Professor Hoyt: 0:00
So as we look at the role of the university, it really is about providing that knowledge, that academic pathway... And then I see such a bright future for research and really helping build capacity in the community. And I believe that that will bring such value to this community--help not only the academic pathways, but certainly that economic engine that is so desperately needed.

De La Torre: 0:29
Welcome to the Fireside Charla. I'm excited to welcome the dean and two top researchers from SDSU Imperial Valley. Today we are connecting via zoom since we all remain in quarantine due to the Coronavirus homestay restrictions. I'm also thrilled to talk about the innovative research taking place at SDSU. Today, we will also get up close look at the considerable community impact that our faculty and students have in the rural region of Imperial County, two hours east of San Diego. Before I let our guests introduce themselves, I want to share a few standout facts about the impact SDSU Imperial Valley has that might surprise you. SDSU Imperial Valley plays a key role along with Imperial Valley College in serving as economic engine of the region. A significant number of teachers, law enforcement officers, and nurses in Imperial County are graduates of our college in the low desert. Many of our students and alumni have strong ties to the community and their families and choose to stay in the region, giving back and becoming contributing members of their community. Since 2009, we have trained 220 nurses, 80% of whom remain in the valley, serving their local community. Many of our nursing graduate students and alumni are medical leaders, the two local hospitals there and have been on the frontlines this year, leading the battle against COVID-19 in ICUs and special units. Joining me today are the Dean of SDSU Imperial Valley, Dr. Gregory Ponce, Nursing Professor, Professor Helina Hoyt, and Public Administration Professor, Professor David Janscics. So I'm going to start with some questions for you, Dean Ponce. So you grew up in the Imperial Valley, what are some of your early memories of the region and SDSU's campus?

Gregorio Ponce: 2:16
So one of the things that I... that I realized after being Dean is that when I was a high school student, I never heard about SDSU Imperial Valley, and I wonder why I never had and I realized
that I didn't because SDSU Imperial Valley was established as an upper division University, and therefore was not an option for high school graduates, and now we're really looking to change that, but what's really funny is that I walked by this University for four years when I was going to grade school and not once did I know that this was a university.

De La Torre: 2:54
So SDSU Imperial Valley has made a lot of strides in recent years. What are some milestones you’re most proud of?

Gregorio Ponce: 3:00
I think one of the things that we are really proud of is that we are transforming ourselves into a four-year University here for Imperial County. We have added criminal justice as an option for high school graduates to come straight into SDSU Imperial Valley, we have also added psychology as another option. And most recently, we added a minor in social work. So, these are just some of the key things that that we are doing to help us transform ourselves into that four-year University for high school graduates.

De La Torre: 3:33
In what ways do we make a significant impact on the local community in the economy?

Gregorio Ponce: 3:38
Well, as you shared, a lot of our graduates are born and raised in Imperial County, and stay in Imperial County. For some of us, I mean, we choose to stay in the region, because we want to help transform and support our community. So, certainly nursing is one where we're being very active and we place a lot of our graduates there and we do So the same in education, our credential program, you know, about 80% of the elementary and high school teachers here in Imperial County came from SDSU Imperial Valley. We also have our social work programs and our psychology majors that really help support some of the--many of the social services that are available in Imperial County. And certainly criminal justice and the law enforcement areas and public administration also in public service areas. So, we have these majors that really help prepare our students to serve this community.
So, then what does it really mean that Valley residents are able to stay at home and go to college?

So that's--that's one of the biggest questions, you know, that I get asked: why SDSU Imperial Valley? First and foremost is because we are a four-year university that is really meant to give our students--our high school graduates and our transfer students the opportunity to experience the university life without having to worry about room and board expenses, but yet we have our faculty focused on research, we have our staff and faculty that serve the community. One of the things that really caught my attention is that Imperial County graduates about 1,000 CSU-eligible high school graduates, and only half of them leave Imperial County. And it dawned on me that these students work really, really hard to be eligible to go to a CSU, there's a CSU in their backyard, and the door was not open to them. So again, we've worked really hard to change that to start taking students straight out of high school, because we want them to have the option to have a university experience here in Imperial County.

So, you know, there are just tremendous opportunities for students in SDSU Imperial Valley. So, what are the next steps in carrying this important momentum forward from when you were a little boy not recognizing it, to now the community recognizing the significant impact, particularly in terms of growing leaders as well as economic impact. So how do we carry the momentum forward, Gregorio?

You know, our faculty and staff have worked really hard to increase the enrollment numbers at SDSU Imperial Valley and that's one of the key steps that we have to address--is that if we are open to our high school and community college transfer students, it needs to be reflected in students choosing to come here and we've been breaking records over the last four or five semesters and in order to continue building on that, we have a few ideas that we want to put in place: one, you know, we find it important to bring a general business degree into SDSU Imperial Valley because the economic infrastructure of Imperial County needs leaders in that area to help them transform the economic vision for Imperial County. We're also looking at sustainability, engineering degrees. You know, there's a possibility we can work with CETYS to make that possible, because we would need help with the infrastructure. But the sustainability
is key in Imperial County. We also know that in order for us to truly transition into becoming a four-year university, we need a building that has labs in it. So we're looking to to bring a stem lab into Imperial County--to SDSU Imperial Valley and bring in the biology lab, the chemistry lab, the nursing lab, the technology lab, the forensic labs, a general science lab, I mean these are key pieces. And of course, we're looking to see how we can better serve the health services industry here in Imperial County for the future.

**De La Torre:** 7:58
So, a lot of people don't fully understand or appreciate our binational connections. Could you give us a little background on why the relationship with CETYS and explain what CETYS is for the campus,

**Gregorio Ponce:** 8:12
So you know, over, at least in my, during my tenure as Dean, we've established relationships, or stronger es with the Tecnologico de Mexicali Engineering University and also with CETYS which is a private university that's WASC accredited. So these are important relationships for us to build because again, the research efforts that our faculty do is not limited to a fence--it's not limited to a border. I mean, they're just a lot of relationships that need to be built, a lot of common issues that we share that we can overcome together.

**De La Torre:** 8:55
So you've mentioned your wonderful faculty, now I have an opportunity to ask a few questions from some of your faculty. So I wanted to start with Professor Hoyt, you've been very active for a number of years working in the Imperial Valley or from the Imperial Valley. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your role in SDSU Imperial Valley?

**Professor Hoyt:** 9:18
Certainly. Thank you so much for having me, President de la Torre. So I was born and raised in Holtville, California, I am through and through an Imperial Valley girl. And I'm so proud to be an SDSU Aztec. I got my master's in Nursing, in Community Health Nursing, and then a PhD in Education from SDSU. I've been motivated to stay in the valley because I see the connectedness--so, strong generational ties, and I just love this community that has helped me raise my two children here. And I saw the SDSU Imperial Valley opportunity as the only way to really make a difference in healthcare. So back in 2007, I joined the team as the SDSU IV Nursing
Program Coordinator, and it's been so exciting to be able to educate nurses and help improve healthcare in Imperial Valley.

De La Torre: 10:10
So I've been very impressed by the impact and the legacy of the SDSU Imperial Valley nursing program and that 80% of our students are really in the field working with the hospitals and clinics and the physicians. So, I want to get your sense, what are the most important impacts from the period that--from when you started to now--that you want to brag about and I think that there is a lot to brag about, given what you've done here at this campus?

Professor Hoyt: 10:44
Oh, thank you. There certainly is, you know, nurses are the largest body of the healthcare workforce. And so since 2007, we've really been focused on building a diverse workforce and really growing our own. We've been working on that professional nursing workforce that can understand the impact they have. And that's been actually kind of hard to achieve in some regards, because traditionally, the only way to get to the RN profession locally is through the Community College. So for several years, we really had to work on that perception that there really needed to be a continuation to the bachelor's degree and beyond and what was the benefit of going on to a bachelor's degree. So what we've been focusing in on are advanced assessment skills, and we're so excited that we now have a new health assessment lab through the Brawley campus... We focus on evidence based practice because without understanding the rule of evidence, it's really hard to make sure you have clinical practice guidelines that are really going to have an impact. We work on leadership and this has really been phenomenal--to watch our nurses who are, you know, born and raised here and sometimes very young, who are thrown in the trenches and realize, wow, I am supposed to be the leader, not just for my patient, but to really point out some of those gaps and to be able to help change the system. The other two things we really focused in on are how to take care of complex patients that have a lot of issues. So for instance, some of the leaders in our... in our... some of our graduates actually have helped to establish two multidisciplinary research councils in both hospitals. And one of the first projects they looked at is, you know, who are the patients we served, and they realized they often have three to six chronic conditions and take up to 25 medicines a day. So they're coming into this system in need of help. And so our nurses have really also been able to look at the social determinants of health and to understand economics and education and literacy and how that shapes health. And finally, they've been able to look at Community Health nursing and population health and how can we become accountable for health in our community. So it's been really exciting over the years to look at how many go on to graduate school--it's nearly a third of them--so we have many who are now nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse leaders, public health nurses, and they truly are transformative. It's
really exciting as well to see how many stay and now they're engaged in the trenches. And many of them now go beyond their immediate role, and they serve on various committees. So, you certainly see this nursing leadership model that works well. One highlight that I have to throw out there is that once a year during nurses week, we host the Imperial Valley Evidence-based Practice Nursing Conference, and it was so exciting to see the shift in about 2014. Up until that time, it was just our students who would talk about research and evidence-based practice because the majority of the workforce wasn't at the bachelor's level and didn't understand how important it was. And now every year, there's more than 100 attendees and our students have a very small role because our graduates are the ones who are actually really leading the way. So, I hope that you'll start to see publications that come out to highlight this rule of border health that we have here, and how exciting it is to see our SDSU alumni actually creating sound, evidence-based change.

De La Torre: 14:39
You know, it's interesting, as I listened to you speaking, the transition of nursing from the AA degree to the BSN and also into the masters and again, this is a pathway that many health professionals and licensing organizations in the healthcare field have been focused on. In my mind, with your leadership and the Imperial Valley campus, we can really create the pathways that are going to allow these individuals to become the CEOs of the medical centers, and create the different types of federally qualified health centers and create the kind of access opportunities and prevention opportunities. So, given this great opportunity and trajectory for Imperial Valley in the health professions, where do you see the future for our--for your profession and for the health professions and for SDSU Imperial Valley in creating this synergy and education opportunity for Imperial Valley residents?

Professor Hoyt: 15:40
So, I'm so glad you asked that question. You know, partly why I left the valley was there was no four-way BSN program. Our four-year sorry, four-year program where, out of high school, you can come in and, in four years, have the bachelor's degree in 120 units, your license, and you're already on that path to make a difference. So, it could take anywhere between four to six years to finish the associate degree program. So, SDSU is positioned to be able to create those academic pathways. And so, we certainly need to continue our partnership to have that transfer pathway, as you mentioned, between that associate degree to the BSN. But there really needs to be that option like there is in San Diego for a four-year BSN program. And then certainly for graduate work, as we've seen with the the inaugural MS and Nursing Leadership Program, these were the Assistant Chief Nursing Officers, these were directors of units, these were leaders in
public health. So we really noted that there wasn't anything regionally that would help to get them to the next level. And it's amazing when you see what they're actually able to produce. One of them is actually creating the first cardiac cath lab. So traditionally, if you had a heart attack here, you'd have to be flown out to San Diego or Palm Desert because we didn't have that capacity. The guidelines show you should be from the ER door to the balloon in the cath lab in 90 minutes. We were just hopeful to get you on the helicopter in that timeframe. So, as we look at the role of the university, it really is about providing that knowledge, that academic pathway--and then I see such a bright future for research and really helping build capacity in the community, so that as Dean Ponce was mentioning, we really have those academic-private partnerships, and we can foster innovation in this--at this area. And I believe that that will bring such value to this community help not only the academic pathways, but certainly that economic engine that is so desperately needed.

**De La Torre: 17:46**
Well, I want to thank you for the exciting work that you're doing for the workforce, for the profession, and for public health and the opportunities for SDSU Imperial Valley for the future. I now want to turn to Professor Janscics, who's doing very exciting work in public administration, focusing on corruption on the border--corruption that occurs in various levels, I think globally. And so, what I'd love to hear is about the kind of work you're doing right now and the importance of your research and how it impacts our students at SDSU Imperial Valley. Professor young church?

**Professor Janscics 18:25**
Sure, thank you very much president de la Torre for having me today. So I am an Associate Professor of Public Administration. I've been at San Diego State since 2017 and my research focuses on corruption and other informal practices in public organizations in different parts of the world. But when I came here to San Diego State, I started a new research agenda with a more specific focus on border corruption in the U.S. And I also frequently consult with international organizations and NGOs, like the UN or Transparency International... and I teach courses in public administration related to human resource management and destructive behavior, research methods and policy analysis.

**De La Torre: 19:09**
Professor Janscics, so what are the important findings that you're finding about the U.S-Mexico border in terms of corruption? Clearly, there seems to be corruption throughout the world. But are there specific characteristics that we need to be observant of in terms of individuals who
Professor Janscics 19:40
Sure. So, my latest article is about corruption within CBP, which is the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency. And one of the main implications of this study was that tightening border control, which is the current federal policy, right, might actually increase corruption among officers. Why? Because smugglers and drug cartels will find other ways to get their goods across the border. I worked with a student—an undergrad student—and my student and I took data collected by investigative reporters and these are documents about cases when CBP employees were arrested for corruption. And we found that, in some cases, infiltrators even pursued employment in CBP only to engage in smuggling. We also found that early career officers, relatively new hires, tend to be more corrupt in facilitating drug-related corruption, and veteran officers tend to be more in facilitating human smuggling. I would not say that the whole agency is corrupt. Of course, it’s not the case because when you see CBP employs about 60,000 people, so 160 exposed corrupt cases over more than 10 years suggests that corruption is not actually by spreading the agency. But it’s alarming.

De La Torre: 21:09
In the context of corruption, to what extent is there an influence of organized crime? You know, we often hear about the border and particularly the cartels. Is there an intersection point in the influence and the corruption that you see on the border?

Professor Janscics 21:28
Well, yes, actually, I was involved in the... in the United Nations project focusing on organized crime in the Western Balkans... they invited me because I have a background in border corruption, which is actually a big part of organized crime. So, I spend the summer of 2019 in Budapest, Hungary, working together with with other scholars from the Balkan region—from Bosnia, Albania, Montenegro, and there are some similar patterns between organized crime in the western Balkan and the organized crime in Latin America, or more specifically, in Mexico. So, we presented our findings in Vienna, Austria at the end the UN headquarters. And in this research, I found that ordinary citizens who are typically not involved in organized crime, were somehow drawn into it. For example, taxi drivers who helped illegal immigrants cross the border, or others who gave shelter or—or accommodation to immigrants and smugglers, or even hotel managers who helped facilitating cross border prostitution. So, this affected the normal life of these people, because this environment was simultaneous with their normal jobs. So, one main conclusion was that crime networks are more extensive than we thought, and they are actually embedded at all levels of society.
De La Torre: 22:57
And so it would speak to the systemic nature of corruption and the context is really: to uproot it might be extremely difficult given the multiple levels and complexity, wouldn't you say?

Professor Janscics 23:09
Yeah, it's a very complex phenomenon and I'm actually very interested in the intersection and the conflict of two very different types of behaviors--so, our normal, informal social life with friends and family members, and our other professional role as an employee in organizations. So, for example, giving a gift to a family member is a compliment, right? Giving the gift of a customs officer is corruption. So what's the difference? I'm also fascinated by why otherwise morally upright, normal people engage routinely in corruption without feeling conflict. Also, how new employees are socialized into corruption. So, what comes to mind when we think about criminals? Definitely not people working in business suits and uniforms, right? Corrupt people typically do not have criminal lifestyle, they are usually non-violent, they are educated, so why are they corrupt? And, of course, money is--money is a huge motivating factor. But there is also toxic agency culture, toxic organizational culture, which is very relevant when we see the recent events related to police corruption, right. So, so toxic culture is another important factor and if people around you are corrupt, there is--there's a huge peer pressure on you to behave corruptly. And there are also other factors outside the organization--the influence of our social network. So giving a public contract to a family member may be viewed as absolutely normal, or even expected by the family, right. But from an organizational perspective, this is nepotism, a form of corruption. So I'm interested in this clash between our formal and informal life and when the result is very often corruption or other forms of white-collar crime.

De La Torre: 25:04
So, in light of your research, I'm curious to know about how your students responded, given that many of your students have grown up in the border, may have even observed, you know, this type of, you know, corruption in one form or another. How has the experience been for your students? And what of the--what are the insights that your students provide to you on this topic?

Professor Janscics 25:26
Sure. So, so my students are undergraduates in public administration, and also many of them are criminal justice majors, so many of them will be--will be law enforcement agents, Border Patrol or local law enforcement employees. So they are actually very interested in this...
topic. They are--they are excited about this. So, I already had several students helping me in this research project. So for them it's very important to learn about eth--the ethical aspects of public service, including corruption. So, we discuss these topics very extensively in my classes. And again, some of them were so intrigued by the subject that they decided to pursue master's degree in this field, and conduct research on corruption. One of them is actually considering to apply to a PhD program. So, when you see students like them, you realize that you actually have an impact on these young people.

De La Torre: 26:33
Well, I think that's fabulous because when we think about the potential impact of the faculty at SDSU Imperial Valley, in terms of transforming the lives of these students, and have an impact on the on the economy and the community, it's--it's really significant. So I want to just take this time to thank all of you because I think this has been an eye-opening experience for me. I want to thank Dean Ponce, Professor Hoyt, Professor Janscics for their great work and their dedication in making SDSU Imperial Valley a premier institution for Imperial County, and we know in the future your impact will even be greater. So thank you so much.

Gregorio Ponce: 27:20
Thank you.

Professor Hoyt: 27:21
Thank you.

Professor Janscics 27:22
Thank you.

Alex
Thank you for being a part of Fireside Charla. You can join the conversation by sharing your comments and questions for President de la Torre via Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn. Make sure to tag @prezdelatorre and #firesidecharla... that's @P-R-E-Zdelatorre. You can also access a transcript of today's episode and other resources at sdsu.edu/firesidecharla. And be sure to subscribe on iTunes or your favorite podcast app to be notified when new podcasts get published. Our Managing Editor is Maria Keckler, our Associate Producer is Padma Nagappan, our editing engineer is SDSU student Alex Schenkhuizen, music is by SDSU alum Kevin Crick, and special thanks to Scott Hargrove and Luis Murillo for their logistical support. Thank you for
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