

UC SANTA BARBARA

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U.S. News Ranks UCSB Graduate Programs Among Best

U.S. News & World Report magazine has rated UC Santa Barbara's physics program among the top 10 in the nation in its 2010 ranking of leading graduate and professional programs at American universities. Overall, seven of UCSB's graduate programs were ranked among the top 50, with three in the top 25.

The graduate program in physics at UCSB, which is also home to the world-renowned Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, has long been considered among the best in the country. While the overall physics program was ranked number 10 by U.S. News, several areas of specialization were ranked even higher: condensed matter at number 3, quantum at number 5, elementary particles/field/string theory at number 8, and cosmology/relativity/gravity at number 9.

UCSB's College of Engineering was ranked number 19 overall, tied with Harvard, and two of its specialties ranked in the top 10 -- materials at number 4 and chemical engineering at number 9.

The other UCSB program ranked in the top 25 was earth sciences at number 23.

Other UCSB programs that achieved national rankings from U.S. News were chemistry, number 33; computer science, number 35; mathematics, number 46; biological sciences, number 46; statistics, number 55; and the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, number 79.

"It is gratifying to see that the rankings in physics and several subfields, and in materials and chemical engineering reflect our longstanding success in these areas," Pierre Wiltzius, Susan & Bruce Worster Dean of Science, Division of Mathematical, Life, and Physical Sciences of the College of Letters and Science.

Wiltzius added that what the U.S. News rankings do not show is UCSB's strength in newer and more interdisciplinary areas such as marine science and environmental studies. "Other recent rankings have placed UCSB in the top 10 worldwide for the overall study of climate change," Wiltzius said. "And our geography department is consistently ranked as one of the best in the country."

Larry Coldren, acting dean of UCSB's College of Engineering, said: "It is always gratifying to see the quality of our programs recognized in this way, but it is also exceptional and extraordinary to be ranked so high when one considers the relatively small size of our graduate program. We have 145 faculty members in our college, and in just one department at MIT, electrical engineering, they have 170 faculty members."

Coldren noted that UCSB's engineering program always stands out in per capita rankings, when distinctions and achievements such as publications and citations, grant funds and fellowships, and memberships in the National Academy of Engineering are viewed in relation to the total faculty size. "But this type of ranking in U.S. News is based in part on total numbers, on how many Ph.D.s are produced. For us to be ranked up there with the big boys is really a statement," he said.

The U.S. News rankings are based on a weighted average of various measures, some specific to the particular program. The rankings generally include a quality assessment by peers, with measures of faculty quality and resources, student selectivity, research activity, and several other factors.

Highlights of the graduate school rankings are included in the current issue of U.S. News & World Report and in the 2011 edition of "America's Best Graduate Schools," as well as on the magazine's Web site, www.usnews.com. U.S. News generally does not compile rankings in all fields every year, but this year the magazine refreshed its rankings of Ph.D. programs in various scientific fields. These rankings, updated every four years, included biological sciences, chemistry, computer science, earth science, mathematics, physics, and statistics. U.S. News did not update the rankings for graduate programs in the humanities and social sciences this year.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.