UC SANTA BARBARA

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‘Remarkable’ Water

Long lauded for its commitment to the environment and all things sustainability, UC Santa Barbara has earned another such accolade: national recognition for its innovative and "remarkable" advances in water conservation.

In a recent roundup of college and university campuses setting the pace for sustainability — nationwide, only four institutions were featured — Earth Day Network singled out UCSB for "leading the way in water conservation." Propelling the campus to the top of the class, according to the globally active nonprofit, is UCSB's novel Water Action Plan, "one of the most comprehensive water management plans ever created by a university."

"So far, the results have been remarkable," Earth Day Network said of the plan conceived, developed and driven by graduate students from UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science & Management. "The university is setting the trend for water conservation on campus. Hopefully, other universities will follow their lead."

By 2011, UCSB had already bested a University of California systemwide mandate to reduce potable water use 20 percent by 2020. Thanks to the 2013-approved Water Action Plan, the campus is poised to curb water waste an additional 20 percent by 2028.

"As is so often the case at UCSB, the actions of students, faculty and staff have positioned our campus to realizing its 2020 reduction in growth-adjusted use of potable water nearly a decade early," said Bruce Tiffney, dean of the College of

Creative Studies and co-chair of the Chancellor's Sustainability Committee. "Perhaps more significantly, in developing a detailed plan that will allow us to reach even greater efficiency in the future, the UCSB Water Action Team has crafted a blueprint that will benefit UC as a whole."

In a nice twist, two members of that team — whose plan took a top award at the 2013 California Higher Education Sustainability Conference — are now among UCSB's staffers devoted to sustainability.

Matthew O'Carroll, a founding force behind the team — and one of the originators of the very idea for a campus water initiative — today is UCSB's refuse, recycling and water efficiency manager. His fellow Bren grad and former water plan collaborator, Jewel Snavely, is the campus sustainability coordinator.

O'Carroll credited UCSB for the success of the bar-setting endeavor, which has been characterized as a roadmap for other institutions to follow.

"UCSB's adoption of the Water Action Plan not only shows the campus's commitment to water conservation efforts, but also trust in our students to produce a planning document," he said. "The fact that the students also collaborated with staff and faculty to produce this document demonstrates the wide range of stakeholder engagement in the plan, a key ingredient to success."

Snavely gave kudos to California itself — specifically to its "tremendous efforts" to cut water usage — for enabling UCSB to hit its original reduction goal nine years early. "We, as master's students, really wanted to push the campus even further in terms of conservation," she added, "and that's why we recommended that UCSB cut water another 20 percent by 2028."

In addition to UCSB, Earth Day Network highlighted American University for its waste management strategy, University of Minnesota-Morris for its renewable energy portfolio and Evergreen State College in Washington for managing its land responsibly and sustainably.

Growing out of the first Earth Day, Earth Day Network works with over 22,000 partners in 192 countries to broaden, diversify and mobilize the environmental movement. One of its largest domestic efforts is the Green Schools Campaign, a partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council and The Clinton Foundation to green all of America's K-12 schools within a generation, believing that "green

schools save money, conserve energy and water, and foster better-performing, healthier students."

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.