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[Nora Drake](#)

UC Santa Barbara Named 2026 AWS Champion

UC Santa Barbara has been selected as a winner in the prestigious 2026 AWS Champions Program, sponsored by the Center for Digital Government and Education. This award recognizes state and local government organizations, educational institutions and industry leaders that are setting new benchmarks for innovation and real-world impact through cloud technology.

UCSB's entry stood out in a highly competitive pool of applicants thanks to the success of its [AWS Lift & Shift project](#). By migrating the majority of campus administrative infrastructure to cloud storage, the initiative achieved three major milestones: cost savings, legacy decommissioning and physical space recovery.

"Winning the AWS Champions Program recognizes the skill and professionalism of UCSB's IT staff as they deliver value supporting our broader academic and research missions," said Shea Lovan, UCSB's Chief Technology Officer. "Migrating our legacy infrastructure to AWS was a strategic transformation for UC Santa Barbara. In addition to modernizing our core systems, we were able to lower costs, decommission aging technology that no longer meets our needs and reclaim valuable real estate on campus."

By transitioning more than 800 servers to scalable cloud infrastructure, the project significantly reduced ongoing operational and maintenance expenses. It also made costs more transparent for users. Instead of estimating how much power, cooling or

server capacity a particular unit is using, ITS can isolate the exact dollar amount consumed by a department, grant or researcher and charge them accordingly.

Before the project, central IT managed nearly 1,000 different systems across campus technology organizations. Moving to cloud storage allowed UCSB to consolidate decades of fragmented infrastructure while saving money for the campus and for users.

“I’m so proud of the entire project team for being recognized with this award,” said Josh Bright, Chief Information Officer. “They stepped up tremendously to meet a challenging timeline, catapulting UCSB into the future by enhancing our resilience, accelerating modern technical practices, and ultimately yielding even more savings for our campus than initially predicted.”

Retiring outdated physical servers also reduced hardware overhead and boosted overall system reliability while freeing up critical real estate. The North Hall Data Center, which serves as physical server storage for the academic, administrative and research communities, now has increased capacity for faculty research computing and storage needs.

By modernizing core IT operations and optimizing physical space, the AWS Lift & Shift project demonstrates how strategic cloud adoption can drive fiscal responsibility and position UCSB at the forefront of higher education technology.

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Media Contact

Nora Drake

Communications Manager, Information Technology Services

(805) 893-2206

noradrake@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.