UC SANTA BARBARA

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UC Santa Barbara ranks among top universities nationally and globally in recent assessments

While rankings cannot reflect the depth and complexity of any university, landing in the upper echelons of such assessments is a significant achievement. And UC Santa Barbara continues to place well both nationally and globally.

For affordability, social mobility, research impact, academics and other metrics, the campus is again considered among the nation's — and the world's — top universities, according to myriad recent rankings.

Forbes Magazine, in its 2024-2025 America's Top Colleges list of 500 schools considered "the cream of the crop for producing successful, high-earning and influential graduates from all economic backgrounds, who graduate with less student debt," ranked UCSB it's No. 8 public university.

Princeton Review, which ranked its Top 50 Best Value Colleges based on "a combination of institutional and student survey data, including academic rigor, affordability, and career outcomes for graduates, among others," also placed UCSB at No. 8 among public universities and at No. 12 for best career placement.

"Overall, though, UCSB undergrads name the 'accessibility and knowledge of the professors as one of the university's strengths," Princeton notes of the student

feedback collected in producing their lists. “If you’re seeking a dynamic college experience with choices within and outside the classroom, UCSB could be for you: ‘UCSB is the perfect blend of academics and social life. I get to study at a renowned research university and work closely with professors, while living on the beach and making lifelong friendships.’”

Meanwhile, U.S. News & World Report, in its 2024-2025 Best Colleges listing, ranked UC Santa Barbara the No. 13 public university in the country. Among all Best National Universities, which include both public and private institutions, UCSB placed No. 39.

The campus again ranked highly in multiple U.S. News categories. Among all national universities ranked as Best Colleges for Veterans, the campus is No. 20. UC Santa Barbara also is No. 20 among all national universities for social mobility, which measures how successfully schools enroll and graduate students who receive federal Pell Grants. These students typically come from households with family incomes less than $50,000 annually, with most Pell Grant money going to students with a total family income below $20,000.

Moving from a numerical ranking to a star system — with universities earning between 1 and 5 stars — Money Magazine for 2024 rated UC Santa Barbara a 4.5-star institution for educational quality, affordability and student outcomes. The magazine evaluated 745 U.S. colleges out of 2,400.

The 2025 Wall Street Journal Best Colleges in the U.S. assessment, focused on how well colleges set up their graduates for future financial success, ranked UC Santa Barbara No. 67 among public universities and No. 64 for best value. The ranking was based on a weighted score, with student outcomes accounting for 70% of the score, including graduates’ salaries, years to pay off the net price and graduation rates. The campus learning environment, based in part on student surveys, accounted for 20% and diversity accounted for the final 10%.

UC Santa Barbara listed at No. 67 — out of 2,000 institutions from 115 countries and territories — in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2025. THE’s 2024 subject-based rankings placed UCSB 37th worldwide in the physical sciences and 46th for engineering.

Elsewhere, but also global: Sustainability Magazine rated UC Santa Barbara No. 7 in its evaluation of the Top 10 sustainable universities around the world that are

implementing sustainability strategy. “UCSB works to hit sustainability head on,” the magazine noted in its summary, “using its campus as a living lab to continually become more sustainable.

And finally, UC Santa Barbara has once again been highly ranked among colleges and universities that have produced the highest all-time number of Peace Corps Volunteers since the agency was established in 1961, coming in at No. 10 for the medium-sized enrollment category. To date, more than 1,510 Gauchos have served in the Peace Corps.

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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.