UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

April 17, 2023

Harrison Tasoff

# A new, fully electric facility opens just in time for spring quarter, increasing classroom capacity by 35%

UC Santa Barbara has a gleaming new building to show off to the community, and it promises to receive a lot of visitors. The newly completed Interactive Learning Pavilion (ILP) opened just in time for spring classes, with thousands of students and faculty already making themselves at home. It is the campus's first new classroom building in more than 50 years.

The building provides roughly 2,000 seats of classroom space, increasing the university's capacity by 35%. These facilities will reduce student waitlists, increase flexibility and improve access to classes students need to graduate in four years. "The Interactive Learning Pavilion has really changed how we are able to approach scheduling and management," said Registrar Anthony Schmid.

The ILP was designed with flexibility in mind and is fully equipped to support traditional lectures, hybrid teaching, group work and informal study. Five lecture halls occupy the first two floors, with capacities ranging from 180 to 350 seats. The upper floors feature 20 classrooms — which can each seat up to 30 students — along with three spaces for project-based learning and two group study rooms.

“The ILP’s classrooms support the kind of interactive, engaged teaching and learning that we know benefits UCSB’s students and instructors,” said Linda Adler-Kassner, associate vice chancellor of teaching and learning. “We’ve been flooded with messages from students and instructors praising the design and space.”

“I was so excited to see a class in the ILP on my schedule,” said Carley Palmer, a second-year undergraduate taking Econ 100B in the new building. “The building itself is beautiful and such a nice addition to our campus.”

But it’s the amenities that really won Palmer over. Features like large desks for note-taking, huge screens for visibility and pivoting seats with extra space between rows to facilitate conversation and collaboration. “Lectures in the new building are so much more comfortable, and the seating is much more functional,” she said.

Comments from faculty members teaching in the ILP mirror their students’ excitement. “It’s really ‘plug-and-play,’ which is exactly what an absent-minded professor needs,” said Assistant Professor Holly Moeller, whose Introduction to Ecology course meets in one of the second floor lecture halls.

“I can have my slides, mic and other setup running in just a few minutes before class,” echoed Assistant Professor Ranjit Deshmukh, who teaches Renewable Energy Systems downstairs in one of the ILP’s large lecture halls. “And in spite of being a large classroom of 250 seats, I can hear the questions and comments from students in the back.”

“I feel like Cinderella whose fairy godmother dressed her up for the ball,” Moeller posted on Twitter.

Located just south of the library, the LEED Gold certified facility is organized into two buildings with a large central breezeway. It is the first fully electric facility on campus, and its roof was designed with solar arrays in mind. The ILP’s unmistakably Californian architecture features prominent staircases, outdoor corridors and floor-to-ceiling windows to let in that South Coast sunshine.

The upper levels offer a spectacular view of campus, clear out to the ocean and the Channel Islands. Students can enjoy the scenery from several outdoor lounges and study spaces. The facility includes parking for roughly 1,700 bicycles and racks

where students can lock up their skateboards and scooters. It also features gender-neutral restrooms and a lactation room.

The ILP opened exactly on schedule after breaking ground in spring 2021. The project was supported by appropriations from the 2019–20 State Budget Act earmarked specifically for construction of the classroom building.

Media Contact

**Harrison Tasoff**

Science Writer

(805) 893-7220

harrisontasoff@ucsb.edu

---

## 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.