

## **UCSD Emeriti Association: A Brief History**

UCSD's Emeriti Association can look back on more than three decades of expanding growth of its membership as well as the depth of its continuing participation in the campus enterprise.

The idea for an organization of retirees took origin from Asst. Vice Chancellor of Personnel Quelda Wilson, who in 1979 proposed that it was time for UCSD administration to form a lasting bond with the growing ranks of its retired faculty and staff. The idea was put aside but then revisited in 1983 when a survey of retirees revealed enthusiastic support. Given strong endorsement from Revelle College Provost Murray Goodman, the group was assigned its charter in 1984 as the UCSD Retirement Club, later revised to Retirement Association (RA). Thanks to Vice-Chancellor Herm Johnson, funds were designated for support a full-time director, Maryann Herbenar.

Although faculty were welcomed by the RA as they still are, a nucleus of emeriti led by radiologist Norman Baily decided to follow precedents at other UC campuses by establishing in 1989 a parallel Emeriti Association (EA). Early enthusiasts for an organization of retired faculty included former Chancellor Herb York, Professor of Literature and former Muir College Provost John Stewart, Biologist Morris Friedkin, and geophysicist Hugh Bradner. Then as now, continuing appeal and success of the organization derives from the diversity of academic disciplines represented in a membership now exceeding 600.

In 2005, EA President and Professor Emeritus of Theater Mary Corrigan recognized that emeriti issues were low priority for the Academic Senate, at that

time the EA's administrative base. No mystery about it: an overtaxed senate staff bore heavy responsibilities for defining admission and graduation requirements, approving courses and curriculum, and so much more. At an annual gathering of the combined RA and EA councils (CUCRA/CUCEA), Mary learned of models existing at other UC campuses for joint administration of the two organizations. And as she heard to muse metaphorically, "...we ought to be developing a more effective voice here on our own arena."

Already established was a highly visible RA at UCSD. Ever since 1985, it had commanded its own space, first a Quonset Hut left behind by the Marine Corps, and in time another vacated Camp Matthews structure. By 2005, RA membership reached 800, making it the largest UC organization of its kind.

Discussions favoring joint administration of the two organizations soon began, first with Executive Director Suzan Cioffi, the dynamo behind the RA's active presence on campus, and later with members of its board. Loretta Smith, RA President at the time, was heard to say, "Of course, it will be like a fraternal reunion. After all," she added, "faculty and staff have worked together throughout their respective professional careers."

Following preliminary deliberations., there were additional meetings with the respective Academic and Human Resource Vice Chancellors, then in July, 2006, submission of a proposal to Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. Her reply was immediate: approval of a new administrative structure providing for joint oversight of both organizations under Human Resources instead of the Academic Senate.

There would also be a doubling of space in building 400, plus additional financial support that acknowledged the remarkable growth of both memberships.

Concurrent with the Chancellor's approval came a challenge for the emeriti to expand their developing mentoring program, inaugurated in 2005 by Professor Emeritus of Biology Mel Green. A target population was identified: Chancellor Scholars selected from UCSD applicants who were first in their families to seek higher education. Several dozen emeriti have participated by generously devoting their time interacting with hundreds of undergraduate students during the program's first decade and beyond. Mentors have also donated generously to the Chancellor's Scholarship Fund.

The RA and the EA are supported by two full-time and several part-time staff. With a combined membership now approaching 3000, both organizations are beneficiaries of a transformed building 400, since designated the Retirement Resource Center. This multi-functional facility includes staff offices, a central meeting space with a capacity for sixty-five, sound and projection equipment suitable for educational events, and a more functional kitchen equipped with the paraphernalia that permits catering self-sufficiency. On the occasion of events too large for the RRC, both groups have enjoyed the facilities of the UCSD Faculty Club. And as our campus continues to expand, the combined organizations look forward to a move in the future, to the Student Services Center.

The EA continues to publish its popular *Chronicles* as it has done since 2001, all volumes are now viewable on the EA website. Members support a

monthly book discussion group. A lecture series begun in 1989 featuring the scholarly work of active and retired faculty continues throughout each academic year.