UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

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Play it Cool

Turn off your overhead light or shut down your monitor when you're away. Ditch your mini-fridge. Do your laundry in cold water. Take the stairs.

For most of us, these are seriously simple tasks. And it's just that easy to take positive action on climate change. The University of California hopes its staff, students and faculty members will try any or all of those things or others during its second Cool Campus Challenge.

The systemwide contest, running throughout the month of April, aims to raise awareness of climate issues and reduce carbon emissions.

"We are hoping to really get our campus community engaged in all of our sustainability goals through the challenge," said Jewel Persad, UC Santa Barbara's sustainability manager. "We also aim to raise climate change awareness and to make conservation behaviors standard practice a UC Santa Barbara. While the first Cool Campus Challenge in 2015 focused more strictly on actions that directly reduce carbon emission, this challenge incorporates actions that address water conservation, waste and food, and relate that to carbon emissions. It is a more holistic challenge that will hopefully engage users in broad sustainability on our campus."

Part of UC's Carbon Neutrality Initiative, the challenge was designed to educate and motivate campuses to lower their carbon footprints and help the UC system reach carbon neutrality by 2025. Participating students, faculty and staff earn points by

taking actions that lower carbon emissions at work, at school, at home and when traveling, with bonus points for new and creative actions that aren't on the action list.

The campus that earns the most points will be named the "Coolest UC Campus." There are also prizes for the campus with the greatest percentage of its population participating, and for the health system that earns the most points.

At UC Santa Barbara, in collaboration with Housing, Dining & Auxiliary Enterprises, there also is a concurrent side competition among students living in residence halls and university-owned apartment complexes. The buildings with the most points and with the highest percentage reduction in energy use, respectively, will win, and participants living in those residences will be entered to win prizes. (Students in campus housing can sign up and join their hall or apartment team at CoolCampusChallenge.org.)

"As part of the Cool Campus Challenge, eleven residence Halls and apartment complexes will compete against each other to see which building can save the most energy in April," explained Mark Rousseau, assistant director of energy and environmental services for UCSB Housing, Dining & Auxiliary Services. "The top two buildings are eligible to win prizes for students who have signed up for the CCC and take actions to save energy. Energy savings will be posted at housing DigiKnow screens in the halls, apartments and dining commons. Housing has had energy competitions for over 20 years, saving thousands of dollars and reducing pollution."

The Cool Campus Challenge is a collaboration between the University of California and UC Berkeley's Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory, and the Center for Sustainable Energy.

"I think UC Santa Barbara can really win this," Persad said. "We are one of the smaller campuses but we have such an active and engaged community motivated to improve environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability. Gauchos are more than ready to rise to the 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.