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UCSB's College of Engineering named for former dean, Robert Mehrabian

UC Santa Barbara's College of Engineering has been named The Robert Mehrabian College of Engineering, for a former dean who has had significant impact on the college. The naming was approved earlier this month by UC President Michael Drake, following review and approval by the UC Santa Barbara Academic Senate, chaired by Rita Raley, and the UC systemwide Academic Council, chaired by Steven W. Cheung.

"I am honored and overwhelmed by a strong sense of gratitude. I want to thank Chancellor Henry Yang, Dean of Engineering Umesh Mishra and the College of Engineering faculty for their trust in bestowing me with this great honor. The success of the college, its students and renowned faculty will continue as my priority in the future," Mehrabian said.

"UC Santa Barbara is so fortunate for the long-standing relationship that our college of engineering has had with Robert Mehrabian," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. "His talent as an academic, vision as an industry leader, and generosity as a philanthropist have helped to shape our College of Engineering over the decades. We are privileged now by having his name associated with our college. We are so grateful to both Robert and Victoria Mehrabian."

Indeed, Mehrabian, who served as the fourth engineering dean at UCSB from 1983-1990, was responsible for major growth and advancement of the relatively young

college during his tenure. He worked on many fronts, encouraging collaborations within the campus as well as partnerships with industry giants such as Bell Labs and IBM, and federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense. Working with faculty colleagues such as Nobel Prize winner Herb Kroemer, he strategically built on the college's existing strengths in III-V semiconductor materials

while remaining nimble to emerging areas of research and industry, such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, polymers, robotics, computing and communications. His efforts resulted in the establishment, in 1987, of the Department of Materials with Tony Evans as founding chair, an interdisciplinary department that is now one of the top-ranked in the nation, as well as an expansion of the college's physical footprint with the completion, that same year, of the Engineering II building complex — an additional 96,000 square feet of classroom, office and lab space.

Mehrabian's vision for the College of Engineering could also be seen in the faculty recruited during his tenure — 69 total over his seven-year term. At least 22 of them would go on to be recognized for their innovative work, with inductions into the prestigious National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London among others. Top faculty conducting research on the frontier of engineering, science, and interdisciplinary collaboration would attract a highly talented and diverse student body, and in turn, these students would continue to attract world-class faculty.

Thirty-five years after his tenure as dean, Mehrabian continues to support engineering at UC Santa Barbara. The endowments created by Robert and Victoria Mehrabian, beginning in 2011, support 17 endowed chairs and provide flexible funds to help recruit and retain top engineering faculty for the College of Engineering.

"Dr. Mehrabian didn't just build a college – he created a model for how engineering education should work," said UCSB Dean of Engineering Umesh Mishra. "His vision of collaboration across departments laid the foundation for the top-tier national rankings our engineering programs enjoy today."

An Armenian-American, Mehrabian earned his bachelor's degree and Sc.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He left MIT, where he was an associate professor, in 1975, and served as a professor of metallurgy and mechanical

engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign until 1979. He was dean of engineering at UCSB from 1983 to 1990, when he became president of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), a position he held until 1997. Additionally, he directed the Center for Materials Science at the National Institute of Standards and Technology and served as a senior advisor to multiple Fortune 500 companies. He held various senior executive positions at Allegheny Teledyne Incorporated, until its spin-off to Teledyne Technologies Incorporated (TDY) in 1999. Since then, Mehrabian has served as chairman, president, chief executive officer, and executive chairman of TDY.

Mehrabian holds eight U.S. patents and more than 40 foreign patents. He has authored 139 technical papers and edited six books in the field of materials science and engineering. He has been elected to the NAE; is a fellow and distinguished life member of the American Society of Metals (ASM) International; has received the Henry Marion Howe Medal of the ASM; and is a fellow and Leadership Award recipient of the Minerals, Metals and Materials Society. He has received honorary degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and Chatham College.

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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.