

Alumni Profile: Dr. Greg Buford, '90

Q: How did studying literature/writing as an undergraduate at UC San Diego help you in medical school and in your career?

A: When I chose a degree in literature/writing, I never fully appreciated the far-reaching benefits that this would have in both my professional as well as personal life. Being able to better communicate verbally as well as in written form has given me a tremendous advantage in connecting more clearly and more deeply with patients, as well as an advantage when it comes to identifying with patients from various cultures and walks of life. My degree has afforded me the ability to see life in a more complex and rich manner and has helped cultivate a mindset that helps me bring a brush of art to an otherwise science-dominated profession.



Dr. Greg Buford

Q: What would you say to incoming undergraduate students considering an arts and humanities major?

A: I would encourage them to consider the college experience as not only a career path but also an opportunity to develop themselves as a person. These early formative years are critical in opening our eyes to the world around us and the many shades of gray and alternatives that exist within every second of every day. Seeing the world through a less myopic vision just might help you not only secure the dream job you have always sought, but also the life you ultimately wish to live.

Q: Why should prospective students choose UC San Diego's Division of Arts and Humanities?

A: What inspires me about UC San Diego's Division of Arts and Humanities is the passion for combining arts and humanities with the sciences to achieve true synergy across these seemingly disparate disciplines. The world around us is changing at an alarming rate and will require leaders in all aspects of professional life who can see the big picture and not get stuck in the small details. More than ever before, the world is looking for dreamers who not only create new ideas but who also bring them to fruition. By educating students in a broad-based but focused STEAM education, UC San Diego is creating future leaders who will be able to navigate challenges associated with a changing world economy in a world whose borders appear to be dissolving by the day.

Q: What is your favorite memory of your time at UC San Diego?

A: My favorite memory of UC San Diego is actually not from when I attended but when I recently came back. I cannot begin to describe the level of pride that I felt when I walked back onto the campus as an alumnus after more than 25 years and saw what

UC San Diego had ultimately grown into. I am blown away by the growth of this once-small campus and the world-class faculty and incredibly gifted students it has attracted.

Q: What was your favorite class?

A: There were so many classes that touched me in different ways that it's hard to choose just one. But I would say that the Humanities Series at Revelle were my favorites. For those of us who survived the Humanities Series, these were classes designed to challenge and to humble the best and the brightest. And they did. But they also exposed me to many different worlds that I could never imagine and then connected them in a way that made sense. I have never worked harder during a semester, but I also have never felt such accomplishment either.

Q: Has the campus changed much since you studied here? If so, how so?

A: The campus has literally exploded since I left in 1990 and has grown into a world-class organization that ranks among the top in its class for state colleges. I am proud to see not only the growth but also the commitment to excellence that this organization holds as its foundation.

Q: What words of wisdom do you have for recent UC San Diego graduates-turned-alumni?

A: There are a tremendous amount of incredible UC San Diego alumni out in the world in virtually every aspect of life. Seek them out and connect with them. Many times in life, it's not only what you know but also who you know that can ultimately help open doors. Make connections and be humble with their time but also ask them the hard questions. You'll be surprised at how welcoming most of us are and how honored we will be to help play a role in guiding you after graduation. And once you get settled into your career and your life . . . whatever that is . . . be sure and pay it forward to someone else.