

UCSC ranks sixth-best college for green power

EPA lauds buying renewable energy to supplement traditional sources

UCSC-8
JUNE 2006
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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported Monday that UC Santa Cruz is the sixth-largest buyer of renewable energy among college campuses nationwide, an announcement that comes on the heels of the campus' inaugural self-evaluation on sustainability.

The campus is the only California college that made the list of 18 using more than 10 million kilowatt hours of renewable energy per year.

Sixteen percent of the energy PG&E provides to UCSC is from renewable sources, but last academic year the campus also bought 57 million kilowatt hours of "green" energy from

On the Net

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the utility giant to be used elsewhere on the power grid. The \$89,000 investment, paid through student fees, makes up the remaining 84 percent of power UCSC receives from traditional sources.

"It's pretty exciting," Ilse Kolbus, director of the UCSC Physical Plant, said of the EPA recognition. "The university as a whole has set some pretty aggressive targets for sustainability. A lot of the push has come from students, who have taken it upon themselves to tax themselves."

In May 2006, students passed a \$3 quarterly tuition increase to

support buying renewable energy. UCSC contracts with Sterling Planet to purchase renewable energy certificates that pay for power generated by wind, solar, geothermal, hydropower, biomass and landfill gas.

Although the "green" energy UCSC buys is used elsewhere, the net effect is that the campus is buying 100 percent renewable energy and reducing its carbon footprint. Officials say the campus is working to provide more on-site renewable energy sources, including installing more solar panels and possibly wind turbines near the Long Marine Laboratory on the coast.

"Direct power is what we would love to see," said UCSC's sustainability coordinator, Aurora Winslade, who along with fellow graduate Tommaso

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Boggia rallied students to support the renewable energy fee in 2006. She said buying green power for use elsewhere "is really an important step along way because it supports the development of the market for renewable energy."

On Earth Day last month, the two-year-old Campus Sustainability Subcommittee issued its first report, which spelled out UCSC's greening efforts in lighting, building, transportation recycling, purchasing, food, curriculum and habitat protection."

The University of Pennsylvania and New York University topped the EPA's list of 2007-08 College & University Green Power Champions.

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