

# THE *Current*

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## Cool School in All Shades of Green

Sierra magazine, the official publication of the Sierra Club, has ranked UC Santa Barbara number 10 on its seventh annual list of “Coolest Schools.” The list recognizes 162 universities and colleges that are helping to solve climate problems, and are making significant efforts to operate sustainably.

The campus was recognized for what the magazine described as “formidable numbers.” Forty-four of the campus’s buildings are LEED certified — the highest number within the University of California system. In addition, 47 percent of academic departments offer at least one course highlighting sustainability — that’s a total of 321 classes, and 217 faculty members are conducting eco-research.

With the help of 10 on-campus photovoltaic systems, UCB has decreased its electricity consumption by a third since the late 1990’s. Also, water use is down by a quarter, and food waste has dropped to nearly 35 percent. Half of all fresh produce served in residence halls is grown on local farms, and over 25 percent is organic and/or sustainably grown. Other sustainable foodstuffs include certified organic milk; fair-trade organic coffee; local grass fed beef; 100 percent sustainable seafood following the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guidelines; cage-free, certified human eggs; local olive oil and honey; and certified organic salad dressings and teas.

In addition, between recycling and the composting of pre- and post-consumer food waste, the campus is able to divert 75 percent of total waste from local landfills. The goal is to reach 100 percent by 2020. Finally, as noted by the “Coolest Schools”

rankings, 94 percent of students use alternative means of transit to get to class, as evidenced by the more than 10,000 bicycle parking spaces and 10 miles of bike paths.

“UCSB has long sought to reduce the impact of campus activities upon the planet through the application of existing technology and modifications of behavior, even as our faculty members and students seek to develop new solutions,” said Bruce Tiffney, dean of the College of Creative Studies and co-chair of the Chancellor’s Sustainability Commission.

“While we have much yet to accomplish, our momentum and commitment will lead to greater achievements in sustainability, a more aware student and alumni body, and, I trust, continued ‘Coolest Schools’ awards.”

To determine the rankings, Sierra examined academic institutions across the country, seeking out campuses that are creating tangible changes in all categories of greenness. “For the past seven years, Sierra magazine has ranked colleges and universities on their commitment to fighting climate disruption and making sure the future their students will inhabit has safer water, clean air, and beautiful landscapes,” said Bob Sipchen, Sierra’s editor-in-chief. “By showing such strong leadership on so many fronts, the best of these schools are pointing the way for other institutions.”

The Sierra Club, America’s largest grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.1 million members and supporters nationwide. The Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of communities, protect wildlife, and preserve remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation.

More information about the “Coolest Schools” rankings is available at [www.sierraclub.org/coolschools](http://www.sierraclub.org/coolschools).

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## **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.