

UC Regents approve acquisition of off-campus residential property

UCSB staff

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The University of California Board of Regents approved the acquisition of an off-campus property to serve as the residence for the current and future chancellors of UC Santa Barbara to enable them to carry out their roles and required official duties. The property, which is located 10 minutes from campus, was purchased for \$7.8 million and the cost will be fully covered by private philanthropy. No state funding or student tuition dollars will be used to finance the property.

An initial independent engineering assessment conducted in March 2025 found that University House, which was built in 1964 to house UCSB chancellors, required an estimated \$8.4 million in critical upgrades and code compliance, including seismic reinforcements, plumbing and electrical system modernization. The initial estimate had a two-year construction timeline and did not include accessibility and entitlement constraints. University House has not been substantially renovated since its construction.

The replacement residential property will eliminate the expense of leasing housing during the two-year construction estimate. The new property also provides the

chancellor a venue for extending official hospitality to important visitors and guests in conjunction with official functions and fundraising activities. Going forward, the campus will be exploring other possible uses for the existing University House site.

Statement from the University of California's Office of the President

The University of California Board of Regents approved the purchase of a property to serve as the new UC Santa Barbara Chancellor Residence with a price not to exceed \$8.3 million. The purchase will be funded with external financing and donor funds will be used to pay off the debt.

Background:

- Under Regents Policy 7708, the Regents require Chancellors to live in residences suitable for carrying out their roles and required official duties.
- As part of their official duties, Chancellors are responsible for extending official hospitality to important visitors and guests in conjunction with official functions and fundraising activities for the campus.
- Two existing on-campus facilities, the University House and the Centennial House, constructed in the 1960s, have served as the UCSB chancellor residence until earlier this year. The former was constructed in 1964, and no significant renovations or updates have been made in more than 30 years.
- An independent engineering assessment in March 2025 identified the need for extensive renovations to these facilities, which total over 9,000 square feet. Repairs and upgrades totaling \$8.4 million and a two-year construction timeline would have been required to make the existing facilities fully functional.
 - In May 2025, the Regents approved a plan to lease an unspecified off-campus property pending the completion of renovations to the University House.
- The campus recently concluded that the University House site, which totals nearly one acre, may be better suited for other campus uses, like additional student housing. Existing undergraduate housing is adjacent to the site.
- Acquiring a new property to serve as the Chancellor's home is considered a better solution, mitigating long-term leasing costs, and freeing up prime on-campus land for future uses, such as student housing projects.
- Given Santa Barbara's historically strong real estate market, the University's investment is expected to grow in value over time, making this a sound financial decision.

- No state funds will be used for the property purchase. The debt payments will be fully supported by university donors.

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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.