

THE *Current*

August 27, 2018

Shelly Leachman

Sustainability Strides

UC Santa Barbara has been named a top performer in three categories of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) 2018 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 — UCSB holds a STARS Gold rating — the 2018 report recognizes top-performing colleges and universities in 17 sustainability impact areas related to academics, engagement, operations and administration.

UC Santa Barbara was cited for its impressive strides in green building, waste reduction and sustainable investing. The campus in 2017 was honored in the categories of water and wellbeing and work.

"UC Santa Barbara has a longstanding commitment to protecting our limited natural resources and to continuing to work to be the most sustainable campus that we can be," said Katie Maynard, UCSB sustainability coordinator based in the geography department and executive director of the California Higher Education Sustainability Conference.

"We are constantly inspired by local environmental non-profit organizations, government agencies, and business leaders in our region and challenged to continue to seek new opportunities to do even better than we have in the past with each new

year,” Maynard continued. “We are proud to be part of both a local and international movement to ensure that colleges and universities are models for sustainable communities.”

Ranked third in the Sustainable Campus Index Buildings category, UCSB received 59.8 percent of available points compared to the average for campuses of similar size (36.6 percent).

In both existing buildings and new construction, UCSB is committed to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the most widely used green building rating system in the world. In existing buildings alone, the campus has more than 278,000 square feet currently certified as either LEED Platinum or Gold. A LEED Lab course based in UCSB’s environmental studies department was honored at the 14th annual Higher Education Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Best Practice Awards.

Committed also to sustainable building management, UCSB has an [indoor air quality policy](#) and a [green cleaning policy](#) for all buildings, and every energy source at all major campus buildings is metered on a 15-minute basis. Further, the campus has adopted UC’s water management and benchmarking standards, with a goal to reduce growth-adjusted potable water consumption by 36 percent by 2025.

Ranked by the index as No. 8 in the Waste category, UCSB scored 75.8 percent, versus the average score of 47.9 percent for similar sized campuses. The campus has reduced by 52 percent its total waste generated per weighted campus user, and has an overall diversion rate (materials diverted from landfill by recycling, composting, donating or re-selling) of 67.8 percent. Among its key initiatives for waste reduction are the Surplus Inventory Program and Zero-Waste Move Out.

In the area of sustainable investing, UCSB ranked fifth, earning 69 percent, compared to an average of just 16.9 percent for institutions of comparable size. Every University of California campus is scored the same in this category, as the UC has a formally established and active committee on investor responsibility that makes recommendations to fund decision-makers on socially and environmentally responsible investment opportunities across asset classes. The UC developed and adopted a framework on sustainable investing in 2014, aligning the university’s investments arm with the goals of the broader institution.

“We are pleased to recognize UC Santa Barbara for its sustainability leadership,” said AASHE’s Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser on the campus’s Sustainable Campus Index rankings for 2018. “UC Santa Barbara is helping forge a path to a more sustainable 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.