

# Interim Chancellor Martin Chemers, lauded by faculty and staff, could land the top job permanently

## UCSC's Next in Line?



Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

Martin Chemers, UCSC interim chancellor, says he took valuable lessons from his years growing up in Chicago. 'You don't have a rich family,' he remembers his mother telling him. 'Your brain is all that will take care of you.'

## 'No one will follow you if they don't trust you'

UCSC - Faculty

By JONDI GUMZ  
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### SANTA CRUZ

Picture this: A new dean is hired at UC Santa Cruz to oversee a division plagued by turnover at the top — the dean's job had changed hands nine times in eight years.

He's a psychology professor who has written books on leadership in the workplace. His theory is leaders must have confidence and optimism to deal with issues as they arise rather than procrastinate.

And Martin Chemers admits that as he drove up the hill to the campus, thinking of all the challenges he would face that day, he would tell himself: "You can do this."

And he did, for eight years, earning a reputation for openness and honesty among faculty.

A year ago, he considered retiring. Then, in October, he was asked to be executive vice chancellor, the No. 2 job on campus. Ten weeks ago, upon the departure of M.R.C. Greenwood, he



Interim Chancellor Martin Chemers, accompanied by his wife Barbara, center, attends a 30-year reunion at Stevenson College last month.

moved into the No. 1 spot on an interim basis.

Soon he will have to decide whether to keep his name in the running. He has yet to announce his plans.

The 15-member search committee has been asked to keep the process confidential, but word is that members see no need to rush the review process to name a chancellor by September because Chemers is doing an

admirable job.

By the end of May, there were 600 applicants for the job, which pays \$269,200. About 85 percent of the candidates are men; about 11 percent are Californians.

Chemers doesn't have the science background or the fund-raising track record of his predecessor, M.R.C.



## MARTIN CHEMERS: A PROFILE

*'He's very straight. There's no spin. I find that enormously refreshing.'*

JOURNALISM LECTURER CONN HALLINAN ON MARTIN CHEMERS

## Chemers

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Greenwood, but he has won over faculty, staff, students and community members with his candor and sincerity.

"He's very straight," said longtime journalism lecturer Conn Hallinan. "There's no spin. I find that enormously refreshing."

He worries that Chemers is too open and too honest to get the job.

Patrick Knowles, a former editor for the City on a Hill Press student newspaper, finds it interesting that Chemers is a fan of the Chicago Cubs.

"What does that say — a guy rooting for the underdog?" Knowles asked.

## Theory vs. practice

Chemers, a Chicago native, relishes the opportunity to put his theories of leadership into practice. The key, in his opinion, is integrity.

"No one will follow you if they don't trust you," Chemers said.

In eight years as dean, he said, "I never reneged on a promise, even when conditions changed."

Moving into the chancellor's job created a potentially awkward situation for him because his wife of 22 years, Barb Goza, is a researcher for campus outreach programs. His solution: Delegate decisions about that division to the executive vice chancellor.

At 61, he looks like a CEO, with his hair turning a distinguished shade of gray. His office on campus is spartan, with one of the few embellishments a pen-and-ink sketch by his father with the words: "Health, happiness and prosperity."

The sketch was drawn during the Depression. It's a reminder to keep a positive outlook even when times are hard.

The chancellor presides over a \$408 million operation in an era when state budget increases have been replaced by cutbacks. The campus is the largest employer in the county with a total of 3,000 faculty and staff, and recent layoffs of staff and lecturers have been painful.

Another tough decision is on the horizon: How large should the campus of 15,000 students grow by 2020? Faculty envision 21,000 students, and the chancellor's recommendation to the Regents is almost certain to create town-gown friction over traffic and housing.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

Interim Chancellor Martin Chemers, center, shakes hands with UCSC Dean of the Arts Ed Houghton at the April opening of UCSC's new Digital Arts Center.

"When you're not working, you're worrying about it," Chemers said. "The risks are bigger. If you make a mistake, it could cost \$5 million to \$10 million."

Chemers has spent decades in academia, but he's also worked in the field, doing research in Tehran, Iran, and finding a way to reduce accidents in underground mines while improving productivity.

He often tells a joke to lighten up a situation.

At a recent budget meeting, he told staff, "You know I can't hold a job."

Everyone calls him Marty.

## Education equals opportunity

Like many of the students the University of California aims to attract, Chemers comes from a family that immigrated to America in search of opportunity.

His grandfather, a carpenter, left Russia in 1906 and became a general contractor in Chicago. He was so successful building apartments that he sent his son, Chemers' father, to the University of Illinois with a stylish raccoon coat. The family was wiped out in the stock market crash in 1929, and Chemers' father waited tables and borrowed money to buy books.

In 1933, when he got his degree, there were no jobs for structural



Chemers first came to Santa Cruz in the early 1990s, when his younger son was looking at colleges. In 1995, the year his son graduated from Porter College, the campus began looking for a new dean for social sciences. Chemers was the eventual hire.

engineers. So he sold shoes, earning \$15 a week. When the federal government started building the Chicago subway, he got work as a draftsman. That led to his career as an engineer. He died when Chemers was 13, and the teen soon

realized he would have to build his own future, like his father and grandfather.

"You don't have a rich family,"

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## Martin Chemers

**AGE:** 61.

**HOME:** Capitola.

**FAMILY:** Married to Barbara Goza. They met when she was a student at the University of Utah. They have two grown sons.

**ACADEMIC EXPERTISE:** Leadership — his theory is that to be successful, leaders must project an image of confidence and trustworthiness, match their strategy to the situation at hand and inspire

followers to make meaningful contributions.

**LAST BOOK READ:** 'The Theory of Poker' by David Sklansky, and 'Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae' by Steven Pressfield.

**FAVORITE MUSIC:** Jazz, R&B, especially Marvin Gaye.

**PREFERRED FORM OF EXERCISE:** Walking or playing golf.

**FAVORITE PLACE IN SANTA CRUZ:** West Cliff Drive.



*'People think you have a pile of money under your desk. We don't. We're living close to the bone.'*

MARTIN CHEMERS ON HIS FORMER ROLE AS DEAN OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

## Chemers

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his mother told him. "Your brain is all that will take care of you."

He got a full scholarship to the University of Illinois.

He sees public education as a part of the American dream.

"It's the opportunity for talent to be realized," he said.

### Hooked on psychology

Chemers wanted to be a novelist — or perhaps a journalist — until he took a psychology class.

His mentor was Fred Fiedler, who developed a theory that certain leaders are effective in one situation but not in others.

Chemers took Fiedler's model a step further. He argues that leaders must project confidence and optimism, inspire followers to do their part and adjust strategy to fit the situation at hand.

Chemers stayed at the University of Illinois to earn his bachelor's, master's and doctorate.

Psychology professor Irwin Altman considered Chemers "a young hotshot" when he hired him at the University of Utah in 1970. When Altman became dean, Chemers moved up to department chairman.

"I dealt with 50 or 60 departments and he was one of the more effective chairs," Altman said.

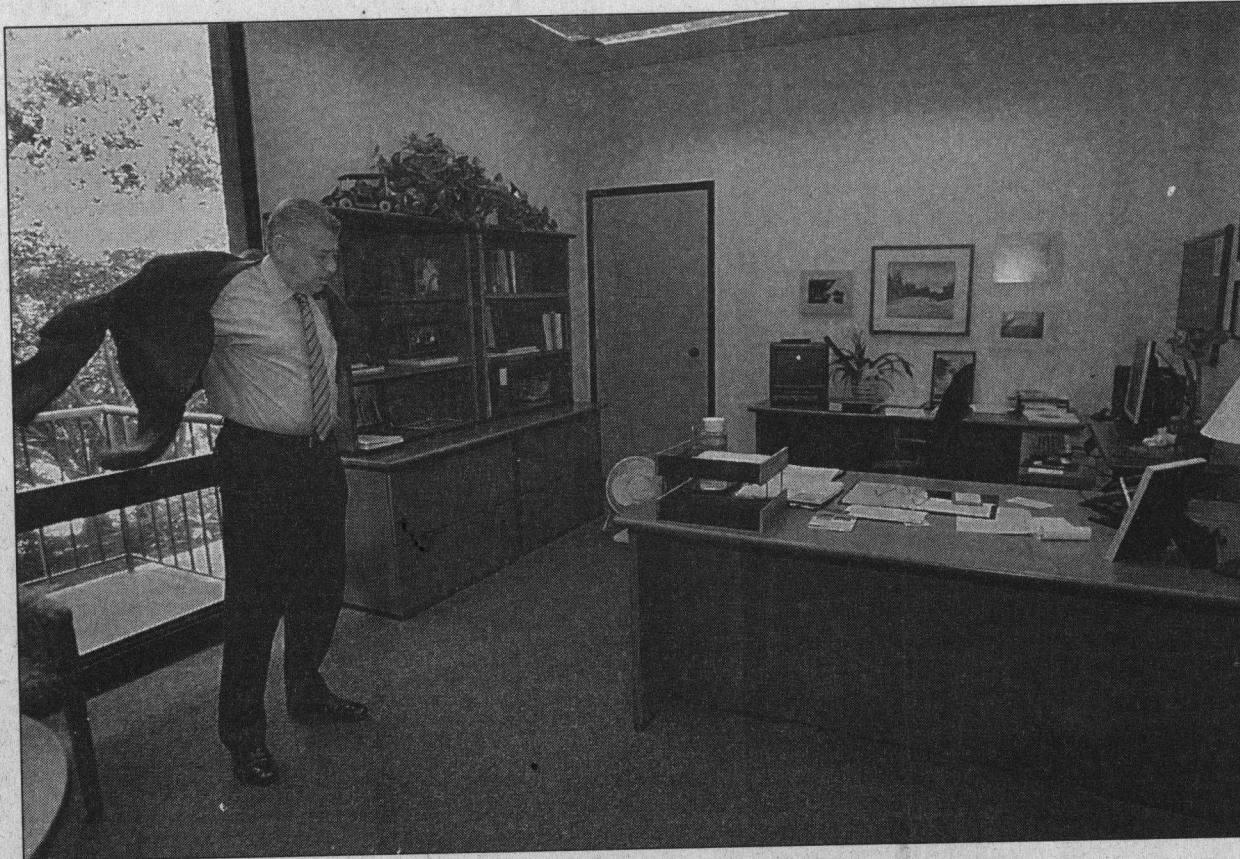
Psychology professor Barbara Rogoff admired Chemers' style at Utah.

"He's not just mechanical, following the rules," she said. "He looks for ways to maximize things for everybody."

As chairman, Chemers focused on younger faculty like Rogoff and helped them develop their careers, rather than academics with established reputations who would be more expensive to recruit.

Rogoff noticed that Chemers figured out how to move faculty meetings along, advising colleagues, "Don't spend all your credibility on this when there are more issues coming."

Claremont McKenna College, a



small private school, called Chemers to California in 1987.

Chemers persuaded financier Henry Kravis, a Claremont alumnus, to endow an institute on leadership, attracting top-notch faculty members from various disciplines to work together.

"It was a sleepy diamond in the rough, and he moved it forward," said Ron Riggio, who succeeded Chemers as director of the institute.

At the time, the idea was on the cutting edge. Now there are 1,000 leadership institutes at colleges around the country. Claremont's is among the best known.

Chemers, who has two grown sons, first saw UCSC when his

younger son was looking at colleges.

In 1995, the year his son graduated from Porter College, the campus began looking for a new dean for social sciences.

Barbara Rogoff, who had joined the UCSC psychology department, encouraged Chemers to apply.

### Dollars and sense

As dean, Chemers was in charge of a \$20 million budget, but it wasn't enough to meet all the faculty requests.

"People think you have a pile of money under your desk," he said. "We don't. We're living close to

the bone."

He used a two-part strategy: If people won't get what they want, tell them why, and leverage the money to stretch it further.

"He realized how many faculty members deal with social justice issues, so he decided to put them together," said Manuel Pastor, a professor of Latin American and Latino studies.

The result: the Center for Justice Tolerance and Community. The new program has brought in

When Chemers had to say no to department chairs, he explained how he made those decisions.

"It takes more time, but you avoid problems later," Hutchison said. "Not every division works that way."

As UCSC's enrollment grew, social sciences kept pace. It's the largest division on campus, with the most faculty and students and the most degrees — 1,352 out of 3,014 last year.

Chemers keeps a spartan office, one of the few embellishments a sketch by his father with the words: 'Health, happiness and prosperity.'

Dan Coyro/Sentinel

\$2.4 in million in grants in four years.

Chemers also helped faculty members launch a research institute focusing on international economics, hooking them up with College 9, which has a focus on global issues.

"He combined the visionary aspect of research with the practical sense of how to get things done," said economics professor Michael Hutchison.

The payoff: \$1.3 million in outside funds in three years.

### Listening to people

Journalism lecturer Hallinan, who is retiring this year, recalls a potential hot potato that arose when Chemers was acting vice chancellor.

The provosts of the colleges asked Chemers about a change in the writing requirement for students. The problem: a composition course was required but there was no consistency from college to college in what was taught.

Chemers challenged them to decide what should be done.

They did. They came up with a plan to have lecturers with experience in teaching writing train other faculty how to teach writing. And students would take two quarters of composition.

The plan sailed through the Academic Senate, the faculty governing body, without a dissenting vote.

Hallinan said Chemers deserves some of the credit.

"I personally hope the man ends up being full-time chancellor," Hallinan said.

So does Santa Cruz City Councilman Ed Porter.

When he spoke to Chemers about his traffic-busting idea for a monorail-type system like the one that carries 16,000 passengers a day at West Virginia University, he got a green light to develop a proposal.

"A new era is upon us," said Porter, who suggests community members lobby for Chemers.

He's already sent his letter to the search committee.

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