Contrary to popular opinion

Despite its reputation for having some of the top science programs in the country, the 10 most popular undergraduate degrees last year were psychology, business management economics, literature, politics, history, environmental studies, sociology, anthropology, film and digital media, and community studies.

UCSC’s history of using narrative evaluations has led many to think the campus has never issued grades. In fact, faculty voted in 2001 to issue grades— in addition to the distinctive narrative system.

UCSC's history of using narrative evaluations has led many to think the campus has never issued grades. In fact, faculty voted in 2001 to issue grades— in addition to the distinctive narrative system.

Huge lecture classes are the norm at most public universities, but at UCSC, 72 percent of upper-division courses and 58 percent of lower-division courses have fewer than 30 students.

You may not know how a goat changed campus policy, that one of the country’s best-selling romance novelists went to school at UCSC, or that you may one day have the campus to thank for more powerful online search engines.

In honor of the campus’s 43rd year, here are 43 things we bet you didn’t know about UC Santa Cruz. We think many of them will surprise and delight you — and maybe even inspire you to send us a few of your own.

By Peggy Townsend

43 things you might not know about UC Santa Cruz

You know about UCSC’s mascot—the slow, humble, neon-yellow banana slug, a choice at once both eccentric and defiant. You might know about the exceptional astronomy program and the intimate feeling within the campus’s individual colleges. You probably have a favorite secret spot deep in the redwoods, or maybe you know UCSC’s 25-plus miles of hiking and jogging trails like the back of your hand.

But we suspect there are things you don’t know about the 2,000-acre campus nestled in the rolling hills above the Monterey Bay. You may not know how a goat changed campus policy, that one of the country’s best-selling romance novelists went to school at UCSC, or that you may one day have the campus to thank for more powerful online search engines.

In honor of the campus’s 43rd year, here are 43 things we bet you didn’t know about UC Santa Cruz. We think many of them will surprise and delight you — and maybe even inspire you to send us a few of your own.

By Peggy Townsend

43 things you might not know about UC Santa Cruz

You know about UCSC’s mascot—the slow, humble, neon-yellow banana slug, a choice at once both eccentric and defiant. You might know about the exceptional astronomy program and the intimate feeling within the campus’s individual colleges. You probably have a favorite secret spot deep in the redwoods, or maybe you know UCSC’s 25-plus miles of hiking and jogging trails like the back of your hand.

But we suspect there are things you don’t know about the 2,000-acre campus nestled in the rolling hills above the Monterey Bay. You may not know how a goat changed campus policy, that one of the country’s best-selling romance novelists went to school at UCSC, or that you may one day have the campus to thank for more powerful online search engines.

In honor of the campus’s 43rd year, here are 43 things we bet you didn’t know about UC Santa Cruz. We think many of them will surprise and delight you — and maybe even inspire you to send us a few of your own.

By Peggy Townsend

43 things you might not know about UC Santa Cruz

You know about UCSC’s mascot—the slow, humble, neon-yellow banana slug, a choice at once both eccentric and defiant. You might know about the exceptional astronomy program and the intimate feeling within the campus’s individual colleges. You probably have a favorite secret spot deep in the redwoods, or maybe you know UCSC’s 25-plus miles of hiking and jogging trails like the back of your hand.

But we suspect there are things you don’t know about the 2,000-acre campus nestled in the rolling hills above the Monterey Bay. You may not know how a goat changed campus policy, that one of the country’s best-selling romance novelists went to school at UCSC, or that you may one day have the campus to thank for more powerful online search engines.

In honor of the campus’s 43rd year, here are 43 things we bet you didn’t know about UC Santa Cruz. We think many of them will surprise and delight you — and maybe even inspire you to send us a few of your own.

By Peggy Townsend
Alumni aim high

18 Five UCSC alumni have won Pulitzer Prizes. Washington Post reporter and Merrill College alumna Dana Priest won Pulitzers in 2006 and 2008 for reporting on the government’s “black site” prisons and the mistreatment of wounded veterans at Guantánamo Bay. Priest won the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 2008 for her reporting on the government’s “black site” prisons and the mistreatment of wounded veterans at Guantánamo Bay.

19 Since the campus opened 43 years ago, 638 UCSC alumni have heeded the call to work in developing countries for the Peace Corps. The number puts UCSC sixth in ranking among medium-sized schools for the number of alumni it has sent to the Peace Corps.

20 One of the country’s most prolific writers, with 23 million copies of her books in print, graduated from UCSC. Best-selling romance novelist Jayne Ann Krentz (Stevenson ’70), who also writes under the names Amanda Quick and Jayne Castle, even included the work of one of her favorite professors, G. William Domhoff, in her 2004 novel Faking Awake.

21 NPR’s famous duo, the Kitchen Sisters, Nikki Siliva (Porter ’73) and Davis Nelson (Stevenson ’73), are graduates of UCSC. Over the years, the two women have attracted devoted listeners to several series, including Lost & Found Sound, Hidden Kitchens, and the Sonic Memorial Project, an audio archive of the World Trade Center.

Legend has it

22 UCSC’s famous banana slug mascot almost didn’t survive the ’80s. Back when the university joined the NCAA, the chancellor and a group of student athletes changed the campus mascot to the sea lion, figuring a stumpy yellow slug didn’t have the cachet they wanted. But students revolted and, in 1986 referendum, voted by a 15-to-1 margin to keep the banana slug, thereby guaranteeing UCSC would always join the Whittier Poets and the Ohio Wesleyan Battling Bishops on the list of most unusual mascots in the country.

23 When the UC Regents were considering a site for a new Central Coast campus, the story goes, they considered possible locations in the Almaden Valley in Santa Clara County as well as Santa Cruz. But coming over the Santa Cruz Mountains on a blistering summer day, they felt the cool ocean breezes and picked the Cowell Ranch property in Santa Cruz.

24 The reason dogs aren’t allowed on campus is due, in part, to a goat named Samantha. Erica, who had become besotted with a police horse named Sam and was its constant companion, was killed by a big sheepdog/Lab mix whose owner had brought it to campus for a run. The campus was already considering a no-dog policy, but Samantha’s 1978 death was the last straw. You can still see Samantha’s gravestone on a hill on the left side of Coolidge Drive and signs that warn against bringing dogs to the campus.

25 UCSC has a long history of protests, but one had an especially ignominious ending. A protest over People’s Park in Berkeley had brought a campus in to the laws of University House, and administrators had spent hours in negotiations, finally persuading campers to leave. But as protesters packed up, then-Chancellor Dean McHenry decided to take matters into his own hands and turned the高压瓦斯的探头 from the protesters. Needless to say, negotiators were quickly back at square one.

26 Over the years, reports of ghostly apparitions on a fire road below Cowell College have prompted the area to be named Haunted Meadow. It was in that area on May 14, 1903, that young Sarah Agnes Cowell was killed when she was thrown from a buggy after the horse bolted.

30 UCSC students are the largest group of masters degrees awarded to women. In 2007, 44.2 percent of master’s degrees awarded by UCSC’s Baskin School of Engineering went to women.

31 When avant-garde composer John Cage was creating music, he was hunting for mushrooms. The celebrated composer’s entire mycological collection, including field guides and a mushroom tie he wore, is held by the University Library’s Special Collections Department.

33 Among all U.S. engineering schools, UCSC ranked third in the percentage of master’s degrees awarded to women. In 2007, 44.2 percent of master’s degrees awarded by UCSC’s Baskin School of Engineering went to women.

34 More than 71,340 degrees have been awarded at UC Santa Cruz since its first graduating class in 1967.

35 Thirty-six percent of last year’s freshman class were the first in their families to attend college.

36 The UCSC campus is home to more than 500 plant species, an extraordinary level of diversity on its 2,000 acres.

37 UCSC started a very popular computer game design major in 2006, the first of its kind in the UC system.

38 UCSC athletic teams have taunted opposing teams by wearing T-shirts with the slogan, “Banana Slugs—No Known Predator.” But that’s not exactly true. On campus, known predators include California giant salamanders, garter snakes, shrews, and raccoons. Even humans have been known to eat banana slugs, in emergences.

39 More than 1,000 graduates of the Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture have fanned out around the globe, cultivating the seeds of sustainability.

Growing greener

38 More than 1,000 graduates of the Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture have fanned out around the globe, cultivating the seeds of sustainability.

40 Per capita campus water consumption has fallen 40 percent since the 1990s as a result of conservation efforts.