

UC San Diego Rated 'Sustainability Leader' in Green Report Card

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Rex Graham

Years of emphasis on sustainable operations have resulted in an outstanding green "report card" for UC San Diego. Citing such factors as the organic food served in its dining halls and strong student involvement in sustainability initiatives to 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 in the report card and an achievement shared with only 25 other campuses nationwide. The report card is based on nine operational categories: administration, climate change and energy, food and recycling, green building, student involvement, transportation, endowment transparency and investment priorities. In order to foster constructive dialogue about investment in clean energy and community development, the Sustainable Endowments Institute has made its in-depth research on 332 colleges and universities available on a website.

"Our high ranking in this national comprehensive analysis of sustainability efforts is a testament to the innovative and ceaseless efforts of our students, faculty and staff," said Russell Thackston, assistant vice chancellor of Auxiliary and Plant Services at UC San Diego. "Our campus is off to a great start, and we will continue to aggressively pursue our goal to be among the world's greenest campuses."

UC San Diego received five "A" grades on the report card for categories related to administration, climate change and energy, food and recycling, student involvement and transportation. The report card also recognized UC San Diego's student "Econauts" and a variety of competitions that encourage students to reduce energy use and waste.

The campus is installing sustainable and drought tolerant bio-swale landscaping. Cafeterias offer organic, locally grown foods and students bring their refillable bottles to "hydration stations" that eliminate the need for disposable water bottles. As an incentive to keep energy consumption as low as possible, each student in a new campus apartment building will receive an individual electricity bill.

UC San Diego lists its sustainability initiatives at <http://sustain.ucsd.edu> to highlight its coordinated campus-wide efforts to advance our understanding of the scientific, economic, and social issues involved in the sustainable stewardship of planet earth in the 21st century.

Sustainability is part of UC San Diego's institutional DNA. Modern climate change science began at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego with the Keeling Curve in 1958, which has become the scientific icon of global warming. Campus researchers continue to make major strides in climate change science, completing modeling studies and worldwide monitoring of oceans and the atmosphere.

The report card not only recognizes UC San Diego's growing campus fleet of hybrid and biodiesel vehicles and that emissions have fallen 20 percent since 2006, but also noted the university's target of zero waste and carbon neutrality, which the university plans to achieve by 2025.

"Given the state of California's funding cutbacks, we will be hard pressed to continue our rapid progress toward achieving our sustainability goals, but UC San Diego is exploring every possible source of support to get there," said Thackston. "Being one of the greenest universities in the nation also has helped us attract some of the most environmentally conscious students in California and the world to our campus. In important ways, we're educating a new generation of Econauts who will help California and the nation preserve today's resources and improve the environment in the future."

Media Contact: Rex Graham, 858-534-5952 or ragraham@ucsd.edu

