

360



THE
LOGIC *of*
SDSU MISSION VALLEY

360

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SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

Leadership Starts Here

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The future is bright for the San Diego State University family as we enter the university's 121st year. Graduation rates are at an all-time high, the university is nationally recognized for scholarship and research, and its financial foundation is strong—thanks to alumni and friends who've embraced the university's vision and supported a growing culture of philanthropy.

Working together through the years, our faculty, staff, students and alumni have solved the challenges of the day and built a major public research university. This issue of *360* showcases new collaborations that ensure SDSU will continue to lead the way in San Diego.

You will read about the “collaborative collisions” being encouraged among engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs in our newly opened Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex. This 85,000-square-foot complex was designed to foster the synergies and new insights among disciplines that are key to solving today's challenges.

Other articles in this issue of *360* explore the new connections possible between the university and the community if San Diego State University has the opportunity to buy the SDCCU Stadium site in Mission Valley.

The university's goal is a world-class campus expansion that includes a research center and stadium venue set amid the San Diego River wetlands and park system. This would be a place where university and private researchers explore solutions to societal problems; where the university's community and clinical health programs could expand; and where the entire San Diego region would come together for Aztec football, professional soccer and other athletic and community events in a new multi-use stadium.



Photo: Lauren Radack

Also in this issue, you will meet Dr. Adela de la Torre. She will succeed me as San Diego State University president in late June. It will be her privilege and responsibility to guide our university community into this exciting new future.

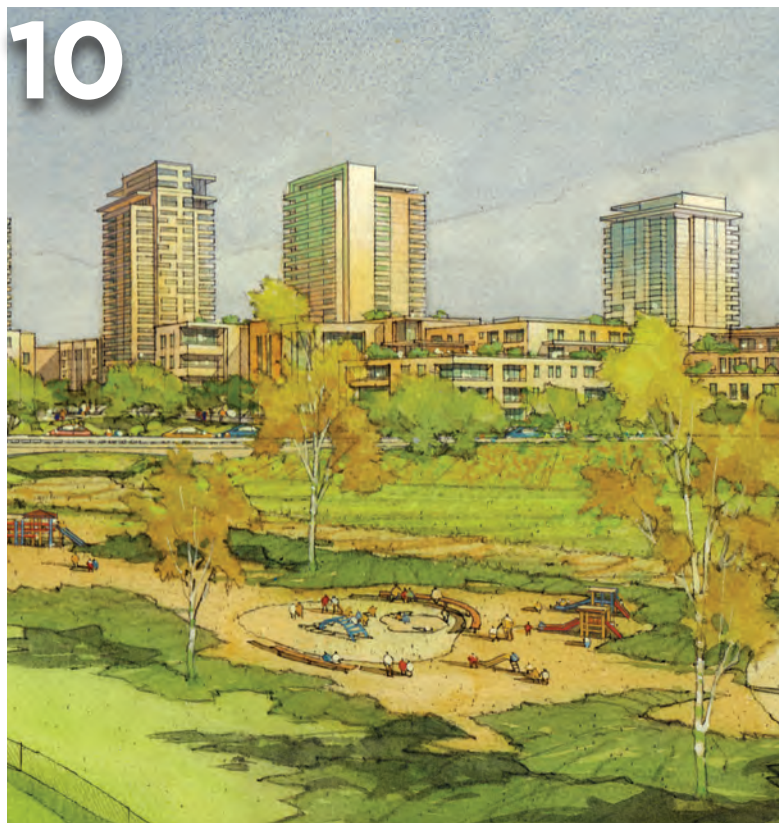
I hope you enjoy this issue of *360: The Magazine of San Diego State University*. It has been my honor to serve as San Diego State University president during this year of transition. Thank you for your support and for all of your efforts on behalf of the university.

I believe in SDSU's future. Working together, we will succeed.

Sally Roush

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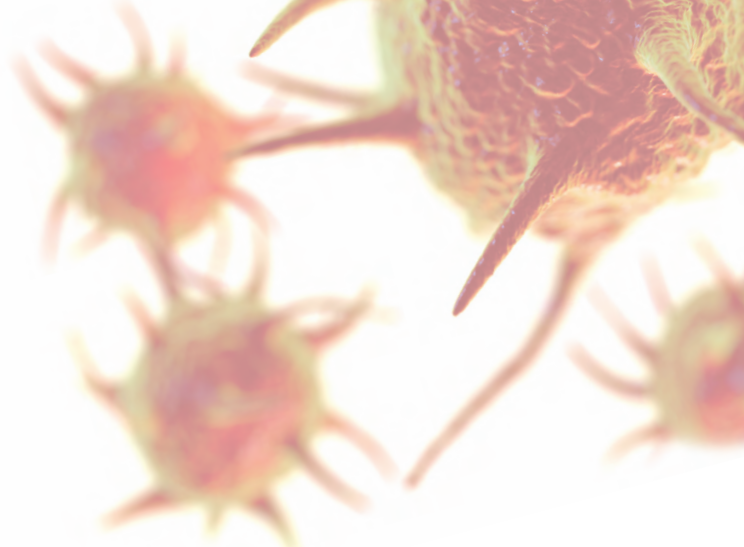
"Balancing *matoke* (bananas) and firewood on your head while walking is an art that I will always appreciate but never master," said Nancy Nguyen, a San Diego State University senior studying abroad in Africa.

Nguyen, pictured left with her host family, is among approximately 3,000 students taking part in SDSU's international programs this academic year. A sociology major, she is studying the economic, political and social development of East Africa, with a focus on Uganda and Rwanda.

Not all of the lessons Nguyen learns are light-hearted. During homestays with Ugandan families, she discovered the disastrous effects of climate change on farmers and the sacrifices that families make to educate their children in the wake of widespread school privatization.

"Despite the abundance of global 'experts' that discuss economic structure, cultural norms and areas of concern of Uganda," Nguyen said, "I believe families are the real experts of their country."

Photo: Alex Oldham



Viral explorers wanted

A few years ago, San Diego State University computer scientist Rob Edwards made headlines when he used a new computational technique to discover a previously unknown virus that lives in the guts of more than three-quarters of the world's population. Beginning this semester, SDSU students will have that same chance in a new course that teaches viral discovery techniques.

Undergraduate students enrolled in Biology 499 will learn how to use computer software known as "cross assembly" to sort through the DNA and RNA present in a sample, separate out the known microbes, and hunt for new viruses.

At the end of the semester, students will create a 3-5 minute video to explain how their findings contribute to understanding new viruses and antibiotic resistance. A committee of judges from SDSU will select the best presentation, and that student will win a semester's tuition.

A good match

Not yet five years old, the Aztec Mentor Program (AMP) has become one of the most fruitful student success initiatives at San Diego State University. The program matches students with professionals in the community who can provide mentorship and career advice.

AMP has grown from 100 matches in fall 2013 to more than 6,900 as of this spring semester. Nearly 85 percent of the mentors are SDSU alumni, like Brenda Lazarus ('91), a training manager at Disneyland, who helped Aztec student Joey Lucero win a spot in the highly competitive Disneyland College Program. Lucero will spend about six months at the theme park or one of the Disney resorts building career skills. To learn more, visit amp.sdsu.edu



Re-wilding the river

In the eastern mountains of San Diego County, Boulder Creek, a tributary of the San Diego River, is giving up its secrets to researchers from San Diego State University and the San Diego River Park Foundation (SDRPF).

From headwaters to outflow, the San Diego River's health has been compromised by agricultural runoff and urban pollution for so long that nobody has proper baseline numbers to determine what a healthy ecosystem here should look like. Restoring the river's health along the city's urban corridors—the Lower San Diego River—is a priority for both SDSU and SDRPF.

"Once we finally have a baseline, we'll know when algae get too numerous or oxygen levels fluctuate out of balance, conditions that can affect the health of both the reservoirs and the river downstream," said lead SDSU watershed researcher Trent Biggs. "We'll be able to plan strategies for improving the health of these tributaries and the river."

New student space

San Diego State University has opened a Black Resource Center to serve as a space for students, faculty and staff to congregate, collaborate and cultivate a unified sense of community.

In 2016, members of SDSU's Afrikan Student Excellence Council and other students proposed the creation of a Black Resource Center, which aligns with SDSU's strategic mission to ensure that students are academically and socially supported in ways that encourage retention and graduation.

"I see this space as a safe haven for black thought and a canvas for black creativity," said Christian Onwuka, an SDSU business major, who was involved in the building's planning and design.

Cue the chorus

A unique new partnership between San Diego State University and the San Diego Opera will enhance the region's creative arts résumé. Beginning in the fall, the two institutions will share a director of opera.

This new faculty member will direct SDSU Opera's fall production and teach acting and stage movement. In the spring, they will serve as assistant director for San Diego Opera's mainstage productions.

Several students majoring in opera at SDSU are currently members of Opera Exposed, a concert series for the community run by the San Diego Opera. Through the program, outstanding college and young professional singers receive professional training and experience.

Meet SDSU's Ninth President, Adela de la Torre

Adela de la Torre shared her guiding principles and priorities with the San Diego State University community during her first visit to campus in February.

During a whirlwind schedule that included a public welcome reception and small group meetings with students, faculty, alumni, donors and administrative staff, the president-designate

pledged support for key university initiatives and spoke of her natural affinity for SDSU.

"This is a campus known for its interdisciplinary research

work, and that has been my lifetime passion as illustrated [by my] research and publications," she said.

De la Torre will be the ninth permanent president of SDSU and the first woman to serve in that role when she officially joins the university in late June. Sally Roush currently serves as president, succeeding Elliot Hirshman, who resigned to take the helm at Stevenson University in Maryland.

"It's my pleasure to welcome Dr. Adela de la Torre to our San Diego State University community," Roush said. "Her dedication to student success, her administrative experience in California's university systems, and her scholarship and research expertise will be great assets as she builds on our 120-year record of commitment to academic excellence for the public good."

De la Torre, 63, joins SDSU from the University of California, Davis, where she has served in several leadership roles, culminating in vice chancellor, student affairs and campus diversity.

She said she looks forward to meeting with SDSU alumni, whose strength in numbers and influence power

We will build a world-class university campus with a stadium venue and a research center that spurs new discoveries and economic development.



Photo: Lauren Radack

[sdsu.edu/delaTorre](https://www.sdsu.edu/delaTorre)

the San Diego region. "These dedicated individuals are committed to the institution," she said.

The president-designate also voiced support for SDSU's hopes of expanding the campus to Mission Valley, calling it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"I'm here today to pledge my support and commitment to this important opportunity," de la Torre told an enthusiastic audience. "We will build a world-class university campus with a stadium venue and a research center that spurs new discoveries and economic development." SDSU's regional presence, she said, "requires us to think about how we can build pathways for understanding and cooperation, not only within [San Diego], but also bi-nationally and globally."

Later in the address, she added, "I also want to highlight that I support our faculty, staff and students in accessing the American dream, regardless of their immigration status ... our diverse enrollment will be our strength."

De la Torre identified her grandmother, mother and several women colleagues and mentors as major influences on her leadership style.

"[Some] very strong women along my pathway have created the kind of leadership style that I have today, which is based on developing strong relationships; recognizing that relationships are important to build trust; recognizing that with trust

you can improve on communication."

She also referenced SDSU's ethos statement, Leadership Starts Here, as a point of solidarity with the university community.

"What I want to say from the heart is leadership starts with all of you," she told faculty, staff and students at the welcome reception. "I want to ask you to be generous with your leadership, and I look forward to working with you in this new chapter in (our) history."

Let Kids Make the Rules

Stuart Aitken's research suggests youngsters are wiser than we give them credit for.

By Michael Price

How to raise a safe, healthy and happy child is a universal concern. Yet despite that globally held goal, customs, advice and legal policies vary widely from nation to nation, and even from generation to generation. Some children have the run of their neighborhoods with little supervision. Others regularly begin working before the age of 12. Stuart Aitken, a professor of geography at San Diego State University, says both of those approaches are fine, depending on circumstances.

"In Bolivia, children are permitted to work at 10," explained Aitken, who studies child welfare and rights, "and that's not necessarily a bad thing. It was only 20 or 30 years ago that American kids regularly delivered newspapers at that age."

Aitken isn't advocating that children around the world should start polishing their resumes, but he points out that different cultures can have very distinct yet perfectly valid methods for raising their children. With funding from the National Science Foundation and the United Nations, it's a topic he's been researching since 1986, when he began working at SDSU. His work involves formally interviewing young people, as well as the adults in their communities, and mapping out where they spend time. In recognition of his body of work, SDSU named Aitken the Albert W. Johnson Research Lecturer for 2018, the university's highest research honor. (The lecture's namesake, a renowned SDSU biologist, died last year.)

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, outlining children's rights such as the right to life, survival and development; the right to participate in decisions that affect them; and rights to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care, leisure and recreation. Every nation in the world has ratified the treaty except for the United States.

"Unfortunately, while it was well-intentioned, 'universal child rights' as a concept hasn't really worked," Aitken said.

What's best for the child differs from place to place, he said, and these rights have to be interpreted into a local context. For example, in the United States,





Canada, and throughout much of Europe, it's considered akin to abuse for a child to begin working at a young age. But when Aitken traveled to Tijuana, Mexico, to observe children in the workforce, abuse wasn't what he found.

"The children were singing and playing while working," he said. "It wasn't exploitative."

Not all workplace environments are suitable for children, Aitken noted, but the idea that children simply can't enjoy life and have fun while working is demonstrably untrue, based on his observations of kids helping their parents sell merchandise or wait tables. In fact, more workplaces might benefit from children being present, he added. Offices too often are sterile, fun-phobic environments, and children—properly supervised and given only carefully chosen responsibilities—could enliven and energize them.

Exposing children to work early could also help teach them business skills that will help them succeed later in life, as well as interpersonal skills and a sense of confidence and self-worth, he said.

WANTING TO BE HEARD

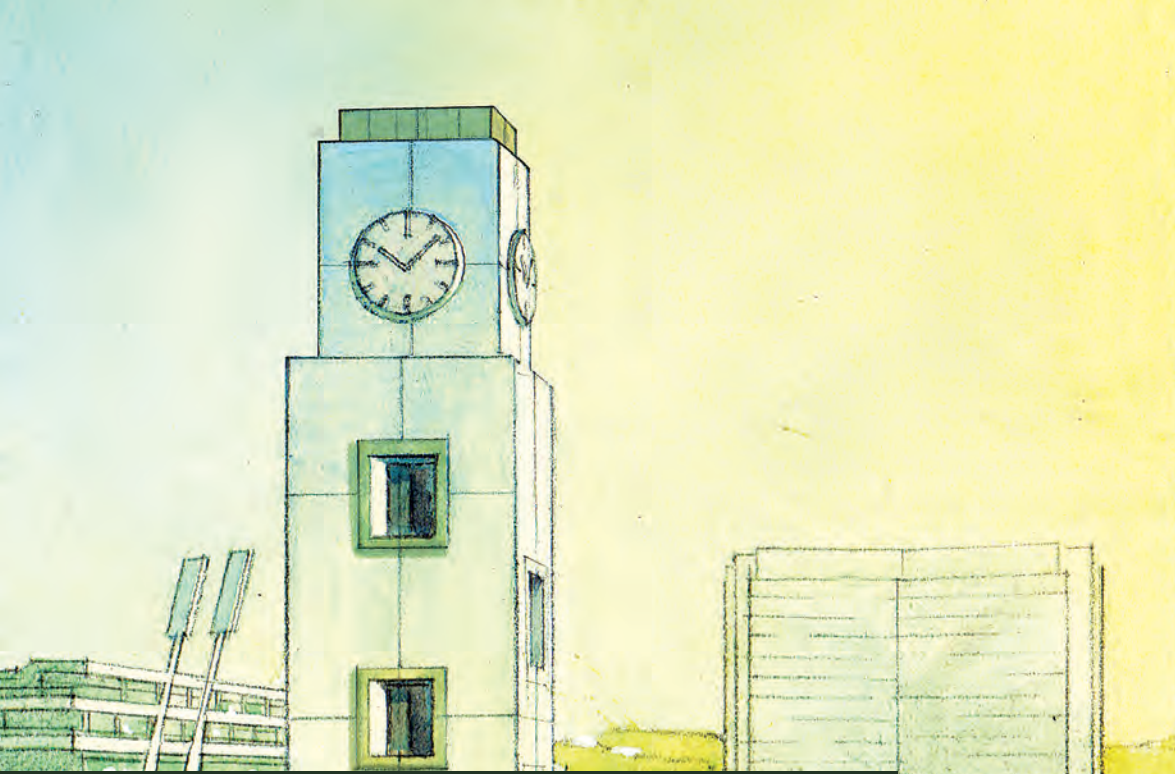
Aitken has also studied student activism among children and teenagers. A classic example is the so-called "Penguin Revolution" in Chile. In April of 2006, the Chilean government announced an increase in fees to take the country's standardized university admissions test—a bit like the SATs in the United States—and rumors swelled that students' transport passes would be curtailed, limiting them to only two bus fares per day.

Children in their school uniforms (that looked a bit like penguins, hence the nickname) took to the streets to protest these measures and demand educational reform in the country. The demonstrations peaked in May when nearly 800,000 young people participated in strikes or marches throughout the country. By June, President Michelle Bachelet had announced measures that would waive the admissions test fee for most students, extend transportation pass rights for most students, invest in school infrastructure improvements and, perhaps most importantly, create a presidential advisory committee that included six seats reserved for high school students.

At the time, Aitken interviewed several of these student activists to find out what motivated them and what they hoped to achieve with their activism. Mostly, he said, they were protesting for their voices to be heard and considered.

Another central conceit of Aitken's work is that children should be empowered to make decisions that affect their world, and that adults should listen to their wants and desires. For example, during the 1970s in Los Angeles, many citizens were growing concerned about their city turning into a concrete jungle devoid of nature. They fretted over what that lack of nature might do to their kids. But if they'd asked young Angelinos at the time, the youngsters would have told a different story, Aitken said: That "paved paradise" sparked the creation of skateboarding and a whole new youth culture.

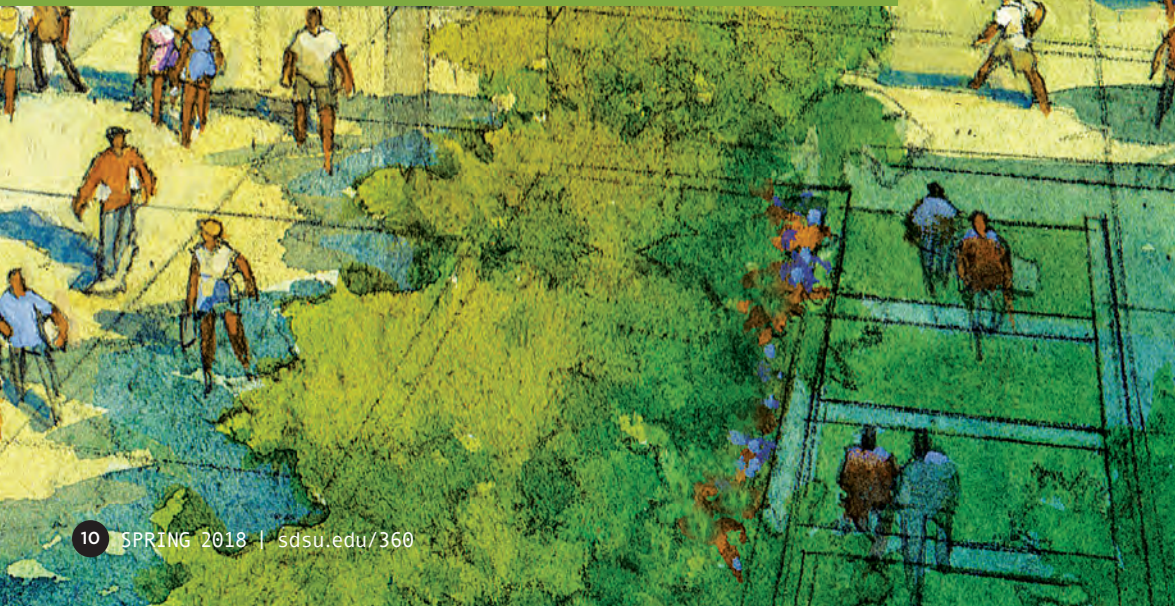
"Adults tend to get overprotective and to over-sanitize things," Aitken said. "Let's see what happens when you give young people control, let them make decisions about their own environments. We need to be kept on our toes and shaken out of our complacency."



THE LOGIC *of* SDSU MISSION VALLEY

By Michael Price

SDSU's plans for a Mission Valley campus focus on collaboration, community and economic growth.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SDSU'S PLAN FOR MISSION VALLEY:

SDSU generates \$5.67 billion in annual economic activity in San Diego. A second campus in Mission Valley would increase that figure exponentially.

SDSU would purchase and develop the land without relying on taxpayer dollars or student tuition/fees. The development would be financed through public-private partnerships and/or bonds to be repaid with revenue generated from the site.

SDSU would build a multi-use stadium on the site to accommodate collegiate athletics, professional soccer and a wide variety of other events.

The SDSU plan would help renew the region's splendor by restoring the river's natural flow and creating 90 acres of open space with a river park and hiking and biking trails.

SDSU Mission Valley would include 1.6 million square feet of academic and research/innovation space to be shared between private companies and SDSU researchers.



San Diego's Mission Valley has long been a land of plenty and promise. Now, the future of the valley's bounty finds itself at a crossroads: One of the largest plots of undeveloped urban real estate in Southern California—currently occupied by SDCCU Stadium—is up for debate. If given the opportunity to purchase the land, San Diego State University aspires to build a world-class university campus, research center and stadium venue on the site.



The plans are extensive, but SDSU has never lacked ambition. During its 121-year history—including 87 years on Montezuma Mesa—SDSU evolved from a training school for teachers into a nationally ranked university offering joint doctoral degrees, rigorous academic programming and transformative opportunities to study abroad and develop entrepreneurial skills.

Throughout that time, the university also forged a personal and financial synergy with San Diego—personal because more than 200,000 SDSU alumni live in San Diego County, and financial because SDSU generates \$5.67 billion in annual economic activity for the region, according to an independent study released last year.



“We have contributed a lot to San Diego over the years, but we've only skimmed the surface of what's possible,” said Stephen Welter, SDSU's vice president for research and dean of Graduate Affairs.

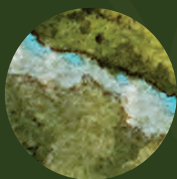
Space race

In order to make what's possible a reality, the university needs more space. SDSU's 288-acre campus is landlocked with a freeway to the north and suburban neighborhoods built up to the campus borders on the south, east and west. The shortage of classroom, lab, office and meeting space is evident, given SDSU's enrollment of 30,000 undergraduate students and 4,000 graduate students.



SDSU envisions the Mission Valley site as a vibrant, mixed-use, medium-density development that is transit-oriented, and expands the university's educational, research, entrepreneurial, and technology transfer programs.

The development would feature a river park and additional open-space areas; a multi-use sports stadium for football, professional soccer and entertainment events; student, faculty and staff housing as well as affordable and market-rate housing for the community; a research and innovation hub linking private industry partners with academic goals; and retail stores to serve the campus and neighborhood.



A conference center hotel is also part of the plan to accommodate campus visitors and train students in SDSU's L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

SDSU's satellite campus on the Mission Valley site would include 1.6 million square feet of academic and innovative space located adjacent to the stadium to create an incubator-like feel and provide modern facilities for researchers. Faculty/staff office space, interdisciplinary research labs and community clinics staffed by SDSU graduate students and researchers are also envisioned.



Detailed plans for the Mission Valley site are intentionally flexible as the university actively seeks community input to ensure its plan is consistent with the objectives of the Mission Valley Community Plan and considerate of the city's goals.

“ We have contributed a lot to San Diego over the years, but we've only skimmed the surface of what's possible. ”

Voters in the City of San Diego will have the opportunity to decide in November whether to direct the city to sell the land to SDSU or to a private developer.

A regional asset

Supporters of SDSU Mission Valley believe the university will be the most conscientious proprietor of the site and a good steward of the land.

“There is no better use for the property,” said Bill Earley ('86), San Diego community leader. “It fits into the expansion needs of higher education in San Diego and at SDSU specifically.”

Preliminary plans drafted by the architecture firm Carrier Johnson & Culture include 1.6 million square feet of dedicated campus space alongside nearly 90 acres of open space—including a river park—a new 35,000-seat multi-use stadium and 15 blocks of housing and retail space developed through public and private partnerships.

All told, the estimated cost of the project is about \$3.8 billion. It will not rely on taxpayer dollars, student tuition or fees, and will cover its own costs through public-private partnerships or bonds paid back by revenue generated through the development.

“There are tremendous benefits to keeping the property within the public


domain, where it can support the growth of San Diego State University and the region,” said Nikki Clay ('67, '72), strategic counsel for The Clay Company and a board member of The Campanile Foundation, SDSU's philanthropic auxiliary.

One of the most visible and pressing needs included in SDSU's expansion plans is the stadium construction. The 50-year-old SDCCU Stadium has become too old and dilapidated to reliably host football games and other large events in the long term. SDSU's plans for the site include a stadium to accommodate collegiate athletics, professional soccer and a wide variety of other events. (For a broader discussion of the university's plan to build a “right-sized stadium” in Mission Valley, see the story on page 16.)

Magnet for top talent

Academically, a campus in Mission Valley makes perfect sense, said Stanley Maloy, SDSU's associate vice president for research and innovation. The completion of the Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences (EIS) Complex was a significant step forward for the university's research ambitions, doubling the classroom space available to engineering students and adding several modern lab facilities with state-of-the-art equipment, including the university's first MRI brain imaging machine.

The EIS Complex will help SDSU attract high-quality faculty and students right now, Maloy said, but the next generation of top talent will



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”

expect more. That's why the Mission Valley site is crucial. In addition to modern research space, dedicated and affordable housing on or close to campus for graduate students and new faculty can be a valuable recruitment tool.

“Expanding into Mission Valley will be critical to who we are and how we want to grow,” Maloy said. “It will allow us to become the best version of ourselves, to expand on what we do well.”

Partnering up

And what SDSU does better than anyone else in the region is build partnerships with the community. With more than 60 percent of SDSU graduates living and working in San Diego County, there's an enormous network of skilled, successful alumni who know the value of partnering with the university. SDSU envisions a Mission Valley campus that promotes collaboration with local, national and international business partners, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

SDSU Mission Valley would be a meeting place for academic and business partners to discuss how research from SDSU labs would benefit their business, or how products dreamed up by SDSU entrepreneurs can make their way into consumers' homes and workplaces. University officials have identified growing fields

such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, biomedical research, health diagnostics, environmental monitoring, engineering and communications technology as potentially fruitful areas for public-private partnerships.

A dedicated conference center on site would allow the university to host annual meetings and conferences for scientific and business associations, not only enhancing SDSU's academic reputation, but also giving its students and faculty “first dibs” on cutting-edge knowledge.

The central location of a Mission Valley campus would ease access to SDSU's many community services, including various clinical programs like psychology, autism services and speech, language and hearing sciences, Welter noted.

“We have the chance to build a very different kind of campus that doesn't exist yet in the San Diego region—a campus without borders,” he said. “For years, academia has been locked into an ‘ivory tower’ mindset where you have to storm the ivory tower to benefit from what's inside. What we're trying to build is something like a public square to benefit the SDSU students, faculty, staff and the community.”

A river runs through it

Finally, the Mission Valley campus would help restore much of the region's natural splendor. When

builders broke ground on Jack Murphy Stadium in 1965, they severely altered the flow and hydrology of the San Diego River and its tributaries that ran through the site. Construction crews cut tons of dirt from the cliffs and built the stadium up on “the world's largest pitching mound” to position it above the floodplain.

Then they tried to reroute the river's flow around the massive asphalt parking lot, explained the SDSU Mission Valley plan's principal architect, Gordon Carrier.

The river never really cooperated, he said, as evidenced by the fact that the site frequently floods during stormy weather. Carrier envisions restoring the river's natural winds and bends within the Mission Valley river park and allowing the park itself to act as a natural floodplain. Allowing the river to dictate development means finger parks will bring nature and green space into the campus.

“If open space is done right, it can inspire thoughtful development, which sets the tone for the whole site,” Carrier said. “There are few, if any, opportunities to influence a region like this plan can influence San Diego. Mission Valley is really the epicenter of the entire community, and it's immensely important to get it right.”

For more information and answers to frequently asked questions, visit: sdsu.edu/missionvalley

Intellectual Infrastructure

In the last two decades, San Diego State University has completed \$900 million of construction on and around Montezuma Mesa. This includes academic buildings, student housing, event centers, athletics facilities and research space.

Year = year completed.



➤ **Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union**
2014
256,000 sq ft
\$102.4M



➤ **Library Dome**
1996
207,000 sq ft
\$25M



➤ **Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center**
2009
32,000 sq ft
\$11M

➤ **Jeff Jacobs JAM Center**
2015
25,000 sq ft
\$14.5M



➤ **MTDB Trolley Station**
2005
\$145.5M

➤ **South Campus Plaza**
2017
774,100 sq ft
\$142M

➤ **Children's Center**
2003
18,000 sq ft
\$3.26M

➤ **Zura Hall renovation**
2015
134,000 sq ft
\$53M

➤ **Calpulli Center (health services)**
2006
83,000 sq ft
\$26M

➤ **Tennis Center & Softball Stadium**
2005
4,000 sq ft
\$6.5M

➤ **Chemical Sciences Building**
2001
158,000 sq ft
\$36M

SDSU ENVISIONS THE MISSION VALLEY SITE AS A VIBRANT, MIXED-USE, MEDIUM-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT THAT IS TRANSIT-ORIENTED AND EXPANDS THE UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATIONAL, RESEARCH, ENTREPRENEURIAL AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAMS.

➤ **Donald P. Shiley
BioScience Center**
2006 (buildout 2012)
39,000 sq ft
\$14.3M



➤ **Storm/Nasatir
renovation
Storm Hall West/
Hostler Hall**
2015
37,000 sq ft
\$71M



➤ **Viejas Arena**
1997
244,000 sq ft
\$38.8M



➤ **Aztec Aquaplex**
2007
135,500 sq ft
\$12.7M

➤ **Cuicacalli Hall & Suites**
2001
248,000 sq ft
\$42M

➤ **Engineering and
Interdisciplinary
Sciences Complex**
2018
120,000 sq ft
\$90M

➤ **Arts and Letters Building**
2006
118,000 sq ft.
\$24M

➤ **Geology, Math, Comp.
Sciences Building**
2004
126,000 sq ft
\$23.34M

➤ **University Towers
renovation**
2013
100,000 sq ft
\$10M

➤ **Extended Studies
Center**
2004
62,000 sq ft
\$12.9M

A Stadium for San Diego

The proposed 35,000-seat venue is designed to host football, soccer and a variety of other events.

By Coleen L. Geraghty

There's a gratifying sense of coming full circle in San Diego State University's plans to build a multi-use sports stadium in Mission Valley.

The stadium is just one piece of SDSU's comprehensive vision for a satellite campus in Mission Valley, but the significance of playing in a stadium of one's own is not lost on Aztec loyalists.

"SDSU fans have long dreamed of the day we would return our football stadium to campus," said John David Wicker, the university's athletic director.

They've been dreaming for 50 years. In the late 1960s, SDSU moved into NCAA Division I and was forced to abandon Aztec Bowl as a playing field, though the campus icon was preserved and subsequently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the Aztecs' new home in Qualcomm Stadium (now SDCCU Stadium) accommodated larger numbers of Aztec fans, it "never really felt like home," said Leon Parma ('51), Aztec Hall of Fame quarterback for the 1950 squad.

All events welcome

It would be a homecoming of sorts, then, if San Diego voters approve the November ballot initiative to sell SDSU the stadium site and adjoining acreage in Mission Valley. Construction of a new stadium will be part of the initial phase of development on the site.

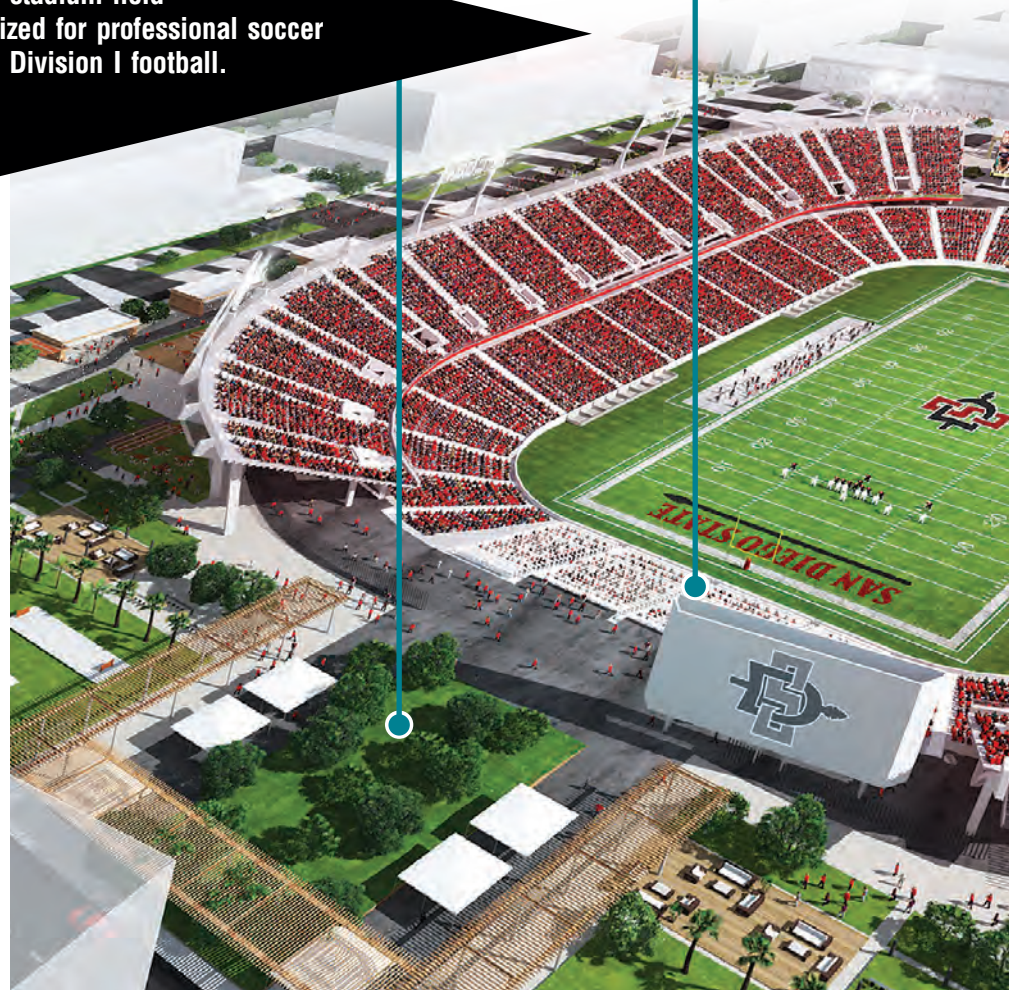
University officials estimate the cost at \$250 million for a 35,000-seat stadium at the north-west corner of the site to be financed with donor support, naming rights and sponsorships, long-term bonds, revenue from athletic events and rent from food, beverage and merchandise concessions.

"We would prefer a corporate sponsor for the stadium, as we have for Viejas Arena on campus, because this allows us to renew the sponsorship every few years and generate new income," said Wicker.

Garden Areas

Student Seating Section

The stadium field is sized for professional soccer and Division I football.



The stadium would be a community resource, available to host collegiate football, professional and collegiate soccer, NCAA championship games, concerts and other events. Plans include the option to expand to 55,000 seats to accommodate professional football, should an NFL team return to San Diego.

“You name it, we’ll host it,” said Wicker. “We have the opportunity to build a right-sized, high-quality, multi-use stadium, one that San Diegans can utilize every day of the year.”

A chance to excel

Returning Aztec football to campus—exciting though it may be—is not the university’s primary reason for wanting the

Mission Valley acreage. The expansion of SDSU’s campus to a second site in Mission Valley also expands higher education opportunities in San Diego, noted Brian Sipe (’70), former NFL MVP and SDSU quarterback, Aztec quarterbacks coach and Aztec Hall of Famer.

SDSU Mission Valley would accommodate new high-tech labs, innovation space and research facilities. The new campus would build SDSU’s capacity for public/private collaboration in fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, biomedical research, health diagnostics, environmental monitoring, engineering and communications technology.

A well-executed plan, modeled on successful campus expansions across the United States, would benefit SDSU and generate tax revenue for San Diego, said Wicker.

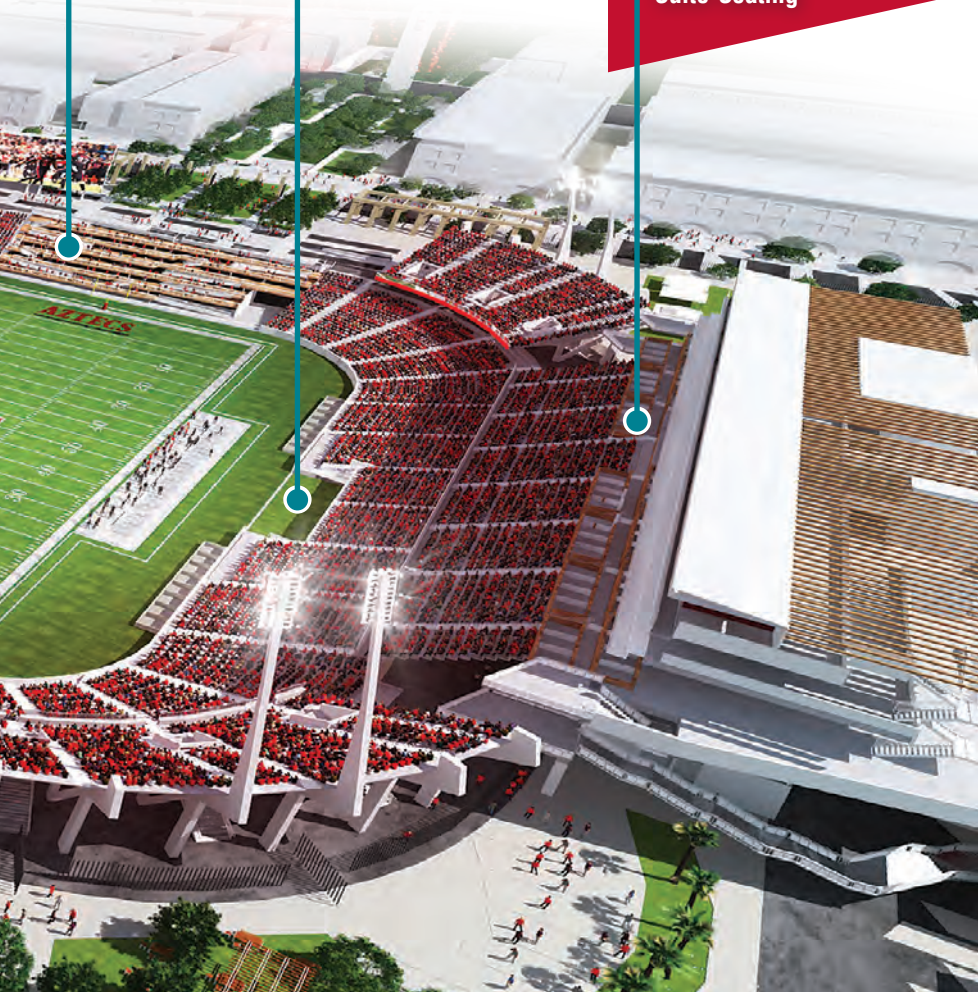
Georgia Tech’s Technology Square, for example, is a redeveloped district in midtown Atlanta with academic buildings, major corporate offices, collaborative spaces for public/private partnerships, incubators and commercial space.

“It’s a prime example of what we would like to do in Mission Valley,” said Wicker.

Standing Room
Premium Area

Field Level Club

Club, Loge,
Suite Seating



Uniquely San Diegan

JMI Sports and Kansas City-based Populous, the architectural lead for Petco Park, developed the stadium’s design plans. The blueprints call for premium seating and moveable loge boxes, a separate student section, a canopy roof for potential soccer competitions and “garden rooms” with a variety of food and drink options.

Open space areas will take advantage of San Diego’s perpetually blue skies and mild temperatures, while other areas will strive for a more intimate atmosphere. There will be ample tailgating opportunities adjacent to the planned river park and in the green areas surrounding the stadium.

“Today, people come to sporting events for the experience—to eat, mingle and enjoy the stadium,” said Sipe. “The SDSU plan will have it all.”

SDSU will survey alumni, students, donors and other constituent groups to develop an understanding of their ideal game-day experience and assess the strength of various revenue streams.

INNOVATORS WANTED

The new Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex gives students and faculty the skills to bring their ideas to market.

By Michael Price

For people with memory disorders, it can be challenging to continually monitor vital signs like body temperature, blood pressure and heart rate. San Diego State University Fowler College of Business student Lucien Aymerick Eloundou had an idea: What if wearable sensors, or sensors placed around the house, could monitor these vital signs independently?

Unknown to Eloundou, SDSU electrical engineering professor Yusuf Ozturk was experimenting with ways to develop mobile devices to ambiently record vital signs in people with Alzheimer's disease.

Traditionally, Eloundou's and Ozturk's separate academic silos would have kept them from meeting and realizing their shared interests. But thanks in large part to the recently completed Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences (EIS) Complex, they're now working together to turn their shared idea into reality. It's evidence that SDSU, which has been named by *Forbes* magazine as one of the country's top entrepreneurial universities, is equipping students and faculty researchers with the skills to transform brilliant, useful ideas into products that can help people.

"We introduced Lucien to Yusuf and now they've been accepted into the second phase of the National Science Foundation's small business program competition, I-Corps, which makes them eligible for \$50,000 in funding," explained Cathy Pucher, executive director of the Zahn Innovation Platform (ZIP) Launchpad start-up incubator.



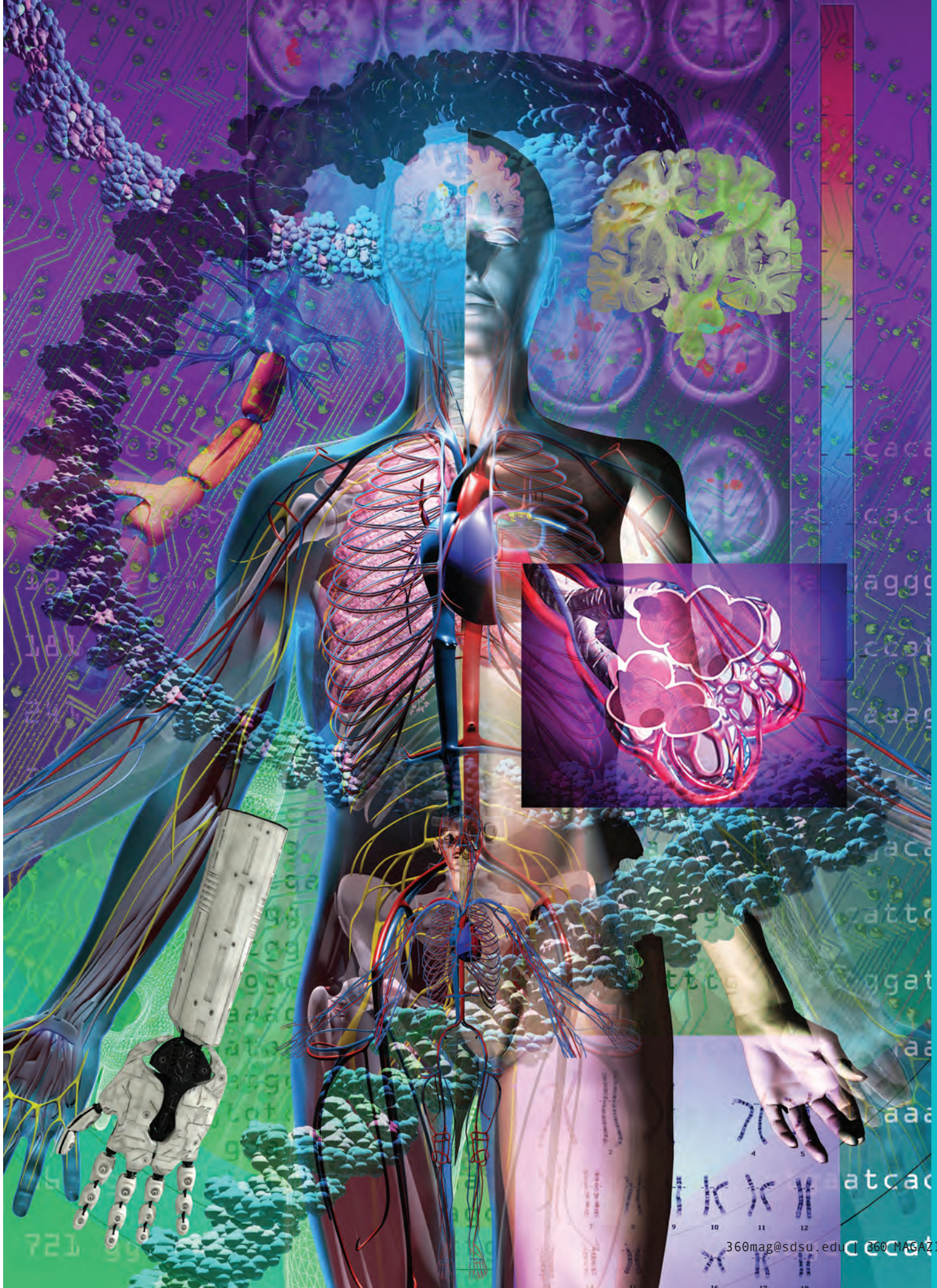
Inside the EIS Complex, graduate students Dhiraj Patil (left) and Pooja Maheshwar Guggari work in mechanical engineering professor Kee Moon's lab on brain-computer interface technology.


Now that the ZIP Launchpad, the Lavin Entrepreneurship Center and H.G. Fenton Company Idea Lab are all under the same roof in the EIS Complex, Pucher expects fortuitous pairings like this one to happen even more frequently.

The building, which opened in January, was explicitly designed to foster these "collaborative collisions" by situating entrepreneurship centers

and engineering labs in close proximity, banking on the hunch that smart people with smart ideas

will naturally bump into one another and find ways to work together. Pucher and others working in the





“ There will, of course, be incidental ‘collisions,’ but we also want to be intentional about it.”

“When I walked into this space for the first time, it was like walking into a Google office.”

William E. Leonhard Entrepreneurship Center want to do everything they can to help those fortuitous moments happen.

They are planning regular meet-and-greet receptions where student entrepreneurs can mingle with each other, faculty researchers and local industry representatives. Lunch-and-learn sessions will teach students the nuts and bolts of entrepreneurship, like how to file patents or register trademarks. And once the EIS Complex’s coffee shop opens later this year, Pucher suspects the shared love of caffeine will jolt new ideas and fuel innovative partnerships.

“There will of course be incidental ‘collisions,’ but we also want to be intentional about it,” she said. “Having a central location just makes it so much easier for that to happen.”

It doesn’t hurt that the digs themselves just feel conducive to creative thinking. Alex Passenheim, a senior in the Fowler College of Business who has been working with the ZIP program since he was a freshman, always appreciated learning entrepreneurial skills in the program—but said that its former home felt cramped and antiquated.

The first time he saw the new center in the EIS Complex, with its modern design concept and state-of-the-art lab space and technology, he knew the program had taken a big step forward.

“When I walked into this space for the first time, it was like walking into a Google office,” said Passenheim, who is currently working to launch SK8DRY, a company that offers waterproofing products for skateboards. “I’m definitely meeting more potential collaborators here.”

Kyle Kitzmiller, a graduate student studying mechanical engineering at SDSU and former manager of the Idea Lab, said he is seeing more random collisions bear fruit as budding collaborations.

“I’m seeing all of these chance meetings when I’m giving tours of the building or when people are hanging out in the lab,” he said. “I think the chain reactions are going to start happening.”

At a lunchtime meeting of the most recent crop of ZIP Launchpad entrepreneurs, business students made up about three-quarters of the assembled students munching on pizza and salad. Pucher would like to see a more balanced representation from science and engineering students.

The sheer proximity of the engineering building and the EIS Complex—the two structures share a courtyard and are connected by a bridge—will help that effort, said Morteza “Monte” Mehrabadi, the late dean of the College of Engineering. Mehrabadi passed away in March, but he was able to see the EIS Complex’s budding promise for entrepreneurial engineers.

“A lot of engineering students already do go to Zahn with ideas, but with the opportunities presented by the new

EIS Complex, we hope there will be even more,” he said.

A number of existing resources that currently link the College of Engineering with the entrepreneurship center should also propel those efforts forward. Several members of the Aztec Mentor Program Engineering Advisory Board also serve as advisers to ZIP Launchpad teams, and those existing relationships can be leveraged to recruit new industry mentors and encourage students to explore the entrepreneurship opportunities within the EIS Complex.



The EIS Complex houses student clubs like SDSU Rocket Project, pictured here with club assistant treasurer Steven Deng (left) and president Karl Parks.

Fowler Dean Lance Nail on Ethics: “YOU HAVE ONLY ONE INTEGRITY CHIP”

By Coleen L. Geraghty

Amid Equifax’s intentional delay in reporting data breaches, the U.S. Justice Department’s probe into Uber’s business practices, and widespread allegations of sexual harassment in many industries, universities are taking a second look at how they teach ethics. The academy’s soul-searching raises questions about the best way to prepare students to face tough ethical questions in the workforce.

360 Magazine asked Lance Nail, dean of the Fowler College of Business, to talk about ethics curriculum in higher education.

What is the state of teaching business ethics in higher education today?

I’ve noticed in my 20-something years of working in higher education that although we talk about the importance of ethics, it often becomes lip service. The real world has a more contextual application of ethics. We do our students a disservice if we tell them, “we know you’re going to act ethically and do the right thing, and it’s going to be easy.”

We have to be honest with our students and explain that sometimes you have to be prepared for short-term negative consequences. It was not easy for Cynthia Cooper, the former vice president of internal audit at WorldCom, to become a whistle-blower after she

discovered massive fraud within the company, but she persisted and was vindicated for it. We should tell our students to be prepared for the difficulties, but know that you have only one integrity chip in your pot. Once you play that chip, it’s gone.

Many professors in the Fowler College include ethics in their curriculum. As dean, how will you reinforce this?

You are correct in saying that the faculty are already doing good work in this area. What we would like to do as a college is take the classroom curriculum and contextualize it to real-life situations. At my prior institution, Texas Tech University, we scheduled an Ethics Week with lectures and seminars. We brought in guest speakers. This signals to the students that ethics is important to us and to SDSU.

Many women have come forward to report sexual harassment in the media and entertainment industries. Is sexual harassment also prevalent in the corporate world and if so, how should that topic be addressed in the classroom?

Certainly the #MeToo movement shines a light on the darkness of sexual harassment in all sectors

of society. One need only observe the recent example at Uber to know that the corporate world is not immune. I do believe that many corporations have been leading the way to formalize policies that address and try to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The Uber example is a perfect case study to discuss with our students.

Does the victim of sexual harassment report it knowing that a positive outcome is anything but certain in the Uber culture at that time? Does the victim have an ethical commitment to report to save others from the same fate? Does an employee who was not a victim, but





CHECK YOUR MORAL COMPASS

aware of the harassment, bear an ethical commitment to report it as a third party—even if it might limit their career potential at the firm?

We know the answers to these questions as bystanders, but why are they not always the answers of those directly involved in the case? If we have honest discussions about those tough adverse reactions that often come with “doing the right thing,” then we can help our students filter out the noise and make the right choices when they face their own ethical dilemmas in life.

Management 444, Lori Ryan’s upper division class on Business Ethics and Corporate Governance, is not for the easily intimidated.

Conversations around topics like corporate whistle-blowing and Big Pharma’s drug pricing often escalate into lively debates, and students leave class certain about this: In business, the ethical trajectory isn’t always straightforward.

“There’s a lot of discussion in Professor Ryan’s class,” said senior Gabrielle Williams. “We spent time listening to our peers, which leads to an understanding that people have different interpretations of right and wrong. Ethics can be a gray area, and that’s okay.”

By Ryan’s estimate, more than 1,500 students have completed her Management 444 course since she began teaching it in 2001. (Others also

teach the class, but Ryan is senior professor and coordinator.) Her classes fill quickly, and that trend is likely to continue as the Fowler College of Business renews a commitment to place business ethics at the center of the undergraduate and graduate curricula.

National trend

Universities across the country are reviewing how they teach ethics in business colleges, and particularly in MBA programs. A December 2017 New York Times article linked this renewed scrutiny to a rash of ethical offenses by major companies, for example, Wells Fargo’s creation of fake accounts and the string of sexual harassment charges against Fox News.

“The media focus on ethics in business tends to run in cycles, but training tomorrow’s ethical leaders has been an ongoing initiative at Fowler,” said Ryan. “Our most recent addition is a business ethics module at the beginning of the MBA core, so that students can share a common approach and ethical vocabulary as they work through their programs.”

Ryan’s class connects theory with case studies based on reality, but parsing those real-world scenarios can lead to impassioned discussion.

“In my view, ethics goes beyond legality,” said senior Lauren Vermillion. “That’s the position I took in class. You have to be willing to go beyond what the law requires.”



THE 2018 Faculty Monty Award Winners

Seven exceptional San Diego State University faculty members received this year's Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Faculty Contributions. The honors—also known as the Faculty Montys—were awarded at the All-University Convocation at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.



College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts Larry Herzog

Larry Herzog is recognized internationally for his research, teaching and consultant work on urban planning and environmental policy solutions along the U.S.-Mexico border. His prolific output includes 10 books and more than 100 journal articles and essays. He has been a visiting professor in Italy, Luxembourg, Brazil, Spain and Mexico, and a Fulbright Scholar in Peru and the United Kingdom.



College of Engineering Satish Kumar Sharma

Joining SDSU from the private sector, Satish Kumar Sharma has made outstanding contributions to research and instructional programs. He established a new Antenna and Microwave Research Lab with industry support and developed seven new engineering courses. In 2015, he received the prestigious IEEE Antenna and Propagation Society's Harold A. Wheeler Prize Paper Award for his research.



College of Sciences Chris Rasmussen

Chris Rasmussen is the point person in the United States, and perhaps in the world, for conducting and disseminating research on undergraduate mathematics education. Funded by the National Science Foundation, he explores ways to improve student success in calculus. He has been invited to speak at the National Academy of Sciences and serves on its National Commission on Mathematical Instruction.



College of Arts and Letters

Huma Ghosh

Huma Ghosh has shaped the emerging global field of research on the lives of Muslim women. At SDSU, she pioneered transnational and interdisciplinary education, developing 21 new courses and teaching 19 of them in the span of a decade. Ghosh's support and advocacy strengthened the work of SDSU's Sexual Violence Task Force and helped create a Women's Resource Center on campus.



College of Education

Douglas Fisher

Douglas Fisher is president of the International Literacy Association, a three-time winner of the SDSU Outstanding Teacher Award for his college and an acknowledged "exemplary leader" of the national Conference of Teachers of English Leadership. In 2016, he led the development of a \$47 million multistate grant funded by the Wallace Foundation to support preservice training for school principals.



Fowler College of Business

Martina Musteen

Martina Musteen is a leader in the fields of international business and entrepreneurship. She is senior editor for the *Journal of World Business* and faculty director for the SDSU Center for International Business and Education Research. A recipient of the Senate Excellence in Teaching Award—SDSU's highest teaching honor—she works across disciplines to promote student success and leadership.



College of Health and Human Services

Larry Verity

Larry Verity has advanced the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences during 33 years at SDSU. His work as committee chair on more than 65 master's thesis committees earned him the college's Graduate Adviser of the Year award in 2011. A fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, he currently serves as interim dean of the College of Health and Human Services.



A Gift From Tony A community mentoring program launched while Gwynn was coach just keeps on giving.



.....

Tony Gwynn ('81) gave generously to his hometown of San Diego throughout his lifetime. "Mr. Padre" was a tireless ambassador for the city and for his always-ambitious baseball team. His benevolence extended to the San Diego community through the Tony Gwynn Foundation and his involvement in the Padre Scholars program, which awards college scholarships to academically talented, financially challenged local students.

Eight years before cancer ended his life in 2014, the celebrated San Diego State University alumnus made another gift that never grabbed the headlines.

Gwynn helped to jump-start the SDSU Big Brother Program, a mentoring initiative created by then-assistant coach Anthony Johnson ('90). At its inception, the initiative paired student-athletes from the SDSU baseball team with underrepresented students in the King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools.

Johnson has a wealth of stories from the early days of the program, when youngsters would visit SDSU to watch a baseball game and meet Coach Gwynn.

"Are you famous?" one asked, and Gwynn—with his signature laugh—admitted that yes, he was.

A proud legacy

Johnson has led the program for 11 years while it has grown to include student-

“AJ gets so animated when he talks about Big Brothers/Sisters. We were all excited to take part.”

athletes from the softball, lacrosse and tennis teams; its name change to the SDSU Big Brothers/Sisters program; and its move from Barrio Logan to the Learn 4 Life charter school in Lakeside, where Johnson is now assistant principal.

Hundreds of SDSU student-athletes have participated. Record-breaking Aztec pitcher Stephen Strasburg, now with the Washington Nationals, and Aztec slugger Greg Allen, drafted in 2014 by the Cleveland Indians, continue to keep in touch with their “little brothers.”

Mark Martinez has given the program his full support since he succeeded Gwynn as baseball head coach.

Aztec record-holder

Johnson, aka AJ, was himself an exceptional student-athlete at SDSU. Effective at second and third bases, shortstop and outfield, he was an all-Region VII and all-Western Athletic Conference selection as a senior when he hit .329 with 47 runs scored, 39 RBIs and 16 stolen bases. He still ranks in the Aztec top 10 in career triples and holds a career batting average of .313.

Since graduating, Johnson has served for 16 seasons with Aztec baseball in several roles, including assistant director of operations, volunteer assistant coach and baseball ambassador, but

the mentoring program is his proudest achievement.

“AJ gets so animated when he talks about Big Brothers/Sisters,” said SDSU softball player and scholarship recipient Jenavee Peres. “We were all excited to take part.”

Field of dreams

Peres, a catcher for Aztec softball, began working with the Big Brothers/Sisters program in fall 2017. Her mentee is an eighth-grader “who just needs someone she can vent to. She reminds me of the little girl that used to be inside of me,” Peres said.

A senior majoring in criminal justice and sociology, she matter-of-factly recalled the challenges of growing up poor in Anaheim, California. After her family lost their house, they lived with relatives for a time. Peres said the setbacks made her strong and humble, and taught her to look for the happiness in life—lessons she tries to convey to her “little sister.”

Although the current Lakeside-based Big Brothers/Sisters program is smaller in scope than the original, Johnson was determined to relocate it when he moved from

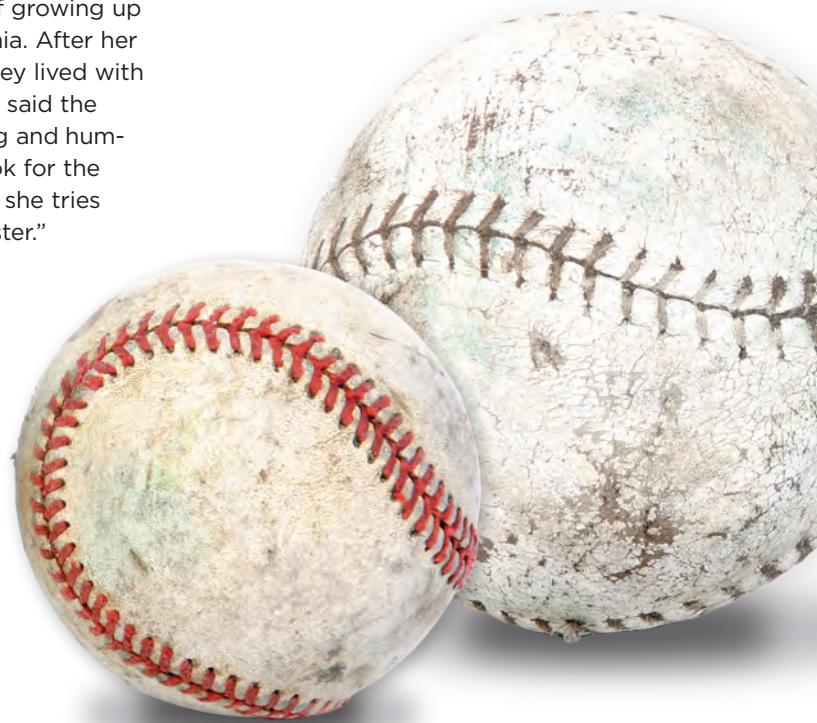
the King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools.

Aztec first baseman Jordan Verdon shares Johnson’s commitment. A native San Diegan from Granite Hills High School, Verdon recalls attending Aztec baseball games as a kid and, years later, getting to meet Gwynn personally when he committed to SDSU in 2014.

The kinesiology major has been a mentor for each of his three years as an Aztec. He helped his first “little brother” overcome shyness and form new friendships at school. But the support goes both ways, Verdon said. Through mentoring, he learned to reevaluate his own strengths and weaknesses and appreciate the advantages he has enjoyed.

“I’m just playing baseball, but to those kids, I’m a celebrity,” he said.

—Coleen L. Geraghty



Raising Researchers

There's a strong link between financial support and student research success.

By Coleen L. Geraghty

Fernanda Figueroa enrolled at San Diego State University determined to have “the whole college experience.” Her resume proves the point—she is president of the Imperial Valley Associated Students, a campus ambassador and vice president of the psychology club. A scholarship helped her finance a summer 2017 study-abroad experience in Milan.

But there was one piece of “the whole college experience” that Figueroa never anticipated. She fell in love with research. Linda Abarbanell, an SDSU psychology professor, recognized Figueroa’s talent and asked her to join the Culture and Cognition Lab, which examines the interaction between language, culture and cognition.

Guided by Abarbanell, Figueroa is studying how cultural beliefs along the U.S.-Mexico border influence the causal treatment choices that cancer patients endorse.

Abarbanell helped Figueroa find SDSU scholarships to support her research and alleviate the pressure of holding multiple jobs to finance her education. Then Figueroa was accepted into SDSU’s undergraduate summer research program, which funded the 200-plus hours she devoted to gathering more data.

Qualified and confident

With more robust data to support her findings, Figueroa presented at SDSU’s Student Research Symposium (SRS) this year and won a top award for her research.

“I was in shock. Dr. Abarbanell told us to go for the experience and not set our hopes on winning,” Figueroa said. “So I thought about it as a great opportunity to prepare for the future, because I want to get a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling and improve access to treatment for San Diego’s Latino community.

“Of course, research is a huge component of graduate school, and through opportunities such as SRS, SDSU allows me to be a more qualified and confident woman in academia.”

Having time for research

There is a strong link between research success and scholarship support. More than 15 percent of SRS participants receive financial aid from SDSU, and that’s no coincidence.

RICARDO DESANTIAGO

FERNANDA FIGUEROA



MADISON KENNEDY

During The Campaign for SDSU, donors gave more than \$190 million to finance student scholarships. Their generosity allows SDSU to award about 19,000 scholarships annually. Some are merit-based; others support students in specific disciplines or fields of research.

Scholarship support alleviates some of the financial burden for students and gives them time to participate, as Figueroa does, in co-curricular activities that build leadership, research and public service skills.

Ricardo Desantiago resumed his education after working for several years at an oil company, where he saw firsthand how human impact accelerates habitat degradation. While studying at San Diego City College, he took part in a National Science Foundation research experience to determine whether fish were consuming the microplastics that made their way into local salt marshes.

After transferring into SDSU's environmental science program, Desantiago received scholarship support that allowed him to focus on completing his degree and working in Professor Jeremy Long's ecology lab.

"The scholarship freed me from having to take days off from my research," he said.

This fall, Desantiago will become a Ph.D. candidate in SDSU's joint program with the University of California, Davis. He plans to study plant-to-plant interactions in local salt marshes with the broader goals of leading local conservation efforts and encouraging underrepresented students to join the STEM disciplines.

A sense of possibility

Madison Kennedy's SRS presentation described her work with Christal Sohl, a biochemistry professor whose research ultimately aims to develop platforms for targeted drug therapy. Kennedy's presentation earned the President's Award, the top accolade for SRS participants.

"Working for three years in Christal Sohl's lab helped me become the scientist I am today," Kennedy said.

As she prepares to graduate, Kennedy is weighing offers from several Ph.D. programs, including the University of California, San Francisco; the University of Washington; and Vanderbilt. At the same time, she's reflecting on the opportunities that were available to her at SDSU.

"I don't know where I would be today without all the financial support from SDSU," she said. "Scholarships give students a sense of possibility."

SDSU ALUMNI

2017 - 2018

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1960s

'66 **Robert "Bob" Ham** ★ (marketing) was named Motorcyclist of the Year by the American Motorcyclist Association and featured on the cover of its January 2018 magazine.

1970s

'79 **Lee Elder** (journalism) published "That Bloody Hill: Hilliard's Legion at Chickamauga" (MacFarland and Co., 2017).

1980s

'82 **Timothy Chaney** (marketing) is vice president, marketing for Toyo Tire U.S.A. Corp.

'86 **Isabelle Goubin** (MBA) was re-elected as chair of Luxembourg's financial watchdog commission. She is also chair of the board of the country's insurance commission and its sovereign wealth fund.

'88 **Jody Gookin** (biology) was named FluoroScience Distinguished Professor in Veterinary Scholars Research Education at North Carolina State University.

'89 **Art Myers** ★ (MPH) published the autobiography "Full and By: A Doctor's Life of Stethoscopes, Sailboats, and SLRs;" **Graciela Gomez** (electrical engineering) is the first woman to become CEO of the law firm Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt.

1990s

'92 **Crispina Calsada** (accounting) is CFO for Laboratoris Sanfit in San Diego.

'94 **Derek Bodkin** (music) won the 2017 World Championship of Musical Whistling.

'98 **Shawn Duffy** (accounting), CFO of Viasat, was named public company CFO of the Year at the 2018 San Diego Business awards.

2000s

'00 **Maria "Mia" Hall** (art; '06 applied design) is director of the Penland School of Crafts near Asheville, North Carolina; **Susan Hannifin MacNab** (MSW) published "A to Z Healing Toolbox" in 2017.

'07 **Kevin Craig** (EMBA) is director of newspaper relations at MMG/Parade; **Ryan Mitchell** (finance) is an associate attorney with finance ADLI Law Group in Los Angeles.

2010s

'12 **Zander Keig** (MSW) was inducted onto the Benjamin F. Dillingham III and Bridget Wilson LGBT Veterans Wall of Honor at the San Diego LGBT Center.

'13 **Leticia Gomez Franco** (MALAS) is arts and culture services coordinator for the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture.

'15 **David Dixon** ★ (critical studies) is a member of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and a voting member of the Regional Theatre Tony Award for the American Theatre Critics Association.

'16 **Iris Almodovar Knightley** ★ (history) published the children's book "The Three Brothertees;" **Anna Wright Cambria** (English) published "My New Normal: Surviving Suicide Loss" after the suicide of her father.

Please send your news to the SDSU Alumni Association, aluminfo@mail.sdsu.edu. | ★ = life member

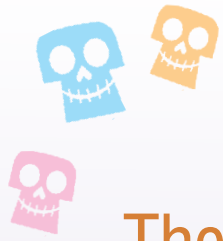
Available this Spring

▶ The SDSU Alumni App

This easy-to-use mobile hub will provide valuable tools to alumni and keep passionate Aztecs connected to SDSU.

COMING SOON TO:





Just Like Family

The SDSU Alumni behind Disney/Pixar's "Coco."

By Cory Marshall

It's a relatively quiet morning at Downtown Disney in Anaheim, California, when San Diego State University alumnus Lalo Alcaraz arrives.

"It's surreal to be in the belly of the beast—Downtown Disney," he said, joking, as he eased into a chair.

Alcaraz ('87) is one of two SDSU alumni behind the blockbuster film "Coco," and he came to this retail outlet in the Disneyland Resort to talk about his role. More widely known for the nationally syndicated, politically sharp *La Cucaracha* comic strip, Alcaraz served as a cultural consultant for "Coco."

The film opened to rave reviews in November 2017 and snatched this year's Academy Award for Animated Feature. It unfolds during the sacred Mexican holiday, *Día de los Muertos*, following 12-year-old Miguel as he pursues his dream of becoming a musician and comes to realize the importance of family.

The film's creators—chief among them SDSU alumna Darla K. Anderson ('82)—have called "Coco" a love letter to Mexico.

If it is a love letter, Mexico wrote back adoringly.

To date, "Coco" is the top-grossing movie of all time in Mexico. Critics say its success is due, in part, to Disney/Pixar's dedication to "get it right" when it came to the dozens of cultural details celebrated in the movie.

Cue Alcaraz

It was in their initial meeting that Alcaraz and Anderson realized the Aztec connection. What's more, the two quickly learned they followed nearly the same academic path.

Though they missed each other by a few months (Anderson graduated the same year Alcaraz enrolled at the university), both majored in environmental design in the School of Art + Design and studied under Professor Emeritus Eugene Ray, whose nonlinear, forward-thinking approach to teaching inspired their respective career paths.

Darla K. Anderson

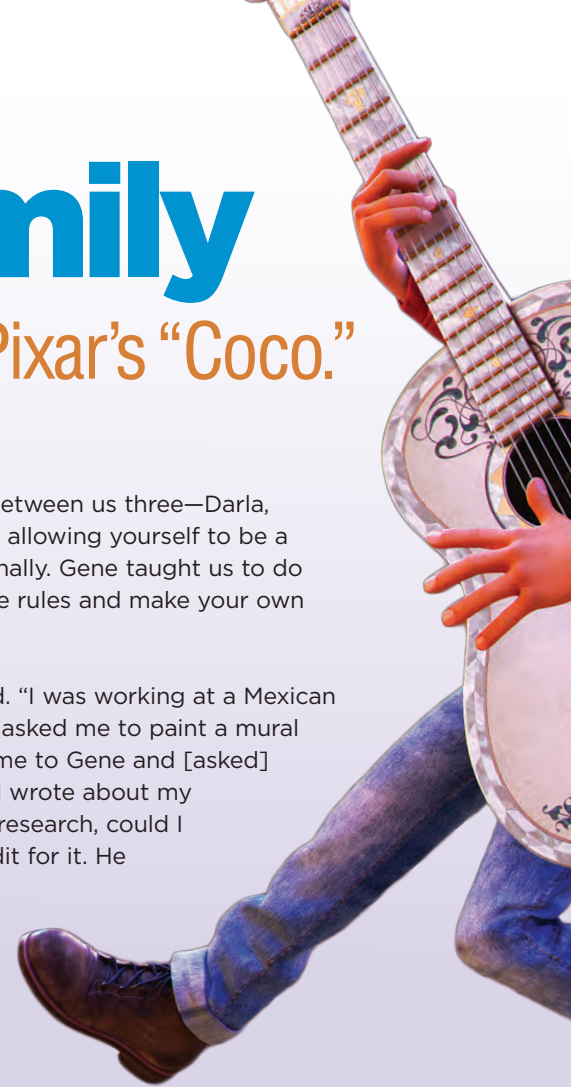
"I think the thread between us three—Darla, Gene and myself—is allowing yourself to be a free thinker occasionally. Gene taught us to do your thing, break the rules and make your own thing," said Alcaraz.


Anderson concurred. "I was working at a Mexican restaurant and they asked me to paint a mural on the wall. So, I came to Gene and [asked] if I documented and wrote about my experience and did research, could I get any college credit for it. He said sure."

After graduation, Anderson worked on commercials before landing at Pixar, while Alcaraz studied architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, before returning to art.

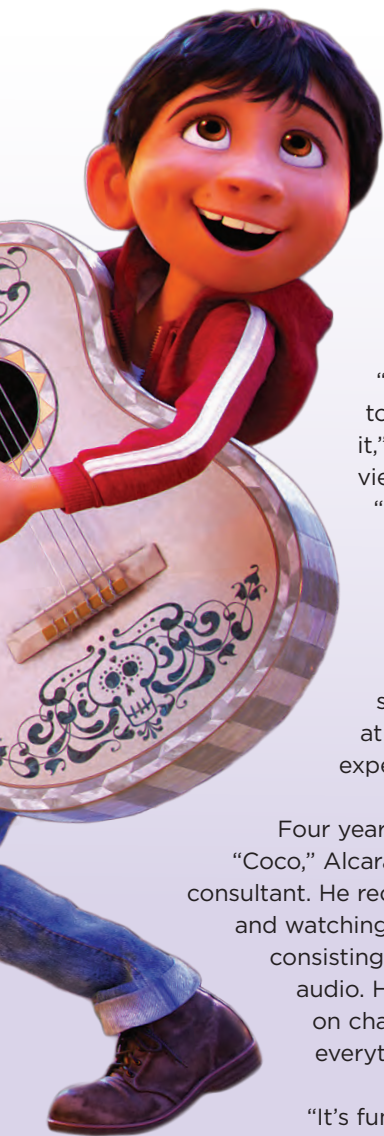
The making of "Coco"

Anderson, who minored in Spanish at SDSU, frequently went camping in Guadalajara, Mexico, and volunteered at orphanages



 [sdsu.edu/Coco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdsu.edu/Coco)





in Baja California, recalled the moment “Coco” director Lee Unkrich first approached her about the concept of the film. She jumped at the chance to be involved.

“I loved being in Mexico, traveling to Mexico and felt very connected to it,” Anderson said in a phone interview from Pixar’s Bay Area studios. “When Lee brought up this idea set in Mexico on *Día de los Muertos*, I felt excited to get to do something that was an extension of who I already was. It definitely helped my relationship with Lalo that I spent so much time in Mexico and at SDSU. I could speak to all of my experiences.”

Four years into the six-year production of “Coco,” Alcaraz was brought on as a cultural consultant. He recounts traveling to Pixar Studios and watching animatic versions of the movie, consisting of a series of storyboards and audio. He would routinely give feedback on characters, dialogue, pronunciations—everything down to the story itself.

“It’s funny when you hear the director talk about our involvement in [Coco] because you hear him say, ‘Well, they weren’t afraid to give big notes.’ You don’t really give a big note to a director. He knows what he’s doing. But they didn’t bring us there just to rubber-stamp stuff,” said Alcaraz.

Later, Disney hired Alcaraz as a consultant for movie merchandise. He concentrated on those plush *alebrijes* that line the shelves at Downtown Disney.

Art can change the world

Similar academic backgrounds aside, Alcaraz and Anderson also share a similar belief. Simply put, they believe art can change the world.

“The main reason for me to work on this project was to have something that my kids would be proud to watch.”



“I believe that we reflect society in our films, and if we can shift perception, create empathy and tell stories that have emotional connectivity, we can change the world. That’s my mission and my task,” said Anderson.

She refers back to 2001’s “Monsters, Inc.,” which she also produced. It was the first major film to come out after 9/11. Pixar had begun production years prior and now it was ready for release, a movie about monsters with the message that laughter is more important than fear.

The timing of “Coco” also seems providential.

“With ‘Coco,’ having it so embraced by the Hispanic and Latino communities and beyond is overwhelming,” Anderson said. “We’re just so happy and grateful that it’s reached so many people and that this extremely specific love letter to Mexico had universal appeal.”

Alcaraz said that same sentiment is what brought him back to art after studying architecture in graduate school.

“The main reason for me to work on this project was to have something that my kids would be proud to watch. I know their kids are going to watch this thing,” said Alcaraz. “These big mainstream Hollywood movies are like public works. They’re going to be used for years and years.”

Lalo Alcaraz



Common Chords

CHAPTERS FROM AZTEC HISTORY

If San Diego State University succeeds in its plan to expand with a new campus in Mission Valley, it won't be the first time—or even the second—that SDSU made a move to accommodate its growth and goals.

The very first incarnation of SDSU, a teacher preparation academy known as the San Diego Normal School, opened in 1898, downtown in the George H. Hill building on the corner of F Street and 6th Avenue. These were only temporary digs, accommodating the first generation of students while the school's main campus was under construction in University Heights.

The new campus was dedicated on May 1, 1899, and the first day of classes was held that fall among stunning Beaux-Arts buildings with domes and columns. Under the leadership of President Samuel T. Black, the normal school grew in population and reputation, quickly outpacing its 600-student capacity. A local junior college joined forces with the school, transforming it into a four-year college, San Diego State Teachers College, in 1921.

The school's smashing success came with one major problem: There simply wasn't any more room for the college to grow. So in 1922, President Edward

Hardy began working with city planners, architects and land developers to find a new home. As college administrators and public officials jockeyed over land rights and public petitions, the student population continued to balloon. Finally, with nearly 1,200 students enrolled in a college built to house 600, everyone agreed on a space with 125 acres on the eastern edges of Mission Valley: SDSU's current home, Montezuma Mesa.

Construction finished in 1931. During the final year, students and faculty hauled tables, chairs and equipment from the old campus to the new, dodging

rattlesnakes that were a persistent nuisance in the region at the time.

"At that point, [it] was way out in the sagebrush," recalled Earl Nation ('31) during an interview with KPBS News in 2005. "There wasn't even so much as a bus line that ran out there."

Gradually, the school grew, becoming San Diego State College in 1935. San Diego grew around it, with neighborhoods and commercial developments hemming the university in on all sides. The university—officially designated SDSU in 1974—has built itself up over the years, making good use of its existing space with smart, forward-thinking design reflected in new structures like the Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union and the Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex.

But the university continues to grow, both in students and in the scope of its ambitions. A campus expansion would help the university take on an even bigger role in the community, partnering with local companies to offer real-world experience to students and attracting top-tier faculty to teach and conduct research. And thankfully, there aren't nearly as many rattlesnakes in Mission Valley these days.

—Michael Price





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