By Laura Margoni   Oct 15, 2015

Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

UC Launches Cool Campus Challenge in Push Toward Carbon Neutrality

Register now for the

Cool Campus Challenge at coolcampuschallenge.org.

The Cool Campus Challenge runs Oct. 6 through Dec. 10 and is open to all students, staff and faculty of the University of California. Show how cool you can be all by yourself, or form teams among your friends, colleagues and roommates.

Participants will receive email alerts when there is a new Cool Campus Challenge activity, and can track their personal points and campus rankings by logging into the Cool Campus Challenge website throughout the 10-week challenge.

Share photos and updates of your Cool Campus Challenge activities with #UCool.

UC Carbon and Climate Neutrality Summit October 26-27

As part of the push toward carbon neutrality, the University of California is also hosting the Summit on Pathways to Carbon and Climate Neutrality Oct. 26-27 at UC San Diego. The invitation-only event will examine how UC research is transforming the possibilities for carbon and climate mitigation and will focus on scalable solutions for achieving significant greenhouse gas reductions.

Learn more about the summit.

When the University of California pledged to become carbon neutral by 2025, nobody said it would be easy. At the outset, everyone agreed that the Carbon Neutrality Initiative would require all hands on deck from staff, faculty and students alike to make its ambitious goal a reality.

"We're on our way to becoming the very first university system to wipe out our carbon footprint for good," said UC President Janet Napolitano. "It's a daring goal, and one that will take both individual and collective action to make happen. Part of that is building awareness about easy steps each of us can take to reduce our carbon footprint."

Launched Oct. 6 and running through Dec. 10, the first Cool Campus Challenge aims to get everyone across the UC campuses on board with the carbon neutrality effort with a bit of friendly competition to get things moving.

During the 10-week contest, UC faculty, staff and students will be challenged to take steps to reduce their carbon footprints using an online tool to track their activity and earn points for their campus. The reward? Bragging rights for the winning campus and progress toward carbon neutrality for the university as a whole.

"Sustainability is part of our institutional DNA at UC San Diego, imparted to us by Roger Revelle, one of our founders and a pioneer of climate change research," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "I encourage every member of the campus community to build on that legacy by participating in the Cool Campus Challenge. Together, we will make great strides in reducing our carbon footprint."

Who's the Coolest?

Modeled on the Cool California Cities Challenge, which gives Californians the tools they need to take action to protect the climate and keep California cool, the Cool Campus Challenge focuses on actions that individuals can take to put their campus on track to reach carbon neutrality.

Each week, the Cool Campus Challenge will highlight an important sustainability theme, from food waste to lighting to transportation. To earn points for their campuses, participants will make pledges and take actions to directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions or increase awareness about climate

disruption, and record their actions on the Cool Campus Challenge website to earn points for their campus. Participants are encouraged to show off their efforts on social media (and egg on their competition) with the hashtag #UCool.

Cool in Action

In many cases, the activities in the challenge will be simple things that a lot of us already do: turning off lights when you leave a room, taking public transportation, composting food waste. Others may require extra thought or effort: replacing incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs or eliminating single-use items from your life.

Participants can also earn bonus points for completing actions within a time limit or for taking new and creative actions beyond those suggested in the challenge.

UC San Diego Extension staff member Alison Sanchirico was nominated as one of the University of California's Cool Campus Heroes. Read more here.

While the challenge will be more fun and perhaps even more productive in teams, it also can be a great showcase for the power of individuals to make a difference.

"If you are in a room right now with a computer, refrigerator, phone charger, heater, bicycle or light bulb, you have the power to help UC San Diego get closer to being carbon free," said Gary C. Matthews, vice chancellor for Resource Management and Planning. "Your actions will complement our existing efforts to achieve carbon neutrality, from building green to using renewable energy on campus to promoting alternative transportation. It will take individual as well as collective action for us to reach our goal."

At the end of the contest, the campus with the highest point count will be crowned the "Coolest UC Campus." There also will be rewards and recognition for the campuses that are leading throughout the competition. UC San Diego will also raffle off prizes, selecting a winner at random from among the top 10 percent of point earners each week. Raffle prizes will include:

- **Week 2:** UC San Diego Sustainability "schwag bag" that includes a reusable bag, water bottle, shower timer, recycled pens and a $25 UC San Diego Bookstore gift card.
- **Weeks 3-9:** Solar power cell phone charger
- **Week 10:** $75 UC San Diego Bookstore gift card

Once an individual has won a raffle prize, he or she will be ineligible to win another.

Find out more and sign up to compete on the Cool Campus Challenge website.

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