

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB to Host First-Ever South Coast Sustainability Summit

Sustainability decision makers, officials, and representatives from organizations throughout the Santa Barbara area will gather for the inaugural South Coast Sustainability Summit at UC Santa Barbara on Thursday, Oct. 13.

The summit, to be held at UCSB's Loma Pelona Conference Center, will bring together officials and staff members from area municipalities and community organizations to discuss common issues in energy, transportation, waste, and water management. The event runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"We want to get people from UCSB, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Goleta, and the county to talk to each other, to learn from each other, and, hopefully in the future, to pair our resources and become partners," said Jasmine Syed, sustainability coordinator at UCSB and the conference organizer. "It's all about sharing and building partnerships."

After a welcome address at 9 a.m. by Ron Cortez, associate vice chancellor of administrative services at UCSB and co-chair of the Chancellor's Sustainability Committee, the summit will kick off with an opening plenary session. Featured speakers will be Dave Davis, executive director of the Santa Barbara Community Environmental Council (CEC), a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness about the most pressing environmental issues that affect the Santa Barbara region; and Mark Heintz, director of corporate responsibility and sustainability at Deckers Corporation

of Goleta.

The summit will feature two separate panel discussion sessions. From 10 to 11:15 a.m., the session topics will include innovative projects in energy efficiency, expanding reclaimed water, and an examination of what zero waste looks like on the South Coast. From 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., the session will include topics such as best practices in carpool rideshare programs, water quality improvements, and financing renewable energy.

Panels will include staff members from the City of Goleta, Santa Barbara County, the City of Santa Barbara, Goleta Water District, and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments. UCSB's representatives will include speakers from the Institute for Energy Efficiency, Associated Students, Housing & Residential Services, Facilities, and the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration.

At 1 p.m., the closing plenary speech will be delivered by representatives from the South Coast Energy Efficiency Partnership (SCEEP).

The event will conclude with a career panel discussion for students interested in green careers in private industry, from 2 to 3 p.m.

"This is so exciting to see UCSB and cities working together to share ideas, best practices, and proven approaches for improving the environment," Cortez said. "Because we share the same water, air, and land, we hope the South Coast Sustainability Summit will provide a strong foundation for us to collaboratively address complex environmental issues.

"During these tough fiscal times, these types of collaborative efforts become even more important in order to ensure we can continue to provide cost-effective 'green' solutions for the South Coast," he added.

Bruce Tiffney, dean of UCSB's College of Creative Studies and co-chair of the Chancellor's Sustainability Committee, said: "Sustainability is not achieved in a vacuum, and I am delighted with this venue to share practical and theoretical experience to better manage our common natural and human resources of our community and campus. UC Santa Barbara brings a tradition of environmental concern to the table, together with the expertise of many faculty members, ranging from photovoltaic to water resources, social justice and sustainable agriculture.

"Perhaps most importantly," Tiffney added, "this summit provides the opportunity to educate our students and engage them as future citizens of our community, state, and planet in taking practical actions to move 'sustainability' from a concept to a way of life."

The event is co-sponsored by SCEEP and MarBorg Industries. Planners are hoping that the summit will become an annual event, though UCSB might not be the host every year. The summit is not open to the public.

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