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REAL ESTATE: ENDOWMENT TO HELP RETAIN, ATTRACT TOP FACULTY

Capstone Advisors Endows Professorship at USD

By Ray Huard

Monday, August 22, 2022

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BURNHAM-MOORES
CENTER FOR REAL ESTATE
KNAUSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Capstone Advisors, led by Alex Zikakis, has endowed a professorship in real estate at the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate at the University of San Diego.



Alex Zikakis CEO and
President Capstone
Advisors

“Those of us in the real estate industry have benefitted by having a nationally recognized real estate program in our community and this provides an opportunity to demonstrate our appreciation and commitment to USD and the Burnham-Moores Center,” Zikakis said.

“This endowed professorship will help the USD real estate program retain and attract top faculty to continue to deliver an exceptional education to its students,” said Zikakis, who has been a member of the Burnham-Moores Center Policy Advisory Board since 2005 and is the CEO and president of Capstone Advisors, which is based in Carlsbad.

“I’ve really been impressed with the quality of the education that the school has,” Zikakis said. “Over the years, we’ve hired more University of San Diego graduates than any other school.”

Neither Zikakis nor the Burnham-Moores Center would disclose the amount of the endowment, but it will go toward the center’s \$10 million Campaign for Student Success, which has so far raised \$8 million.



Charles Tu Daniel F.
Mulvihill Endowed Chair
USD Real Estate
Department

“With a 30% growth in real estate majors and minors year-over-years for the last five years, this gift could not come at a better time,” said Charles Tu, the Daniel F. Mulvihill Endowed Chair of the USD Real Estate Department.

Strong Relationships

In 2022, U.S. News & World Report ranked USD 11th in the nation in its listing of the best undergraduate real estate programs and in 2018, 2019 and 2020, College Factual ranked USD first in its listing of the best real estate colleges in the country, according to USD’s website.

“The strong relationships we enjoy with the real estate industry are key to our success in being able to offer the very best in a comprehensive real estate program at USD,” said Stath Karras, executive director of the Burnham-Moores Center.

Zikakis said having a top-notch faculty also is critical to the success of USD’s real estate program.

“I’ve found that one of the things successful people often have in common is they can easily recall a faculty member from their college years who made a positive impact on their lives when they were young, someone who cared enough to take the time to get to know them as a student,”



Stath Karras Executive
Director Burnham-Moores
Center

Zikakis said. "USD is a place where that happens."

Finding a Career

Zikakis founded Capstone Advisors in 1996 with one employee - himself - after moving to San Diego in 1991.

After earning a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Colorado Boulder and a master's degree in business administration from Cornell Johnson Graduate School of Management, Zikakis worked as an investment banker in New York.

As he watched the construction of a building from his office window, Zikakis said he decided to switch careers.

"I didn't know where in real estate I wanted to go but I knew I wanted to be in an industry that had a tangible product that could really impact the environment I was in," Zikakis said.

Zikakis said that he had no idea that real estate programs like those offered by USD existed.

He moved to San Diego in 1991 and worked for a real estate consulting firm during the height of the Savings and Loan crisis.

"I spent the first three years of my (real estate) career mainly focused on bankruptcy and workouts and liquidating large pools of defaulted real estate loans or real estate that had been foreclosed," Zikakis said. "It was a really fascinating entry into the industry, to see how bad things can go."

Super Fortunate

Capstone Advisors has grown to have a staff of 18 and is developing 1.3 million square feet of industrial products and multi-family projects of more than 1,000 units, he said.

“We’ve been super fortunate to invest and be involved in a wide variety of real estate,” Zikakis said. “We do everything from investing in land for large scale residential construction to owning and operating commercial real estate, primarily shopping centers and industrial parks.”

Through the endowment and his work on the Burnham-Moores Center board, Zikakis said that he hopes to share the enthusiasm he’s had for real estate and inspire that same enthusiasm in others. “I think it’s the best career that I could have possibly picked. I find it endlessly fascinating,” Zikakis said.

Capstone Advisors

Founded: 1996

CEO: Alex Zikakis

Headquarters: Carlsbad

Business: Real estate investment, development and asset management company

Employees: 18

Website: www.capstoneadvisors.com

Contact: 760-804-6900

Notable: Company purchased over 5 million square feet of multi-tenant retail, office and industrial properties and has been the equity investor in more than \$2 billion of residential development projects.