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Washington Monthly Ranks UC San Diego Nation's Best University for Fourth Consecutive Year

Campus garners top honors for social mobility, research and civic engagement



For the fourth consecutive year, UC San Diego was ranked the top university in the nation by Washington Monthly magazine. Photos by UC San Diego Publications

The University of California, San Diego has been ranked as the top university in the nation for the fourth consecutive year by Washington Monthly. The magazine's annual "College Rankings" considers how universities are "acting on behalf of the true public interest," measuring institutions based on three criteria: social mobility, research and civic engagement.

The ranking comes just one week after President Barack Obama announced the rollout of a new initiative designed to keep colleges accountable for outcomes such as graduation rates, and affordability and access—each aspects of Washington Monthly's criteria. UC San Diego was ranked high by the publication for social mobility, based on the number of students who receive federal Pell Grants (need-based grants to low-income students) and their graduation rates. At UC San Diego, approximately 65 percent of students receive need-based financial aid and nearly 44 percent of students receive the Pell Grant.

"We are honored to receive this recognition by Washington Monthly for a fourth consecutive year. This ranking is a testament to UC San Diego's efforts to remain accessible and affordable, and to offer opportunities of upward social mobility for students from all backgrounds," said UC San

Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "We are committed to being a student-centered, research-focused, service-oriented public university that provides opportunity for all."

According to the editor of Washington Monthly, Paul Glastris, “This year’s college guide is an alternative ranking ... that rewards schools for, among other things, recruiting and graduating students of modest means.”

Among the various UC San Diego initiatives that are designed to promote social mobility is the Chancellor’s Associates Scholars Program. The scholarship, which was announced in spring 2013, is designed to help make a UC San Diego education a reality for students from three local high schools that work with historically underserved communities: Gompers Preparatory Academy, Lincoln High School and The Preuss School UCSD.

Scholarship recipients must be eligible for the University of California’s Blue + Gold Opportunity Plan, which covers tuition and fees for California residents whose families earn less than \$80,000 a year. The \$10,000-per-year Chancellor’s Associates Scholarship covers additional costs including books, transportation and living expenses—essentially providing a full ride scholarship to attend UC San Diego.

In addition to social mobility, the Washington Monthly ranking was also based on civic engagement, measured by community service participation, students who serve in the ROTC, alumni who go on to serve in the Peace Corps and more. UC San Diego currently ranks 13th in the nation for Peace Corps service, with 70 alumni currently serving in the field.



Recipients of the Chancellor’s Associates Scholarship, just one of the university’s initiatives to promote social mobility.

In the research category, Washington Monthly took into account the number of undergraduate alumni who go on to receive a Ph.D., faculty awards and research expenditures, among other criteria. During the most recent fiscal year, UC San Diego received \$985 million in research funding, positioning it among the nation’s top 10 universities for annual research funding.

In addition to UC San Diego’s top honor, the University of California as a whole received praise by Washington Monthly: “Campuses in the UC system represented six of our top 25 institutions, reflecting the University of California’s historical commitment to pairing public access with world-class research.”

UC President Mark Yudof recently stated that, “Nearly half of UC students graduate with no loan debt, and the average debt upon graduation for those who do borrow is roughly \$7,000 below the national average. UC’s graduation rates and time to degree rank high among public universities.”

For more information on the Washington Monthly college guide, go to washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide.

UC San Diego's Studio Ten 300 offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via studio@ucsd.edu. To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.