

UC San Diego Recognized for Sustainable Operations

52 colleges and universities earn "A" grades on Green Report Card

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Rex Graham

The "College Sustainability Report Card 2011" has awarded UC San Diego and 51 other colleges and universities in the United States and Canada "A" grades for their sustainable campus operations and endowment practices.

UC San Diego's A- grade by the independent Sustainable Endowments Institute, the same grade the university received last year, was based on sustainability performance in campus operations, dining services, endowment investment practices, and student activities. The complete survey responses are available online at greenreportcard.org.

The ranking involved 322 colleges and universities, representing all 50 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces. Each institution was evaluated in nine categories, ranging from climate change and energy to green building and investment priorities.

"Our high ranking in this national, independent evaluation of college and university sustainability efforts is a testament to the ceaseless efforts of our students, faculty and staff, even at a time when the university faces financial uncertainties," said Gary C. Matthews, vice chancellor of Resource Management and Planning at UC San Diego. "This award and other recent national recognitions for our sustainable operations also have significant impact on our students, who see their university leading by example."

Over 90 percent of participating schools agreed to make public detailed information about their inner green dynamics, resulting in more than 1,100 full survey responses with more than 10,000 pages of detailed data and descriptions published on the GreenReportCard.org website. This level of cooperation with the College Sustainability Report Card reflects the highest response rate, by far, of any college sustainability ranking or rating.

"The green groundswell on campus is evident in a wide variety of energy-saving initiatives, such as sourcing food from campus farms and reducing hot water use through trayless dining," said Mark Orłowski, executive director of the Sustainable Endowments Institute, publisher of the Report Card.

UC San Diego has been recognized by other organizations in 2010 for its sustainability efforts, including:

The American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment gave its 1st Annual Climate Leadership Award for Institutional Excellence in Climate Leadership to UC San Diego.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave a 2010 Energy Star CHP Award to UC San Diego in recognition of its high-efficiency, low-emission combined heat and power (CHP) plant that provides 85 percent of the campus' annual electricity needs.

Greenopia named UC San Diego one of the seven greenest campuses in the country based on its green building design, waste program, food selection, campus vehicle fleet, water conservation measures, climate performance, renewable energy usage, and the overall environmental transparency.

The American Institute of Architects, California Council gave a merit award for architecture to UC San Diego's Price Center East, in recognition of its architectural design, which successfully integrates concepts of community space and sustainability into the physical structure.

Sierra magazine named UC San Diego one the nation's top 20 "coolest" schools for its efforts to stop global warming and operate sustainably.

San Diego Gas & Electric named UC San Diego an "Energy Champion" during the 5th Annual SDG&E Energy Showcase for the university's outstanding energy efficiency efforts in the previous year.

The 2010 California Higher Education Sustainability Conference awarded three "best practices" awards to UC San Diego for its Sustainability Resource Center, which uses a direct current lighting system that integrates solar panels, LED lights, lighting controls, day-lighting and photoluminescent exit lighting; a campus-wide water-efficiency and conservation initiative; and its low-cost Toby's Spot program involving reusable plates, bowls, glasses and silverware that reduced wastes by 47 tons compared to a baseline period.

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