

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

November 15, 2012

George Foulsham

## **EPA Partners With UC Santa Barbara in Pledge to Reduce Food Waste**

UC Santa Barbara is one of 59 colleges and universities nationwide participating in the EPA's Food Recovery Challenge as part of America Recycles Day 2012, which takes place today.

The Food Recovery Challenge is a voluntary program that aims to limit the 34 million tons of food wasted nationwide annually by reducing unnecessary consumption and increasing donations to charity and composting. By participating, UCSB and the other schools pledge to reduce food waste by 5 percent in one year.

"Food waste is a particular problem for California, the world's fifth largest food supplier, because of the enormous quantities of water and energy required for production," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's regional administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "EPA is proud to partner with these universities as they commit to support the environment and their community by reducing food waste."

In addition to higher education institutions, participants include grocers and entertainment venues, such as the Los Angeles Dodgers stadium.

Nationally, food is the single largest material sent to landfills, accounting for 25 percent of all waste sent to landfills. When excess food, leftover food, and food scraps are disposed of in a landfill, they decompose and become a significant source of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. In turn, limiting wasted food will reduce

methane emissions.

"Since 2010, Residential Dining Services' four dining commons have been partnering with Marborg Waste Management to send all food scraps -- pre- and post-consumer -- to a composting facility, rather than disposing of them in a landfill," said Bonnie Crouse, assistant director of Residential Dining Services at UCSB. "This, along with other waste-reduction projects, such as aggressive recycling and trayless dining, have raised Dining's waste diversion rate from 20 percent to a whopping 90 percent rate today. Even with those impressive gains, Dining Services is looking forward to partnering with the EPA for a more in-depth analysis of ways to make further reductions in food waste."

The Food Recovery Challenge is part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program, which seeks to reduce the environmental impact of food and other widely used everyday items through their entire life cycle, including how they are extracted, manufactured, distributed, used, reused, recycled, and disposed.

Related Links

[Residential Dining Services](#)

[Food Recovery Challenge](#)

---

## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.