

Trustee



Kwan So

“A good link to China.” This simple description of Kwan So’s career also describes his earliest interest in UC San Diego. Born in Hong Kong, Kwan was university-educated in the U.S., first at Georgia Tech, then M.I.T., and eventually at Cal Tech to study aeronautics briefly.

It hasn’t slowed his success, or his interest in higher education. In the 1970s, Kwan remembers UCSD was a “little, tiny school” with few students. Years later, when his wife, Marion, told him about a new graduate school on campus – International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) – “I poked my nose in, and I’ve been here ever since!” Kwan’s specific interest was and continues to be the school’s China studies, and as a businessman who travels frequently between Asia and the U.S. representing his Hong Kong clients, his counsel to the school’s deans has been invaluable. Marion shares this interest, even volunteering at a campus resale shop that raises funds for scholarships that send UCSD students abroad and brings international students to UCSD.

In addition to his third term on the UC San Diego Foundation, Kwan has spent nearly two decades on the IR/PS International Advisory Board, and has served on the Undergraduate Scholarship Council since its inception. The Soss are Lifetime Chancellor’s Associates.

Kwan and Marion have been very generous across campus, most notably to endowed chairs, scholarships and fellowships. Their strong belief in higher education led their daughter, Annie, to study at UC Berkeley and Georgetown, while son John earned his degrees at Brown University and University of Hong Kong.

Kwan’s interest in UC San Diego began in 1989 with a question: “I wanted to find out about International Relations and Pacific Studies: What are they doing? Anything about China?” The answer since then has been: Quite a lot, especially with his involvement and support.