

# SIERRA

## SIERRA MAGAZINE'S 2011 "COOLEST SCHOOLS" QUESTIONNAIRE



2007



2008



2009



2010

# SIERRA

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We at *Sierra*, the award-winning magazine of the Sierra Club, are compiling information for our fifth annual “Coolest Schools” issue, which will rate American colleges and universities according to their environmental practices, green initiatives, and caliber of sustainability-oriented education.

Schools that score highly in these realms may be contacted for further discussion and will receive recognition in the magazine’s September/October issue. Please download this interactive PDF and fill it out as thoroughly as possible. Save it with your responses as **2011\_coolschools\_your school’s name** and email it to **cool.schools@sierraclub.org** no later than April 20, 2011.

Note that this questionnaire will become a public document and that we will not be altering your responses before publishing them online. Questions left blank will receive no credit, and if a question requests a percentage, you must provide a number to receive a score. If you need more space to answer a question, you may attach pages. The scoring key will be available online once the issue is published.

As the magazine of the nation’s oldest and largest environmental nonprofit, *Sierra* has a readership of more than 1 million engaged and educated citizens.

Many thanks for your participation.

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**School name:**

**Contact name and title:**

**Contact phone:**

**Contact email:**

**School city and state:**

**Number of students:**

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**HONOR PLEDGE:** By completing and submitting this questionnaire, you are certifying that all statements in this document are true to the best of your knowledge.

INITIAL: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# Category 1: Energy Supply

1. Please break down the energy types that your campus uses for electricity by percentage. If your school purchases its electricity from a utility company, this information should be available from that company. If you insert a number into the “other” category, specify the energy source.

\_\_\_ % Coal                      \_\_\_ % Wind                      \_\_\_ % Biomass  
\_\_\_ % Natural gas            \_\_\_ % Solar                      \_\_\_ % Geothermal  
\_\_\_ % Nuclear                 \_\_\_ % Hydro                      \_\_\_ % Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. What type(s) of energy does your campus use for heating buildings? If you insert a number into the “other” category, specify the energy source.

\_\_\_ % Coal                      \_\_\_ % Biomass                      \_\_\_ % Electricity  
\_\_\_ % Natural gas            \_\_\_ % Geothermal                 \_\_\_ % Fuel oil  
\_\_\_ % Other \_\_\_\_\_

If cogeneration, please explain.

# Category 2: Efficiency

1. What percentage of campus buildings completed within the past five years have a LEED certification of at least silver, or an equivalent rating from another certifier? (If an equivalent rating, please specify which rating and certifier.)

\_\_\_\_\_ %

2. What percentage of water used for campus landscaping is from recovered, reclaimed, or untreated sources?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

3. What percentage of campus lighting fixtures, including indoor and outdoor, are energy efficient (e.g., compact fluorescent, LED, or equipped with motion sensors, automatic daylight shutoff, or other energy-conserving features)?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

4. What percentage of campus appliances are Energy Star-rated?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

5. Does your school have in place energy-efficiency retrofitting programs, such as improving building insulation or sealing ducts? If yes, by what percentage have these programs reduced (or will they reduce) consumption over a three-year period?

\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ %

6. Does your school have a program to monitor, record, and assess patterns of electricity and water consumption as a means of regularly evaluating and improving buildings' environmental performance? If yes, provide the percentage of buildings monitored for each and describe the program.

**Electricity:**

\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ %

**Water:**

\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ %

# Category 3: Food

1. What percentage (in dollars) of food served at cafeterias is grown or raised within 100 miles of campus?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

2. What percentage (in dollars) of food served at campus cafeterias is USDA-certified organic?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

3. Do campus cafeterias source seafood that is deemed sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program, or a similar program?

4. What is the dollar amount spent on all cafeteria meat purchases per year? What is the total number of cafeteria meals served? If the meat is produced sustainably (for example, free-range or grass-fed), please explain.

5. Are nutritionally complete vegetarian and/or vegan options available at every meal?

6. Is bottled water sold or distributed on campus?

7. Does your school maintain a campus farm or garden on which students can work?

# Category 4: Academics

1. Does your school offer environment- and/or sustainability-related majors, such as environmental studies, ecology, or sustainable agriculture? If so, list up to six.
2. Does your school offer classes about clean technologies, including topics such as energy efficiency and solar-wind engineering? If so, list up to five.
3. Does your school provide students with a list of environmental and/or sustainability classes to make such courses easy to identify? Please provide a link, if available.
4. Please provide names of up to four standout professors who work on environmental and/or sustainability issues. List their primary accomplishments, including awards, honors, and noteworthy publications.
5. Is your school associated with any environment- and/or sustainability-related centers, programs, or research institutions? If so, please provide their names and a description.
6. Is an environment-themed class a core curriculum requirement? If yes, please provide the name(s) of the course(s).
7. What percentage of academic departments offer environment- or sustainability-related classes?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

# Category 5: Purchasing

1. Does your school have a university-wide sustainable-purchasing policy? If yes, briefly explain.

2. What percentage of paper used on campus is made from at least 30% postconsumer recycled content?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

3. Does your school purchase paper that is Forest Stewardship Council–certified?

4. Does your school have a policy to purchase electronics that have Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) certification (or similar)? If yes, please describe.

5. Does your school have packaging agreements with suppliers that minimize waste? If yes, please describe.

6. Does your school specify in its purchasing contracts that products with energy-saving features be installed or delivered with these features enabled?

# Category 6: Transportation

1. Does your school provide a free shuttle service around campus and town? If yes, briefly explain.

2. What percentage of your school's vehicle fleet is hybrid or electric or uses sustainable biofuels?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

3. List specific steps your school has taken to promote walking and bicycling as transportation methods.

4. Does your school offer its students and employees incentives to carpool, take public transit, or use some other form of communal transportation? If yes, please describe.

5. Approximately what percentage of students commute to school in a car?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

6. Approximately what percentage of faculty and staff commute to work in a car?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

# Category 7: Waste Management

1. What is your campus's current waste-diversion rate (i.e., percentage of campus waste being diverted from landfills)?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

2. Are recycling receptacles readily available throughout campus? If yes, please describe.

3. Are recycling bins readily available at large events such as football games?

4. Does your school compost? If yes, are compost receptacles available at all or most on-campus dining locations? Are compost receptacles available at all or most food-preparation facilities (i.e., cafeteria and restaurant kitchens)?

5. Does your school have a stated commitment to waste-reduction goals, such as zero waste? If applicable, briefly explain the plan of action.

6. Does your school administer a donation program for clothing and other used goods when students are moving out of campus housing? If so, are bins placed in every dormitory?

# Category 8: Administration

1. Is environmental sustainability part of your institution's mission statement or guiding principles? If so, please provide the text or a link.

2. Does your school employ at least one person dedicated to overseeing campus environmental initiatives, such as a sustainability coordinator, or have a sustainability task force or committee? Is the coordinator position part-time or full-time?

3. Does your school have a formal policy to integrate life-cycle cost analysis into plans for constructing or renovating buildings? If yes, please explain.

4. Has your school made an official commitment to reducing its impact on climate change by setting goals of emissions reductions by a certain date? If yes, does your school have a plan for achieving these reductions? If so, briefly explain the plan.

5. Has your school conducted a complete greenhouse-gas-emissions audit of its campus?

6. Has your school achieved a reduction in total annual carbon emissions? If yes, please explain and provide the benchmark year and percentage.

# Category 9: Financial Investments

1. Is all information about your school's endowment fund publicly available? Briefly explain.

2. Does your school have an investment-responsibility committee that considers and acts on environmental issues? If so, provide key examples of actions it has taken.

3. Does your school have, or is it planning to implement, a formal policy that restricts or prohibits investments in fossil fuels? If yes, briefly explain.

4. What percentage of your school's overall endowment is invested in companies or funds that further renewable energy and clean technology?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

# Category 10: Other Initiatives

1. Have any of your school's students effected positive environmental change on a campus, state, or national level? If so, please describe. (To nominate a specific student for greater attention in our coverage, please email [cool.schools@sierraclub.org](mailto:cool.schools@sierraclub.org) with his or her name, accomplishments, and contact information. For privacy reasons, please do not include students' contact information here).

2. Have students participated in regional or national environmental challenges or events such as the Solar Decathlon or environmental design contests? If so, which events and how did they do?

3. Has your school set aside part of its campus as natural habitat, stipulated limited campus development, or enacted programs preserving its land? If so, please explain.

4. Does your school adhere to an indoor air-quality policy (e.g., the mandated use of nontoxic cleaning supplies or paints)? If yes, describe the policy.

5. Does your school offer outdoor- or field-based classes or academic programs? If so, please list and describe up to three. (To nominate a specific program for greater attention in our coverage, please email [cool.schools@sierraclub.org](mailto:cool.schools@sierraclub.org) with a detailed description and the program coordinator's contact information.)

6. Does your school offer campus-sponsored, nature-based extracurricular activities to students and/or faculty? If yes, please list and describe up to three.

# Category 10: Other Initiatives *{continued}*

7. What specific actions, if any, has your school taken to improve its environmental sustainability since spring 2010? Please list and describe.

8. Use this space to address any other unique or interesting sustainability initiatives at your school that have not already been mentioned:

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**Please save this PDF with your answers and email it to [cool.schools@sierraclub.org](mailto:cool.schools@sierraclub.org) no later than **April 20, 2011**. Thank you very much for your participation.**