



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Ocean Discovery Institute Strengthens Their Board with the Election of New Directors and Officers**

**SAN DIEGO, CA** – Ocean Discovery Institute has elected four new directors and four new officers to serve and lead the organization’s Board of Directors.

The elected directors are:

- Drew Auker, a broker associate at Ascent Real Estate in San Diego. With his high energy, knowledge of City Heights, and commitment to building authentic relationships, Drew is dedicated to expanding our community of supporters.
- Dave Bialis, former senior vice president/general manager for Cox Communications California, recently retired after 32 years of service reaching 800,000 customers. His past work experience combined with his nonprofit board leadership expertise, gives him the knowledge to help Ocean Discovery grow to serve 10,000 youth in the coming years.
- Mindy Dominek, audit managing director with Deloitte & Touche, joins the board with 20 years of audit experience. Mindy is excited to help strengthen financial processes and ensure sustainability as Ocean Discovery’s Treasurer.
- Stewart Halpern has a broad business background, including more than 30 years as a financial executive. He is now an independent business management advisor. Stewart will use his financial expertise with startup and growth initiatives to expand development capabilities and position the organization for further growth.

“The expertise and passion of the board members will have a profound impact in a critical and exciting period during which Ocean Discovery Institute will open a new facility in City Heights, expand programming, and strengthen sustainability,” said Shara Fidler, executive director of Ocean Discovery. “Professionally, the four directors bring unique talents that will be put to action immediately to ensure success.”

In addition to the election of new members, new officers were elected to lead the organization over the next two years. The elected officers are:

- Board Chair - Scott Pearson, director of environmental services for San Diego Gas & Electric Company and four-year board member of Ocean Discovery.

- Vice Chair - Tres Conrique, University of San Diego faculty for the School of Business and seven-year board member of Ocean Discovery.
- Board Treasurer - Mindy Dominek, a new member to Ocean Discovery.
- Board Secretary - Claudia Rodriguez, a program coordinator for San Diego State University's College Avenue Compact program, an Ocean Discovery graduate, and second-year board member of Ocean Discovery.

For full bios, please visit <http://oceandiscoveryinstitute.org/board-of-directors/>.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to leverage my business and financial background to give back to the community as the Treasurer and member of the Ocean Discovery Institute's Board of Directors," said Dominek. "Having a young son of my own and understanding the stresses and challenges associated with trying to provide him with educational opportunities which will empower and inspire him, has made the mission of this amazing organization very meaningful to me."

#### **About Ocean Discovery Institute**

Ocean Discovery Institute is a non-profit organization that uses science to engage young people from urban and underserved backgrounds and empowers them to transform their lives, their community, and ultimately the world as scientific and environmental leaders.

Ocean Discovery Institute serves more than 6,000 students in City Heights, and plans to increase that number to 10,000 within the next couple of years. The organization works in partnership with National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, San Diego Unified School District, along with other corporations and foundations in San Diego. Ocean Discovery has become a national model for STEM education in underrepresented communities. Ocean Discovery Institute is the proud recipient of the White House's Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring, the first ever awarded in the San Diego region. For more information, please visit [www.OceanDiscoveryInstitute.org](http://www.OceanDiscoveryInstitute.org).

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