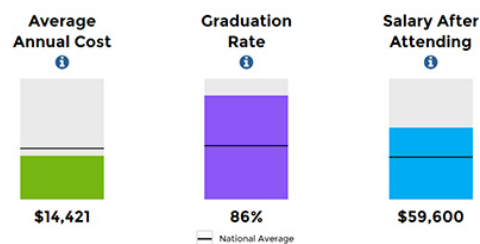


By Christine Clark     Oct 29, 2015

## UC San Diego an 'Upward-Mobility Machine'

UC San Diego freshman Felipe Soltero always knew he wanted to go to college, but it was a dream that did not always seem attainable. “I knew I wanted to come to UC San Diego, but I had no idea how I would pay,” Soltero said.

All that changed, however, when Soltero learned he was awarded a Chancellor’s Associates Scholarship, one of many campus initiatives designed to promote upward social mobility. When coupled with other forms of financial aid, the scholarship essentially covers all costs associated with a UC San Diego education including housing and books.



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#### This Way Up

***UC San Diego’s Yankelovich Center for Social Science Research seeks to point policymakers to most effective strategies for improving upward mobility in the United States***

The American Dream is less real than it used to be. On that, the evidence is clear. Incomes have grown slowly for all but the wealthiest since the late 1970s. And if you were born into a less advantaged family, the chances of making it into the middle class have diminished. But what to do? What will work best to restore the nation’s promise of upward mobility? The Yankelovich Center for Social Science Research at UC San Diego will weigh 25 available options and, in two years, will release a ranking of the most effective.

“There is no shortage of proposed strategies to remedy America’s upward mobility problem,” said sociology professor Lane Kenworthy, director of the Yankelovich Center in the UC San Diego Division of Social Sciences. “What we lack, and what policymakers most need, is information about the relative merits of such strategies.”

With the support of a \$100,000 gift in start-up funding from Yankelovich Center founder Daniel Yankelovich, Kenworthy is putting together an Upward Mobility Commission to examine the existing research on possible solutions and estimate their probable impact. [Read More »](#)

Soltero, like many students at UC San Diego, receives a federal Pell Grant (need-based grants for low-income students). The large number of such economically diverse students on campus helped UC San Diego recently garner attention from the New York Times which named it the No. 4 school in the nation in the Times' College Access Index that measures which universities do the most for low-income students.

The College Access Index assesses economic diversity based on the number of students who receive Pell grants (which typically go to families making less than \$70,000 annually), the graduation rate of those students, and the net cost, after financial aid, that colleges charge both low- and middle-income students.

The New York Times announcement came just weeks after UC San Diego was named by Washington Monthly as the No.1 university in the nation for the sixth consecutive year. The magazine's annual college rankings measure how universities are acting on behalf of the public interest, based on three criteria, one of which is social mobility, measuring the number of students who receive federal Pell grants and their graduation rates.

"It is an honor for UC San Diego to continue to be recognized for delivering a world-class education that is accessible and affordable," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "The strength of education is upward mobility and we are dedicated to providing opportunities for all students, from all backgrounds, so they can achieve their goals and ambitions."

Adding to the praises from the New York Times and Washington Monthly, the White House recently released its College Scorecard through the Department of Education that highlights the all-around value of UC San Diego as well as other campuses in the UC system.

The interactive website, which bases its analysis on data from students who received federal financial aid, shows that the University of California is a good investment not only for students and their families, but for the federal government and the state. All 10 campuses, including UC San Diego, excelled in the areas measured in the scorecard, which included cost, graduation rates and student debt levels.

UC San Diego graduates have higher median earnings at the 10-year mark after enrollment. And alumni also are much more likely than others to have begun to pay down their college debt, the data shows.

According to a White House press release, the scorecard was created to provide reliable information that helps students find the college that best fits their needs so that they can succeed.

"In an economy where some higher education is still the surest ticket to the middle class, the choices that Americans make when searching for and selecting a college have never been more important."

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