

Few institutions are known for innovating quite as much as the University of California (UC). With 74 Nobel Prize winners, 102 MacArthur "Genius" grants and 66 National Medal of Science winners, UC's commitment to research and discovery is unparalleled. UC had [more utility patents than any other university](#) in the world last year, according to recently released rankings from the National Academy of Inventors. 18 UC faculty were named [2026 Sloan Research fellows](#), recognizing promising early-career scientists. Several UC recipients have gone on to win Nobel prizes. But this isn't just about rankings and awards, it's about UC's unmatched record of sparking innovation that boosts the economy and drives societal progress throughout California and the nation.



Even more, it underscores the critical partnership between UC and the federal government. Federal research funding plays a vitally important role in powering the country's scientific and technological prowess. We see it in the thousands of jobs supported by UC operations, the billions of dollars in economic impact generated by UC activities and our country's global scientific and technological leadership.

And, if you're missing the Olympics already, check out this feature on [UC athletes](#) at the 2026 winter games.

**-- Chris Harrington, UC Associate Vice President,
Federal Governmental Relations**

What We're Watching

1.

Healing hearts

UC scientists across campuses are using funding from the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** to tackle some of the most pressing [problems in heart health](#). They're developing innovative solutions to combat heart disease, which is the leading cause of death for adults in the U.S. From an injectable gel that reduces scarring and preserves living muscle to a method for getting heart cells to regenerate, these discoveries could open doors and save lives.

2.

Uncovering early organic chemistry

How did early life form on earth? It's a question many have asked, and one that researchers at **UC Santa Barbara** are working to uncover, supported by a grant from the **NIH**. By looking into [complex redox reactions](#), they're developing a better understanding of how energy impacts the formation of life.

3.

Earthquake preparedness

At the **Berkeley Seismological Laboratory**, data analysts use the information they get from seismic sensors to identify the [most hazardous faults](#). The lab's seismic stations tie in with the **U.S. Geological Survey's** network, combining data to more effectively alert the public to potential danger and keep Californians safe. Providing even just tens of seconds of advanced warning can be enough to get people to safety, saving lives and money.

4.

Fighting fires

With funding from the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** and the **U.S. Department of the Interior**, scientists at **UC Merced** are examining how extreme fire weather on the rise worldwide is [straining existing firefighting resources](#). Their research found that early warning signs, enhanced wildfire management and clear communication between agencies could help combat the growing risk and further international cooperation.

5.

Revolutionary silicon chips

A new [silicon chip transceiver](#), invented at **UC Irvine** with funding from the **U.S. Department of Defense Microelectronics Commons program**, is ultrafast and energy efficient. The discovery unlocks data speeds that rival those of fiber-optic cables, facilitating connected cities, automated manufacturing and power-saving data centers.

Did You Know?

There were **1,529 inventions** disclosed at UC.

UC has **14,665 active U.S. and foreign patents**.

67 startups came from UC intellectual property or technology last year.

*Data from, or through, UC FY 2024 unless otherwise noted.

From Coast to Capital

UC Washington Center: Upcoming Events

Washington, D.C.

Upcoming events at UCDC can be explored [online here](#), including an alumni networking night on Mar. 6.

The UC Washington Center (UCDC) serves as a live-learn facility for the University in the nation's capital, offering a dynamic environment for education, research and engagement.



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