Leading by Example

Sacramento State faculty member Bernice Bass de Martinez said it’s easy to give to Sacramento State because it’s family.

As a child, Bernice Bass de Martinez went along with her parents on their numerous service activities to help members of their church and community.

“I don’t know how not to give back,” said Bass de Martinez, who serves as a special assistant to the dean in the College of Arts and Letters. “I grew up around that experience, that you always help others.”

Bass de Martinez has built a distinguished career at Sacramento State over the past two decades. She taught at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. She served as chair of the foreign language department, as well as provost and vice president for academic affairs. What’s more, Bass de Martinez has worked on service projects in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean.

“I have always wanted to show people you can build education in an equitable way,” she said.

This passion for equity has influenced her career and her involvement at Sacramento State. Bass de Martinez is the Governance Committee chair on the Sacramento State University Foundation Board of Directors and is a donor to the Sacramento State President’s Circle.

The President’s Circle is a giving program for people who contribute $1,500 or more annually to address emerging needs and to support student-centered programs such as the ASI Food Pantry, the Student Emergency Grant Fund, and study-abroad opportunities.

“When you care about a place, you give in support of the place,” she said. “Giving to Sacramento State emphasizes the passions that I care about.”

She knows she is not alone in her commitment to the University’s mission and its students.

“I don’t know any faculty member at Sacramento State who isn’t committed to helping our students,” she said. “By giving financially to Sacramento State, we can be assured that the University will be able to continue to support students.”

She adds that the University relies on all levels of support. “Yes, the multi-million-dollar gifts are wonderful, but we also really need the smaller, consistent, on-going gifts. They are crucial and critically important.”

Bass de Martinez thinks that if faculty and staff aren’t giving, it’s because they haven’t been asked—so she’s asking because students rely on Sacramento State as their community.