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Campus Earns Continued Praise, Recognition for Sustainability

UC Merced's Long Range Development Plan earns prestigious ranking for green design and construction; Logistical Support/Safety Facility achieves LEED Gold certification

MERCED, Calif. — The University of California, Merced, recently earned what might be the most prestigious of a growing list of awards for its Long Range Development Plan, while the campus had its seventh building certified “Gold” by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

UC Merced’s commitment to sustainability can be seen throughout the campus, which now has eight buildings LEED certified silver or better, and in its ambitious goal to achieve zero net energy use, contribute zero waste to landfills and produce zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 — known as the Triple Zero Commitment.

“At UC Merced, we’re attempting to set new standards for energy efficiency and environmental stewardship in our building design and construction,” said Thomas Lollini, FAIA, campus architect and associate vice chancellor for Physical Planning, Design and Construction. “These latest achievements show that we are on our way toward not just meeting those standards, but exceeding them.”

Quick Facts

- UC Merced's 2009 Long Range Development Plan was included in the Top Ten Green Projects list compiled by the American Institute of Architects' Committee on the Environment.
- The Logistical Support/Safety Facility was UC Merced's seventh campus building to earn LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.
- UC Merced's commitment to sustainability is only growing stronger, with LEED Platinum the goal for four new building projects.

Development Plan Among ‘Top Ten Green Projects’

UC Merced’s grand plan for campus design and construction — the 2009 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) — [continues to be lauded](#) by industry organizations. The latest recognition is the LRDP’s inclusion in the [Top Ten Green Projects](#) list compiled each year by the American Institute of Architects’ Committee on the Environment. The award, given to the leading examples of sustainable architecture and green design solutions, will be formally announced at a convention in May in Washington, D.C.

The plan, which has been honored several times for its commitment to sustainability, [earned high praise from the AIA judges](#) for its ambitious goals, the many successes already achieved toward those goals, and UC Merced staff’s diligent monitoring of the campus’ performance in areas of sustainability.

“This is a profound example of taking the long view of the built environment, setting out an early plan, identifying benchmarks, designing and building a campus, seeing if you are meeting your benchmarks, and continuous improvement until hopefully you reach the goals of zero energy and zero waste for 10,000 students in 2020,” wrote one juror. “It’s an astonishing ambition, and they are on track.”

According to principal planner Richard Cummings, UC Merced’s Physical Planning, Design and Construction team was assisted in developing the 2009 plan by a consultant team that included Bruce Race, FAIA, FAICP, RACESTUDIO; Cliff Lowe Associates; A. Plescia & Co.; Shabnam Barati, Impact Sciences; Paul Heath, Business Place Strategies; STANTEC; Fehr & Peers; and Douglas Jamieson.

Another Campus Building Strikes Gold

The campus’ [Logistical Support/Safety Facility](#) (LSSF) is the latest UC Merced building to achieve LEED Gold certification. The facility, which encompasses two metal buildings joined by a loading dock, houses the departments of material management, mail services; environmental health and safety; facility management; and transportation services.

Construction of the LSSF featured a number of sustainability-related achievements. Around 77 percent of the construction waste was diverted from landfills and was ground up for reuse by farmers and nurseries; potable water use in the facility was reduced by 48 percent via the installation of waterless or low-flow urinals, lavatories

and sinks; and 24 percent of the materials used in construction were made from recycled content.



All of those factors contributed to the high LEED ranking. The facility was also the first UC Merced construction project to achieve several new LEED credits: a renewable energy credit, thanks to the campus' 1-megawatt solar array constructed in 2009; an alternative fuels credit, for offering a 20 percent discount on parking permits for drivers of fuel-efficient vehicles; and an "Innovation and Design" credit, which the LSSF earned for its Green Cleaning Plan.

"Achieving LEED Gold on a metal building here on campus goes to show our high commitment to sustainability," said Mark Maxwell, UC Merced's assistant director of construction and sustainability.

UC Merced's standards for sustainability are only increasing, Maxwell said. Four completed projects are all expected to achieve LEED Gold certification or better: the Dining Expansion (platinum), the Early Childhood Education Center (gold), Housing 3 (platinum) and the Social Science and Management Building (platinum). And the campus is pursuing LEED Platinum for each of its four [newest construction projects](#): Housing 4; the Student Activity and Athletic Center; Science and Engineering Building 2; and the Student Services Building.

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UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American research university of the 21st century. The campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of advanced research and as a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the region. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the university is expected to grow rapidly, topping out at about 25,000 students within 30 years.