

San Diego EXPORT Center receives Equal Opportunity and Diversity Award

By Tracy Nelson

It's no surprise that an organization like the San Diego EXPORT Center (Excellence in Partnerships for Community Outreach, Research on Health Disparities, and Training) at University of California, San Diego (UCSD) is a recipient of the 2004 UCSD Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action & Diversity Award. With a mission to reduce health disparities among the diverse African-American and Hispanic populations of San Diego, and staff consisting of a rich diversity of people, it fits the mold of an honoree perfectly.

“As employees and supervisors we have an obligation to make our university community more diverse,” said UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox at a recent award ceremony.

The Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action and Diversity Awards Program honors individuals and departments that show outstanding support for the UCSD Principles of Community, which: 1) Promote fairness in the workplace; 2) Celebrate cultural differences; 3) Make UCSD a better place to work; and 4) Demonstrate exemplary support of the UCSD Principles of Community.

“The diversity these honorees have built across the campus creates an environment for success,” said Fox.

Established in October of 2002 by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s new National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, the EXPORT Center is a collaboration between UCSD, San Diego State University, the San Diego Council of Community Clinics and the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. This partnership is based on successful

relationships within the UCSD School of Medicine and twenty years of working in the San Diego community.

The Center's infrastructure and staffing is also rich in diversity: of their 43 affiliated faculty, 49% are minority, and 48% female; 70% of the staff are minority. Even the 13 student employees add to the diversity of the Center with 85 percent being minority.

"The EXPORT Center provides leadership and resources to increase and enhance education, training and research opportunities for students and faculty interested in health disparities," according to Dr. Sandra Daley, Principal Investigator of the Center.

The EXPORT Center spreads diversity beyond its office through the linking of existing San Diego programs across multiple departments with new programs that embrace cultural and ethnic diversity. For this work, the EXPORT Center was also awarded a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition by Congresswoman Susan Davis.

In 2004, the EXPORT Center offered basic science and behavioral research training to 97 students from four local middle and high schools, three community colleges, SDSU and UCSD, 96 percent of whom are ethnic minorities. The EXPORT Center also supports graduate students' HIV and Cardiovascular Disease research, as well as the participation of minority junior faculty in the UCSD's faculty development program, the National Center for Leadership in Academic Medicine.

"Diversity has to be a top priority for UCSD," said Fox.

The UCSD San Diego EXPORT Center is doing its part to fulfill Fox's goal and address the needs of the San Diego community.

Tracy Nelson is an intern with the UCSD San Diego EXPORT Center and a journalism student at Point Loma Nazarene University. The San Diego EXPORT Center is a partnership of organizations focusing on community minority health and health disparities research.

Picture to include (attached separately)

Caption: UCSD Professor of Biology Dr. Percy Russell instructs students on biomedical research methods and techniques in a San Diego EXPORT Center training laboratory