

All-University Convocation 2017
San Diego State University
Aug. 24, 2017
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union, Montezuma Hall

(Voiceover)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 2017 All-University Convocation. Please take your seats and be sure to silence your cell phones. Thank you.

(Performance of the SDSU marching band drumline, cheer and dance teams)
(Applause)

President's Chief of Staff Gina Jacobs: Good morning.

Audience: Good morning.

Gina Jacobs: That was an exciting way to start the morning.

So it's my pleasure to welcome you to the 2017 San Diego State University All-University Convocation.

I'm Gina Jacobs, President Roush's chief of staff.

It's great to see so many of you in the audience this morning. We're so glad that you've joined us.

Our guests today include faculty, staff, students, alumni, community leaders, advisory board members and many others. Thank you so much for being here.

I'd like to start by recognizing our new faculty and staff. We're pleased to welcome you to our San Diego State University family.

SDSU is a wonderful and exciting place to work. We've learned to work, to learn, to teach and to do research. We look forward to the leadership, creativity and energy you will bring to the San Diego State campus. Our wish is that your years with San Diego State will be both productive and rewarding, and we extend our most sincere welcome to all of you.

I'd now like to acknowledge some of our university leaders and distinguished guests. Members of the President's Cabinet, Academic Deans' Council, SDSU Alumni Association Board, BRIDGES and our Associated Students Executive Officers.

I would also like to welcome representatives from the offices of Senator Toni Atkins, Assemblymember Todd Gloria and Councilmember Georgette Gomez. Could you all please rise and be acknowledged?

(Applause)

Thank you for joining us.

Our other guests joining us on stage are professor from the School of Journalism and Media Studies and University Senate Chair Marcie Bober-Michel.

(Applause)

President of Associated Students Chimezie Ebiriekwe.

(Applause)

The president of the SDSU Alumni Association, Leo Morales.

(Applause)

Provost and Senior Vice President Chukuka Enwemeka.

(Applause)

And, of course, the seven recipients of the Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Faculty Contributions. Please join me in welcoming them.

(Applause)

And now it's my honor to introduce SDSU President Sally Roush.

(Applause)

SDSU President Sally Roush: Thank you, Gina.

Gina has done a great job of filling in on very short notice from last July, so I want to give her a special round of thanks.

(Applause)

A long time ago, when I was considering whether to move my family from Denver, Colorado, to San Diego, a dear friend told me, "Some of the most wonderful and interesting people in your life, you have not even met yet."

All these years later, those words still ring true.

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting our Zuma Award winners and presenting them with their awards for staff excellence. These wonderful and interesting people are here today.

It is my great privilege to introduce them to you.

Will our Zuma awardees please stand when I call your name and remain standing until all the names are called? Let's hold our applause until they're all introduced.

In the auxiliary category, our winner is Frank Sweeney IV, account administrator for sponsored research at San Diego State University Research Foundation.

In the manager category, we honor Rick Gulizia, director of Research Affairs.

The team awardees are the technical staff of the Department of Geography and its Center for Earth Analysis Research. Two of them are here today, but I'm going to read all four of their names: Marcus Chiu, Pete Coulter, Harry Johnson and David McKinsey.

In the innovation category, we recognize Andrea Saltzman Martin, instructional designer in the College of Education.

In the staff-to-staff mentoring category, our winner is Teddi Brock, administrative coordinator in the Department of Women's Studies.

Our honoree for community service is Mohamed Ahmed, staff member in Community Engagement and special assistant to the Dean of Students.

And our final honoree for service to the university, someone who started her career as a student assistant in Human Resources, is Thelma Chavez, program coordinator in the College of Sciences.

Let's congratulate our Zuma Award recipients.

(Applause)

If you don't already know these fine and wonderful and interesting people, I encourage you to greet them, to get to know them. They're a wonderful group who collectively represent what's best about San Diego State University, along with our faculty awardees this morning. Congratulations – and you are already seated.

(Laughter)

Now it's my pleasure to introduce our first speaker, our University Senate chair, Marcie Bober-Michel.

When I meet people out in the community, they always have this view of the university that, because we have a collegial and shared governance management style, that it makes us slow, and we can't ever make a decision – and they couldn't be more wrong. It's our ability to work and talk with one another and get a lot of smart people thinking about the same thing that actually makes us so effective. And so both Marcie and Chimezie, who you will meet in just a little while, contribute to that.

Thank you, Marcie, for your work, and come up and give your presentation now.

Thank you.

(Applause)

(Remarks by Senate Chair Marcie Bober-Michel, Associated Students President Chimezie Ebiriekwe and Provost Chukuka Enwemeka; presentation of faculty Monty awards.)

Provost Chukuka Enwemeka: Last year was a year of great achievement for our university. I will introduce you to a short video before we bring to the podium President Roush.

(Video highlighting 2016-17 SDSU achievements)

(Applause)

Enwemeka: And now please welcome San Diego State University's President, Sally Roush.

(Applause)

President Sally Roush: Thank you and good morning to all of you wonderful and interesting people.

I want to start by thanking a number of people who helped put this together. I want to thank Marcie and Chimezie for your remarks. I look forward to working with you this year and, as both of you said, I'm confident we're well-equipped for the year ahead working together.

I would also like to thank Leo Morales for joining us today. We are fortunate to enjoy the support of over 400,000 passionate alumni and of the Alumni Association, which has sponsored the Monty awards for many, many years. Thank you and thank you, Leo.

And thank you to the Alumni Association, along with Aztec Shops, and to Provost Enwemeka for supporting faculty excellence.

Our Monty award winner stories were so very impressive. I have to say, each and every one of you now has a special place in that category of interesting and wonderful people. All of you here and all of you out here. I'm not too much of a crybaby, but I did get tears a few little times.

And did we lose our toddlers? Oh, OK. We have a 5-year-old here whose mommy won an award. You want to say hi? OK. Hi.

(Laughter)

(Applause)

And the 2-year-old made an exit stage left, I think. Or right.

(Laughter)

I hope all of you were very proud of the achievements we reviewed in the video of the past year. The collective efforts of each and every one of you, regardless of your roles – or because of your roles – are inspiring as we begin this year. I want to thank you for your dedication, day in and day out, to serve San Diego State University and the public good.

Convocation is a custom that binds us to our rich history, to our 120 Years of Leadership – and counting, I might add.

Recent events in our nation make it clear that now, more than ever, there is a need to gather as a community – as a community of friends and co-workers – to exercise our leadership and to reaffirm our shared values of diversity, inclusion and respect.

As we embark on another year of serving the public through excellence in teaching, scholarship, creative activities and service, we have the opportunity to demonstrate the benefit of living our shared values every day.

I had someone recently send me a letter explaining that diversity wasn't a value; it was a condition. Either way, I think it's one of the most important things that we experience on a daily basis at San Diego State University, so that even – or especially – when we may have disagreements, our foundation of respect and civility will see us through whatever the year may bring.

One thing this year will bring is the completion of the final year of our strategic plan, Building on Excellence. Marcie gave a great a summary of that plan that has seen us through these past several years. Its initiatives have led to record-high graduation rates, nationally recognized scholarships, and engaged alumni and friends who donated \$105 million just this last year alone to support our students and programs.

Mary Ruth, I'd like to say the big number – \$815 million over the course of the campaign – and \$88 million from faculty and staff. If that isn't a remarkable number, I don't know what is.

(Applause)

Yes. It's an uncommon thing. I've been told from people at other universities that their faculty and staff would never do anything like that – so another point of pride for us.

During this year, we will continue our focus on student success, which occurs first in the classroom but also, as you've seen with our awardees here, everywhere that the influence of their interaction with their professors takes them.

To that end, student success, we will seek to hire 88 new tenure-track faculty, with a continuing emphasis on inclusive excellence.

We continue to recruit and support under-represented students, and we will improve time to degree by moving up the registration timeline – a not-easy task that we have a lot of people working very hard to do – by continuing improvements in student advising and by building on our success in increasing summer enrollment, which was significantly online this past summer. So if it felt a little vacant around here to you, as it did to me, it's because we had so much summer enrollment online.

The Fowler College of Business and the College of Extended Studies are collaborating on our first undergraduate degree program, a bachelor of science in business administration. I actually found that to be a bit of a surprise. I thought we would have had another by now, but no, it's the first. For sure? OK.

(Laughter)

First of more to come, I'm sure.

At SDSU-Imperial Valley, we're partnering with University of California and UABC to offer courses that will prepare students for jobs in sustainable energy.

We also will pilot aspects of our Sophomore Success Program which, in part, emphasizes the academic benefits of living on campus.

Activities and events outside the classroom will continue to enrich learning. The acting surgeon general of the United States will be speaking at our fall Provost Distinguished Lecture.

And in the spring, our music and dance students will present "SDSU Pops Downtown" at Copley Symphony Hall. I'm sure it will be another sell-out event. Where's Joyce? It will. I don't know where she is; there she is. OK.

We will continue our distinctive focus on integrating undergraduate scholarship and research across many programs. We will be increasing participation in the Student

Research Symposium, which I think is just a wonderful event. I hope many of you have served as judges in that program. It's just an outstanding activity.

We will be increasing the number of graduate students who mentor undergraduates, and we will be developing a website to match students with research in faculty labs.

A very noteworthy event, which Marcie alluded to, will be the opening of the Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex, scheduled for early next year. And a tidbit that I learned this morning is that it's such a dynamic building that, immediately upon opening, we will start to renovate a lab for somebody on this stage – *(laughter)* so he can continue to do his wonderful research.

This building will double teaching facilities and space for engineering students, as well as research space for engineering and sciences. There will be new labs, collaborative spaces, a brain-imaging facility and a space for entrepreneurial efforts.

Our success in completing this great facility to which we owe President Hirshman. People who have been around the university as long as I have, which is a long time, know that forever we wanted a new engineering building. And then, an opportunity arose because of changes that happened with the state funding and the way the state system was handling things, and Elliot saw that opportunity and he went for it. And from the time that Tom McCarron told me we were thinking about and the time I heard that it was a done deal, I couldn't believe it was true. So really, thank you to President Hirshman for that remarkable accomplishment.

(Applause)

But our success in completing this facility reminds of the importance of the right kind of space. I had tea and cookies with some of the – with as many of the Monty awardees as were available – and we were talking a little bit about the CSU graduation initiative, which is to double the four-year graduation rate by 2025. And I will say, the faculty members said, "Really?" It's a daunting task, but one observation that stuck with me is that what we need in order to be able to do that – along with more faculty – is more of the right kind of space.

And to that end, you may have read that San Diego State is part of the community discussion around the future of Qualcomm Stadium. That would give us an opportunity to have space, land, to develop the right kind of space if we're successful in reaching the right partnership there.

We have said, quite publicly, that we believe any development on the Mission Valley site should serve higher education and the public good – which we, of course, do – as well as the community's goals and aspirations for that site.

As we saw in our video, the scholarship, teaching excellence and artistic success that occurs every day at our university is broad and well-recognized. The faculty and staff who make this possible achieve this excellence despite the challenges that we face and have faced and overcome for many years.

Someone said to me after joining San Diego State not too long ago that we were kind of gritty and scrappy about what we do here and how we do it. He knows who he is; he

just smiled in the front row here. *(laughter)* And he's right. Something that distinguishes us is our determination. When someone says, "You can't do that," to say, "Yes, we can."

This year, despite the improved economy, we've demonstrated, again, that we can persevere. State funding accounts for just 21 percent of our total revenue. That is an improvement over a few years ago, when it was hovering just above 10, but it still falls far short.

The Campaign for SDSU has ended, but private philanthropy remains critical to our future. A key initiative this year is continued fundraising, in particular for the \$25-million Fowler Challenge.

For now, our budget remains stable. We were able to allocate this year an additional \$5 million in base budget funding and \$24 million in one-time funds to support our strategic plan and critical support needs.

But I want to take a moment and consider the most important thing we will do this year. That is to help select a new president for San Diego State University.

The campus advisory committee that Marcie mentioned has sought and continues to seek your input, and the trustee search committee, which is where the decision will actually take place as to what candidates to put forward, that search committee will solicit your input on qualifications, characteristics and qualities that you want in the ninth president of San Diego State University. I implore you, I implore you, to give this task your best thinking and recommendations.

The presidential search committee will hold an open forum for your thoughts on September 25, from 12:30 to 2:30 at the Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center.

I know from past experiences with the trustee search committees that I've been a part of, that they listen very, very carefully and attentively to the input that they get from the campus. It's very, very important that you can articulate not our past complaints about each other – we have those, we know that we do and we just move on – but what we want for our future, what kind of qualifications, qualities, and characteristics.

So I hope you give that some really careful thought and that you will participate in this crucial task because, in the end, the success San Diego State University enjoys today is due to the hard work and efforts of faculty and staff students and alumni over 12 decades – but also over the next decades to come. So finding someone who can lead you forward in that first year of the next 120 – or will be 121 by then – is a really important thing to do.

At this point in my remarks, I was going to share a story with you about something very meaningful to me, but after thinking about the wonderful and interesting Monty Award winners here and the stories we saw this morning, I know each one of them had a special memory of San Diego State. Rather than share my special memory, which seems kind of selfish now that I've been standing up here in front of all of you, I'd like for you all, each of you together, however that works for you, to think about something special about San Diego State University for yourselves.

It might be something you did yourself. It might be something that you did with a group. It might be some new discovery that you made. It might be how much you loved teaching a particular class on that particular day. It might be helping a student on their new day find directions to their classroom. I love doing that. It makes me feel like I have a role and purpose that is important.

(Laughter)

There are so many opportunities to feel good about your contribution to the university. So while you're talking with each other and getting to know our awardees this year, I would really like to ask that you share with each other those special moments that you have in your memory about San Diego State.

These stories from our history will remind us that, whatever large or small part one may have at SDSU, we are all contributors in the classrooms, laboratories, offices, and hallways. We are contributors to the future of the university.

This year, we will add our own contributions to this tradition of sustained excellence. If we continue to have the courage to make tough decisions, to hold ourselves accountable, to recognize and value the diversity of ways that each of us contributes, and to demonstrate the creativity needed – and I would say the scrappiness and edginess needed – to find new pathways, then we will persist and persevere on our collective journey of excellence.

So I thank you all, and I look forward to an exciting year of success.

(Applause)

Gina is waiting to come up here, but I want to just ad-lib a couple of things here, which I know makes Catherine crazy. I want to thank Catherine Snapp, who helps me put together all of these remarks, which I edit often, and I'm sure it's a frustration, but it's all the better for her help in getting that done.

And I want to thank someone whose words I plagiarized a little bit – I did have them in quotes in my speech – and that's Steve Welter. He spent a lot of time reviewing the remarks and helped remind me of the wonderful essence of San Diego State University. So, Catherine and Steve, thank you in particular.

(Applause)

Gina Jacobs: Thank you, President Roush.

We've covered a lot of ground in our presentation this morning. The President's remarks will be available for viewing shortly via the home page at sdsu.edu.

And a sincere thank-you for sharing your morning with us. We hope you will join us for the appreciation luncheon immediately following in the Frank Goldberg Courtyard. It's downstairs out here. During the luncheon, you will enjoy a special performance by Django Shredders, featuring guitarist Alex Ciavarelli and Rudy Marquez. Alex and Rudy are both undergraduate students in SDSU's jazz studies program.

Again, thank you for being here. Best wishes for a wonderful year and Go Aztecs!

(Applause)