

June 23, 2020 | By Erika Johnson

UC San Diego Named Among Top 10 Public Universities for LGBTQ+ Students



UC San Diego students who marched in the San Diego Pride Parade in 2019. Photo by Erik Jepsen/Publications.

The University of California San Diego has been named the 9th best public university in the nation for LGBTQ+ students according to a new ranking by Campus Pride in partnership with BestColleges. The “2020 Best Colleges for LGBTQ+ Students” ranking, which placed the campus 17th overall, recognizes higher education institutions that provide both a quality academic experience as well as a safe and inclusive space for

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) students.

In the context of a global pandemic and nationwide racial tension, the LGBT Resource Center has served as a place of solidarity and comfort for many students. Though they cannot meet in person, programs have continued to be held virtually so students can check in, share their experiences and support each other.

“UC San Diego has made great strides in the past year to be more inclusive of our transgender and non-binary students, which included adding lived names and pronouns on our class rosters,” said Shaun Travers, director of UC San Diego’s LGBT Resource Center. “We have also continued our deep partnership with all of our peer Campus Community Centers and Programs, centering the lives of those who are often at the intersections, including Black and Indigenous Queer and Trans People of Color.”

Throughout the year, the LGBT Resource Center serves as a hub for student organizations to meet, including the Black Queer Collective, Queer & Trans People of Color (QTPOC) and the Coming Out Group. Students may also develop leadership skills through an internship program that focuses on increasing the broader LGBTQIA+ movement and contributing to a more just, equitable society for the future.

More than 10% of students at UC San Diego identify as LGBTQIA+. They find community through a multitude of programs across campus, many of them led by UC San Diego's LGBT Resource Center. One of six campus community centers dedicated to equity and inclusion, the center is open to all to explore issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identities. Through numerous yearly programs, the center develops student leadership, builds workplace equity, promotes academic research and provides resources for LGBTQ people.



UC San Diego LGBT Resource Center.

UC San Diego graduating senior Afi Blackshear, noting that he and his peers face uncertainty happening now in our nation and the world, said, “I’m often centered when I think back on the brilliance, kindness and empathy that permeate our rainbow community.”

“This ranking reflects largely on the ongoing transformation of our campus to be more student-centered and we are pleased that our efforts to ensure students thrive are being recognized,” said Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Becky Petitt. “While we are grateful for this recognition, knowing that our current and prospective students see UC San Diego as a place where they can flourish – in all of their full identities – is the greatest reward. True ‘inclusion’ is never done. We continue to learn, grow and create conditions for students, faculty and staff to succeed. There is still much work to be done.”

The rankings, released in June in celebration of LGBTQ Pride Month, consider multiple factors to help prospective LGBTQ+ students identify schools that are culturally inclusive, affordable and offer excellent academic opportunities. Criteria that editors reviewed include recruitment and retention efforts; counseling and health; campus safety; housing; student life; academic life; support and institutional commitment; and policy inclusion.

Each fall, incoming LGBTQIA+ students are invited to Q-Camp, an annual orientation. And at the end of the year, seniors are celebrated at Rainbow Graduation, this year hosted virtually. On June 12, LGBTQIA+ graduates gathered online to watch the premiere of a special video prepared for the occasion, with remarks from Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, LGBT Center Director Shaun Travers, and senior Afi Blackshear. Students watched live together, sharing congratulations in a chat, and enjoyed a live DJ afterwards on social media.

Blackshear, who graduated from UC San Diego this June with a degree in political science, said, “I hope you feel the same fearlessness to use our degree to challenge the world for how great it can be, and empowered by the opportunity to shape the world that has yet been molded. Have no fear, because the class of 2020 is here—and now it’s our turn to lead!”

To view a complete list of the rankings, visit the [2020 Best Colleges for LGBTQ+ Students website](#). In addition, learn more about the [UC San Diego LGBT Resource Center on their website](#).

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