



## News

## UCSB Named Greenest Public University in U.S.

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### Ranking based on data from Sierra Club, EPA, other groups

UCSB recently placed third on Online Schools Center's list of the "Top 50 Green Schools," coming in behind American University and Dickinson College and making it the top-ranked public university nationwide.

Online Schools Center, which is a web resource for students to research universities, developed a composite ranking using several criteria, including institutions ranked in the last two years by prestigious green star ratings by the Sierra Club, U.S. News & World Report, the Princeton Review and the Environmental Protection Agency. Gold or silver ratings from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System and current or pending green initiatives were also taken into consideration. The Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, as well as the numerous campus organizations and policies aimed at improving sustainability, helped secure the university's third place position.

According to the Bren School Assistant Dean of Development Andrew Krupa, the university links students, faculty and staff in implementing green initiatives, with sustainability programs on campus ranging from water reclamation and waste management to sustainable food systems and over 45 student organizations aimed at environmental sustainability.

"This collaboration creates stakeholders vested in these initiatives," Krupa said in an email. "UCSB also utilizes the tremendous research conducted by students and faculty to design initiatives that are solution-orientated thus creating best practices often adopted by other institutions and organizations."

Krupa said the Bren School has been a determining factor in the university's third-place placement and is representative of the school's leading role in the field of Environmental Science & Management.

"It was ranked #1 by Net Impact," Krupa said in an email. "It's faculty are leaders in their respective specializations and the staff is committed to the success of the school and its students. All this creates an unique opportunity for the Bren School to play a lead role in campus sustainability. In fact, the UCSB Water Action Plan was born out of a Bren School Master's Project."

According to the Bren School Dean Steve Gaines, the Bren School and the "entrepreneurial talents" of students and faculty, along with the interdisciplinary campus culture, has contributed to making the university a global leader in sustainability "for the coming decades."

"UCSB has drawn on the incredible talent of Bren students to design both water and climate action plans for the campus that I believe will be models for universities across the nation," Gaines said in an email.

According to Director of Campus Sustainability Mo Lovegreen, the university's dedication to improving sustainability has been demonstrated through various organizations on campus geared toward green practices.

"We were also the first UC to establish a Green Initiative Fund (known as TGIF) as well as a Renewable Energy Initiative Fund," Lovegreen said in an email. "Our students voted to tax themselves to help the campus become greener...We also initiated the California Higher Education Sustainability Conference (CHESC). This brings together faculty, staff, and students from all higher education institutions to talk

about best practices.”

As for the university becoming a top green public school, Kupra said UCSB contributes the to the UC system’s role as a leader in sustainable practices around the world.

“UCSB can not only compete but surpass the traditional private institutions that previously dominated such rankings,” Kupra said in an email. “It will raise the visibility of UCSB both nationally and internationally, which will lead to the recruitment and retention of top students and faculty, and aid in the funding and development of cutting-edge academics.”

According to Lovegreen, the university’s ability to achieve a top ranking as a public school with less funding than a private institution demonstrates the effectiveness of participation that has taken place in developing UCSB into a green university.

“On the practical side, public institutions are very frugal – so the fact that we can achieve the highest ranking helps other institutions see that it really doesn’t take funding to be sustainable, it takes participation,” Lovegreen said in an email.

According to Gaines, the university’s dedication to environmental sustainability can be seen through accolades such as the LEED Platinum certification green building, water conservation through sustainable irrigation and over 2,000 solar panels.

“I believe what distinguishes our green initiatives is that they emerge from the basic principles of the campus,” Gaines said in an email. “As the setting for the birth of the modern environmental movement, UCSB has grown to be one of the world’s leading academic institutions with an obsession for finding environmental solutions at its core.”

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