



## SILVER RATING SHOWS MAJOR PROGRESS FOR CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY



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*This 40kw solar array carport on campus will power 15 percent of new biology and chemistry labs. Photo by Brian Pullen.*

Spearheaded by an active student body and faculty, the USFSP community is investing in solar panels and energy efficient buildings, leading innovative research in sustainability and incorporating environmental stewardship into many planning decisions on campus. These were just a few of the reasons why the university received a Silver rating for sustainability performance by the Association

for the Advancement for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). This was the first time USFSP received such an honor.

“Receiving this distinction was not an easy task and our community should be very proud that we continue to push the boundary of sustainability at our campus,” said Brian Pullen, USFSP sustainability planner.

One of the core values of USFSP is care for the natural environment. The university took a major step in living up to this value by bringing on a full-time sustainability planner to ensure environmentally-friendly practices are used in operations and planning and to partner with local businesses and institutions on projects such as solar panels and greenhouses.

“Campus sustainability is important because it can highlight the balance between society, the economy, and the environment to students and demonstrate how campus can be a living, learning community to reduce our environmental footprint,” said Pullen. “This generation of students understands the major environmental issues of today and wants to make sure the place they go to for higher education is helping to develop sustainable solutions.”

Evidence of student’s passion for sustainability can be found in [USFSP Student Green Energy Fund](#). The Fund – financed through a \$1 fee per credit hour voted on by students every three years – is used to assist the university in reducing energy costs through conservation and promoting power generation using renewable energy to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Students on the Green Energy Fund committee vote on projects and these funds have made a large contribution towards improving campus sustainability.

Pullen said campus sustainability has progressed greatly this past year, but even more is to come. There are several sustainable projects in the works that should go live in the coming months, including:

- A solar carport – an overhead canopy to cover parking areas – will be unveiled in the parking lot just north of new biology and chemistry labs. The 40kw solar array will power about 15 percent of the Labs building
- An energy management system will be placed on several buildings, including residence halls. The system will allow for monitoring of energy usage in real time to indicate where efficiencies can be made; and
- Installation of a 120kw solar array on the roof of a yet to be determined campus building could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 175 tons per year, equivalent to saving nearly 187,000 pounds of coal from being burned each year.

In addition to being awarded a Silver rating, USFSP also moved up 66 spots in Sierra Club’s Cool Schools sustainability rankings this year to 112 out of 227. For more information about campus sustainability, visit <https://www.usfsp.edu/sustainability/about-us/>.

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