UC SANTA BARBARA

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UC Office of the President

UC President Michael V. Drake, M.D., announces plans to step down

University of California President Michael V. Drake, M.D., announced today that he will step down from his role at the end of the 2024-25 academic year after five years leading California's world-renowned public research university system. Dr. Drake was appointed as the 21st president of the University of California in July 2020, a position that became part of a 50-year career in higher education.

Drake assumed the role of president at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing immediately on keeping the University of California community safe during an unprecedented lockdown, public health crisis, and transition to remote instruction and work. Since then, he has focused on preserving and improving educational quality and research excellence, maintaining access and opportunity through new student support initiatives, growing enrollment of California students from all backgrounds, and expanding access to quality health care across California.

As president of California's preeminent system of 10 campuses, six academic health systems and three nationally-affiliated labs, President Drake's leadership has been informed by a steadfast commitment to the University's core values, including stakeholder engagement with UC's diverse community.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as president of the University of California these past several years, and I am immensely proud of what the UC community has accomplished," said Drake. "At every turn, I have sought to listen to

those I served, to uphold our shared UC values, and to do all I could to leave this institution in better shape than it was before. I'm proud to see the University continuing to make a positive impact on the lives of countless Californians through research, teaching, and public service."

President Drake's tenure is marked by numerous achievements, including forging notably stronger partnerships with state and federal lawmakers to continue expanding opportunities for more California students to attend the University of California. He also played an instrumental role in securing historic state investments in the University, including achieving a five-year funding Compact with California Governor Gavin Newsom and the California State Legislature that provided UC with additional fiscal stability and supported critical long-term investments in educational access and excellence.

"President Drake took the reins of the University of California during the height of the pandemic and has led with grace and vision in the years since," said Governor Newsom. "He has used his decades of experience to advocate for better access to higher education for all Californians and has always fought for academic excellence. On behalf of all Californians, I thank President Drake for his leadership, for growing our UC system, and for paving a brighter path forward for our state. His legacy of service in higher education has undoubtedly helped us grow the next generation of extraordinary California leaders, and it's been an honor to work alongside him."

Drake has dedicated his career to championing affordable, accessible, and high-quality public higher education. During his tenure at UC, the University enrolled significantly more California residents and students from groups underrepresented in higher education, affirming the University's commitment to recognizing outstanding students and removing barriers in support of their lifelong aspirations. Drake also led the development of a systemwide Tuition Stability Plan to keep UC tuition predictable for students and families and provide new financial aid resources, and he made steady progress toward offering every UC undergraduate a pathway for debt-free education by 2029-30.

"It has been an extraordinary honor to work alongside Michael Drake, a thoughtful leader who has advanced the University's mission with his forward-looking approach. I appreciate his great partnership with the UC Board of Regents as we've explored exciting opportunities and tackled challenging issues — all in the service of our students, faculty, staff, and the broader community," said Janet Reilly, Chair of the

UC Board of Regents. “President Drake has dedicated much of his career, his energy, and his expertise to the University of California and his contributions will most definitely leave a lasting impact and an inspiring legacy on this institution.”

Drake played a key role in advancing the University’s commitment to student diversity and inclusive excellence through the creation of the UC Native American Opportunity Plan, which aims to make college more affordable and accessible for California’s Native American students, one of the most underrepresented groups within higher education. More broadly, students from underrepresented groups in higher education now make up 32 percent of UC’s total undergraduate enrollment, with Latino student enrollment up by five percent in fall 2023.

One of the president’s core priorities has been creating a safe and respectful community that fosters a free exchange of ideas. He led a comprehensive, systemwide effort with key stakeholders across the University to reimagine public safety and launch a Systemwide Office of Civil Rights to help ensure that every member of the UC community feels safe and respected.

Before assuming the role of UC President, Drake served as the 15th president of The Ohio State University (OSU) from 2014 through June 2020. Prior to his six years at OSU, his entire academic career had been spent at the University of California, including nine years as chancellor of UC Irvine (2005–2014) and five years as UC systemwide vice president for health affairs (2000–2005). Dr. Drake received his A.B. from Stanford University and his M.D. and residency training from UCSF. He subsequently spent more than 25 years on the faculty of the UCSF School of Medicine, ultimately as the Steven P. Shearing Professor of Ophthalmology and senior associate dean. Today, he holds faculty appointments at the UCSF School of Medicine as a professor of ophthalmology, at the UC Riverside School of Medicine as a professor of medicine, and as a distinguished professor of ophthalmology at the UC Irvine School of Medicine.

Throughout his distinguished career in higher education, President Drake has been an impactful and respected leader in California and nationally among his peers in higher education and academic medicine. He has chaired the boards of six national organizations of leaders in higher education, including the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC).

UC Board of Regents Chair Reilly will soon appoint a committee to begin a comprehensive national search for the next UC president. Per University policy, the search committee will include student, faculty, staff, and alumni representatives, as well as representatives of the Board of Regents, and will seek input from the UC community and the public at large.

See more of UC President Michael V. Drake's accomplishments here.

Letter to the UC community from President Michael V. Drake, M.D.

Media Contact

media@ucop.edu

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.