



PAUL SCHRAUB

**Denice D. Denton**, the ninth chancellor to lead UC Santa Cruz, was appointed by the UC Regents in December and officially assumed the position on February 14. On the eve of her first official day as chancellor, Denton took a few minutes from a very full schedule to contemplate the future. As she stresses in the following interview, she is eager to pursue opportunities that will benefit students, support the work of staff and faculty, and foster productive connections with alumni, donors, corporate partners, and others.

# Introducing

## What have you learned about UC Santa Cruz since your appointment as chancellor?

**I**N A GLOBAL SOCIETY, universities have new obligations to seek, understand, and celebrate diversity—not only diversity in people, but the intellectual diversity and creativity that can be found at the edges of inquiry. I have learned that this interdisciplinary approach to creativity is a cornerstone of UC Santa Cruz’s history and remains an integral element of its current aspirations. This appreciation for intellectual diversity provides a strategic advantage for our campus—one that I believe will continue to distinguish UC Santa Cruz as one of the world’s most innovative universities.

I have also observed that UCSC’s students and faculty are committed to making positive contributions to society, regardless of their discipline. And this fire burns brightly among our alumni, who clearly carry forward a tradition of making a difference in the world. Already, I have seen examples of this desire to tackle critical issues in the work of the Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community; the Institute for Advanced Feminist Research; the Center for Ocean Health; the Institute for Humanities Research; and the Center for Adaptive Optics, to name just a few. In fact, I have not yet discovered an area of inquiry at UCSC that doesn’t strive to create knowledge that will advance our society. At UCSC, for example, we are home to a health sciences major

# Chancellor Denton

that requires Spanish-language study, engineering research that is helping the blind to “see,” and an international economics program whose scholars are guiding governmental policy around the globe.

## **UCSC is much smaller than your former institution, the University of Washington. Does that concern you?**

**S**IZE IS NOT AS IMPORTANT as creativity and innovation, both of which abound at UC Santa Cruz. UCSC is smaller and younger than other leading universities, but this makes it more agile and adaptive, allowing nimble responses to change and new opportunities. Another key to UCSC’s leadership in the 21st century will be our ability to develop new and productive partnerships. The problems we face as a society are too large for one discipline or even one institution to tackle alone. I am convinced that bringing together a variety of strengths and perspectives is the only way to address society’s crucial challenges. Many UCSC scholars are doing just that. With students, staff, and faculty, I will build on the collaborations already begun and develop new ones.

## **How does the current climate of limited budgets affect your vision for UC Santa Cruz?**

**W**HEN I STARTED AS DEAN of engineering at the University of Washington, budgets also were lean and state budget cuts were frequent.

Even so, we doubled our resources over a period of a few years. That experience underscored my belief that an entrepreneurial spirit along with productive partnerships can lead to new sources of funds and more effective ways to use the resources at hand. UC Santa Cruz is emerging from a period of significant budget reductions. Still, I see opportunity to recover and expand resources, whether from private philanthropy or increased state and federal funding. For example, a reputation for excellent teaching and research has led to fundraising success in the current Cornerstone Campaign. I intend for UCSC to build on that unprecedented success.

## **What led you to accept the position of chancellor at UC Santa Cruz?**

**U**CSC IS CLEARLY GOING PLACES. The campus has a well-deserved reputation for—and a passionate commitment to—diversity, excellence, and innovation. As the new chancellor, I welcome the chance to support the education of some of the country’s most talented students and to help sustain and inspire the work of distinguished faculty and outstanding staff. I will dedicate myself as an ambassador and ardent advocate in both national and international circles to increase recognition of UCSC’s achievements. On a personal note, this position has given me the wonderful opportunity to live in a community that is renowned for its natural beauty and progressive attitudes.

## **A Record of Achievement**

**F**rom 1996 until her UC appointment, Chancellor Denton was Dean of the College of Engineering and Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington (UW), the first woman to hold such a position at an NRC–designated Research One university. Previously, she held academic appointments at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Chancellor Denton has an international reputation for effective advocacy supporting access to science, math, and engineering opportunities for women and minorities. In May 2004, Denton was among nine scholars honored by the White House with a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring, recognizing her role as a leader in enhancing diversity in science and engineering.

Chancellor Denton is a current member of the President’s Committee to select recipients of the National Medal of Science, and she also serves on the committee to select recipients of the A. T. Waterman Award sponsored by the National Science Foundation to honor exceptional individual achievement in science or engineering. She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Association for Women in Science, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and serves on several prestigious commissions and boards.

The author of nearly 100 scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers, Denton earned a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she earned three other degrees, including a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, the Electrical Engineering degree, and a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering. Her research is in microelectromechanical systems (MEMS) as an enabling technology, particularly in life sciences applications. She also works in the arena of transformational change in higher education and holds a UCSC appointment as Professor of Electrical Engineering.