

August 17, 2011 | By Rex Graham and Christine Clark

Sierra Magazine Names UC San Diego Third ‘Coolest’ School for Going Green

University leaps from 15th place for efforts to help solve climate issues and operate sustainably

The University of California, San Diego was listed third in Sierra Magazine’s 2011 “Coolest Schools” report released Aug. 17 as part of the environmental magazine’s annual sustainability ranking of U.S. colleges and universities.

UC San Diego jumped to third from 15th last year in the rankings offered by Sierra Magazine, the official publication of the Sierra Club, one of the nation’s largest and most influential environmental organizations. The university was recognized for environmental practices, green initiatives and its caliber of sustainability-oriented education.

“Being green is part of our institutional DNA,” said UC San Diego Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. “This ranking reflects the commitment, planning and hard work of our students, faculty and staff to implement sustainable solutions which will create a better future for us all.”

The rankings were based on findings from a survey with questions in 10 categories: energy supply, efficiency, food, academics, purchasing, transportation, waste management, administration, financial investments and other initiatives. The campus scored highly in all categories; for example, in the “academics” category, UC San Diego was recognized for having developed a variety of environment- and sustainability-related majors, minors and classes, and for a stellar faculty of internationally renowned professors doing pioneering research on environmental issues.



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go leaps from 15th to 3rd place in recognition of its provide green majors and classes, help solve climate and operate sustainably.

“Being green is the new measure of prestige for institutions of higher education and about two-thirds of students say a school’s commitment to going green is an



important factor in their enrollment decisions,” said Avital Vinshtock, features editor at Sierra Magazine. “This year’s ranking will encourage prospective students who are interested in environmental sustainability to choose green universities like UC San Diego.”

Sustainability initiatives reach a variety of constituents, including students, staff and faculty members, as well as partnering corporations, research institutes and nonprofit organizations. Student involvement at UC San Diego has been a driving force in many sustainability initiatives. The student-driven “Own Your Impact” campaign received 2,000 pledges from members of the campus community who committed to conserve water, waste, food, and energy.

The magazine’s “Coolest Schools” ranking noted the high usage of public transit and other communal transportation initiatives at UC San Diego.

“Almost everywhere you look, the impacts of our drive to become more environmentally sustainable may be visible by lowering operating costs, less waste going to landfills and reducing the campus carbon footprint,” said Gary C. Matthews, UC San Diego vice chancellor for Resource Management and Planning. “Students play significant roles in many of these efforts and encourage the university administration to do even more.”

UC San Diego earned high marks for its green building projects. Construction at UC San Diego must meet stringent energy and environmental design standards and older buildings have been or are being retrofitted with more energy-efficient lighting, heating and air conditioning, and other improvements.

Sierra Magazine’s summary of UC San Diego’s sustainability-related academic achievements included a list of standout professors:

- Tony Haymet, director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and board member of the Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans
- Ralph Keeling, professor of geochemistry and program director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography CO₂ Program
- Mario Molina, professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry and Nobel Laureate in chemistry for discoveries on the formation and decomposition of ozone in the atmosphere

- Naomi Oreskes, professor of History and Science Studies and consultant to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board
- Richard Somerville, distinguished professor emeritus at Scripps and co-Nobel laureate with colleagues on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- Veerabhadran Ramanathan, distinguished professor of atmospheric and climate sciences at Scripps and chair, United Nations Environment Programme's Atmospheric Brown Clouds project
- David Victor, director of the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies' Laboratory on International Law and Regulation

To see the full list of Sierra Magazine's "Coolest Schools," go to www.sierraclub.org/coolschools

MEDIA CONTACT

Rex Graham, 858-534-2248 or ragraham@ucsd.edu Christine Clark, 858-534-7618 or ceclark@ucsd.edu

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