At the University of California San Diego, challenging convention is our most cherished tradition. The Campaign for UC San Diego is a university-wide comprehensive fundraising effort to transform the student experience, our campus, and ultimately the way humanity approaches problems and develops solutions.

Birch Aquarium at Scripps

Revitalization for a New Era

Transforming our space
Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, an integral part of the renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography for over a century, is embarking on an ambitious and much-needed renovation, wholly reimagining our space to better support our crucial role as a leader in science and environmental communications. This phased capital project will enable Birch Aquarium at Scripps to meet its important new mission of ‘connecting understanding to protecting our ocean planet’ for audiences of all ages and cultures.

Birch Aquarium at Scripps’ current home is more than 25 years old and suffers from outdated facilities and systems. Our revitalization will create improved spaces to better support innovations in science-based exhibitions, marine animal care and conservation, K-14 educational programs, public outreach, and community events.

Implementing a new vision
We visualize the revitalized Birch Aquarium at Scripps as both a global-class aquarium and access point to behind-the-scenes experiences at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Our central theme – big and small, near and far, explore our ocean planet, how it works, and how we fit in – will be integrated into all aspects of the visitor experience.

The redesign will grow our interpretive capacity and guide visitors through three zones of immersive learning experiences and exhibits – Connect, Invent, and Discover – giving physical shape to the Scripps Oceanography research we are charged with sharing.

500,000 visitors
Explore Birch Aquarium yearly

56,000 K-14 students
Experience marine science annually through a combination of aquarium visits and outreach

1 million learners
Reached through online programming each year, including UCSD-TV

Continue the nontradition.
Birch Aquarium Revitalization

Enriching our community

» Through this revitalization, Birch Aquarium at Scripps will amplify its role as the community's portal into our world’s oceans, inviting generations of San Diegans to use our learning center as an authentic and trusted place to introduce their families to science and nature.

» The revitalized Birch Aquarium at Scripps will be less an 80,000-square foot aquarium and more a 170-acre exploratory campus housed in the Scripps Coastal Reserve, providing an astounding expanded resource for the community.

» Birch Aquarium at Scripps’ active student education program welcomes over 56,000 K-14 students annually and emphasizes service to San Diego’s underserved communities, helping to ensure equity in access to marine, earth, and atmospheric science education. Through the revitalization, students from underserved communities will enjoy innovative enhancements to informal instruction.

Enhancing the learning experience

» Birch Aquarium at Scripps’ new interpretive pathway, built on the central backbone of Earthworks: Earth Investigation Gallery – an Exploratorium-like experience that invites visitors to play with Scripps’ robots and sensors – will also include seven new experience-based pathways to explore including: Cove to Canyon Habitat Exploration, Experience: Oceans, Expedition Earth Gallery, Floating Science Phenomena Play Zone, Husbandry Arts Care and Conservation Center, Sensors and Observation Exploration Trail, and the Horses, Dragons, and Penguins Gallery.

» A new Center for Science Translation and Global Sustainability will allow Birch Aquarium at Scripps to leverage UC San Diego’s resources as a major research university to drive innovation in learning; reinforce cross-cutting concepts and practices of science, technology, engineering, and math; and integrate the arts and humanities.

» Young learners and their families will benefit from exhibits and programs built on a theory of learning based on relationships which are designed to promote curiosity, empathy, exploration, and play while simultaneously being multisensory and universally accessible.

» New exhibits that immerse visitors in the learning experience will be the Leopard Shark Aggregation Immersion Tank, Kelp Forest and MPA Listening Bar, Butterfly Fish and Coral Grow-out House, and Ocean@Night.

Help us continue the nontradition.

With your help, UC San Diego will realize a transformative revitalization of Birch Aquarium at Scripps, placing ‘protecting our ocean planet’ at the center of Birch’s educational programs and exhibits. Together with your philanthropic support of the Campaign for UC San Diego, we can successfully share Scripps Oceanography’s vibrant research with the community, influencing generations of our planet’s future stewards.

Learn more at campaign.ucsd.edu

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