



SUSTAINABILITY NEWS BEAT

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New Associate Vice Chancellor Brings New Life into Campus Sustainability Program

By Joshua Kelley

Last month, UCSB Chancellor Henry Yang approved a plan detailing the short- and long-term goals necessary to keep UCSB at the forefront of sustainable campuses and not long before that appointed a new Associate Vice Chancellor, Ron Cortez who will ensure that the plan is carried out. The Campus Sustainability Plan (CSP) has several areas of focus, such as education, energy, food, and landscaping.

"All of these areas are important," said Ron Cortez, Associate Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services and the key figure in the CSP's implementation. "Energy is one of the primary issues to be tackled, and it will also be one of the more challenging goals, because it will require a lot of capital. Another issue is that many innovative energy technologies have yet to be tested on a large scale. So with new technologies there is a risk of being on the 'bleeding edge,' but at the same time we don't want to be lagging behind."

One of the goals outlined in the CSP is achieving "net zero waste," or producing as little unrecyclable waste as possible. While UCSB is working to bulk up its recycling and composting programs, it has a long way to go before hitting this target.

"UCSB currently uses the Tajiguas Landfill, which will only be available for another 13 to 14 years," said Cortez. "We are working to coordinate alternative waste solutions with MarBorg Industries [UCSB's trash/recycling hauler] and that will need to happen within the next decade."

In addition, Chancellor Yang is organizing a panel, the Campus Committee for Sustainability, to advise and monitor sustainability programs at UCSB. This task force will, among other things, address sustainability initiatives that clash with existing campus policies.

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"There are conflicts that exist and will come up in time," said Cortez, "the beauty of what Chancellor Yang is setting up is that policy will be able to evolve in order to deal with these conflicts."

Cortez believes that the fundamental and immediate challenge is organizing the multitude of sustainability groups on campus.

"Students are the most important factor for the plan's success," said Cortez. "We can't do much without student support, and that's not just for UCSB. When students who have skills in sustainability leave this school, they will carry that knowledge out into the world."

SUMMER SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITIES

HABITAT RESTORATION SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

Coal Oil Point Reserve

Several paid habitat restoration interns for the Summer Quarter 2008. Working with a restoration ecologist, the Reserve Steward, other interns, and volunteers assisting with the restoration of native wetland and coastal sage scrub habitats. To apply, send your resume and course schedule/available summer hours to:

Darlene Chirman: dchirman@starband.net - 692-2008, and
Tara Longwell: longwell@lifesci.ucsb.edu - 893-5092

UC/CSU/CCC STATEWIDE SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

July 31 - August 1, 2008

Come and exchange ideas and best practices with people engaged in or seeking to learn more about campus sustainability. The conference will cover the entire spectrum from teaching and academic research to all aspects of campus operations. To register: <http://sustainability.calpoly.edu/register>

For more events: <http://sustainability.ucsb.edu/events>

Green Campus Program to Increase Energy Efficiency with Residence Hall Competition

By Taylor Orr

The UCSB Green Campus Program Energy Competition engaged five of UCSB's six residence halls in raising awareness about practical ways students can save energy in their dorm.

The Green Campus Program distributed 384 compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) on the launch day of the competition, May 3rd, to increase dorm energy efficiency and raise awareness for the competition that took place over a two week period. Although dorm rooms do not use typical lights, additional features, such as desk lamps, could use CFLs.

Clay Carlson, Santa Rosa Hall Resident Assistant and the Green Campus Intern primarily responsible for the event, had these hopefully words to open the week:

"We designed the competition to increase awareness of efficient energy usage and to show how easy it is to save energy. I think that we have done a great job in pumping up the competition this year and that our extra work will show in the high participation levels in each of the residence halls. I also think that our tabling opportunity in front of the dining commons and the face to face interactions with residents will make the competition more personal for the residents, and will show how easily a community can come together to alter their actions," said Carlson.

After the numbers were tabulated, San Nicolas won the energy competition with a 23 percent improvement over their historical baseline.

The Green Campus Program is run under the auspices of the Alliance to Save Energy and is funded by Southern California Edison.

For more information on the Green Campus Program at UCSB, please visit: <http://sustainability.ucsb.edu/gcp>



The Diet of Worms

By Chris Darancette

They're icky, they're slimy and they're covered with small bugs racing over their entire surface. Indeed, to those particularly squeamish, a vermicompost bin is comparable to the seven layers of hell from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. However, recently, these worms have begun recruiting some near-fanatical followers, Casey Duncan of the Ellison Hall Sustainability Committee and Amy Liu of AS Worms. Together these two have created the workings of the first composting coalition on campus.



Vermicomposting, which differs from passive and hot composting, uses a three-layer (or more) bin that stores red wiggler worms and other insects that help digest the old food material, and divides the food waste into varying degrees of decomposition. The bottom layer is the worm tea or liquid by-product of composting (worms require a moist environment). This worm tea is not very appetizing to drink but it makes a great fertilizer for roses and gardens. The upper layers represent different levels of decomposed food on its way to becoming a rich soil amendment made from worm castings.

Amy Liu and Casey Duncan have taken the next step by combining vermicomposting volunteer days with field trips to larger, active hot composting systems maintained by the County of Santa Barbara. Their work in creating the composting coalition has also managed to unite many people with different permaculture and gardening interests by starting their own home composting systems.

The Composting Coalition, originally a group dedicated to educating students on composting, has

now expanded to include elementary education and community outreach. Recent projects have included building vermicomposting bins that can be made at home with just worms, newspaper and a used trash can, as well as expanding composting efforts into elementary schools.

Casey Duncan's organization, The Ellison Hall Sustainability Committee, has won recent fame for achieving an 88.76% diversion rate for rescuing recyclables, including food waste, from the trash.

For more information on the Composting Coalition and the Ellison Hall Sustainability Team visit: <http://sustainability.ucsb.edu/ellison-hall>, and to obtain worm casting for your garden, email cmduncan@umail.ucsb.edu.

INTERESTED IN INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES?

The Sustainability Internship Program is consistently offering new academic credit, volunteer and even paid internships. This is a great opportunity to build your resume and see if sustainability is the field you want to work in after college. Projects range from energy and water efficiency, to environmental literacy and green chemistry. Email: kmaynard@geog.ucsb.edu

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