In January 2014, Steve Gamer became a part of the UC San Diego family when he stepped into his role as vice chancellor for advancement, where he leads the strategic development and management of campuswide fundraising and alumni relations programs, and serves as president of the UC San Diego Foundation.

Steve's 25-year career in fundraising began on the day he took a job as volunteer fundraiser as a student at the University of Michigan. “What I like best about what we do,” he says, “is meeting people who care about making a difference in this world. I couldn’t imagine doing anything else. I absolutely love this work.”

Steve was recruited to San Diego from his 11-year position as an associate vice chancellor for development at UCLA, where he steered an expansion of the fundraising capacity to a record-setting $512 million in gifts and pledges in fiscal year 2012-13. He is very enthusiastic about the potential at UC San Diego. “I want to help build unshakeable bonds between the community and UC San Diego’s academic leadership, faculty and students. One of my goals is to make sure that every supporter understands the impact that he or she is having, and that this is the right place for philanthropic investment – not only for San Diego, but for California and the world.

“I’m looking forward to helping one of the top 15 research universities in the world secure the funding needed to continue its excellence in all areas, from the sciences to engineering, international relations to the humanities.”

In addition to research and outreach, Steve is passionate about UC San Diego’s education mission. “The students who are in school right now will be sitting in positions of influence in 20 years. They’ll be leading the future economy. Investment here is investment in our future.”

The next generation of leaders is more than an abstract to Steve and his wife, who are raising two teenagers, Shira and Elie, and fifth-grader Ariella, all of whom attend public schools. Stephanie Klasky-Gamer is president and CEO of a LA Family Housing, a nonprofit that helps families transition out of homelessness and poverty through a continuum of housing enriched with supportive services. Social commitment is in the DNA of the Klasky-Gamer household.

Steve credits his values and work ethic to his parents, who taught him the importance of making a difference through his work. Born in North Carolina, Steve was raised in Detroit and attended the University of Michigan for his undergraduate degree, later earning a master’s degree in Public Administration at the University of Southern California. “One of the best decisions of my life was moving to California,” says Steve who loves skiing with his family, reading and year-round digging in the garden.
As a new San Diegan yet longtime champion of the University of California, Steve clearly sees California’s position as a global driver, and UC San Diego as a pivotal cog in that engine.

“Seventy-nine percent of all UC San Diego alumni reside in California, with the majority – 72 percent – in southern and 28 percent in the northern part of the state. Our alumni create businesses; they generate job growth. Today’s students will be our doctors, our elected representatives, entrepreneurs and the parents of future alumni. This is why everyone who supports UC San Diego is shaping the local and global future economy.”