At the University of California San Diego, we constantly push boundaries and challenge expectations. Established in 1960, UC San Diego has been shaped by exceptional scholars who aren’t afraid to take risks and redefine conventional wisdom. Today, as one of the top 15 research universities in the world, we are driving innovation and change to advance society, propel economic growth and make our world a better place.

UC San Diego’s main campus is located near the Pacific Ocean on 1,200 acres of coastal woodland in La Jolla, California. The campus sits on the ancestral homelands of the Kumeyaay Nation. Kumeyaay people continue to have an important and thriving presence in the region. UC San Diego’s rich academic portfolio includes six undergraduate colleges, five academic divisions and five graduate and professional schools.

By the Numbers

#1 UC San Diego enrolls the largest number of students among colleges and universities in San Diego County.

35,821 Total campus enrollment (as of Fall 2016)

88,451 Freshman applicants for 2017

4.12 Admitted freshman average high school GPA

$4.3 billion Fiscal year 2014-15 revenues; 22% of this total is revenue from contracts and grants, most of which is from the federal government for research.

7% Total educational appropriations from the State of California; yet a small investment in UC San Diego results in significant impact to the region’s economy, workforce and businesses.

59% Percentage of undergraduate students who received financial aid in the 2014-15 academic year.

$1.012 billion Research funding secured during fiscal year 2014-15 to support research in all fields. One of the nation’s 10 largest centers for science, engineering and medicine, UC San Diego’s research funding has surpassed $1 billion four times in the past six years.

8,058 Number of undergraduate and graduate degrees conferred in 2016

170,000+ Number of UC San Diego alumni worldwide; 26% live in San Diego County, contributing income, payroll, property and sales taxes to the region

67.7% live in California, with the highest percentage (26%) in San Diego
6.9% live in the United States (outside of California)
<1% live abroad
24.9% address data unavailable

16 Number of Nobel laureates who have taught on campus

161 Memberships held by current and emeriti faculty, including Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, in one or more of the three prestigious National Academies; the National Academy of Sciences (84), National Academy of Engineering (27) and National Academy of Medicine (50).

4 Scripps Institution of Oceanography operates three research vessels and an innovative *Floating Instrument Platform* (FLIP), enabling faculty, students and researchers to address our planet’s most pressing environmental challenges within a cutting-edge mobile laboratory. In 2016, the Navy-owned *R/V Sally Ride* became the newest addition to the Scripps Fleet and is considered one of the most technologically advanced oceanographic research vessels in the world.

30 Sustainability is part of UC San Diego’s institutional DNA. More than 30 campus structures are equipped with solar panels and more than a dozen buildings are LEED certified; wireless sensors are situated across campus to determine the best time to gain and expend energy; and more than half of the campus community utilizes alternative transportation.

Global and National Rankings

1st for Positive Impact In 2016, UC San Diego was ranked the top public university in the nation by the *Washington Monthly’s College Guide* based on the positive impact the university has had on the country in terms of enabling social mobility, research productivity and civic engagement.
#1 for Women Graduates in STEM
According to a study by BestColleges.com, UC San Diego is 1st in the nation for enrolling and graduating the most women with majors in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). In addition, UC San Diego’s proportion of STEM graduates is three times the national average.

Changemaker Campus
UC San Diego was designated as a Changemaker Campus in 2017 by Ashoka U for its role as a leader in social innovation education. Only 40 universities around the world have received this designation and UC San Diego is the first University of California campus to be recognized.

Best High School in San Diego County
The Preuss School UCSD—a charter middle and high school for low-income students who strive to become the first in their families to graduate from college—was ranked the best high school in San Diego County by U.S. News & World Report in their 2017 list of “Best High Schools.” Preuss was also ranked among the top five high schools in the State of California and among the top 15 charter high schools nationwide. And in 2017, Preuss was named one of “America’s Most Challenging High Schools” in The Washington Post’s annual rankings of how successfully schools challenge their students.

Top Research Output
UC San Diego was ranked 6th in the nation for total research output by the journal Nature in their 2016 index. The university also currently ranks 5th in the nation for total research and development expenditures by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

7th Best Public University in the World
UC San Diego was named the seventh best public university across the globe by Times Higher Education World University Rankings. In its 2016–17 report, the London-based publication named UC San Diego 22nd in the United States and 41st internationally. Times also ranked UC San Diego the world’s top “Golden Age” university in the world in 2017 among institutions that were founded between 1945 and 1966.

Top 10 Best Public University in the Nation
For more than a decade, U.S. News & World Report has included UC San Diego among the nation’s top 10 public universities. In the 2017 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges guidebook, UC San Diego ranked 10th best public university in the nation and 44th best university in the U.S. among more than 300 public, private and for-profit institutions. The UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering’s undergraduate program was ranked 24th in the category for engineering schools that award doctorates.

14th in the World for Beneficial Research
In 2017, the journal Nature named UC San Diego the world’s 14th best university for developing research that is used to create products or services that benefit society and spur economic growth. The rankings also praised the campus for its research output: nearly half of UC San Diego’s natural science papers appear in the Nature index, which measures research productivity in the globe’s top science journals.

16th in the World for Scientific Impact
UC San Diego was named 16th best research university in the world by the Centre for Science and Technology Studies of Leiden University’s 2015 list that measured scientific impact of universities worldwide.

Among the Top 20 Best Universities in the World
In the prestigious 2017 Academic Ranking of World Universities released by the Center for World-Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong, UC San Diego was ranked the 15th best university in world. U.S. News and World Report named UC San Diego the 15th best university in the world in 2016 for research, global and regional reputation, international collaboration as well as number of highly-cited papers and doctorates awarded. In addition, the Center for the World University Rankings named UC San Diego the 17th best university in the world, 14th in the U.S. and third best public university in the nation in 2016.

Economic Impact

650+ Companies launched by and/or utilizing technology produced by UC San Diego faculty, staff and alumni, including many San Diego biotech and technology firms.

200+ Number of active local UC San Diego-related companies.

15 Number of start-up companies formed with licensed UC San Diego technology in fiscal year 2014-15.

2,900 At fiscal year-end 2015, the UC San Diego Office of Innovation and Commercialization managed more than 2,900 inventions, including 340 new inventions and over 350 active utility license agreements. With copyright and trademark agreements, the office manages more than 400 intellectual property licenses.

#2 UC Patent Producer UC San Diego is second in the University of California system for the highest number of U.S. patents issued in 2015. The University of California is ranked first in the Top 100 Worldwide Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents Ranking for 2015, according to a report by the National Academy of Inventors and Intellectual Property Owners Association.

$32.4 billion Total estimated annual sales of active UC San Diego-related companies in San Diego County, including those utilizing licensed technology.
The amount of wages that our region’s algae biotechnology industry generates each year according to a 2014 study conducted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). The industry, which is integrally tied to collaborative research driven by UC San Diego’s California Center for Algae Biotechnology, has fostered approximately 1,020 jobs, contributing over $175 million to the San Diego economy.

Direct jobs attributable to active UC San Diego-related companies.

Our campus is the largest employer based in San Diego County.

Total number of full and part-time academic and staff employees at UC San Diego (as of April 2016).

UC San Diego is ranked 26th among the top 50 universities in the world for producing venture capital-backed business founders. The ranking by Pitchbook Data, Inc., a venture capital data provider, is based on funding acquired between 2009 and 2014 – during that time, 91 UC San Diego alumni entrepreneurs received $740 million in investment capital.

UC San Diego celebrated a record-breaking increase in charitable gifts. The campus received a 20 percent increase in private support in fiscal year 2015-16 over the preceding year, thanks to over 46,000 gifts and grants.

Total combined endowment for the campus as of fiscal year 2015-16, managed by the UC San Diego Foundation and the UC Regents.

UC San Diego Health was recognized as 1st among San Diego’s adult hospitals and 6th in California by the 2016-2017 U.S. News & World Report “Best Hospitals” issue, and ranked among the best in the nation in eight specialty areas.

The UC San Diego School of Medicine was named the 18th best in the nation among research-intensive programs in US. News & World Report’s 2018 Best Graduate Schools Guidebook. The school was also ranked 12th in the primary care category, up nine spots compared to last year.

In U.S. News & World Report’s 2017-18 “Best Hospitals” report, UC San Diego was ranked highly in eight specialties, including: Pulmonology (#13), Orthopedics (#20), Geriatrics (#34), Cancer (#40), Cardiology and Heart Surgery (#40), Neurology and Neurosurgery (#40), Gynecology (#42), and Gastroenterology and Gastrointestinal Surgery (#46). U.S. News & World Report also considered UC San Diego Health high-performing in Nephrology and Urology.

More than 100 physicians from UC San Diego Health were named “Top Docs” in the 2015 San Diego Magazine “Physicians of Exceptional Excellence” annual survey.

In 2016, the UC San Diego Medical Center was named among “100 Great Hospitals in America” by Becker’s Hospital Review. The Medical Center is also included on top 100 lists by Becker’s for programs in heart and oncology as well as neurosurgery and spine.

In 2012, UC San Diego Medical Center-Hillcrest became one of five facilities in the country—and the only center in San Diego County—to be recognized as one of the first Comprehensive Stroke Centers, the newest level of certification for advanced stroke care awarded by The Joint Commission.

Graduates of UC San Diego were ranked 10th for salary earning potential in the 2013-2014 PayScale.com report measuring top state schools across the nation. UC San Diego was also ranked 4th best public university for its return on investment for alumni who are California residents in the 2012 College Salary Report by PayScale.com.

The 2015 college salary report by PayScale.com ranks UC San Diego the 15th best public university for its return on investment (ROI)—what students pay to attend versus what they get back in lifetime earnings—for alumni who are California residents.
In 2015, Kiplinger’s Personal Finance named UC San Diego the 20th best value public university in the nation based on its academic quality and affordability, including high four-year graduation rates, low average student debt at graduation, the availability of financial aid and overall great value.

In 2015, UC San Diego was named 12th in the West in Washington Monthly’s new book, “The Other College Guide,” which ranks schools with the best value based on net price, graduation rates and whether alumni earn enough to pay off their loans.

Graduate Programs

Ranked Top 25 in the Nation

Graduate programs at UC San Diego continue to rank highly as noted in the 2018 “America’s Best Graduate Schools” guidebook, released by U.S. News Media Group, publishers of U.S. News & World Report.

- Fine Arts: time-based media/new media (3rd), fine arts (13th)
- Engineering: biomedical/bioengineering (3rd), best engineering school (13th)
- Health Sciences: drug and alcohol abuse research (10th), School of Medicine research program (18th), primary care (21st), pharmacy (25th), clinical psychology (25th)
- Sciences: neuroscience/neurobiology (2nd), discrete mathematics and combinations (3rd), plasma physics (7th), biochemistry (10th), computer science systems (11th), condensed matter physics (13th), biological sciences (14th), computer science theory (14th), computer science (15th), physics (16th), earth sciences (16th), chemistry (21st), mathematics (23rd)
- Social Sciences and Humanities: behavioral neuroscience (4th), econometrics (4th), international politics (4th), cognitive psychology (8th), public finance (8th), political science (9th), comparative politics (10th), development economics (10th), comparative politics (11th), American politics (11th), microeconomics (12th), Latin American history (12th), political methodology (12th), economics (12th) psychology (13th).

In 2016, The Hollywood Reporter ranked UC San Diego’s Department of Theatre and Dance 5th in the nation among drama schools with an MFA program. The program also ranked 6th in the world.

In their 2017 rankings, College Choice named UC San Diego’s Master’s in Fine Arts Program 6th in the nation based on academic reputation, student satisfaction, affordability and average annual salary of early career artists.

In 2015, UC San Diego’s Rady School of Management Executive MBA program was ranked 1st in San Diego, 2nd in California and 33rd globally by The Economist.

Foreign Policy Magazine’s 2015 rankings named UC San Diego’s undergraduate international relations program and master’s program for policy careers in international relations 13th best in the world.

Additional Rankings

World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds

Twenty-two UC San Diego scientists and physicians are among the 2015 listing of “The World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds,” an annual compendium of “Highly Cited Researchers” by Thomson Reuters, a multinational mass media and information company.

Top 3 Academic Institution in Earth and Environmental Research

In 2016 the journal Nature ranked UC San Diego 2nd in the U.S. and 3rd worldwide among academic institutions in earth and environmental research based on total contribution to studies published in major science journals.

Top School for Peace Corps Service

UC San Diego ranks 14th nationally on the Peace Corps’ 2016 list of “Top Colleges and Universities,” marking the sixth consecutive year that UC San Diego has been named in the top 15. There are currently 36 UC San Diego undergraduate alumni serving as Peace Corps volunteers; in total, the campus has produced 807 volunteers.

4th in the Nation for Economic Diversity

The New York Times named UC San Diego 4th in the nation for providing access to low-income students in their 2017 College Access Index. The report assesses economic diversity based on the number of and graduation rate of students who receive Pell grants and the net cost, after financial aid, colleges charge both low and middle-income students.

Top 10 LGBTQ-Friendly University

College Choice, an online publication that helps students select a school, named UC San Diego the 9th best public university for LGBTQ students in their 2017 list of the “50 Best Colleges for LGBTQ Students.” In addition to being in the top 10 among public schools, UC San Diego was ranked 19th overall among public and private universities in the U.S.

Top 10 “Coolest Schools”

Sierra magazine named UC San Diego the 7th “Coolest School” in the nation in 2015 for displaying a deep and thorough commitment to protecting the environment, addressing climate issues and encouraging environmental responsibility.

5th Best Drama School in the Nation

6th Best MFA Program in the Nation

#1 Executive MBA Program in San Diego

International Relations Programs Top World Rankings
World’s 3rd Most Beautiful Library

In 2017, CNN Travel named UC San Diego’s Geisel Library the 3rd most beautiful library in the world in the list of the top 7 most architecturally inspiring libraries.

Doctoral Programs Ranked 1st in the Nation

Three doctoral programs offered at UC San Diego—Biological Sciences, Bioengineering and Scripps Institution of Oceanography—are ranked 1st in the nation according to the results of the 2010 National Research Council (NRC) Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs, conducted every ten years. Additionally, biomedical sciences was ranked 2nd, neurosciences 4th and linguistics 9th in the nation, while 60% of all UC San Diego’s doctoral programs are among the top 20 in their fields nationwide.

Top Teach For America Contributor

UC San Diego was named 12th in the nation among schools contributing the most graduates to Teach For America in 2015. Corps members commit to teaching for at least two years in under-resourced schools and become lifelong leaders in the pursuit of educational equity.

Top Academic Surfing School in the Nation

In 2015 UC San Diego was ranked 2nd nationally among "Top Academic Surf Schools" and "Core Surf Schools" by The Inertia, a website that focuses on surfing news and lifestyle. Criteria included average incoming freshman GPA and SAT scores as well as access to high quality surf. UC San Diego’s surf team has won six national championships.

Active Faculty Honors

Nobel Prize

Harry Markowitz, economics (1990); and Mario J. Molina, chemistry (1995). The 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to former vice president Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose roster of researchers lists nearly two dozen Scripps Institution of Oceanography scientists including Mario Molina, Veerabhadran Ramanathan, Richard Somerville and Lynne Talley.

Fields Medal

Michael Freedman, mathematics (1986); and Efim Zelmanov, mathematics (1994).

National Medal of Science

Margaret Burbidge, astrophysics (1983); Walter Munk, geophysics (1983); Craig Venter, pharmacology (2009); Marye Anne Fox, chemistry (2010); and Shu Chien, bioengineering (2011).

Presidential Medal of Freedom

Mario Molina (2013).

Pulitzer Prize

Roger Reynolds, music (1989); and Rae Armantrout, poetry (2010).

Kyoto Prize

Edwin Hutchins, cognitive science (1985); Nancy D. Cartwright, philosophy (1993); Kun-Liang Guan, pharmacology (1998); Guillermo Algaze, anthropology (2003); and Carol Padden, communication (2010).

Tony Award


Grammy Award

Kamau Kenyatta (2014).

John von Neumann Theory Prize in Mathematics

Ruth Williams, (2016).

Academy Award

Henrik Wann Jensen, computer science and engineering (2004).

Notable Former Faculty and Alumni Honors

Nobel Prize

Harold Urey, chemistry (1934); Linus Pauling, chemistry, (1954); Francis Crick, physiology or medicine (1962); Linus Pauling, peace, (1962); Maria Goeppert-Mayer, physics (1963); Robert Holley, physiology or medicine, (1968); Hannes Alfven, physics, (1970); George Palade, physiology or medicine, (1974); Renato Dulbecco, physiology or medicine, (1975); Roger Guillemin, physiology or medicine, (1977); Susumu Tonegawa, '88, physiology or medicine, (1987); Paul Crutzen, chemistry, (1995); Sydney Brenner, physiology or medicine, (2002); Robert Engle, economic sciences, (2003); Clive Granger, economic sciences, (2003); Roger Tsien, chemistry (2008); and Bruce Beutler, '76, physiology or medicine, (2011).

National Medal of Science

Harold Urey, chemistry (1964); Linus Pauling, chemistry (1974); Roger Guillemin, medicine (1976); Margaret Burbidge, astrophysics (1983); George Palade, medicine (1986); Michael Freedman, mathematics (1987); Roger Revelle, oceanography (1990); Marshall Rosenbluth, physics (1997); Yuan-Cheng Fung, bioengineering (2000); Charles David Keeling, geosciences (2001); Andrew Viterbi, electrical and computer engineering (2007); and Craig Venter, '72, pharmacology (2008).

National Medal of Technology and Innovation

Irwin Jacobs (1994).

Pulitzer Prize

Balzan Prize  Roger Driscoll, political science (1986); Roger Revelle, oceanography (1986); James Freeman Gilbert, geophysics (1990); Wolfgang Berger, geosciences (1993); and Harmon Craig, geophysics (1998).

Tony Award  Jefferson Mays, ’91, (2004); Paloma Young, ’06, (2012).

Emmy Award  Larry Groupe, musical composition (1999, 2008).


Fields Medal  Michael Freedman, mathematics (1986); and Shing-Tung Yau, mathematics (1982).

MacArthur Fellows  Elizabeth Bates, cognitive science (1983); Ramon Arturo Gutierrez, ethnic studies (1983); Richard Schoen, mathematics (1983); Michael Freedman, mathematics (1984); Arnold Mandell, psychiatry (1984); Shing-Tung Yau, mathematics (1985); David Rumelhart, psychology (1987); Michael Schudson, communications (1990); Patricia Smith Churchland, philosophy (1991); Russell Lande, biology (1997); George Lewis, music (2002); and Emily Ann Thompson, history (2005); and Carrie Mae Weems, photography and video art (2013).


Wolf Prize  Roger Tsien, medicine (2008).

See the “UC San Diego Campus Profile” at http://ucpa.ucsd.edu/resources-and-information/campus-profile/ for updated rankings, facts and statistics. This list is not comprehensive. We make every effort to keep these listings current and accurate. Please notify erjohnson@ucsd.edu if you notice a discrepancy. Revised 08 11 2017.