

UC San Diego Named One of Nation's "Happiest" Colleges

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The University of California, San Diego is ranked among the nation's happiest colleges for its nightlife, number of student organizations, retention rate and sunny days, according to the *Daily Beast*, a news reporting and commentary website.

To arrive at the initial pool of schools to rank, the *Daily Beast* considered the top 50 public universities, the top 50 liberal arts colleges and the top 50 national universities based on *U.S. News and World Report*'s Best College rankings, as well as the 50 largest universities by enrollment according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

"The rankings come as no surprise," said Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Penny Rue. "UC San Diego is one of the most academically prestigious institutions in the nation and we're home to 500 student organizations and exciting entertainment venues, such as The Loft. There is something for every student who wants to get involved at UC San Diego, and of course, our campus is as beautiful as the weather is in San Diego."

The *Daily Beast*'s "Happiest College" rankings come as high school seniors across the country make their final decision on which college to attend for fall 2010. The website ranks America's colleges using the criterion—besides academics—that students most value: quality of life. The website ranked the top 100 schools around the country based on the campus housing, nightlife, average graduate indebtedness, average freshman retention, campus dining, daylight hours that are sunny and the number of student clubs and organizations.

The UC San Diego Center for Student Involvement, which offers students professional advising services, student organization resources, leadership and community service programs and campus wide events, recently celebrated a milestone: there are now 500 registered student organizations on campus.

"Our organizations give students a chance to gain leaderships skills, get involved and give back to the community," said Emily Marx, director of the Center for Student Involvement. "We currently have 85 student organizations registered in our service category, more than ever before. These organizations also give student an opportunity to socialize and make friends."

The *Daily Beast* noted UC San Diego's high retention rate (94.2 percent) as a sign of a happy campus, due to the large number of students who stay enrolled after their first year.

The university's nightlife was given a grade "A" in response to UC San Diego's social life, art exhibits, campus concerts and entertainment venues such as The Loft, a performance lounge and wine bar that opened in 2008. This social hub has helped build an active community on UC San Diego's campus.

"The Loft, which was conceived, developed and is now managed in partnership with UC San Diego students, is the only venue of its kind on any college campus in the country," said Marty Wollesen, artistic director of The Loft. "Recently ranked one of the best venues in San Diego to experience live music, The Loft continues to bring

some of the most exciting offerings in music, performance, film, spoken word and taste to the campus and local community."

Below are other UC San Diego activities enjoyed by students:

The annual Sun God Festival takes place at the end of spring quarter and is organized by the Associated Students Concerts and Events office. The event contains a fair, as well as multiple stages which feature art shows, DJ performances and a main stage with a mix of underground/independent bands and headlining mainstream groups.

Student Center Block Parties are free events that take place quarterly and give students a fun way to explore the Student Center and listen to local bands.

The "Pub After Dark" concert series features innovative and up-and-coming talent at the campus-based Porters Pub.

Students can catch singer-songwriters performing original music Mondays on campus at Espresso Roma and pre-DVD release movies regularly screened at the local theater in the Price Center.

Throughout the year, students have access to discounted tickets to theatrical productions presented by the UC San Diego theatre and dance department.

Art exhibits are regularly featured at the Price Center where more than a dozen students exhibit their works each quarter. Many art exhibits have opening or closing receptions with free appetizers and opportunities to meet the artists.

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