



The Colleges: Communities of Learning

UC SANTA CRUZ



Requesting College Affiliation

Students accepting the offer of admission to UC Santa Cruz are asked to indicate five UCSC college preferences during the online acceptance process at my.ucsc.edu. You may also choose to indicate “no preference,” as many students do, meaning you will be fine with any of our 10 colleges.

Review the information in this guide and on the UCSC website to learn about each of our colleges, including themes, programs, and college courses.

After the acceptance deadline, the Office of Admissions will affiliate you with a college. The college assignment takes into account available space at each college and the preferences you have indicated.

Next, UCSC Student Housing Services will send you information about the housing options available to you and instructions for completing the online housing application.

Students interested in finding their own accommodations in the off-campus community are encouraged to use the rental listings and other helpful online resources of UCSC Community Rentals at communityrentals.ucsc.edu.

For information about dates and deadlines, visit admissions.ucsc.edu.

Common to All Colleges

- A small community within the larger university
- Required core course for new students
- Integration of student, academic, and residential life
- Commitment to welcoming all students
- Student activities and events

About the required core course
Each college’s core course is a unique class that emphasizes the theme of the college and helps students develop critical thinking and writing skills.

Things to Consider

- College theme
- Required core course for new students
- Housing and theme options
- Special activities or programs
- Geographic location on campus

Theme housing options
Each residential community offers theme housing options centered around shared interests, academics, and community engagement. These spaces create opportunities for connection and personal growth. If you’re interested in a specific theme, consider this when selecting your college preferences. Learn more by visiting: housing.ucsc.edu/themes

Helpful Resources

- Campus web sites
- Campus visit
- Virtual tours
- Campus catalog
- Current students
- Faculty and staff
- Alumni



For more information about the colleges, visit housing.ucsc.edu/colleges

10 Colleges, One University

Communities of Learning

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 you will have an opportunity to indicate your college preferences

All 10 residential college communities are interdisciplinary and house students from all different majors. Although each college has a theme, they aren't tied to a specific major or discipline. All 10 colleges are dynamic, engaging learning communities that offer opportunities for students to help build and shape their experiences.



Cowell College

Founded 1965

Cowell College is the founding college of UC Santa Cruz. Its motto, The Pursuit of Truth in the Company of Friends, represents its twin commitments to academic endeavor and supportive community.

Stevenson College

Founded 1966

Stevenson College's theme, Self and Society, emphasizes the goals of both self-understanding and active participation in one's community to give students a greater understanding of themselves and their cultures, and to help them think globally.



Crown College

Founded 1967

Crown College's theme, Science, Technology, and Society, explores the relationship of science and technology with the world around us, including both the positive and negative impacts of technology on our environment and social institutions.

Merrill College

Founded 1968

Merrill College's theme, Cultural Identities and Global Consciousness, helps students to understand the nature of cultural identity by examining the relationships between societies of the world and their struggles to preserve their cultures.



Porter College

Founded 1969

Porter College's theme, Ars Longa, Vita Brevis: Life is Short, Art Endures, manifests our belief that creativity is integral to all fields of study from art to physics to linguistics, and promotes an environment in which original thought, creative imagination, and personal and cultural differences are appreciated.

Kresge College

Founded 1971

Kresge College's theme, Power and Representation, explores the many ways we constitute ourselves as individuals in relation to communities, focusing on representations of class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and race.



Oakes College

Founded 1972

Oakes College's theme, Communicating Diversity for a Just Society, prepares students to become active citizens and future leaders capable of communicating across differences to bring about a more egalitarian and just society.

Rachel Carson College

Founded 1972

Rachel Carson College's theme, Environment and Society, embodies the college's concern for environmental issues within a social, political, scientific, and humanistic context.



College Nine

Founded 2000

College Nine's theme, International and Global Perspectives, recognizes the importance of cultural competency and focuses on issues such as economic globalization, environmental degradation, human rights, and international and ethnic conflicts.

John R. Lewis College

Founded 2002

John R. Lewis College's theme, Social Justice and Community, focuses on the inequalities that exist in society, such as discrimination and poverty, and the role of community involvement in addressing social injustices.

