

UC San Diego Named to President Obama's Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction

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The University of California, San Diego has been named to the 2009 President's Community Service Honor Roll with distinction for the contributions UC San Diego's students make to local, national and global communities on issues ranging from poverty to homelessness and environmental justice. This is the first year the university is on the Distinction List.

UC San Diego was recognized for two exemplary learning programs, Teams in Engineering Service (TIES) and Thurgood Marshall College's public service minor, and one outstanding community service program, Alternative Breaks.

The honor roll includes 115 colleges named to the distinction list and 621 schools listed as honor roll members.

"Giving back is part of UC San Diego's tradition of community service," Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Penny Rue said. "UC San Diego is dedicated to learning, teaching and serving society through education, research and public service and it is an honor to be recognized nationally for our contributions."

Honorees are chosen based on a series of selection factors including the scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service and the extent to which the school offers academic service learning courses.

UC San Diego has more than 500 student organizations, a total of 13,892 students engaged in a form of community service and in 2009, the university's students completed 1,177,848 hours of community service.

"Our service programs have grown significantly over the years," said Emily Marx, director of UC San Diego's Center for Student Involvement. "We currently have 92 student organizations dedicated to service, which is more than any other category and the campus continues to expand our community service initiatives."

The three programs recognized include:

Alternative Breaks - This organization sponsors service trips to Costa Rica, Peru, Tanzania, Russia, Appalachia, the Gulf Region and other areas where student aid is needed. For example, in Russia, students mentored disadvantaged elementary students and made improvements to school facilities.

Teams in Engineering Service (TIES) - This innovative service and academic program involves multi-disciplinary teams of students who use their combined technical and creative skills to design, build and deploy projects that solve technology-based problems for San Diego non-profit organizations.

Public Service Minor - The learning program sponsored by Thurgood Marshall College encourages students to understand the history and practices of public service and to work toward the development of civic skills. Those skills and practices are essential cornerstones of participation in a democratic society regardless of one's chosen profession.

The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, launched in 2006, annually recognizes institutions of higher education for their commitment to and achievement in community service.

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