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Catching Waves, Catching classes: UC Santa Cruz named one of the nation's top spots for surf-loving students

By J.M. BROWN
 Posted: 03/19/2009 01:30:16 AM PDT

SANTA CRUZ -- Surfline, a leading Web magazine for surfing enthusiasts, has named UC Santa Cruz the second top surfing college in the country.

The school, bested only by UC San Diego, was hailed by the magazine for its proximity to "high-performance hotbed Steamer Lane" and just an hour's drive from "the coldwater behemoths of Maverick's."

UCSC is surrounded by "probably the single most diverse surf area in the state," the magazine said.

Gary Griggs, director of the Institute of Marine Sciences and Long Marine Laboratory at UCSC, said surfing pushed him on a career path. He was a wave-seeking undergrad at UC Santa Barbara before pursuing a career at UCSC studying beaches and coastlines.

"If a student is looking for one of the best universities in the country for marine sciences combined with world class surfing, they couldn't do better than UC Santa Cruz," he said Wednesday. "First-rate undergraduate and graduate programs in marine sciences and an internationally recognized marine lab where cutting edge research is under way, all within 10 minutes of Steamer Lane, Pleasure Point and a dozen other top surfing spots unparalleled along the West Coast."

The 44-year-old campus has a long history of attracting student surfers, including the first woman ever to brave the legendary break at Maverick's, Sarah Gerhardt. She attended UCSC several years ago to seek a doctorate in physical chemistry.

Other alums listed by the magazine include Dan



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Duane, author of "Caught Inside," a book about surf culture; Scooter Leonard, former editor of Surfing Magazine; and David Giddings, a pro surfer.

UCSC offers popular beginner and intermediate surfing classes. "People show up as early as 4 a.m. for open registration -- we open at 9 and all the spots are usually gone by 10," campus recreation director Kathleen Ferraro was quoted as saying in the magazine.

Other schools ranked at the top by Surfline were Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Santa Barbara, University of Hawaii, University of North Carolina at Wilmington and University of Rhode Island.

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