UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

February 9, 2026
UCSB Engineering Staff

UCSB among the world's most influential research universities for science impact

UC Santa Barbara ranks first among U.S. public universities, third among all U.S. institutions, and seventh worldwide for scientific impact in engineering and the physical sciences, according to the **2025 Leiden Rankings** (Open Edition) released by the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) at Leiden University in the Netherlands. The latest results mark the fifteenth consecutive year that UCSB has placed among the top two public universities nationally for scientific impact.

"These results affirm what we see every day at UC Santa Barbara: research that is not only prolific and impactful, but profoundly influential," said Umesh Mishra, dean of The Robert Mehrabian College of Engineering. "Ranking first among U.S. public universities and among the very top institutions worldwide for scientific impact reflects the sustained excellence of our faculty and students and the extraordinary research culture they have built."

The Leiden Ranking Open Edition evaluates universities using the open-source OpenAlex database rather than a proprietary system. The 2025 analysis examined research papers published between 2020 and 2023 from 2,831 universities worldwide, including 275 in the United States. CWTS measures scientific impact by tracking how frequently a university's publications are cited by other researchers, focusing strictly on bibliometric data and avoiding subjective reputation surveys.

Among institutions that produced at least 1,000 publications during the study period, Leiden assessed how many papers, including those co-authored by multiple organizations, ranked in the top 1%, 5%, 10%, and 50% of their respective fields, based on citations. UCSB researchers produced 4,920 engineering and physical sciences papers during the evaluation window and ranked first among all U.S. public universities across all four impact tiers:

- Top 1%: 201 papers (4.1%), ranking seventh in world, third in the U.S. behind only MIT and Harvard, and first among all U.S. public institutions
- Top 5%: 655 papers (13.3%), ranking seventh overall, fourth in the U.S., and first among U.S. publics
- Top 10%: 1,077 papers (21.9%), ranking fourth in the U.S., first among U.S. public universities, and 11th in the world
- Top 50%: 3,380 papers (68.7%), ranking third in the U.S., first among U.S. public universities, and 14th in the world

Media Contact
Shelly Leachman
Editorial Director
(805) 893-2191
sleachman@ucsb.edu

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.