UC SANTA CRUZ

Chancellor Denice D. Denton: A Brief Biography

Denice Denton was appointed by the UC Regents as the ninth chancellor of the University of California, Santa Cruz. She assumed office on February 14, 2005. Dr. Denton also held a UCSC appointment as Professor of Electrical Engineering. As chief executive, Chancellor Denton led a major public research university with a combined undergraduate and graduate enrollment of about 15,000 students engaged in 62 undergraduate majors and a total of 32 master's, doctoral, and graduate certificate programs.

Previous Appointments

Beginning in 1996, Chancellor Denton was Dean of the College of Engineering and Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington (UW), the first woman to hold such a position at an NRC-designated Research One university. She held academic appointments at the University of Massachusetts, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where she worked from 1987, leaving as professor in the Departments of Electrical & Computer Engineering and Chemistry to become dean at UW.

A Commitment to Diversity

Dr. Denton earned an international reputation for effective advocacy supporting access to science, math, and engineering opportunities for women and minorities. At each of her previous appointments and during her tenure at UW, she established and promoted programs that expanded access to these fields. In May 2004, Denton was among nine scholars honored by the White House with a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring, recognizing her role as a major leader in enhancing diversity in science and engineering.

Awards and Honors

Among her awards were the Maria Mitchell Women in Science Award (2006), national recognition of exceptional work advancing opportunities in the sciences for women and girls; IEEE/HP Harriet B. Rigas Award (1995); ASEE George Westinghouse Award (1995); W. M. Keck Foundation Engineering Teaching Excellence Award (1994); Benjamin Smith Reynolds Teaching Award (University of Wisconsin, 1994); Eta Kappa Nu C. Holmes MacDonald Distinguished Young Electrical Engineer National Teaching Award (1993); American Society of Engineering Education AT&T Foundation Teaching Award (1991); Kiekhofer Distinguished Teaching Award (University of Wisconsin, 1990); and NSF Presidential Young Investigator Award (1987).

National Leadership Roles

Chancellor Denton was a member of the President's Committee to select recipients of the National Medal of Science, and the committee to select recipients of the A. T. Waterman Award sponsored by the National Science Foundation. She was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Association for Women in Science, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. She was a member of the National Science Foundation Engineering Directorate Advisory Committee and a member of the Visiting Committee for the California Institute of Technology Division of Engineering and Applied Science. Formerly, she served as chair of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council (NAS/NRC) Board on Engineering Education. Among many other prestigious appointments, she was a member of the NRC Committee on Advanced Materials and Fabrication Methods for Microelectromechanical Systems and of MIT's Advisory Board for Initiatives to Diversify the Professoriate.

Education and Research Interests

The author of nearly 100 scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers, Chancellor Denton earned a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; her doctoral thesis was titled, "Moisture Transport in Polyimide Films in Integrated Circuits." MIT also awarded her three other degrees, including a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, the Electrical Engineering degree, and a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering. Her research was in microelectromechanical systems (MEMS) as an enabling technology, particularly in life sciences applications. She also worked in the arena of transformational change in higher education.

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