

THE *Current*

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UC Santa Barbara Among ‘Five-Star’ Campuses Rated for LGBT-Friendliness

In the midst of LGBT Pride Month, UC Santa Barbara is earning new notice for its reputation as a welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students. The campus is one of just 28 U.S. universities -- out of a total of 326 participating campuses -- to be rated a "five-star school" in an ongoing assessment of LGBT-friendliness by the national nonprofit Campus Pride.

"We have worked hard to create a community where all of the students feel that they have a place at the institution, that they are welcome at the institution, that it is their institution," said Michael Young, vice chancellor for student affairs. "When your young people, whatever community they are in, are part of the fabric of the institution, there is a level of comfort and normalness to their being part of community that builds more community, and makes it a place that is friendly and supportive. So I'm very proud of this rating. I think we deserve it and I think the campus, broadly, deserves it."

The Campus Climate Index is a self-measurement tool that serves to examine, in depth, LGBT-friendly policies, programs, and practices at colleges and universities nationwide. Using more than 50 questions to assign each school an overall rating, scores are based on campus responses around eight central LGBT-friendly factors: policy inclusion; support and institutional commitment; academic life; student life;

housing; campus safety; counseling and health; and recruitment and retention.

UCSB earned five out of five stars in every category except policy inclusion (4.5 stars) and recruitment and retention efforts (3.5 stars).

"As a collective, UCSB has a lot of different entities advocating for LGBTQ issues, and we do have long-term institutional support," said Joshua Moon Johnson, director of LGBT resources in the campus's Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity. "All those entities definitely push to make sure we are supporting our LGBTQ students. There have been negative incidents here -- those things happen everywhere -- but we have systems and procedures in place that allow us to respond, and advocate, in a way that is unified and preventative."

Since 2001, the nationally praised index has been a central initiative of Campus Pride, which works to create safer, more LGBT-inclusive colleges, and build future LGBT leaders. The assessment has become a staple in student and faculty research, campus organizing efforts, and benchmarking, according to the organization.

"I always said when I got here that my goal was to work myself out of a job. It hasn't happened yet. There is still progress to be made," Johnson said. "It's not perfect here, but the students feel comfortable enough to push for what they want, and to push for change."

Related Links

[Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity](#)

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.