

# CSUSB hike to San Andreas Fault shakes up myths on earthquakes

**Jim Steinberg, Los Angeles Newspaper Group, 10-16-15**

SAN BERNARDINO --One day — 25 million years from now — students at Cal State San Bernardino will be able to take classes in person at nearby University of California, Berkeley, a geology professor said here Thursday.

That's because the Pacific Plate, on which CSUSB resides, will have moved north, while the North American plate — where most of the United States, including UC Berkeley, resides — will have moved south, said Joan E. Fryxell, a geology professor, during her traditional hike in connection with the "Great California ShakeOut."

Throughout the 90-minute trek into the foothills behind the CSUSB campus, Fryxell imparted countless facts and debunked many myths about earthquakes and the fault lines that prompt them. Accompanying her were about 20 mostly non-CSUSB-connected hikers.

Among the early stops was to look at some slate gray-greenish rock that didn't look like much around it.

That's because the Pelona schist outcrop has a companion cluster — more than 150 miles away in the Orocochia Mountains, east of the Coachella Valley and south of Interstate 10, Fryxell told the group.

The long journey for related rock outcropping was due to the movement of the San Andreas Fault, Fryxell said.

The high point of the trek, literally, was up a winding dirt trail some distance from the university's pavement.

With a commanding view of the campus, the group stood on the famous fault.

"If there is an earthquake, nobody is going to fall into the earth," Fryxell said. "But you probably won't be standing either."

And to a hiker immediately east of her, Fryxell said: "We won't be standing close together."

She moved about 12 feet away. "I might be here," she said, "or here," as she moved away even farther. That movement was to simulate the drifting of the two plates, which are on opposite sides of the San Andreas Fault.

Dispelling a common myth, Fryxell said there is no such thing as "earthquake weather."

The relationship between weather and earthquakes has been long studied and no correlations have been found, she told the group.

April Auberry, a registered nurse who lives near CSUSB, said she enjoyed the hike and especially Fryxell's efforts to debunk those pervasive earthquake myths.

"I now know we won't be dropping into the ocean," she said.