

PARENT PROFILE

Aztec Parents Advisory Board members Rachael and Bruce Witt said that all parents should view themselves as equal partners at SDSU.

"We are all part of the SDSU community, along with university administrators, faculty, and staff. We are all in it together to help our students succeed in attaining their college degree and developing into mature, socially responsible adults," said Rachael.

Bruce echoed that sentiment and commented on how helping other parents is a role that both the Witts enjoy.

"Participating on the Aztec Parents Advisory Board is one way to make a direct contribution toward the goal of partnering with the university," he said. "Drawing upon our own experiences, knowledge and sharing with other parents, we demystify the transition to college, enabling new parents to feel more comfortable and reassured about the university."

The Witts have two daughters, only 13 months apart. Oldest daughter Elyse is a senior at SDSU, and will graduate in May. Their younger daughter, Caitlyn, chose to go out of state to college — she attends St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN.

Rachael said both girls became very familiar with San Diego State very early in their lives, as she worked on campus for 14 years in the university's Instructional Technology Services department.

"Elyse had always wanted to attend SDSU despite visiting six other universities both in-state and out-of-state," said Rachael. "Elyse's familiarity with the campus prior to becoming a student enabled her to be a good resource/tour guide for her friends who were considering SDSU or were new students."

Both Bruce and Rachael are very active on campus as members of the Aztec Parents Advisory Board. They have participated in orientation, residence hall move-in, New Student and Family Convocation, Explore SDSU, Family Weekend, among others, in order to serve parents who have questions or concerns.

When asked why they thought it was important to be so involved as parents at the college level, Bruce said it was second nature to them.



"We have always been active in our girls' schools. From elementary, middle school and high school, we participated on school boards, fundraising, volunteered for facility improvement projects, coached sports teams, volunteered and provided financial support for special projects," he said. "Being active in the Aztec Parents Association enables us to make a contribution that benefits that part of the college community commonly overlooked at other universities, namely the parents."

They both agreed that there is just as much a need to be involved at the college level.

"Just as the transition to college is a big change for students, it is equally a big change for parents for completely different reasons. We view our participation as being advocates for parents — answering the numerous questions (asked and unasked) that go through parents' minds as they prepare to transition into a new phase of their lives," said Bruce.

Rachael expanded on new college parent concerns further.

"While participating in the events on campus, you can literally see the anxiousness and concern in new parents' eyes as they try to 'keep it together' while helping their student move in or become familiar with the campus," she said. "We found that it only takes a welcoming smile and the simple act of asking to get new

parents talking about their concerns or inquiries. And what a change in their expressions occurs (relief) once they get answers and begin to feel more comfortable about SDSU and the transition."

Bruce said he is extremely proud of the support the Aztec Parents Fund is able to provide to all students.

"The programs and services the Aztec Parents Fund sponsors broaden the learning and life-skill development opportunities for students beyond traditional or mandated academic standards," he said. "We feel that the donations we make support innovative programs that strive to enhance the personal college experience for a large number of students. Donating to the Aztec Parents Fund enables the university to incorporate new approaches to keep learning current and engaged in a safe and healthy environment."

Rachael emphasized that all parents can easily become involved.

"Participating in the Aztec Parents Association does not require a huge time commitment, nor does donating to the Aztec Parents Fund require a large sum of money," she said. "A small investment of time and/or resources by every family can yield significant collective effort toward keeping SDSU at the forefront of higher education nationally, and providing countless opportunities for student success."