UC SANTA BARBARA

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The Next Big Adventure

UC Santa Barbara's residence halls were abuzz with excitement and emotion over the last few days as the rite of passage known as Move-In Weekend brought new and returning undergrads to campus. Thousands of students, their families and friends, rolled onto campus in vehicles packed with all the necessities to create a comfortable home away from home, while Housing and Residential Services staff and Move-In volunteers were on hand to make sure everything moved swiftly and smoothly.

"We have lots of excitement, lots of parents, lots of students," said an animated Brennan Bowen, a newly minted resident assistant who, like his colleagues, trained for weeks on keeping the steady stream of people organized and providing information as needed. Other volunteers helped with transport, pushing rolling bins of belongings to their appropriate destinations.

Amid the hustle and bustle, the lives of thousands of people underwent change, from the freshmen starting the next phase of their lives, to parents seeing their children begin their transition into adulthood. Everyone spoke of excitement and optimism and the hope of the best that was yet to come, as well as gratitude for all the support and love that brought them to this moment.

Move-In was a momentous step for incoming freshman Daisy Gonzalez and her tight-knit family. Originally from the City of Hawthorne, in the southwestern area of Los Angeles, Daisy traded her familiar urban environment for the suburban and college-town aspect of the Santa Catalina residences. Though not the first in her family to

attend university — her sister Melinda just graduated from Cal State Long Beach — she is the first of the Gonzalez sisters to move far from home.

“It’s a new freedom that I’m going to have, that I’m excited for, but I feel that I’m also going to miss home a lot,” said Daisy, who initially considered staying closer to home. A Young Eisner Scholar, she prepared well for college, attending the highly regarded private coed prep school in the L.A. area. To be prudent, she considered other universities in the state but fell in love with UCSB.

“When I came, I could imagine myself walking and going to class here,” said the new psychology major, who was considering about a dozen other universities at the time.

“Whatever she does, it’s going to be amazing,” said her teary-eyed mother Maria. “I want her to be happy, take advantage of all the opportunities and every experience, every happy moment…and be safe.”

For John Mead, father of Madison, also a new UCSB psychology student, coming to campus was like coming back home. A graduate of the UCSB College of Engineering’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, he’s careful to point out that he did not try to sway his daughter’s choice of UCSB.

“I didn’t say a word even though I went to school here,” he said. Just a few yards away from the Santa Cruz residence hall, where the family was helping Madison move in, was his own stomping ground at Santa Rosa Hall.

“I wanted to choose UCSB because it had so many great things about it,” said Madison, listing decision-making factors such as the environment, the activities, the opportunities for outdoor adventures and the education. She looks forward to meeting new people and learning more about herself as well, and comparing notes with dad about her experience.

Students moving into the Santa Cruz residence hall were in for a treat. The latest of the residences to be remodeled for sustainability, the building features the latest in energy-efficient design, with elements such as LED lighting for cooler burning light and double-paned glass for insulation. As part of UCSB’s ongoing effort toward sustainable building and design, the 60-year-old building also got revamped plumbing, new flooring and paint, and some other amenities such as remodeled kitchen and laundry facilities. The remodel also resulted in a high-end TV lounge, complete with soundproofing, giant high-definition TV screen and theater-style

seating. The other two residences in the area — Anacapa and Santa Rosa — had been remodeled in previous years.

It was pride, anticipation and perhaps a touch of apprehension for 17-year-old Zoey Brandt and her mother Zelah as they prepared for the next big step in Zoey's life, one that would take them away from each other for extended periods of time. "I will definitely miss my baby," Zelah said. "She is my only one, and we are very close."

UCSB represented the best choice for various reasons, including the mix of education, environment and experience. It also helps that Zelah graduated from UCSB with a bachelor's in sociology in 1992 and has maintained close ties with friends in the area, friends to whom Zoey can turn if she needs any assistance. With those contingencies covered, the travel time between campus and their home in Northern California will feel not so long, and the brand-new English major can still spread her wings, maybe dive into choir and theater, or even try out for the campus's unofficial quidditch team.

"It's kind of scary," said Zoey. "I keep looking at things and realizing that I won't be seeing them every day anymore. It feels like I'm saying goodbye to a whole era…But at the same time, it's exciting to have the freedom that comes with living five hours away from home."

The Move-In events continue until the first day of class, Thursday, Oct. 2, with the Week of Welcome — activities designed to help students become better acquainted with the campus and with each other.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.