



University of Houston
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Press Release

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UH's GREEN GRADE IMPROVES TO B- IN COLLEGE REPORT CARD RANKINGS

Houston, October 7, 2009 – The grades are in and the University of Houston has some green cheering to do. UH earned a full grade point higher overall on the 2010 College Sustainability Report Card as compared to last year's grade, confirming the university's rapid move toward increased sustainability. The grades released today on GreenReportCard.org are administered by the Sustainable Endowments Institute, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage in research and education to advance sustainability in campus operations and endowment practices.

The College Sustainability Report Card serves as a comparative evaluation of campus sustainability activities of colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. This year, the Institute researchers witnessed the highest participation rate to date, with 318 of 332 schools responding to a least one of its surveys. The surveys completed by campus administrators, staff and student groups focused on sustainable policies and practices in the following nine categories: Administration, Climate Change & Energy, Food & Recycling, Green Building, Student Involvement, Transportation, Endowment Transparency, Investment Priorities, and Shareholder Engagement.

In the 2010 Report Card, UH received an overall grade of B-, demonstrating impressive advancement from the C- it earned the previous year. In six of the nine categories, UH improved by one or two grade points, with the greatest improvement seen in the categories of Administration and Student Involvement.

	2009	2010
Overall	C-	B-
Administration	D	B
Climate & Energy	D	C
Food & Recycling	C	B
Green Building	C	B
Student Involvement	D	B
Transportation	C	B
Endowment Transparency	A	A
Investment Priorities	C	C
Shareholder Engagement	D	D

The higher scores come as no surprise to the staff, faculty and students who have been involved in the spearheading of the UH Green Initiative over the last year. Since the last report card was released, the campus has made progress in several key areas.

Sustainability Policy - The Sustainability Task Force drafted a campus sustainability policy in Spring 2009 that states the university's position on sustainability.

Carbon Footprint – A course in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences calculated the university's carbon footprint in Fall 2008 and reported that the largest contributor is commuting to campus. The Sustainability Task Force is outlining goals and timeframes for reducing the university's carbon footprint.

Green Commuting – The campus hosted a Green Commuting Fair in partnership with the METRO to promote student discounted fares and other commuting solutions like car sharing and van pools. Because of the success of the Green Commuting Fair, METRO has agreed to partner with the university and host a fair each semester to encourage the use of mass transit.

Campus Engagement – Recognizing that the best way to reverse climate change is to educate individuals to reduce, reuse and recycle; UH has made sustainability more visible to its community by adding 300 outdoor recycling bins. Additionally, the school participation in RecycleMania put campus sustainability front and center in students' minds with weekly events over the course of the 10 week competition. Other activities that highlighted UH Green Initiatives on campus included the Campus Green Day in October 2008 and the Earth Day Carnival in April 2009.

Education – UH produced a Living Green at the University of Houston guide which was made available on recycle paper and in electronic form via the GreenUH website. This guide was provided to all new students and newly hired faculty and staff. Recently, Green UH and the Biology and Biochemistry Department have formed a partnership that will engage students in the academic program to provide seedlings for the Cougar Community Garden. Produce will be grown from seed to plant in the campus greenhouse, which had long been dormant, and then transplanted to the Cougar Community Garden. Another exciting academic development with Green UH will occur in Spring 2010 when the Task Force Chair Emily Messa will co-teach a class with two university professors – Dr. Barry Lefer and Dr. Peter Bishop. This course will be centered on creating a culture of sustainability for the university. The hope is that this course will evolve into a green literacy program for all students.

Emily Messa, Assistant Vice President of University Services, says, "I want to thank and congratulate the University of Houston community for their work on sustainability at the university. Together, in one year's time, we accomplished so much. This wasn't the work of an individual or department but the work of the entire campus. The conversation on sustainability at UH is just beginning. There is more work to do, and together we will work to make a difference."

The Report Card, evaluating approximately 300 colleges and universities with the largest endowments, indicates that despite the budgetary challenges schools are facing, as well as increased energy cost, campuses across the board became greener this past year. The University of Houston is no exception. UH has discovered that effort from students, faculty and staff to be more resourceful and less wasteful is the basis of sustainability.

To view the 2010 Sustainability Report Card for UH and other schools visit www.greenreportcard.org.

About the University of Houston

The University of Houston, Texas' premier metropolitan research and teaching institution, is home to more than 40 research centers and institutes and sponsors more than 300 partnerships with corporate, civic and governmental entities. UH, the most diverse research university in the country stands at the forefront of education, research and service with more than 35,000 students.