

THE Current

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UC Santa Barbara Awarded Double LEED Gold Certification for San Clemente Villages

The San Clemente Villages Apartments complex at UC Santa Barbara has been awarded its second Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold-level certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), making the 385,000-square-foot project the largest university housing facility in the nation to be double-certified at the gold level.

A globally recognized green building rating system, LEED provides third-party verification that a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving energy savings, water efficiency, emissions reduction, indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources.

At the time of its opening in 2009, San Clemente Villages was certified with LEED Gold for New Construction (NC). With the new distinction -- LEED Gold for Existing Building Operations & Maintenance (EB) -- San Clemente becomes the first residential project anywhere to achieve LEED Gold in both categories, according to UCSB's LEED program manager Jordan Sager. He described the new certification as "welcome confirmation that the project's original design goals of optimizing energy and water efficiency are being realized."

"San Clemente's LEED-EB certification emphasizes the high-performance aspects of the building itself while acknowledging the environmentally preferable practices which have become a part of routine operations at the university," Sager added. "Bringing sustainability through each building's lifecycle -- from design and construction to operations and maintenance -- has been an area of increasing focus for UCSB. Great emphasis is being placed on upgrading existing facilities as a means to lower the campus's utility costs and environmental impact."

San Clemente pushed beyond the baseline performance criteria for LEED certification by exceeding expectations for participation in renewable energy. The complex also earned innovation credits for its resident education practices and its partnership with neighboring projects, such as a collaboration with Santa Barbara County to design and create a rain-garden bioswale to manage storm water drainage from the entire San Clemente site, as well as a large part of the adjacent El Colegio Road Project. The same bioswale also receives significant storm water runoff from UCSB soccer fields and is a key part of the sustainable practices educational tour created at San Clemente.

UCSB is one of three universities in the U.S. participating in the pilot phase of the LEED Portfolio Program, aiming to certify 25 existing buildings over a period of approximately five years. To date, the campus has achieved LEED certification for 11 existing buildings, Sager said.

UCSB has had nine buildings certified in the New Construction category. The campus also had 22 homes certified during Phase I of the North Campus Faculty Housing Project -- the first LEED for Homes project for the entire UC system.

In 2002, UCSB adopted a campus policy stating that all new buildings commissioned after July 1, 2004, must meet a minimum of LEED Silver. In 2010, the Chancellor's Sustainability Committee established a new policy that all buildings commissioned after July 1, 2010, must meet a minimum of LEED Gold.

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