CSUN was the first institution in California to have a fully integrated student union when opened in 2008, the Institute promotes, facilitates and develops programs related to sustainability. It serves as an interdisciplinary minor in Sustainability offers a broad education in sustainability for many disciplines. Core courses educate students in sustainability issues and practices, and teach students about the economic, environmental and social factors involved in sustainability decisions. Elective courses are chosen from an individual's field of interest where the emphasis is on issues relating to sustainability.

Jacaranda Walk Bicycle Path

The 0.2 mile long bicycle path connects transit station users to the campus, allow for easier cross campus treks, and reduce bicycle/pedestrian accidents. The path is a step toward making CSUN a more bicycle friendly campus.

Rainforest Project

CSUN’s outdoor subtropical rainforest is fully sustained by the power generation byproducts including excess water and CO2. The facility is modeled after a California rainforest and captures over 100,000 gallons of waste water from the fuel cell plant and collects in a 12,000 gallon storage tank and used to irrigate the rainforest through a gravity flow system. The rainforest utilizes nearly all the waste from the fuel cell and satellite chiller plant.

University Student Union

The USU installed 40 waterless urinals, which save roughly 3,300,240 gallons of water per year. The USU facilities utilize natural lighting, LED and CFL light fixtures, motion sensors and advanced technology to manage and reduce energy consumption.

Student Recreation Center

The SRC is a 138,000 square foot LEED Gold certified facility featuring 90 kW of solar PV panels, water-efficient landscaping, waterless urinals, and recycled materials throughout. About 75% of the building is daylit, and water fixtures include 2,832 solar panels with a capacity of 467 kW. The SRC provides natural shading and reduces the heat island effect, reducing energy costs and making outdoor areas attractive even during the warmest months. The SRC also includes several sustainable elements such as energy efficient lighting, a state-of-the-art HVAC system, tinted glass windows, cool (reflective) roof, and water conservation features. The SRC is LEED Gold Certified.

Orange Grove

The grove’s more than 400 orange trees serve as one of the last remnants of orange groves in the San Fernando Valley’s agricultural past. The grove features a walking path, natural spring water, red-earred slider turtles, ducks, koi, goldfish, and a variety of flowers including water lilies and hyacinths. The five acre site is open to the public at the end of the season with water. The grove is utilized by the campus community for educational and recreational activities and is shared by local community banks.

Zipcar Locations

Zipcars are available for students, employees, and the community to rent at hourly rates. This reduces the need for students and others to drive to campus, thus reducing the demand for on-campus parking and alleviating peak demand. In addition, the Associated Students offers more than $100,000 per year to subsidize students’ use of public transportation.

Fuel Cell

CSUN was the first institution in the world to have a grid-connected fuel cell plant. The plant has a 1 megawatt capacity and eliminates more than 6,400 tons of CO2 a year that otherwise would be released into the atmosphere. The plant generates over 1 million kWh per year of electricity from the chemical conversion, rather than the combustion, of natural gas. Waste heat (reflective) roof, and water conservation features. The SRC is LEED Gold Certified.

The Institute for Sustainability

Founded in 2008, the Institute promotes, facilitates and develops programs related to sustainability. It serves as an umbrella organization across the university on issues related to sustainability and is committed to increasing interdisciplinary and cross-functional communication, education, and research. There are three primary functional arms of the Institute—curriculum, campus operations, and research.

California State University Northridge

Valley Performing Arts Center

The 166,000 square foot performing arts center opened January 2011. The addition of 180 trees provides natural shading and reduces energy costs and making outdoor areas attractive even during the warmest months. The facility includes several sustainable elements such as energy efficient lighting, a state-of-the-art HVAC system, tinted glass windows, cool (reflective) roof, and water conservation features. The SRC is LEED Gold Certified.

Transit Station

The transit station, built in 2012, provides a convenient location for students, faculty and staff to access mass transit commuting options, including buses and Metrolink shuttle services. The campus is working with L.A. Metro to expand services.

Central Plant Thermal Storage

A 2.3 million gallon tank stores chilled water on campus. Water is cooled to 39°F (4°C) during off-peak night-time hours when electric rates are low; during peak hours, the cold water flows around campus providing air conditioning. This allows the chillers to be shutdown during the peak electric load time of the day when rates are high.

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