



FactSheet

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

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CAMPUS HISTORY

San Diego State University is the oldest and largest higher education institution in the San Diego region. Since it was founded in 1897, the university has grown to become a nationally ranked research university. Each year, SDSU provides approximately 30,000 students with the opportunity to participate in an academic curriculum distinguished by direct contact with faculty and an increasing international emphasis, preparing them for a global future.

Serving the San Diego region has always been a core part of SDSU's mission. Founded March 13, 1897, San Diego State University began as the San Diego Normal School, a training facility for elementary school teachers. Seven faculty and 91 students met in temporary quarters over a downtown drugstore before moving to a newly constructed 17-acre campus on Park Boulevard.

The curriculum was limited at first to English, history and mathematics, but course offerings broadened rapidly under the leadership of Samuel T. Black, who left his position as state superintendent of public instruction to become the new school's first president. Black served from 1898 to 1910.

From 1910 to 1935, President Edward L. Hardy headed a vigorous administration that oversaw major changes to the fledgling institution. In 1921, the Normal School became San Diego State Teachers College, a four-year public institution controlled by the state Board of Education. In that same year, the two-year San Diego Junior College, forerunner of today's local community colleges, became a branch of San Diego State, creating a union that lasted until 1946.

By the 1920s, San Diego State was already beginning to outgrow its Park Boulevard location, and San Diegans launched a campaign to build a new campus on the city's eastern border. In February 1931, students, faculty and staff moved into seven Mission-style buildings surrounding a common area still known as the Main Quad.

Four years later, the Legislature authorized expansion of degree programs beyond teacher education, and San Diego State Teachers College became San Diego State College. Also in 1935, Walter R. Hepner took the helm as president, beginning a 17-year tenure. The college continued to grow over time, reaching an enrollment of more than 25,000 students during the administration of Malcolm A. Love, who served as president from 1952 to 1971.

In 1960, San Diego State became part of the newly created California State College system, now known as the California State University system. In the early 1970s, with legislative approval, San Diego State College became San Diego State University. Leading the institution during the 1970s were Acting President Donald E. Walker (1971-1972), President Brage Golding (1972-1977), Acting President Trevor Colbourn (1977-1978) and President Thomas B. Day, whose tenure spanned from 1978 to 1996. Stephen L. Weber became the university's seventh president in 1996 and served the university for 15 years. He was succeeded on July 5, 2011 by current President Elliot Hirshman.

Beginning its 115th academic year in fall 2011, San Diego State University can take pride in more than a century of achievement in education, research and service. With an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students, SDSU has grown into the largest institution of higher education in the San Diego region and one of the largest in California. SDSU is increasingly becoming a top choice for undergraduates, receiving more than 60,000 undergraduate applications every year since 2007.

Renowned for its academic excellence, the university is home to top-ranking programs in education, international business, social work, speech-language pathology, biology and public administration. Overall, San Diego State students can choose from 84 undergraduate majors, 76 master's programs, 16 joint doctoral degree programs and two independent doctoral degree programs.

SDSU produces thousands of graduates each year, 60 percent of whom stay in San Diego to pursue their careers, making San Diego State a primary educator of the region's work force, as well as a leader in expanding access to higher education. Committed to serving the richly diverse San Diego region, SDSU ranks among the top universities nationwide in terms of ethnic and racial diversity among its student body, as well as the number of bachelor's degrees conferred upon students of color.

Increasingly recognized for innovative research, San Diego State has achieved the prestigious designation of "Research University" with high research activity granted by the Carnegie Foundation. For the past four years, SDSU has ranked the No. 1 Research University for those with 14 or fewer Ph.D. programs according to Academic Analytic's faculty-scholarly productivity index. Since 2000, SDSU faculty and staff have attracted more than \$1 billion in grants and contracts for research and program administration. SDSU ranks among the top 150 public universities nationwide in research expenditures, and SDSU's research funding has more than doubled from a decade ago.

Founded in service, SDSU continues to be a leader in analyzing and resolving complex community problems. One example is the City Heights Educational Collaborative, an ongoing partnership with San Diego City Schools, the San Diego Education Association, teachers and parents. Funded with an \$18 million grant from Price Charities, the Collaborative is improving instruction for students and professional development for teachers in three inner-city schools managed by the university.

Another initiative to improve education in the San Diego region and beyond is the QUALCOMM Institute for Innovation and Educational Success, launched in 2004 with a record \$14.5 million corporate gift from QUALCOMM. The Institute supports programs that aim to enhance math and engineering education across the K-12 spectrum, and supports efforts to revitalize performance in urban school districts nationwide.

Perhaps the most visible evidence of SDSU's growth is in the physical additions to campus and its continued commitment to providing a modern learning environment for students, faculty and staff. Over the past decade, the university has completed facilities totaling more than \$430 million in value. Most recently, the university opened the new Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center. The center is a gateway for the community to access SDSU's rich assets. Not only does it serve as the first point of contact for alumni and friends visiting SDSU, but it is also a place where academic and business leaders can collaborate on ventures to benefit our community and impact our future.

Construction of a new student union building is underway, and future campus improvements set to take place include the renovation of Nasatir and Storm Halls. SDSU's Campus Master Plan will also include the addition of several facilities, including Plaza Linda Verde, a mixed-use retail and residential development and on-campus housing for approximately 1,600 additional students.

Beyond accolades and campus expansion, San Diego State University remains, as always, most proud of its alumni family, more than 250,000 strong. Among those who call SDSU their alma mater are former Federal Trade Commission Chairman Timothy Muris, former Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Merrill A. "Tony" McPeak, San Diego County supervisors Greg Cox, Dianne Jacob, Pam Slater, Ron Roberts and Bill Horn; San Diego city council member Kevin Faulconer, National Teachers of the Year Janis Gabay (1990) and Sandra McBrayer (1994), restaurant executives Ralph Rubio, co-founder of Rubio's Fresh Mexican Grill and Linda A. Lang, CEO of Jack In the Box restaurants; astronaut Ellen Ochoa and Costco CEO and co-founder Jim Sinegal.

Aztec alumni also include entertainers Marion Ross, Julie Kavner and Kathy Najimy; Hollywood producer Kathleen Kennedy; golfers Lon Hinkle and Gene Littler; baseball players Tony Gwynn, Mark Grace, Travis Lee and Graig Nettles and Stephen Strasburg; football players Marshall Faulk, Brian Sipe, Fred Dryer, Kyle Turley and Kirk Morrison; America's Cup skipper Dennis Conner; and basketball player Michael Cage.

The success of these individuals and thousands of other SDSU alumni attest eloquently to the success of their alma mater. From modest beginnings, San Diego State University has evolved into a premier center of learning, research and service.