October 29, 2007

Dear UC San Diego Parents & Families:

Last week our campus community was faced with an incredible challenge and rose to the occasion. Monday morning we awoke to find our county and local region in a precarious situation with several fires burning in the area and Santa Ana winds pushing blazes westerly.

Although the UC San Diego campus was in no immediate danger from the flames of the fire, classes were cancelled Monday and Tuesday due to poor air quality, and the decision to cancel classes for the remainder of the week was made on Tuesday.

As part of the UC San Diego community, we knew it was critical to communicate with parents and family members and did our best to put information on the UCSD homepage and TritonLink as soon as it was available. We also maintained the Parent Helpline that took hundreds of calls throughout the week from anxious parents from across the state and country who were watching the media coverage in their homes.

We did our absolute best to ensure that students living on campus in the six undergraduate colleges were safe and cared for at all times during this crisis. Evacuation plans were in place and the situation was being monitored by our chief safety experts and top administrators, who remained on campus all week. For those living on campus as well as those living in nearby apartments, key services such as the student health clinic, psychological and counseling services, and dining halls were staffed and operational. As the week unfolded we also made sure that student life services that college students come to depend on in the Price Center (student union), RIMAC (recreation facility), and Geisel Library were open.

We realize that during times like this communication is key and therefore encourage parents and families to register today for the campus’ emergency alert system, MIR3. MIR3 will provide you with automated voicemails and text messages of campus emergencies and important announcements. [To register, go http://emergency.ucsd.edu. This will take you to a site where you can register multiple phone numbers.] We also ask that you remind your student who may not have registered, to do so as well.

While you are doing this we also invite you to explore and familiarize yourself with http://TritonLink.ucsd.edu and the information provided on it. TritonLink is our main communication tool for students. As parents we know that you will also find this a valuable tool for navigating the university.
Last but not least, if your family was directly impacted by either the San Diego County wildfires or other fires burning in Southern California, our hearts go out to you. Please contact the undergraduate college your student is affiliated with or call the Parent Helpline at (800) 534-7273 to let us know. Chancellor Fox and I will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting Wednesday, October 31 at noon to discuss the impact the fires have had in our community and the resources available. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to attend.

Now that the crisis has passed and we begin to recover and rebuild, I encourage you to stay connected to our campus and learn about the many resources and opportunities UC San Diego has to offer you and your student.

With much appreciation,

Penny Rue, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor-Student Affairs