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UC Santa Cruz Sustainability Director Aurora Winslade and student Gabi Kirk spend part of Wednesday afternoon in the Family Housing Garden at UCSC. The school was named to Sierra Club's annual list of 'the nations most planet-minded universities.'

# PLANETMINDED

Sierra Magazine ranks UCSC in Top 10 for sustainability

By TOVIN LAPAN

tlapan@santacruzsentinel.com

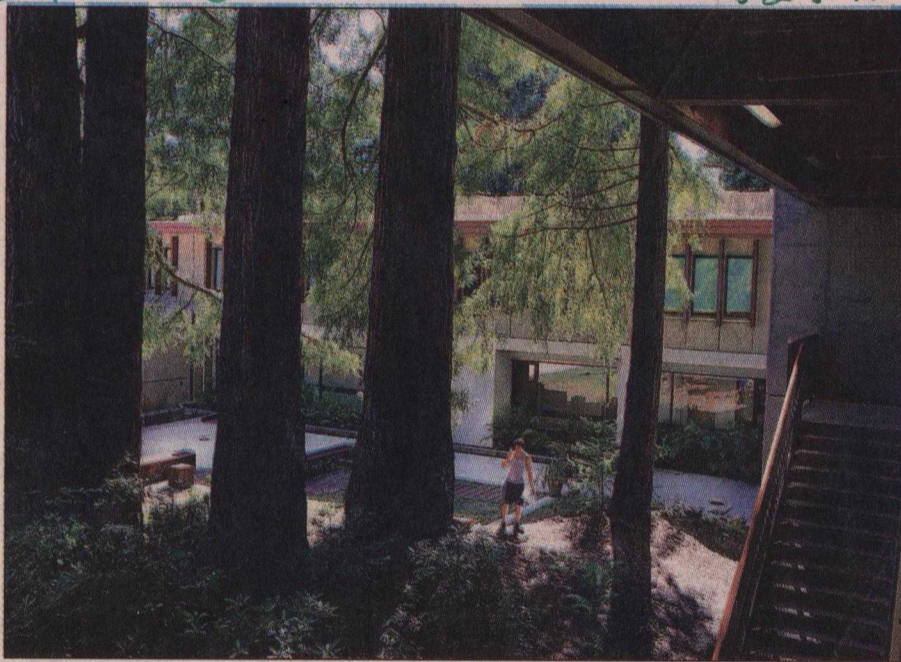
SANTA CRUZ — When the University of Hawaii West Oahu was looking for another university to offer guidance in sustainable practices for its brand new campus, it turned to UC Santa Cruz.

When Taiwan hosted a workshop for its Green University Program a delegation from UCSC was one of the first to be invited.

The fact that UCSC was chosen for these collaborations is a testament to UCSC's evolution into one of the leaders in campus sustainability efforts. That status was only reinforced earlier this month when the Sierra Club ranked UCSC seventh on its annual list of "the nations most planet-minded universities" in the latest edition of Sierra Magazine.

"Credit goes to the hundreds of students, hundreds of staff and dozens of faculty that have put their time and energy into

SEE UCSC ON B3



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The Cowell Student Health Center earned UC Santa Cruz its first 'gold' certification from LEED, a nonprofit trade organization that promotes sustainability in the design, construction and daily operation of buildings. That recognition was the end result of a four-year, \$17 million project to expand and seismically retrofit the 42-year-old health center, while making the building more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

## UCSC

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the mission," said UCSC's Sustainability Director Aurora Winslade, 31, who as a student at UCSC in the early 2000s helped organize some of the first sustainability programs.

UCSC received stellar scores in the categories for academics, purchasing, administration and waste management.

"The main thing about Santa Cruz that caught our attention is its commitment to waste diversion," said "Sierra Magazine" Lifestyle Editor Avital Binshtock. "It's diversion rate

is very, very high compared to other schools."

Recently the school has been honored for green building projects and an energy-saving lighting retrofit at its Science and Engineering library.

UC has a systemwide sustainability plan approved in 2003 that UCSC students had a large part in championing. UC San Diego, UC Irvine and UC Davis were ranked third, sixth and eighth respectively. One of the plans goals is to divert all campus waste from landfills by 2020.

The sustainability initiatives at UCSC reduce waste and save water and energy, but they also may help the school attract students.

A Princeton Review survey of 2011 college applicants found that 69 percent said a college's commitment to the environment would influence their decision. UCSC also appeared on the Princeton Review's list of the most environmentally friendly universities.

"These days if a university doesn't care about being green, it may lose a chunk of its potential applicants," Binshtock said.

The Sierra Magazine survey is not perfect. Schools are trusted to accurately self report information, and out of 940 surveys sent out across the country only 118 universities responded, a figure Binshtock said the magazine is working to improve.

Some survey questions do not apply to some schools as well as others.

Yet, Winslade said the survey process alone is valuable in that it promotes self-evaluation and the collection of information and data on various projects. There is still plenty of room for improvement — she'd like the school to compost on site instead of shipping refuse to Marina for example — but UCSC has gotten a head start on the sustainability movement.

"I want to move to a new place after graduation," said Gabi Kirk, 20, a senior and co-chair of UCSC's Student Environmental Center. "I want to take what I've learned here and apply it elsewhere."