UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

January 21, 2016
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Michael Witherell to Direct Berkeley National Lab

Michael Witherell, vice chancellor for research at UC Santa Barbara, has been named by the UC Board of Regents to head Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, effective March 1, 2016.

“This honorable and prestigious appointment by the Regents, based on President Janet Napolitano’s recommendation and with the concurrence of the U.S. Department of Energy, provides an excellent opportunity for Michael,” said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. “But his departure is a tremendous loss for our UC Santa Barbara family. His impact on our campus has been far-reaching, making valuable contributions to our administration, academics, fundraising, and student affairs.”

Witherell has served as UCSB’s vice chancellor for research for nearly 11 years. Under his leadership, the campus has seen a steady increase in annual extramural research expenditures, from $165 million in 2005 to $227 million today. At the same time, UCSB has continued its tradition of interdisciplinary and inclusive research, and established significant new research opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students.

A leading physicist with a long and distinguished career in teaching, research, and public service, Witherell also has held a UC Presidential Chair in the UCSB Department of Physics. He previously was a member of the faculty in the department from 1981 until 1999, before moving on to serve as director of the Fermi

National Accelerator Laboratory in Illinois for six years. He returned to UCSB as vice chancellor or research in 2005.

Witherell received his B.S. degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and his Ph.D. in physics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the recipient of numerous prestigious honors and awards in recognition of his achievements and contributions, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and the American Physical Society's W.K.H. Panofsky Prize in Experimental Particle Physics. An elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, he is also a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Fellow of the American Physical Society.

"I am excited and proud that Berkeley Lab is gaining a superb leader as its next director," Yang continued. "But this news is also bittersweet for our UC Santa Barbara community, because we are losing a dear colleague and friend." He added that he will be consulting with our administrators and faculty members to identify an acting vice chancellor for research.

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.