

Vice Chair



Sheldon C. Engelhorn, '72

If you'd like a snapshot of the UC San Diego undergraduate experience – more practical than romanticized – Sheldon Engelhorn is the person to ask. The father of an alum, Sheldon attended UC San Diego himself, choosing the campus because it was close to home and affordable – circumstances that have shaped his personal involvement with the university, and his philanthropic ideals.

As a Trustee of the UC San Diego Foundation, Sheldon has been very involved with the UC San Diego Student Foundation, which allows him to pursue one of his passions: spending time with students. “It’s a fun, interesting group of bright, engaged young people. We give them feedback on business plans and investments.” And, he proudly adds, “Their portfolio did better than the market. They’re smart kids!”

Sheldon and his wife, Susan, stand behind smart kids in other meaningful ways, such as establishing The Engelhorn Scholarships for qualified transfer students who complete two years of community college. “By extending UCSD’s reach to a wider pool of talent, we equip more promising young people for learning and innovation. Not all the people with the brains, imagination and commitment to solve the world’s problems have the financial resources to attend a school that will cultivate them the way UCSD can.”

Sheldon also serves as an Alumni Regent on the University of California Board of Regents. In his letter of intent to serve as a Regent, he noted “If we want to preserve public support for these institutions in a world of difficult resource-allocation choices, we must make the case that we play a critical role in helping shape a healthy, sustainable future. We have to do a better job of translating our research and curriculum into practical solutions that demonstrably benefit the community.”

Sheldon graduated from UC San Diego in 1972 with a B.S. in Biology. He is a former executive vice president for NOVEX, which was founded in 1987 with UCSD alumnus Richard Chan '74, and operated two facilities in Germany. Before starting NOVEX, Sheldon worked at UCSD as a research associate from 1972 to 1979, and in various positions at Bio Rad Laboratories in Richmond, California, from 1979 to 1987. In 2000, NOVEX merged with Invitrogen, a company co-founded by UCSD alumnus Lyle Turner.

Sheldon has since retired from these ventures, but is involved in a couple of start-ups as a principle or advisor. He currently devotes most of his time to individual pursuits, family life, philanthropy and volunteer work – a good bit of it on the UC San Diego campus, where he is unquestionably affecting change.