

August 11, 2015 | By Christine Clark

## UC San Diego is Sierra Magazine's 7th Coolest School in Nation for Sustainability Efforts

**Campus recognized nationally for its commitment to protecting the environment, reducing water use significantly, addressing climate issues and encouraging environmental responsibility**

The University of California, San Diego has been named the 7th "Coolest School" by Sierra magazine, climbing 10 spots from last year in the publication's annual ranking of America's greenest colleges. Sierra magazine is a publication of the Sierra Club, the oldest and largest environmental group in the U.S.

"It is an honor to be recognized as one of the nation's top colleges for our commitment to protect the environment," said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "Sustainability is part of our institutional DNA, imparted to us by UC San Diego's early scientists like Roger Revelle, one of the university's founders and a pioneer of climate change research. We have built upon their legacy to become a living laboratory of sustainable solutions that benefit our local and global communities."

According to the editors at Sierra magazine, factors that helped schools like UC San Diego land in the top 10 included having dining halls that serve organic and local foods; waste systems that divert trash from landfills; transportation options that keep students and staff out of cars; academic programs that are heavily eco-focused; and strong methods to conserve water and energy.



“Sustainability is a top priority in UC San Diego’s education, research and campus operations,” added Gary C. Matthews, vice chancellor for Resource Management and Planning. “From building green to saving water to offering hundreds of sustainability related classes, our efforts are changing not only the campus, but also the minds of the students we’re educating.”



*As California continues to suffer from one of the worst droughts on record, a key UC San Diego sustainability initiative is water conservation, which editors at Sierra noted. “Since 2009, the campus has reduced its water use by more than 30 million gallons a year, and in the last year has recycled 400,000 gallons,” they wrote. At UC San Diego, all new landscaping uses drought-tolerant plants (pictured above). Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications*

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Other eco-friendly accomplishments at UC San Diego highlighted by Sierra magazine include encouraging campus commuters to use alternative transportation options such as public transit, carpools, vanpools, bikes, car sharing, ride matching, campus shuttles and more. The university was recently recognized with a Diamond Award from the San Diego Association of Government (SANDAG) for making strides to promote alternative commute choices in the workplace.

Additional UC San Diego sustainable efforts lauded by Sierra magazine include the following:

- **Food**

- 17 percent of all food purchased in Housing, Dining and Hospitality locations is locally grown and/or certified organic or fair trade.
- 100 percent of coffee in in these locations is certified fair trade.
- The campus composts pre-consumer food waste in all dining halls.
- UC San Diego is home to student-run gardens that also feature locally grown produce.

- **Energy conservation**

- UC San Diego has an aggressive goal to be climate neutral by 2025.
- The campus generates 92 percent of its own electricity and has one the largest, most advanced microgrids in the world, which features alternative sources of energy such as photovoltaics.
- **Waste diversion**
  - One of UC San Diego's goals is to be zero waste by 2020.
  - During the spring 2015 student move out, more than 25 tons of donations such as food and clothes were sent to a local charity and food pantry.
  - The campus avoided 86 tons of plastic water bottles usage through its hydration station refill program.
  - UC San Diego's graduation gowns are made of 100 percent recycled products.
- **Academics**
  - UC San Diego offers a range of "green" majors and minors from environmental systems to urban planning to hundreds of sustainability-related courses.
  - As part of the campuswide strategic plan, UC San Diego produces research that helps to better understand and protect the planet.
- **Campus life**
  - UC San Diego is home to the Sustainability Resource Center, a one-stop-sustainability-shop where the campus community can learn about courses on sustainability-related topics, how to conserve energy and water and how to get more involved in sustainability on campus.
  - UC San Diego was the first UC campus to launch a Staff Sustainability Network which provides grants for sustainability projects.

More information on the university's sustainability initiatives can be found at [sustain.ucsd.edu](http://sustain.ucsd.edu). To view the complete list of Sierra magazine's "Coolest Schools," go [here](#).

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UC San Diego's Studio Ten 300 offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via [studio@ucsd.edu](mailto:studio@ucsd.edu). To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.