Scholars’ Floors Support Academic Goals and Build Community

Finding the right housing “fit” as a first-year student is critical to a successful transition and to feeling connected to the University. To help students find their niche, UCSB’s Housing and Residential Services devotes approximately one-fifth of the floors in residence halls to Living Learning Communities (LLCs). LLCs are described as “dynamic communities designed to promote themes through programs and activities.” Examples of Living Learning Communities include wellness, global awareness, multicultural, and scholars’ communities. Regina Fletcher, the honors coordinator in the College of Letters and Science, has observed first-hand the solid success of the scholars’ floors since their inception in 1994.

Scholars’ floors are reserved for students in college honors programs, in the College of Creative Studies, and those who are Regents Scholars. This year, there are 100 scholars living in Anacapa Hall, 66 in Santa Catalina, 50 in San Nicolas, 60 in Cuyama House in Manzanita Village, and 40 in a College of Creative Studies house. Resident assistants provide mentorship and guidance and offer a variety of educational, social, and community service activities. In addition, each scholars’ floor has a faculty and staff liaison to provide a personal connection within the challenging first year. Student peer advisors from the Letters and Science Honors Program visit the residents quarterly for schedule planning and general academic advising and keep in touch via an honors email list.

Students choose to live in a community of scholars for different reasons. Those who want a living environment that is conducive to studying and where residents are motivated to succeed in school find it meets their expectations. The most valuable thing about the scholars’ floor, one resident says, is the support for each person’s academic goals. “We are all figuring out how the system works together. Everyone helps everyone else with class work, regardless of the subject; with questions about honors programs; and with study groups.”

Jamie Thomas, current student honors coordinator and a former scholars’ floor resident, says, “A scholars’ floor is not a competitive environment at all. Everyone is there to help each other out. I had a successful first year and I can easily say this was largely due to my living environment.”

Some high school seniors are hesitant about selecting a scholars’ floor for their first year at UCSB. Many say their parents thought the choice would be a good idea, and the students agreed, though somewhat reluctantly. One current freshman says, “At first I wasn’t sure how I would like living on a scholars’ floor, but I am so glad I did, and I absolutely love it.” A UCSB alumna who is currently studying for her Ph.D. was not so pleased with her parents’ decision to house her on a scholars’ floor. She feared that her co-residents would be “single-mindedly devoted to their studies” and wouldn’t be interested in having the social and cultural experiences that she wanted as part of her college life. Once she moved in, though, she learned quickly that the residents did not fit the stereotype she had imagined. “My hallmates were completely and totally devoted to their classes and had ‘big’ academic goals – graduate school, professional school, careers in foreign service, etc. All of us felt that we would reach our ‘big goals’ through daily attention to our studies. But, contrary to what I had expected, my fellow residents were also aware that there were more experiences to be had in college than those that occur in the classroom.”

The word “community” comes up repeatedly when students talk about their scholars’ floor experiences. One resident says, “Our hall is about teamwork, friendship, hard work, enthusiasm, pride and family.” Another adds, “I cannot picture myself living anywhere else and still being able to retain such an exciting balance of activities.” And a third confirms that “Everyone is very intelligent, responsible, fun-loving, helpful, and non-competitive. The scholars’ floor really is a community—the residents genuinely care about how you are doing both socially and academically.” Spirit is high on scholars’ floors: “We all have enthusiasm, enthusiasm toward our goals in life, our hall challenges… toward success in school, and most of all, enthusiasm, toward one another as we help each other through everything. We have pride in what we represent.”

Scholars’ floors are sanctuaries where students focus on hard work, have fun, achieve balance, and have respect for one another. The UCSB graduate says “my greatest friends from college are my neighbors from my scholars’ floor, and they have ’grown up’ to be even more incredible versions of the people they were when I met them. Each person has in fact, captured the ‘big dream’ they were chasing back when we were all first-year undergraduates. We have always supported each other, cheered each other on, and been each others’ safety nets when times got tough— all things that we learned living on a scholars’ floor.”
UCSB Emergency Communication Resources

The safety of all members of our campus community is of utmost importance. In light of recent local and national emergencies, we feel that it is important to share with parents the campus’s communication resources by which information about emergency situations will be conveyed.

The main campus Web site, www.ucsb.edu, is a starting point for immediate information. Should a situation arise, the campus will place a link on the main Web page that will include event updates and resource information. Another option is the 1-888-UCSB (8272) telephone line available for recorded information about emergency situations.

The most recent addition to our communication resources is an emergency notification system called UCSB ALERT. This system will enable the campus to send emergency notifications to students, faculty, staff, parents, and visitors via their text-capable cell phones, Blackberry devices, wireless PDAs, pagers, and e-mail once they are registered on the UCSB ALERT Web site.

In an emergency, the situation will determine which groups will be alerted. Messages will go to those in the immediate vicinity of an event. If the situation warrants an additional response, other parties will be alerted to call the resource line noted above for information.

Parents can assist UCSB in our communication efforts by encouraging their son or daughter to register for UCSB ALERT. To learn more about this system, or to sign up, go to http://alert.ucsb.edu/ and click on the button marked “Click Here to Register.”

Being aware of campus communication resources is one of the most important components in emergency preparedness, but another essential element of emergency preparedness is to have a family communication plan. Take time to discuss how your family will communicate an emergency situation. For example, you might agree to call, e-mail, or text each other immediately in the event of an emergency. In an emergency, the most important piece of information for you as a parent will be the knowledge that your son or daughter is safe.

To learn more about this system, or to sign up, go to http://alert.ucsb.edu/ and click on the button marked “Click Here to Register.”

Faqs: Financial Aid Information

If a student has not yet applied for financial aid for the 2008-2009 academic year, is it too late?

No, although the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) priority filing deadline for 2008-2009 financial aid was March 2, 2008, students can still apply for financial aid for the 2008-2009 academic year to be considered for the Pell Grant, Direct Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), and the Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). The FAFSA application is available on the Internet at www.fafsa.ed.gov. UCSB’s school code number is 001320.

If a student has already applied for financial aid for 2008-2009, when will he or she receive an offer of financial aid?

If additional documentation is required to verify the accuracy of the FAFSA information, your son or daughter will be sent an e-mail in April or May directing him or her to check “Aid Status” on the Financial Aid Office Web site (www.finaid.ucsb.edu). When all documents requested are received, they will be reviewed and an offer of financial aid will be created. At that point, another e-mail will be sent directing the student to view his or her Financial Aid Award Letter (FAAL) on the Web site.

What scholarships are available?

UCSB awards its limited allocation of scholarship aid primarily to continuing UCSB students who filed the FAFSA by the March 2, 2008, priority deadline and who meet the dual criteria of financial need and academic merit. Additionally, there are links to free scholarship search engines on the scholarship section of the Financial Aid Office Web site.

How does a student receive financial aid?

Most of the types of aid that a student has accepted will be credited to the student’s account with the UCSB Billing Office (BARC). If the aid placed on the student’s Barc account does not cover all of the institutional charges, he or she will be expected to pay the difference by the fall quarter fee deadline of September 15, 2008.

What is the PLUS Loan?

Parents may borrow a PLUS Loan on behalf of their dependent undergraduate student to help fund educational expenses. A PLUS Loan may be a type of loan offered on the student’s Financial Aid Award Letter. The interest rate is fixed at 7.9%. Repayment begins within sixty days after the loan is fully disbursed. All PLUS Loan applicants must pass a credit check to have their loan approved.

Is financial aid available for Summer Session 2008?

Summer Session financial aid (grants and loans) will be available only to eligible incoming freshmen, transfer and continuing UCSB undergraduate students who are in academic good standing and who have a complete 2007-2008 FAFSA on file with the UCSB Financial Aid Office. To apply, a student must submit a Summer Session 2008 Financial Aid Application (which will be available on the Financial Aid Office Web site on April 14, 2008). The priority filing deadline for the Summer Session 2008 Financial Aid Application is May 30, 2008.

Flu Prevention

During winter quarter 2008, UCSB has been hit hard with the worst influenza epidemic in many years. Student Health has seen record numbers of students miserable with fever, chills, body aches, cold symptoms, and cough. For many students these symptoms have required multiple days of bed rest and missed classes. In the relatively short ten-week quarter system, these illnesses greatly increase the stress for students who are conscientiously trying to keep up-to-date with their schoolwork.

While the flu shot has not been entirely protective this season, there is no doubt that it has prevented or reduced the severity of many cases of influenza on our campus. Unfortunately, and despite widespread promotional campaigns and easy accessibility, many students do not seek out flu immunization each November as recommended for an optimal college health care regimen.

If your son or daughter is a smoker, all upper and lower respiratory illnesses may be more severe and typically will require a longer recovery period. Student Health sponsors a free and comprehensive smoking cessation program open to all students. For more information on smoking cessation, call (805) 893-5013.

We strongly encourage you to recommend a flu shot for your student next fall 2008 and each fall thereafter. Student Health will once again be sponsoring flu shot clinics at various locations around campus, as well as in our own facility. Next October, simply access our Web site at http://studenthealth.sa.ucsb.edu for further information.

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Distinguished Leadership Challenge® Workshop Arrives at UCSB

The world presents no shortage of opportunities and challenges, and there is no doubt that today’s Gauchos will accomplish outstanding things in the years and decades to come. Your son or daughter is receiving an excellent education at one of the top-ranked research universities in the nation. In addition to supporting students’ academic success, the Division of Student Affairs provides numerous opportunities for students to supplement academic coursework with experiences and training that promote success.

The Leadership Challenge® workshop series is the newest offering in the area of leadership development at UCSB. The series is appropriate for all students, regardless of experience or interests. Unparalleled in its flexibility, the series encourages students to identify and genuinely apply their values; in fact, research indicates that the most successful leaders are those who understand their values and act in accordance with them.

Barry Posner (’70), co-author of the bestselling book, The Leadership Challenge, is a world-renowned researcher and educator in the field of leadership. Since its original publication, The Leadership Challenge, has been translated into twelve languages; and the leadership model at its core has been the focus of more than 350 doctoral dissertations. Dr. Posner, dean of the Leavey School of Business and professor at Santa Clara University, is currently involved in projects in the Bay Area in the fields of education and business. The Division of Student Affairs is proud of this outstanding UCSB alumnus and excited to add this outstanding opportunity to its diverse co-curriculum.

The Leadership Challenge®, based on more than twenty years of research, uses the Leadership Practices Inventory assessment, backed by the analysis of 100,000 survey responses collected from around the globe. The research highlights behaviors common to effective leaders in a variety of fields and in a number of countries. Students who enroll in the series also learn about the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® and are asked to apply them in practical ways to their own experiences and goals.

Students who participate in the Leadership Challenge® at UCSB receive a customized leadership assessment and extensive workshop and review materials. Additionally, students who complete the series are recognized at the annual UCSB Activities Awards each June. Interested students are invited to visit the Office of Student Life to get more information and to sign up for this free series. For further information, contact Miles Ashlock at (805) 893-3544.

Parent Support to Student Affairs Exceeds $50,000

The Division of Student Affairs is pleased to announce that for the 2007-2008 academic year to date, parents have provided more than $50,000 in gifts! These gifts, in the form of cash donations, are enabling a number of departments to provide students with crucial academic, social, and personal support. “Favorites” among parent donors include Campus Learning Assistance Services, or CLAS, which offers tutoring, and Recreation, through which students have tremendous opportunities to participate in team sports.

Parents also have given significant support to Career Services and the Office of Student Life, the latter of which offers leadership programs, advises student organizations, and houses Greek affairs. In addition, parents have been extremely receptive to many of student affairs’ newer programs, including those aimed at health and fitness (the Wellness Program), student mental health, and increased campus safety.

To join with other parents, guardians, and family members in making a gift to student affairs, simply contact Laurie Hoyle, director of student affairs grants and development, at (805) 893-5017 or laurie.hoyle@sa.ucsb.edu. To learn more about student affairs’ wide range of departments, programs, and services, visit www.sa.ucsb.edu. And thank you for all you do every day to support your student’s success.

UCSB Briefs

The Office of Admissions received a total of 55,871 applications for fall 2008 which is a campus record. Of the 47,025 freshman applications, we expect to admit around 21,000 and enroll about 21,000. Nearly one third of the freshman applicants report a GPA of 4.0 or higher. Eighteen percent of applicants will be the first in their families to attend college, and twenty-five percent of applicants are members of underrepresented ethnic groups. With receipt of 8,846 transfer applications, we expect to admit around 6,200 and enroll 1,400.

The second annual All Gaucho Reunion will take place on April 24-27, 2008. Many exciting activities are planned for you and your entire family including the alumni golf tournament, a 10K/5K Gaucho Gallop, men’s and women’s soccer games, and a night of rock and roll at The Hub. Other highlights of the weekend include the grand opening of the Mosher Alumni House, the Gauchos athletics hall of fame dinner, the Riviera campus alumni reunion, and the Walter Capps Vietnam War class reunion. For complete information, visit the Web site at www.ucsbalum.com.

Parents’ and Family Weekend is held every fall quarter. Hundreds of students’ families will explore the campus and get a firsthand look at what life is like at UCSB. You will have the opportunity to attend classes, participate in faculty presentations, take part in campus area tours and activities, as well as meet a variety of UCSB faculty and administrators, including Chancellor Henry T. Yang and his wife Dilling Yang.

Senior Week Designed to Facilitate Post-UCSB Transition

UCSB is proud to announce the creation of Senior Week, to be held April 21-26, 2008. This week-long event is designed to help seniors make a smooth transition to their new lives beyond UCSB as well as to celebrate their time on campus. Senior Week, free to students, is co-sponsored by Career Services, the Office of Student Life, and the Alumni Association. The week will include workshops, social events, and opportunities to connect with visiting alums (as Senior Week overlaps with the annual All-Gaucho Reunion weekend).

During the week, students will have a variety of workshops to choose from, all designed to assist with the transition into a professional or graduate school environment. Every day there will be informative and free workshops including the following:

- Interview Skills
- Interview Etiquette
- Ten Ways to Shine in Your New Job
- Crash Course in Supervision
- Five Exemplary Leadership Practices
- Tips for Success from Young Alums
- Making Smart Financial Choices
- Finding Housing in Your New Town
- Grad School 101
- Extreme Life Makeover

Senior Week will also include social events, most notably the senior bonfire to be held on the beach on Friday evening, complete with a live band and s’mores. Seniors will have many opportunities to connect with alums over the weekend, including a speed interviewing event, a campus BBQ and soccer game, and the “destinations mixer” where students and alums will be grouped by cities/regions. If your son or daughter is a senior, encourage him or her to participate in as many of these activities as possible to help prepare for life after UCSB.

The dates for this weekend and a schedule of events will be posted in a few weeks at www.ia.ucsb.edu/pfw/. For questions, send an e-mail to parent@ia.ucsb.edu or call the Office of Public Events at (805) 893-7382.

The new University Children’s Center, the last tenant to take up residence in the new Student Resource Building, celebrated its grand opening on February 1, 2008. The infant and toddler classrooms provide care for children from three months to three years, and over thirty children are currently enrolled in the new facility. This on-campus facility allows busy students, faculty, and staff who are also parents a more convenient location for childcare, and provides another part-time employment opportunity for our students. For more information call (805) 893-7030.

Scholarship Leadership Citizenship
Commencement Planning Begins Now

Schedule of Ceremonies:

Sunday, June 8, 2008 – 11:00 a.m.
College of Creative Studies, Campbell Hall

All Saturday (June 14) and Sunday (June 15) ceremonies take place on the Faculty Club Green

Saturday, June 14 – 9:00 a.m.
Science and Mathematics

Saturday, June 14 – 1:00 p.m.
Engineering and Science

Saturday, June 14 – 4:00 p.m.
Social Sciences I

Sunday, June 15 – 9:00 a.m.
Social Sciences II

Sunday, June 15 – 1:00 p.m.
Humanities and Fine Arts

Sunday, June 15 – 4:00 p.m.
Graduate Division

Students must make a commencement reservation for an open and available ceremony in order to participate in commencement. Special note: Parents, please remind your student that declaring candidacy for an official degree and making a commencement reservation are two separate actions on the GOLD system.

Please keep in mind that thousands of graduating seniors will be inviting family and friends to the commencement ceremonies. Students should limit their number of guests to a maximum of six to help maintain a high level of comfort and decorum.

For more information, call the commencement hotline at (805) 893-8289, send an e-mail to commencement@sa.ucsb.edu, or visit the Web site at www.instadv.ucsb.edu/commencement. For accommodations information visit www.santabarbara.com. Book hotel rooms soon; space is limited!

Grad Fair 2008
A graduating student fair will be held April 29-30 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. in the University Center lobby. Various campus department representatives and vendors will be available to answer commencement questions. Check out the Graduation Center on the Bookstore Web site at www.bookstore.ucsb.edu/graduation/graduation.html.

Grad Gift: Gaucho for Life
Need a special graduation gift idea for your son or daughter? Consider giving the gift that will last a lifetime—a life membership in the UCSB Alumni Association. Benefits include career connections, job postings, networking, Coastlines publication, travel tours, alumni directory, and locator service. More information can be found on the Alumni Association’s Web site at www.ucsbalum.com.