UC SANTA BARBARA

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# Dr. Dennis Assanis appointed as UC Santa Barbara's next chancellor

The University of California Board of Regents today approved Dr. Dennis Assanis as UC Santa Barbara's sixth chancellor. He will assume his role on September 1, 2025.

Assanis comes to UC from the University of Delaware (UD), where he has served as president since 2016. A native of Athens, Greece, he established UD as a hub of innovation in health, biotechnology, neuroscience, energy and the environment, data science, advanced manufacturing, art conservation, and digital humanities.

"Dr. Assanis is the right person to lead UC Santa Barbara into the future," said UC President Michael V. Drake, M.D. "His deep understanding of the power of interdisciplinary work combined with his energy, insight and strategic vision will blend perfectly with the excellence of UC Santa Barbara students, faculty and staff as they address the world's most urgent challenges."

UD is Delaware's flagship university and generates an annual economic impact of $5 billion in the mid-Atlantic region. As president, Assanis oversaw the university's annual operating budget of $1.35 billion, endowment assets of over $2 billion, a footprint extending over 2,250 acres in Newark, Delaware, and several other campuses across the state, and a physical plant valued at approximately $8 billion.

"I am truly honored and thrilled to serve as the next chancellor of UC Santa Barbara," said Assanis. "I am particularly excited about UC Santa Barbara's

exceptional academic reputation, amazing students and boundless potential to be recognized among the top public universities, building on the celebrated achievements of its distinguished faculty and dedicated staff. Fostering a culture of innovation, academic excellence and student success has been my core focus as a public university leader. My wife, Eleni, and I are excited to join the vibrant and welcoming Santa Barbara community."

Assanis oversaw UD's ascendancy as an institution of world-class academic excellence and national prominence. During his tenure, UD was consistently named among the best colleges in the United States according to rankings released by U.S. News & World Report and the Wall Street Journal. Under Assanis's leadership, the university's strong reputation for higher learning led to record applications and enrollments. His commitment to student success has translated into a four-year graduation rate of 73 percent.

"What a thrill it is to welcome a scholar and leader of Dr. Assanis's caliber to UC Santa Barbara," said Janet Reilly, chair of the UC Board of Regents. "His commitment to academic excellence and his penchant for collaboration will steer a bold new era of growth and innovation, serving the campus and all of UC well."

While at UD, Assanis spearheaded initiatives to drive transformational growth of UD's research, scholarship and innovation enterprises. Total research expenditures surged over 160 percent during his time at UD, climbing from $176 million in FY16 to $466 million in FY24. One of Assanis's biggest achievements at UD was the creation of the Science, Technology and Advanced Research (STAR) campus, now home to over 1.2 million square feet of new facilities and more than 3,000 professionals. The STAR campus also became the headquarters of the National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals (NIIMBL), a public-private partnership that leads industry-wide research on vaccines and pharmaceuticals. Assanis also oversaw the development and renewal of multiple interdisciplinary centers and institutes in innovative materials, clean hydrogen and the environment, biomedical and life sciences, engineering-driven health, education and policy. During his tenure, UD also successfully launched and completed the most comprehensive fundraising and engagement campaign in the institution's more than 280-year history, raising over $1 billion from more than 100,000 donors.

Assanis's scientific and engineering contributions have been recognized through his election to the National Academy of Engineering and his appointment to the

President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. Before coming to UD, Assanis served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at New York’s Stony Brook University and vice president for Brookhaven National Laboratory Affairs. He previously taught and conducted research at the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

“Dr. Assanis is an exceptional academic administrator to serve as the next chancellor of UC Santa Barbara,” said Steven W. Cheung, M.D., chair of the Faculty Academic Senate. “He is a top-flight, well-respected scholar and versatile leader with a superb track record of student and institutional success.”

Assanis succeeds former UC Santa Barbara Chancellor Henry Yang. Assanis earned his bachelor’s degree in Marine Engineering from Newcastle University in England in 1980. He earned three master’s degrees at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering in 1982, Mechanical Engineering in 1982 and Management in 1986. He earned a Ph.D. in Power and Propulsion at MIT in 1985. He has also received an Honorary Doctor in Humane Letters from the University of Delaware in 2025.

The UC Regents approved Assanis’s salary at $880,000.

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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.