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Alcalá

A newsletter for the employees
of the University of San Diego

View

October 1999, Vol. 16, Issue 2

'Not Content to Just be Satisfactory'

By Jill Wagner

Is USD a Catholic university committed to the exploration of faith and culture? Or is it a nationally prominent university focused on teaching and research?

President **Alice B. Hayes** asserts that USD can be both Catholic in nature and academically excellent.

"No university would say that it was its goal to be just OK, particularly a Catholic university where work is seen as a service to God," Hayes said to faculty and administrators gathered Sept. 17 for her annual convocation.

Results from surveys conducted the past three years as part of the Ethics Across the Campus initiative affirm the desire of students, faculty, staff and administrators for USD to pursue the goals of academic excellence and Catholic identity.

"The Ethics Across the Campus report urges us to explore more deeply the commitment to excellence in all academic and professional endeavors," Hayes said.

Catholic identity is not an alternative to academic excellence, Hayes noted, but rather a goal that can complement rigorous intellectual work and teaching. "A Catholic university is, first, a university," she said.

So, while excellence in teaching, research and community service is pursued, USD also can strive to promote the exploration of faith, justice and service to humanity as part of a Catholic mission.

Summarizing survey data, Hayes said that some work needs to be done. Three-fourths of administrators and staff, two-thirds of faculty and half of the students feel it is important to support a Catholic mission. But the number of respondents who think their understanding of the Catholic faith is

greater because of their experiences at USD is notably lower than the number of people who consider supporting the mission important.

"Students want to experience a strong Catholic culture at USD, and this calls for further conversation and planning on campus," she said.

In her address that kicks off the new school year, Hayes broached the subject of academic quality and Catholic identity partly in response to a Vatican initiative to scrutinize Catholic colleges and universities

"The Ethics Across the Campus report urges us to explore more deeply the commitment to excellence in all academic and professional endeavors," Hayes said.

around the world. A document called *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, if implemented, would assess

how well the schools are living up to their Catholic mission.

USD's goals as a Catholic university include respect for faith, ethics and community service; an academic program in which religious issues and moral values are studied; and an intellectual environment in which scholars examine faith and culture.

"We are achieving many of these goals to a satisfactory degree," Hayes said. "But we are not content to just be satisfactory."

Excellence Personified

The excellence in teaching and research that already exists on campus is exemplified by 17 faculty who were recognized during the convocation as the 1999-2000 University Professors, Herzog Endowed Scholars and Steber Professors. The awards for outstanding teaching and scholarly work are bestowed by their peers.

The 1999-2000 University Professors are: **Tammy Dwyer**, chemistry; **Florence**

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Explore Viejas

Bingo! Your shouts of triumph could be the next to echo through the bingo hall of Viejas Casino and Outlet Center. Or maybe you'll saunter away from the blackjack table with a bundle of chips. Perhaps you'll walk through the doors of the Black & Decker outlet store to find the perfect power tool and kitchen appliance.

Try your luck, start that Christmas shopping and explore the Viejas center from noon to 7 p.m., Oct. 17. A bus leaving from the UC West parking lot will take up to 42 employees and friends to the East County Indian reservation for \$10 roundtrip. Sponsored by the Staff Employees Association, the event includes a \$20 coupon book for the casino and shopping center, and a tour by a Viejas guide.

Participants must be 18 years or older. To make reservations, call **Mildred Brown** at ext. 4654 or **Yolanda Castro** at ext. 4520.

Parking Jackpot

Congratulations to **Armando Gonzales**, **Judy Sanchez** and **Mary Jane Tiernan**, winners of the Staff Employees Association parking permit drawing. Each person won \$120 to buy a permit of their choice. The SEA fund-raiser pulled in \$682.

University Ministry Events Faculty and Staff Prayer

Breakfast, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., Oct. 20, in the Faculty/Staff Dining Room. Father Patrick

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Benefits Brief

Mark Nov. 5 on your calendar for the annual USD Employee Benefits Fair in UC Forum A/B from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. You are invited to participate in free health screenings, enter opportunity drawings for a variety of prizes and talk with insurance and retirement company specialists.

Open Enrollment: Nov. 8 - 19 are the dates for open enrollment for year 2000 benefits. Check campus mail in the coming weeks for more information.

In order to better serve you, please contact the following benefits department personnel for information: **Vicki Coscia** (ext. 8764) for retirement issues; **Nina Sciuto** (ext. 8762) for benefits enrollment, insurance problem solving and leaves of absence; **Susan Pillsbury-Barton** (ext. 2063) for tuition remission; and **Debbie Anderson** (ext. 4456) for health and dependent care reimbursement, COBRA, insurance student certification, and post retirement medical questions.

New IRS Ruling on Smoking Cessation Programs: The IRS now states that Smoking Cessation Programs are tax deductible and will also make these expenses reimbursable through a health care reimbursement account. Included in this decision is coverage for the cost of prescription drugs to aid in nicotine withdrawal. Nicotine gum or patches are not deductible, however, because no prescription is required.

Immunizations Available on Campus: For your convenience, USD's health center offers flu shots in mid-October for \$5. Hepatitis A and B immunizations are also available upon request. Contact the health center at ext. 4595 for scheduling information.

— Debbie Anderson

Numbers Cruncher is Also Wordsmith

By Jill Wagner

Lois Scheer has a terrible time with her checkbook. She can never get the darn thing balanced. But give her a \$1 million acquisitions budget for the Legal Research Center and she gets the account figured right down to the penny.

As acquisitions assistant in the campus law library, Scheer manages the ordering of new materials, maintains subscriptions to journals and keeps the financial records of all the transactions. Her 16 years of superior service earned Scheer recognition as a 1999 Employee of the Year finalist.

"Lois does not merely take direction, she makes direction, by taking responsibility for each transaction from beginning to end," says Nancy Carol Carter, director of the Legal Research Center. "In so doing, she ensures our funds are always in absolutely perfect order."

Try to get Scheer to explain why a simple personal account can cause such confusion when a complex corporate budget doesn't and her voice is lost in a stream of laughter. With a giant grin, she switches the subject to what she likes best — words.

"Words are so intriguing, numbers are so unforgiving," says Scheer, who is also a freelance writer for a religious publishing house based in St. Louis.

In her Mira Mesa home, which she shares with her husband, Rod, Scheer turned one of the kids' room into a study with a beautiful wood desk and lovely view from the windows. It's an inspiring place to complete assignments such as writing greeting cards, bookmarks, devotionals for families, and even a children's book she is hoping to publish one day. Trouble is, she can never get the words to come out when in that study.

"I just can't do it," she says. "I have to go use the other room with an old Formica table."

With her son and daughter grown and out of the house, several rooms are available



One of Lois Scheer's (front center) favorite parts of her job is her co-workers. (From left to right): Kathy Whistler, Carrie Dussia, Maggie McDonald, Rod Miller, Luda Berengolts, Sarah Winston and Loren Stamper.

to accommodate the whims of a writer. Lois and Rod, a former Navy chaplain, settled in the suburban neighborhood 23 years ago because Mira Mesa is not a typical suburb. The couple wanted their children to grow up in a culturally diverse area with all the benefits of large homes, backyards and neighborhood parks.

Diversity is also what Scheer loves about coming to work each day at the LRC. Among the 24 library employees, languages spoken include Arabic, Russian, Hindi, Spanish, French and German. Summer vacations this year included trips to India, Costa Rica, Brazil, Nepal, Romania and Ireland.

"It's not your average Monday morning water cooler conversation, that's for sure," she says. "I work with such a fine group of people."

Nine of them join her each day in the large office behind the circulation desk. As the technical services department, they purchase, receive, catalog and shelve all the LRC's books and journals. Scheer is the first person visitors see when stepping through the double doors, and she always has a smile for a greeting. Her kindness, compassion and deep sense of faith is appreciated by her co-workers, probably more than Scheer realizes.

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Employees Speak Out About Supervisors

Judging by the comments at a recent hot topics forum, all employees are not treated equally on the USD campus.

Which is to be expected, asserted a panel of supervisors including **Roger Manion**, **Judith Muñoz**, **Charles Waldie**, **Rudy Spano** and **M.T. Karlinger**.

"Some people equate consistency with fairness, which is not always the case," said Muñoz, director of human resources.

For example, a supervisor may not grant flexible work hours to a receptionist who has to be at the front counter during regular business hours, yet will let a back office worker set his own schedule. It's not a consistent policy, but not unfair either, compared to the demands of each employee's job, Muñoz said.

Gathered in Salomon Hall to talk about supervisory discretion, the panel fielded questions and explained procedures to a group of more than 60 staff, administrators and faculty. Sponsored by the Staff Employees Association, the hot topic forums are designed to address employment issues and give employees a chance to voice opinions.

It has long been the practice at USD to give supervisors the discretion to make decisions on issues such as flexible hours, attending classes during work hours and attending special events, such as the employee picnic. The goal is to keep the rules pliable so that individual circumstances are taken into account before denying a request. Consistency, on the other hand, could cut out options for many people.

"Sometimes when organizations are forced to be consistent, they often end up with a very rigid definition of what's acceptable," Muñoz said.

Several employees spoke on behalf of facilities management workers, questioning why it seems they are rarely allowed to attend campus events and meetings.

"There's never been an edict that says our employees can't go to something," said Manion, director of facilities management. "I'm not sure where that question came from or why."

From the back of the room, where a group of gardeners, housekeepers and building maintenance workers huddled to listen to a

Spanish translator, came comments that were echoed by others in the room.

"They would like to be treated equal," said **Perla Bleisch**, faculty secretary in the School of Law, who acted as translator.

"They do not believe that all supervisors know how to treat people. They expect to at least be treated with decency."

The claims of unfair treatment by supervisors led to a discussion about evaluation of the managers and directors, and a suggestion that employees should be allowed to rate their supervisor's job performance. Currently, each division of the university handles evaluation of supervisors in a different way and staff are rarely involved.

Margie Carroll, faculty secretary for math and computer science, noted that on a recent survey conducted as part of the university's re-accreditation process, 93 percent of the respondents felt supervisors should be evaluated. Similar data shows up on the

SEA Ethics Across the Campus values survey, conducted two years ago to assess how well USD

is living up to its mission.

"In light of the values survey, we need to have a fair evaluation process," said **Father Ron Pachence**, director of the practical theology program. "No matter what level they are, employees need to feel assessment is happening."

Scheer

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"Without fanfare, Lois looks to the needs of her co-workers, putting in a kind word when she observes someone in distress, or leaving a cheery note to bring a smile to a colleague's face and warmth to someone's heart," says Carter. "She has a flair for bringing joy to others."

University Ministry

(Continued from page one)

Howell, S.J., will be speaking on "Discerning Life's Choices from the Heart." Reservations are required by Oct. 13. Call Sister **Irene Cullen** at ext. 2265.

Bible Study, 12:10 to 12:50 p.m., every Tuesday, in Warren Hall 201. For more information, call **Mike McIntyre** at ext. 4251.

Bible Study in Spanish, 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., every Wednesday, in Warren Hall room 2B. For more information, call **Father Alejandro Crosthwaite** at ext. 6818.

Daily Masses at Founders Chapel, 12:10 p.m., Monday through Friday; and 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Sunday Masses at Founders Chapel, 7 and 9 p.m.

Passages

Retired

Charles Waldie, director of budget and administration in the School of Law, on Aug. 31, after six years.

Births

Twin daughters, **Lauren Elizabeth** and **Miranda Katherine Bernhard**, to **Sue Lowery**, professor of biology, and her husband, **Eric Bernhard**, on Aug. 23.

A daughter, **Maria "Lupita" Guadalupe**, to **Tonis Manriquez**, assistant director of UC Operations, and **Manuel Veléz**, on Sept. 4.

A son, **Adam Joseph**, to **Vicky Madruga**, dining services, and her husband, **Tom**, on Sept. 10.

Deaths

M. Frank Stattel, father of **Roger Stattel**, computer user services technician in the School of Law, on Sept. 6.

Correction

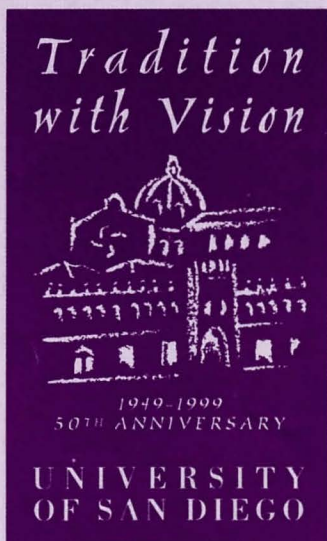
From a story in the September issue, the Patient Advocacy Program, housed in the University Office Park, does not have a campus extension. To call the office, dial an outside line to 543-9998.

Psst...

Bits and Pieces from the Readers

A father tromped across the grass in front of Founders Hall on Move-In Day and declared to his companion, "I don't think they're allowed to walk on the grass when school starts."

The myth seemed to have spread instantaneously. A mom trying to meet up with a friend standing near Aromas retraced her steps to walk around a large patch of grass and avoid stepping on the lush blades.



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Something Other Than a Journalist

By Jill Wagner

Empty sandwich wrappers lay crumpled on the blanket, shoes were tossed aside and Theresa rested nearby on a grassy slope. She gazed at the brilliant blue sky checkered with soft clouds as I grabbed our kite and ran barefoot through the cool grass. It soared into a sky that smiled on us that September afternoon.

CC took over and let the string out farther and farther. We watched, mesmerized by our fluttering kite with a rainbow whirly gig as its tail.

It was the most perfect thing three friends could do on a lunch hour.

The simplicity of the afternoon renewed my unsettled spirit. For days I dreamt about feeling that free every moment. Then, five days later, I resigned from USD.

For months I've known I'm done being a journalist and ready to be a writer. Rather than report, I want to create. Inside of me are adventures, insights and stories waiting to be shared, but I need help. So I turn to school and seek a master's program that will teach me to be a novelist, poet, essayist ... something other than a journalist.

In the weeks ahead, I will drink morning tea on my balcony, walk to the park and read in the shade of a eucalyptus tree, ride my bike to meet friends for lunch and spend afternoons writing like I've never written before. By the end of the year, my applications for graduate school will be complete and by next summer I hope to be loading boxes into a truck that will take me to a new city. A city where I will spend two years studying and a lifetime practicing the art of writing.

My office mates spent my final two weeks asking me to remember them when. When my novel tops *The New York Times* Bestseller List or when I'm on my first book signing tour. And I struggled to find the words to assure them a piece of each person I've met at USD is a part of me always.

If I'm lucky enough to write something that touches the hearts and minds of the country, it will be in part because of strength given me by the friends, colleagues and teachers of the last five years. If I'm lucky enough simply to make a living as a writer, it will be in part because of the spirit of USD.

Thank you for touching my heart.

Convocation

(Continued from page one)

Gillman, theological and religious studies; **Rick Gonzalez**, biology; **Diane Hatton**, Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science; **William Lawrence**, School of Law; **Herbert Lazerow**, School of Law; **Loren Margheim**, School of Business Administration; **Lee Ann Otto**, political science; **Roger Pace**, communication studies; **Diane Pattison**, School of Business Administration; **Rodney Pepper**, philosophy; **Michael Rappaport**, School of Law; **Mary Scherr**, School of Education; and **Dirk Yandell**, School of Business Administration.

The Herzog Endowed Scholars are law professors **Lynne Dallas** and **Maimon Schwarzschild**.

The 1999-2000 Steber Professor is **James Burns**, School of Business Administration.



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