

HONOR SOCIETIES

Phi Beta Kappa

Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the United States. Phi Beta Kappa was established in 1776 and has evolved to become the nation's leading advocate for the liberal arts and sciences at the undergraduate level. The society's distinctive emblem, the golden key, is widely recognized as a symbol of academic achievement. USD received its Phi Beta Kappa charter in 2003. To be eligible for membership, students must be majoring in an area of the liberal arts or sciences, hold senior standing, and have attained a GPA that places them in the top 10 percent of their class. Additional criteria for selection include intellectual integrity, tolerance, and a broad range of intellectual interests. Each spring a campus committee composed of Phi Beta Kappa faculty invites a select group of students to become members in the Society. Students who accept the invitation are then initiated into the Phi Beta Kappa Society in a formal ceremony. For more information about Phi Beta Kappa and the USD chapter, including the names of past inductees and faculty members, please follow this link to the chapter home page (<https://www.sandiego.edu/cas/student-opportunities/honor-societies>).

Kappa Gamma Pi

Kappa Gamma Pi is the national Catholic college graduate honor society. Members are graduates who have demonstrated academic excellence and outstanding service and leadership during their college years. As candidates, they pledge to continue to provide examples of scholarship, leadership, and service in their personal and professional lives. This commitment is the difference that distinguishes nomination to Kappa Gamma Pi as one of the most relevant and prestigious awards on campus. Kappa Gamma Pi was founded in 1926 at the National Catholic Educational Association Conference of Catholic Colleges. Today, more than 41,000 graduates of 139 Catholic colleges are Kappa Gamma Pi members. They live throughout the United States and in many foreign countries. Their successful lives and careers exemplify outstanding leadership and service in church, profession, and community. Kappa Gamma Pi has members from the first graduating classes of USD to the present. These members are Catholic men and women as well as men and women of other faith communities. In January, graduating seniors who have a GPA of 3.5 or above receive a letter from the Provost informing them that they are qualified by reason of their academic achievement to apply for membership in Kappa Gamma Pi. If they have exemplified outstanding leadership and service during their years at USD, they are encouraged to submit a letter of recommendation and an essay to the selection committee. Kappa Gamma Pi sponsors the St. Catherine Medal, awarded at the Honors Convocation, for outstanding leadership and service as well as the Cornaro Scholarship for members of Kappa Gamma Pi pursuing graduate studies.

Mortar Board

Mortar Board is a national honor society for college seniors which was founded in 1918 and chartered on the USD campus in the fall of 2000. The society recognizes in its members the qualities of scholastic achievement, outstanding leadership, and dedicated service to the university and the community. There are over 200 active chapters of Mortar Board at colleges throughout the country. To be eligible for membership, students must have junior standing in the spring semester with an overall GPA that places them in the top 35 percent of their class. Moreover, students must have participated and excelled in leadership and service activities during their college years. They must submit an information sheet, a resume, a letter of recommendation from a USD faculty member, and a personal essay for review by the current Mortar Board members. Admission to Mortar Board at USD is highly competitive and is restricted to approximately 30 students each year. USD's Mortar Board chapter is an active student organization and expects full participation from its members. Chapter members participate in bi-weekly

meetings, an annual Faculty Appreciation Dinner, tutoring and other service activities, interaction with San Diego's Mortar Board Alumni Chapter, social events, and fundraising for the STRIVE scholarship, which chapter members established for college bound seniors at Kearny High School who have excelled in scholarship, leadership, and service. Mortar Board members have the opportunity to apply for local and national Mortar Board scholarships and fellowships to be used for graduate study. Each year in February a letter is mailed to juniors who are in the top 35 percent of their class. The letter invites those students to submit their essay, letter of recommendation, and other required information for consideration for Mortar Board membership. Selected students are "tapped" in one of their classes by USD Mortar Board members. The Mortar Board Initiation ceremony occurs in April.

