

## College Spotlight: University of California, Santa Cruz

If your passion for academics and surfing are always at odds, then look no further than UC Santa Cruz to have both needs met in a beautiful setting, just one hour away from world famous Silicon Valley. UCSC is nestled in the mountain range which divides the city of Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay from the San Francisco Peninsula and Santa Clara Valley. A short 45-minute drive to the San Jose airport will get you home to Maui on a number of non-stop flights (in non-pandemic times). The campus itself is set among beautiful native redwood trees, looking slightly like the set of a classic summer camp movie. But don't be fooled by the laid-back appearance of the campus or its students. UCSC is part of the world-class University of California system of 10 campuses.

UCSC is on the smaller size of large with 17,500 students, with a fairly diverse ethnic population. Almost all first-year students live on campus, with 50% of all students living on campus. Once accepted to UCSC one is then asked to select a College Affiliation. As per the school's website:

*UC Santa Cruz combines the resources of a world class public research university with a distinctive undergraduate experience characterized by our college system. Each college is a vibrant living/learning community supported by faculty and staff who provide academic support, organize student activities, and sponsor events that enhance the intellectual and social life of the campus.*

*After accepting the UC Santa Cruz offer of admission, all undergraduate students become affiliated with one of our 10 colleges. During the admissions acceptance process students have an opportunity to indicate their college preferences.*

*Every college community includes students with diverse backgrounds and academic goals. Your college affiliation is independent of your choice of major.*

It is important to review the information about each of the colleges before you make a choice where you wish to live and work as they each have unique personalities and academic goals. When applying, you also have the opportunity to indicate your preference. Each of the colleges offer the ability to have the personalized attention of a small school, while offering the resources of the larger school and UC system as a whole.

The College Board reports that the top three majors at UCSA are Biology, Social Sciences, and Computer and Information Sciences. With the Pacific Ocean on one side and Silicon Valley on the other, it is easy to see that majors in things like Marine Biology and Computer Engineering would be an easy fit for this school. Majors are divided among 5 different divisions: Art, Humanities, Physical and Biological Sciences, Social Sciences, and The Jack Baskin School of Engineering.

Admission to UCSC is competitive, but not as much as UC Berkeley or UCLA. As an out-of-state freshman applicant, you would be required to submit a minimum GPA of 3.4%, however the mean GPA of the most recent incoming class was 3.91(41% had a GPA between 3.5 and 3.99).

UC schools are not currently using standardized testing as a tool for admissions, but will be utilizing their own test system in coming years.

Out-of-State tuition is currently right up there with many private colleges and universities at \$69,000. Ouch. But, all applicants are considered for a variety of institutional scholarships based on your initial application, and there are many scholarships to apply for within the school. Always make sure to complete your FAFSA early for the best chance at early financial aid decisions. As an out-of-state student, it is important to understand residency rules and how they can affect your tuition payments and scholarships, so *don't* think that just because you live there for the school year that you qualify for resident tuition rates!

Banana Slug Athletics are not going to be considered a major power house for the big-time sports fan, but the school does field 7 Men's and 8 Women's NCAA D-III teams. The school also offers a variety of Club and Intramural teams for the more relaxed competitor.

If you are looking for the outstanding academics of a UC school in a less stressed setting that is just about as close to Maui as the mainland gets, give UCSC a look. It's unique college arrangement and setting is worth the time.

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