

UC San Diego to Join College Campuses Across the Nation Jan. 28-31 to "Focus the Nation" on Climate Change Solutions

UCSD Students, Faculty to participate in campuswide teach-ins, panel discussion, carbon-neutral concert and variety of other "green" activities

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Underscoring its longstanding commitment to climate change research, the University of California, San Diego will join more than 1,000 universities to participate in the first annual *Focus the Nation*, a nationwide program designed to engage faculty and students at college campuses in discussions about climate change solutions.

From Jan. 28 to 31, UC San Diego will honor *Focus the Nation* with a campuswide, multidisciplinary teach-in, as well as a variety of other events ranging from a green car show and a mock trial to a sustainability career panel and a green-powered concert. The week will culminate with a panel discussion on climate change solutions at 4 p.m., Jan. 31 in the UCSD Student Services Center.

Chancellor Marye Anne Fox will kick off the panel discussion which will feature Richard Somerville, a professor at UCSD's Scripps Institution of Oceanography and one of the nation's top experts on climate change; Ivan Evans, professor in the Department of Sociology and Mark Jacobsen, a professor in the Department of Economics. Assembly Member Lori Saldaña also will join the panel. Saldaña represents the 76th Assembly District and is a member of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and the Legislature's Environmental Caucus.

"UC San Diego has a legacy of illuminating the problems of climate change so we feel strongly that we need to be a leader in identifying real solutions," said Chancellor Fox. "Focus the Nation" will raise awareness of the critical need to focus on climate change solutions and help to unify the UC San Diego community in its commitment to reducing our carbon footprint."

Lisa Shaffer, executive director of UC San Diego's Environment and Sustainability Initiative (ESI), who has completed a climate change training session lead by Al Gore, has played a leadership role in UCSD's participation in *Focus the Nation*. "We are one of the world's leading institutions when it comes to climate change research," she said. "Climate change is not just a scientific problem, it is a societal one and this is a great opportunity to get the best minds from all disciplines to focus on this and engage our students."

Scientists at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego were the first to discover rising levels of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere back in 1958. Last year, several faculty members were part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore.

To date, more than 35 faculty members from various academic departments have agreed to participate in the teach-in. *Focus the Nation* organizers have provided model lesson plans and panel topics for professors from any discipline to use. Kim Griest, a UCSD professor in the Department of Physics, said he is participating in *Focus the Nation* because he feels it is necessary for academics to find a solution to global climate change. "We just need

to stop and acknowledge once and for all that this is a serious problem," Griest said. "Academics and scientists discovered climate change and we are going to be the ones to find the solutions."

Focus the Nation at UCSD has been organized by the *Focus the Nation* Steering Committee, comprised mostly of students representing various student organizations on UCSD's campus. Meagan Moore, a graduate student researcher in the Department of Chemistry, is co-chair of the committee. "I think this event is important because there has been a shift from 'global warming isn't real' to 'it's too late to do anything,'" Moore said. "This is a great way to make others aware that it is not too late and start the discussion on what we can do to stop irreversible climate change."

Focus the Nation kicks off with a sustainable art show which begins Jan. 28 on the Sun God Lawn. There also will be a Careers in Sustainability panel from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Jan. 29 at the Rady School of Management which will focus on career opportunities and business practices in environmentally conscious industries, such as solar energy and the health food industry.

Other events include a green-powered concert on Jan. 31 that will feature four local bands. Also on Jan. 31 at the Price Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. there will be an interactive performance piece featuring a student dressed as a polar bear in a giant "electric" chair wearing a sign stating "You have the power" to convey that we can stop global climate change.

In addition, a green car show will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Jan. 31 at Warren Mall. A variety of alternative fuel vehicles belonging to local members of the Electric Vehicle Association will be showcased at the event.

According to *Focus the Nation* campus organizer Kristen Blackler, the teach-in is the core of *Focus the Nation*. "The teach-in is modeled after the sit-ins that took place during the Vietnam era," Blackler said. "The purpose of this event is to get the rhetoric away from doom and gloom and to look at the facts and focus on solutions."

Shaffer said it was important for students to organize the *Focus the Nation* event because younger generations will bear the consequences of climate change. "Given the critical mass of student involvement in this effort, I think we are making it clear that younger generations care and they have ideas."

In addition to its pioneering climate change research, UC San Diego is recognized as a leader in the implementation of green practices across all levels of campus operations—from energy management programs that apply cutting edge technology to alternative transportation programs that dramatically reduce air pollution levels on campus and in the region. Earlier this month, UC San Diego became the first campus on the West Coast to join the Chicago Climate Exchange, North America's only voluntary, legally binding trading system to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. UC San Diego was also the first university in California to be recognized by the California Climate Action Registry as a "Climate Action Leader" for successfully measuring, certifying and reporting its greenhouse gas emissions to the Registry and the public.

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