

## UC San Diego Celebrates 40 Years of Partnership with Metropolitan Transit System's Free 'Zone'

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To mark the success and longevity of a first-of-its-kind arrangement between a public university and a public transportation system, UC San Diego honored its Metropolitan Transit System partners in creating the free "UCSD Zone" at an Oct. 30 campus celebration.

UC San Diego Chancellor Marye Anne Fox was joined by San Diego City Councilman Todd Gloria and Metropolitan Transit System CEO Paul Jablonski in noting the 40th anniversary of the UCSD Bus Zone, where students, faculty and staff can ride public transit for free. The event in Town Square included a tour of the state-of-the-art gasoline-electric hybrid bus operating on the new SuperLoop route which circles the University City area.

"Over the last four decades, this partnership between a public university and a public transportation system has been extremely important to our campus community," Chancellor Fox said. "It has contributed to the university's comprehensive sustainability efforts, and proved to be a vital commute solution for those trying to save money in these difficult economic times"

"As we know," she said, "La Jolla is an expensive area in which to live. So the bus program has allowed our campus community to seek more affordable housing options further away from campus-in neighborhoods such as North Park, Mission Valley, Ocean Beach and Mira Mesa."

UC San Diego was the first university or college in the nation to encourage public transportation use by partnering with a transit agency to allow university affiliates to ride for free, notes Samuel Corbett, assistant director of Parking and Transportation.

Bus Zone riders save more than money and vehicle wear and tear. In fact, the nearly 1.6 million trips taken last year alone contributed to the alternative transportation programs what saved more than two million gallons of gasoline and offset an estimated 16,972 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions in 2008, the equivalent of removing 3,475 cars from local roadways, Corbett said.

The popularity of the Bus Zone is one of the primary reasons the campus has seen single-occupant commuting drop from 66 percent in 2001 to 46 percent today, Corbett said, placing alternative transportation users in the majority for the second consecutive year.

The Bus Zone program began with a limited service area encompassing a one-mile radius around campus on specific routes. It has expanded to include the full length of all routes serving the UC San Diego campus and Hillcrest Medical Center-a total of eight routes including MTS routes 3, 10, 30, 41, 150, 201/202 and 921 and NCTD route 101.

According to ridership counts provided by the transit operators, Bus Zone ridership increased from about 357,974 in 2005-06 to nearly 1,596,755 in 2008-09, a 346 percent increase.

Years of emphasis on such programs as this have resulted in an outstanding green "report card" for UC San Diego. Citing such sustainability initiatives as 56 hybrid and 33 biodiesel vehicles in its fleet, the non-profit Sustainable Endowments Institute listed UC San Diego as one of the nation's 26 greenest campuses in its 2010 *College Sustainability Report Card*. UC San Diego received an overall grade of "A-," the highest awarded.

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