

Biography: Alberto “Beto” Vasquez

Statistics indicate that individuals with Beto’s background are seldom considered to be college bound or successful. Expectations are low for high school graduation and far lower for obtaining a graduate degree. Nevertheless, his story proves otherwise. Beto is the youngest of four children born to Mexican parents and was raised in Logan Heights, a community riddled with gangs, drugs & violence. Once a high school dropout, he has overcome homelessness, incarceration and addiction and managed to change the trajectory of his life.

Beto has a Masters degree in biology from UCSD and is currently employed with UC San Diego where he leads efforts to increase diversity in STEM. Beto is currently a doctoral candidate at SDSU in Education and plans to pursue a career as a professor and a community college administrator. As such, he is committed to becoming a role model; to his four kids, his community and as a professional in higher education. He is an educational advocate for marginalized groups and a great proponent of diversity in Science, technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) fields.

He is very active in the community and has assisted with designing programs and events (for system-impacted individuals and underrepresented groups in STEM), and uses his story to motivate others—specifically at-risk populations. Within the community, he is involved with grant selection committees, various board positions with local non-profits and as a community organizer works closely with probation, parole and a myriad of other agencies. He currently serve as President for the [Nostros Alumni Association](#) (a non-profit committed to assisting men in recovery), Founder/Co-advisor of the City College SACNAS Chapter (a program committed to increasing diversity in STEM) & [Urban Scholars Union](#) (an education-based support group for ex-incarcerated students) and was appointed by the Mayor of San Diego to the City’s Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention. He also recently served as Co-chair for the Warden’s Community Advisory Board at RJ Donovan Prison.

Beto has been recognized as one of San Diego Metro Magazine’s “40 Under 40” persons to watch, among various other community leader distinctions and a special recognition from the City of San Diego for his civic engagement. Nationally, he has collaborated on several education-based workshops, trainings and conference presentations. He is a fellow of Just Leadership USA, a national organization committed to cutting recidivism rates.

He recently served as Outreach Coordinator for San Diego Continuing Education (CE) where he created CE’s very first Outreach Department to boast their seven facilities, free programs and educational opportunities. He is currently employed with the Center for Research on Educational Equity, Assessment and Teaching Excellence (CREATE) at UC San Diego, where he spearheads UCSD’s efforts to increase STEM diversity, access and interest to disenfranchised communities throughout Southern California. He is also a community college professor of Biology.

He has worked in the non-profit sector, local government and higher education; and has been instrumental in successfully implementing programs supporting underserved communities, disenfranchised populations and students of color. Beto actively uses his lived and professional experience to serve as a motivational speaker, class instructor, professional development facilitator, author and director of equity grants – locally, nationally and internationally.

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