

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Nora Crutcher

Education for All

With nine undergraduate campuses across the state, the University of California is dedicated to providing top quality education to all of California's eligible high school graduates and community college transfer students.

Rankings of the nation's top colleges and universities consistently place UC Santa Barbara among the country's elite institutions of higher education, and a number of 2015-16 rankings have recognized UCSB for its efforts to achieve economic diversity as well.

"We are committed to ensuring that our students are able to enjoy the best living and learning environment with the greatest opportunity for success," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. "We are honored and grateful for these national recognitions."

In its 2015 College Guide, Washington Monthly identified UCSB as one of 10 "Access Improvers" — colleges and universities that have increased their enrollments of federally funded Pell Grant students while maintaining strong student outcomes.

In addition, UCSB was ranked number 6 among public universities in U.S. News & World report's 2016 list of colleges and universities that offer students the best education value based on academic quality and net cost of attendance. And UCSB placed number 3 in The Upshot's College Access Index published recently in The New York Times. The index is based on the share of students receiving Pell grants (which typically go to families making less than \$70,000 per year); the graduation

rate of students on Pell grants; and the net cost, after financial aid, that a college or university charged low- and middle-income students.

A Top-Flight Education

Acknowledging UC's dominance on the index (six of the top seven spots belong to the University of California), the Times reported that the system's nine campuses "lead the nation in providing top-flight college education to the masses."

The Times also noted that the University of California takes deliberate steps to attract "students of modest means" by keeping tuition low and actively recruiting community-college transfer students at a rate greater than that of other elite state universities.

"UC Santa Barbara is fully committed to providing the highest quality education to the most excellent and diverse student body for the lowest possible cost," said Yang. "We reach out to students who may not even be aware of the opportunities we can provide."

Creating a Diverse Learning Community

To what does UCSB owe its success in economic diversity? The College Access Index identified a three-step approach to recruiting, admitting and supporting economically diverse students as a contributing factor, along with a willingness by college administrators to actively reach out to students who might otherwise be overlooked.

According to Washington Monthly, "access improvers" go to high schools with historically low-income populations, seek out talented students and then bring them to campus to introduce them to college life.

"We want students from all backgrounds because we want a diverse learning community," noted Lisa Przekop, director of admissions at UCSB. She described how she and her admissions staff reach underserved populations. "We have special programs in place to meet the informational needs of first-generation and/or low-income students, because they may not have easy access to that information otherwise."

According to the Washington Monthly report, as part of the admissions process access improvers evaluate applications based not only on test scores but also on

grades, activities and life experiences. Przekop added that, while UCSB practices a “need-blind” admissions process (which means family income cannot be a deciding factor), the university considers a wide range of information when making an admissions decision.

“We employ a review process called Comprehensive Review, which looks at 14 different factors of an applicant’s file,” she said. “This includes academic preparation, extracurricular activities, personal statement information and other factors that put the student’s accomplishments in context given their family education history and financial resources.”

The Path to Graduation

But admission is only the beginning. When low-income students get to college, universities such as UCSB that succeed in economic diversity ensure that services are in place — tutoring, advising and housing programs, for example — to help the students stay on the path to graduation.

“UCSB’s track record is the envy of universities across the country,” said Carl Gutiérrez-Jones, interim dean of undergraduate education. “The quality of our students has steadily improved even as our student body has become increasingly diverse. UCSB has provided a remarkable path to a world-class education for students from low-income families, and it is great to see this leadership recognized.”

In summing up the methodology for its ranking of Best Value Schools, U.S. News & World Report articulated what UCSB has strived to provide for every student, regardless of income, since it first became part of the UC system more than 70 years ago: “The higher quality the program and lower the cost, the better the deal.”

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.