for staff. I am also working to strengthen our alumni and community engagement through community forums and joint initiatives. In addition, partnerships with other UC Campuses provide a great opportunity to share best practices and to help shape the broader UC diversity strategy.

Apart from UC, can you name some institutions that you look to as strong models of equity, diversity and inclusion? If so, what makes them exemplary? I'm a little biased. Texas A&M — both my previous employer as well as the institution where I received my master's and doctorate — is doing really great work in this regard. Being part of a team that created an exemplary University Diversity Plan that was recently featured in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* was a major achievement and a very rewarding experience. All of the right conditions were in place to create this success model — courageous and committed leaders, institutional readiness, and a comprehensive, sustainable strategy. That work continues to this day and I am grateful for the breadth of experience I received there and the phenomenal team I was privileged to work with. Pennsylvania State University is also an exemplar. Their longstanding and very productive diversity strategy has outlasted many leadership transitions. This kind of sustainability is the mark of discerning architects who saw the wisdom of establishing structures that are not dependent on individual leaders. I also admire the work of UC Berkeley and am grateful that we can now work in partnership.

Are diversity leaders, ideally, working to make themselves obsolete? Can you ever see a time when universities don't need departments devoted to equity, diversity and inclusion? The equity and inclusion project will never be done. I don't see this as pessimist, but rather an educated view of our society and how it organizes itself in hierarchies, embeds and reinforces asymmetrical distribution of power and resources, and creates both rewards and penalties based on one's level of compliance with the rules of engagement. One need only read today's news to observe hostility toward equity in higher education, the recent anti-affirmative action court cases, for example, and the anti-inclusion agendas of several candidates in the 2016 United States presidential election.

Progress is absolutely possible, and I intend to make substantial gains and necessary changes in important areas. However, I doubt our work will ever be "done." I will remain vigilant and unrelenting in my pursuit of equity and inclusion.

Any news or events that you'd like to share from UCSD? Exciting plans are afoot at UC San Diego! I'm just getting started. When I joined the university approximately nine months ago, I said then, and still believe I've joined a dream team. Having had firsthand experience with trial, error, and ultimately successful execution of a sustainable diversity strategy, I know when the conditions for advancement of an ambitious diversity agenda are in place. Our team of audacious leaders, as well as dedicated faculty, staff, student and community partners are all committed to working together to ensure that UCSD is the university of choice and the benchmark for equity and inclusion in higher education. ■



UCLA Education Professor Linda Sax receives \$2m NSF grant for diversity initiative

UCLA Education Professor Linda Sax has received a \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a follow-up study of the "Building Recruiting and Inclusion for Diversity" (BRAID) Project. The BRAID initiative is a partnership with universities across the nation to increase the numbers of women and underrepresented minorities majoring in computer science.

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UC-HBCU Initiative Announces Grants to Increase Diversity in UC PhD Programs

The UC Office of the President has announced the 2015-16 Request for Proposals (RFP) for the [UC-HBCU Initiative](#), a grant opportunity for UC faculty that aims to increase the number of HBCU graduates in UC PhD programs by investing in relationships between UC faculty and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Grants are competitively awarded to UC faculty members to host HBCU student summer research interns and facilitate faculty research collaborations and other educational activities that serve the goals of the initiative. Interested UC faculty can

see the RFP [online](#). The deadline to apply is March 15, 2016 at noon P.S.T.

Faculty Principal Investigators may request a portion (i.e., one-ninth or one-twelfth of UCSF PIs) summer salary to help support their efforts related to the grant. The salary funds are being provided by the UC chancellors as a commitment to valuing faculty diversity work at their campuses.

This year marks the initiative's sixth cycle. Since its inception in 2011, UCOP has awarded 33 faculty members across nine UC campuses in departments from English to Engineering to Evolutionary Biology,

and hosted over 230 summer interns from various HBCUs, including Howard, Morehouse, Spelman Claflin and Tougaloo.

In 2013-14, President Napolitano allocated \$2 million to be used over three years to provide fellowship support, in partnership with campuses, to enroll former UC-HBCU interns into UC PhD programs. In 2015, Provost Dorr allocated permanent resources to provide the cost-share fellowships. UC currently has 20 PhD fellows enrolled as a direct result of the UC-HBCU Initiative.



Achieve UC Event at Sacramento's Valley High School

On February 24, nearly 1,000 students packed the Valley High School auditorium for an Achieve UC event, a UC outreach event designed to help students prepare and apply for college. Representatives from UC Davis joined California's GEAR UP staff and school teachers and counselors to provide workshops, financial aid Q-and-A sessions, and counselor-assisted SAT registration and completion of federal student aid forms. [READ MORE ABOUT THE EVENT](#)



Diverse Strengths, Shared Vision

Drawing on our collective knowledge to help students succeed

College Access & Preparation Forum June 16-17, 2016
EMBASSY SUITES, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO

Each year, the University of California (UC) Office of Diversity and Engagement sponsors the College Access and Preparation (CAP) Forum, a gathering of UC professionals working to advance higher education for all students, in particular students from underrepresented minority groups who need support and services to become college-ready. The programs span two days and include sessions designed to inform and engage UC staff serving in the fields of university admissions, community college transfer, the K-12 education pipeline, student academic preparation, undergraduate retention and teacher preparation.

This year we will present sessions that address critical issues in educational equity, and increasing diversity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

UC Professors Receive National Science Foundation Awards Research Grant to Study Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in the Faculty Hiring Process

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a three-year, \$1.48 million research grant to a collaborative team of researchers from several UC campuses – Kimberlee Shauman (UCD), Catherine Albiston (UCB), Susan Carlson (UCOP), Victoria Plaut (UCB), and Marc Goulden, PhD (UCB) – to study equity, inclusion, and diversity in the faculty hiring process. The study will identify the steps in UC's hiring process that are most susceptible to bias and characteristics of the hiring process that amplify or mitigate disparities. The goal is to identify the most important targets for policies designed to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity among faculty. The study will use administrative records from UC Recruit, an online recruitment management system used by all 10

UC campuses. A significant strength of this administrative data is that it tracks the process of each applicant's file (and the progress of each faculty recruitment) across the series of sequential decisions that comprise the faculty hiring process.

The study has a Project Advisory Board, which includes representatives from UC stakeholders, including faculty and academic administration, as well as scholars from around the country with expertise in both the research and policy issues relevant to this study. The researchers, along with the active involvement and support of the advisory board and key university leaders, will use the study results to develop new policies and practices at UC to increase equity, inclusion, and diversity in faculty hiring.

NEWS

UC Irvine Postdoctoral Fellow Named to Forbes Magazine 30 Under 30 list

Forbes magazine recently featured Constance Iloh, a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Irvine, in its fifth annual "30 Under 30" list, that features a who's who of distinguished young adults.

Dr. Iloh is examining equity, access and the experiences of minority students and alternative approaches to postsecondary education, including privatization of colleges and universities. She also received a research grant from the Educational Credit Management Corp. Foundation to study online learning in vocational programs.

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UC Diversity and Engagement Launches New Website

We're happy to announce the launch of a comprehensive new website that encapsulates everything that's going on at UC to advance and sustain diversity and inclusion. Here you will find programs and services for students, faculty and staff; links to the diversity resources at each UC campus; policies and reports related to diversity at UC; and much more, including diversity news and events. Please visit the website often, and let us know how we can improve it to meet your needs.

[DIVERSITY WEBSITE](#)