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High Impact

Growing up in Old Town Goleta, Britt Ortiz used to ride his bicycle to UC Santa Barbara on warm summer afternoons to swim in the campus pool. Little did he know he'd play water polo in that same pool during high school and college, or that his professional career would land him at UCSB decades later.

Talk about coming full circle.

Education changed Ortiz's life, and as director of UCSB's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) he's doing his best to afford that same opportunity to as many high school students as he can reach. For his nearly 30-year effort, he has received the University of California's 2017 Dr. Winston Doby Impact Award.

Presented at UC's annual College Access and Preparation Forum, the award recognizes two exceptional UC professionals selected by their colleagues in recognition of their individual commitment to improving educational opportunities for all California students. The second recipient of the 2017 award is Catherine Cooper of UC Santa Cruz.

This year's forum explored avenues for improving academic preparation and postsecondary access for all California students, particularly those from underserved communities.

"Britt has dedicated his professional career to helping students achieve their dreams of attending college," said Margaret Klawunn, vice chancellor for student affairs at UCSB. "The work Britt does is special in many ways and I am impressed by his

passions to help all students, not just those who attend UC. He cares just as much about a student going to community college or a California State University. He is deserving of the Doby Impact Award because his work improves lives and will be felt for generations to come."

The award is named for the late Winston Churchill Doby, a visionary leader and advocate for educationally disadvantaged students. He served as vice chancellor of student affairs at UCLA and as vice president of educational outreach and later of student affairs at UC Office of the President.

"This is definitely a wow moment in my career," said Ortiz. "I had the chance to work with Dr. Doby and he inspired me and touched my heart during his time at the UC Office of the President. So that just adds a deeper meaning for me personally."

Over his nearly three decades in higher education, Ortiz has worked in the areas of early academic outreach, recruitment, retention, family engagement, diversity management and educational access. He has presented at 15 national and more than 30 statewide and regional higher education conferences. In addition, he has written and/or co-authored numerous state, federal and private-foundation grans for a host of agencies and institutions, resulting in over $4.5 million in funding.

Ortiz has been director of UCSB EAOP since 2000. He has overseen the development and implementation of the College Site Coordinator whole-school service model that is credited with increasing UCSB and systemwide applications, admissions and eligibility rates by 50 to 100 percent from six low-performing pilot partnership high schools in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The model has evolved into duel service, balancing intensive cohort services with whole-school college-going initiatives.

Overall, EAOP focuses on four key strategies — academic advising, college knowledge, academic enrichment and entrance exam preparation — to help students reach college eligibility and participate in higher education.

A variety of pre-college programs offered on an annual basis give students the opportunity to visit UCSB, tour campus labs, meet with faculty members and conduct research or participate in other academic enrichment activities. Among the programs and services are annual transcript evaluation, academic advisement, academic achiever's receptions, study skills and testing strategies, college readiness seminars, the Education-Leadership-Careers Conference, UC Success Night and

college readiness academies.

While Ortiz highlighted the Doby Impact Award as “a great moment in my career,” he gave kudos to the work of his colleagues at UCSB EAOP. “I can’t say enough about the team I work with here,” he said. “Our team truly changes life trajectories and fosters educational dreams coming true for hundreds of students each year. I’m so blessed to be part of this incredible team and to receive such a great honor while doing so.”

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.