UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

August 28, 2019
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Repeat Performance

Forget the cameos; among the nation's most sustainable universities, UC Santa Barbara is now a recurring featured player.

Recognized for its efforts to reduce waste, to follow and promote green building standards, and to invest sustainably, UC Santa Barbara has once again been named a top performer in three categories of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) 2019 Sustainable Campus Index.

The annual index ranks the nation's most sustainable colleges and universities, as measured by AASHE's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) . Highlighting innovative and high-impact sustainability initiatives from STARS-rated institutions — UC Santa Barbara holds a STARS Gold rating — the 2019 report recognizes top-performing colleges and universities in sustainability efforts related to academics, engagement, operations and administration.

"Protecting our limited and precious natural resources has long been a priority for our UC Santa Barbara — sustainability is in our campus DNA," said Mo Lovegreen, the university's sustainability director. "We are proud to be recognized by AASHE for our continued efforts. Our success springs from the hard work of our students."

As it was in 2018, UC Santa Barbara this year was honored for its impressive strides in the areas of sustainable investing, green building and waste reduction. The campus has previously been recognized in the categories of water and wellbeing and work.

Ranked by the index as No. 9 in the waste category, UCSB scored 75.8%, versus the average score of 48% percent for similar sized institutions. It's largely credit to the campus's all-hands-on-deck approach to waste reduction, and the active engagement of students, according to Jessica Schmitt, recycling and compost coordinator with UC Santa Barbara's Associated Students organization.

"We are thrilled to be named in the top ten colleges in waste reduction for the 2019 Campus Sustainability Index," Schmitt said. "Over the past year, we have completed various projects to work toward our goals of waste minimization. Most notably, a collaboration between Associated Students Recycling, the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management and Housing, Dining & Auxiliary Enterprises resulted in the first organics collection program in an on-campus apartment complex, San Clemente Villages."

The majority of residents participated in the program, which also included educational workshops and programming to inform residents about the importance of food waste reduction and composting, noted Schmitt.

The result? Nearly 10,000 pounds of waste was reduced in the first year. And, in a subsequent survey of participating residents, 87% stated that they would continue composting after moving out of their San Clemente apartment.

"Clearly this demonstrates that this program will have a long-lasting impact," Schmitt said. "UCSB students collected the food waste, planned the outreach programs and tracked the weekly data. They are the reason this program was so successful and we are so proud that our students are leading the way to a more sustainable future. We look forward to expanding this program for years to come."

Elsewhere in the Sustainable Campus Index, UC Santa Barbara ranked fifth in the buildings category, receiving 59.8% of available points compared to the average for campuses of similar size (35.5%). Long committed to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the most widely used green building rating system in the world, UCSB has more than 278,000 square feet currently certified as either LEED Platinum or Gold in existing buildings alone.

In the area of investing and finance, UC Santa Barbara ranked No. 9, with 69% of points, compared to an average of just 18% for institutions of comparable size. The UC, which adopted a sustainable investing framework in 2014, has an active committee on investor responsibility that makes recommendations to fund decision-

makers on socially and environmentally responsible investment opportunities across asset classes.

“We are happy to highlight UC Santa Barbara in this year’s Sustainable Campus Index,” said AASHE’s Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser on the campus’s Sustainable Campus Index rankings for 2018. “We hope that the stories contained in this year’s report will provide inspiration and ideas for other institutions to promote a more equitable and ecologically healthy future.”

A transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada, AASHE’s STARS is the leading tool for measuring higher education sustainability performance. With nearly 800 participating institutions, it is the most thoroughly vetted and extensively tested system of its kind.

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.