UC Santa Barbara Emeriti Association

October 2026 Report to CUCEA

emeritiassociation.ucsb.edu

On September 24, the Board of the UCSB Emeriti Association met in person to receive committee reports and to discuss business. The Board has four new members for 2026-2027, who replace the vacancies that opened at the end of 2025-2026.

The Association operates on a no-dues basis, with membership granted automatically to Senate emeriti and to eligible non-Senate academic retirees (Librarians, Continuing Lecturers, and Professional Researchers). We currently have 887 members, including 495 emeriti and 392 academic retirees

The Emeriti Association has a long history of financially supporting UCSB's Promise Scholars program. In January 2026 the Association launched a small-scale pilot of a mentoring program by emeriti for these first-generation college students from California. It proved very successful, and requests from the Scholars to participate have been high. We look forward to expanding the program to the emeriti at large in the future. A reception was held on May 13th by the Development Office for donors to the Promise Scholars program, Emeriti Association Board members, mentors, and Scholars; a similar event is planned for next spring.

A General Meeting of the Emeriti Association was held on April 14th via Zoom. President Muriel Zimmerman introduced Chancellor Dennis Assanis, who was inaugurated in fall 2025. Following a brief campus update by the chancellor, he then entertained questions from the general membership and guests. Discussion touched on the annual Emeriti Association survey of the retirement experience of recent emeriti; the results of the 11th Campus Survey; what additional roles emeriti and staff retirees might play in the future at UCSB; campus budget challenges; international students; and the financial contributions made by staff and faculty retirees. The Chancellor, accompanied by Mrs. Assanis, remained present for the positive report by two Promise Scholar mentees of their experience with the Emeriti Association's mentoring program.

Since the meeting with the Chancellor, the Emeriti Association Board was deeply dismayed to learn that he has discontinued two long-standing practices that recognize the presence of emeriti at the campus-wide level. The first is the established practice of issuing In Memoriam notifications of faculty by the Office of the Chancellor upon the death of a colleague. The second is that we have not yet heard whether the Chancellor's annual celebratory reception for retiring faculty will continue. The Emeriti Association regards the losses of these practices and traditions as significant to the morale of campus community and chillingly unsatisfactory is a number of ways. The Association Board has sent a strong letter of concern to the Chancellor, discussed further below, about the discontinuation of In Memoriam notifications. It plans to address the loss of the annual celebratory reception at a future time.

Emeriti Association Business

Most of the actual work of the Association is done by its committees. We have established the expectation that every member of the Board will be active in at least one committee; this practice has a positive effect on the on the Association's overall level of activity and visibility.

The Association moved a few years ago to a model of funding by donation rather than by membership dues. The **Development and Engagement Committee** conducts two annual fundraising campaigns, both of which accept tax-deductible donations by credit card online via the UCSB Development Office. The fall fundraiser is directed at the Association's support for Promise Scholars, and the spring fundraiser is directed at general Association projects and activities. The Promise Scholars fundraiser exceeded its goal of $15,000. This will allow the Association to continue funding for our current scholarship recipients and an additional two new scholars in 2026-2027. While the general Association fund has a balance sufficient to cover Association activities, its uneven year-to-year donations is a matter the committee intends to focus on for the fund's spring fundraiser. Overall, the change to universal membership has been successful, with donations double the amount formerly brought in by dues.

The **Oral History Committee** continues to make professionally produced video interviews with retired faculty members, in collaboration with UCSB Visual Services. Six excellent oral histories have been produced thus far.

The **Emeriti Welfare Committee** (EWC) continues its advocacy for improvements in campus support for UCSB emeriti and for the Emeriti Association, which remains quite low relative to other UC campuses.

EWC has been working with the UCSB Senate Council on Faculty Welfare (CFW) to formalize an ongoing liaison position between the Emeriti Association and the Faculty Senate. In spring 2026, CFW voted to amend its bylaws to add a non-voting member to be designated by the Emeriti Association and submitted a proposal to the UCSB Senate Executive Council for approval. That proposal is wending its way through the UCSB Senate.

Each fall, EWC surveys newly retired senate faculty, librarians, professional researchers, and continuing lecturers (all of whom automatically become EA members and most of whom retire on July 1) on their experience with the retirement process. Our goal is to gather data to support advocacy for improvements in the process for the benefit of both current and future emeriti, and to monitor the effectiveness of the retirement process over time. This year's survey will be open from early October through mid-November. The response rate on the last two surveys has exceeded 55%, and the results for the 2025-2026 cohort will be reported in the spring report to CUCEA.

Beginning in fall 2025, UCSB established (for a two-year term) a 43%-time recall position of Retirement Counselor in Human Resources. EWC is cooperating with the Retirement Counselor and is advocating to make this a permanent full-time position. EWC is also talking with the UCSB administration about the possibility of a "Pathways to Retirement" program for UCSB faculty, similar to those at several other UC campuses.

Finally, as mentioned above, the EWC was gravely concerned to learn that the long-established practice of posting campus-wide In Memoriam notifications by the Office of the Chancellor was discontinued. Until former Chancellor Henry Yang retired, the Association's In Memoriam tab

on its website linked directly to campus-wide announcements prepared and issued by the Office of the Chancellor. Presently, the only recognition deceased emeriti receive is via a link to the systemwide UC Academic Senate website and on the Emeriti and Retiree Center's In Memoriam page. The only other local recognition is now limited to announcements contained solely within individual departments. This loss of focus on our own campus suggests a troubling lack of vision at the highest level of our new campus administration. The Association has sent a letter expressing deep concern to Chancellor Assanis about the negative impact of this change in practice upon the local campus as a community. The letter also addresses the ways in which this change constrains reputational benefits UCSB accrues from recognition of emeriti career achievements.

Activities and Events since April 2026 Report

Most of the activities and events organized by the Emeriti Association are also open to members of the UCSB Retirees Association.

- Bike to Breakfast rides (aka "Beach to Brunch"), held on a Tuesday every month year-round, continue to be popular. These are rides of 12 to 20 miles on bike paths and quiet streets of Goleta, Santa Barbara, Montecito, and Summerland. The rides are designed to be safe, suitable for both beginners and experienced riders, friendly to both conventional and e-bikes, and to include a stop for breakfast. Rides continued through spring and summer, and now into fall.

- Our reading group on "Universities and Authoritarianism," led by Board member Charles Bazerman, concluded its once-a-month meetings in June.

- May 13. Event. UCSB's Davidson Library celebrated the ongoing scholarship of three distinguished UCSB faculty emeriti, Catherine L. Albanese, Brenda Major, and John Woolley, each presenting on their current research, followed by a Q & A. Catherine L. Albanese is J. F. Rowny Distinguished Professor Emerita in Comparative Religions, and former president of the American Academy of Religion. Brenda Major is Distinguished Professor Emerita in Psychology, a pioneer in the study of stigma and resilience, and an elected fellow of the National Academy of Sciences. John Woolley is Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Co-Director of the American Presidency Project, now in its 25th year.

- June 4. Webinar. "Artificial Intelligence for Vulnerability Analysis: A Historical Perspective." Giovanni Vigna, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Computer Science at the University of California in Santa Barbara, and the director of the NSF AI Institute for Agent-based Cyber Threat Intelligence and Operation (ACTION) at UCSB. Vigna's research interests include vulnerability assessment, malware analysis, the underground economy, the security of social networks, voting security and misinformation detection, and the applications of machine learning and artificial intelligence to security problems. Hosted by Board member John Gilbert.

- June 15. Tour. Bellosguardo. A tour of the renowned Clark Estate and its villa, Bellosguardo, former residence of the enigmatic copper heiress Huguette Clark. Upon her death in 2011, Clark bequeathed the property to the Bellosguardo Foundation, which is committed to honoring the estate as a focal point for the arts in Santa Barbara. Bellosguardo stands in the pristine condition Huguette left behind in 1953, perfectly maintained and protected since then. Arranged by Board member Bill Ashby.

- September 28. Tour. Lobero Theater. A tour led by Marianne Clark, Executive Director, of the historic Lobero Theater to learn about renovation plans, see the theater and backstage, and to end on stage for wine and cheese and a Q & A session. The Lobero Theater, established in 1873, is the oldest continuously operating theater in California and the fourth-oldest continuously operating performing arts theater in the U.S. Arranged by Board member Jill Felber.

- October 8. Webinar. "Who Gets to Live in Santa Barbara?" Richard P. Appelbaum, Distinguished Professor Emeritus and former MacArthur Foundation Chair in Global and International Studies and Sociology at UCSB. Appelbaum's scholarship combines research and activism to address the city's housing crisis, its divisive adoption of rent control, the need for more housing, and balancing Santa Barbara's unique environmental qualities with the need to affordably house the people who work here. Hosted by Professor Emeritus of Sociology Richard Flacks.

The **Program Committee** schedules webinars by UCSB faculty and emeriti nearly every month, among other opportunities for emeriti to recreate and connect. Archives of webinars are available at emeritiassociation.ucsb.edu/events/archived-webinars.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bielby
UCSB Representative to CUCEA