

March 27, 2014

TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Dear Colleagues and Students:

We at UC Santa Barbara have long recognized that water is a critical resource for the state of California. Despite the recent rains, California is currently experiencing a drought emergency. We ask that you continue to help us reduce our consumption and do our part to conserve.

We have pursued aggressive water conservation strategies for almost two decades in the following areas: academic buildings, residential and dining facilities, industrial applications, and landscaping and irrigation practices. These efforts have not only allowed us to achieve a 25 percent reduction in total potable water use (74 million gallons) from 1996 to 2011, but have made UCSB a leader in water conservation among institutions of higher education. In February of 2013, we developed our first Water Action Plan as the official guidance document for water conservation strategies on our campus, identifying recommendations in short-, mid- and long-term planning horizons. Our preparation on this front has allowed us to take action by identifying immediate practices for reducing water consumption on campus and minimizing the stress on our local water supplies.

About 90 percent of our campus landscapes are irrigated with reclaimed water, and irrigation practices in the remaining areas will either be completely turned off for the duration of the drought, or reduced by 50 percent until a recycled water line can be extended to service those areas. This summer we will be extending our recycled water line to more than six new locations, increasing our reclaimed water use for irrigation on campus. In addition, we have also secured funding for retrofitting restrooms with more efficient water fixtures, which will include the installation of in-line aerators and high-efficiency toilets in the coming months.

To alleviate the urgency of the drought conditions, we would also like to ask our campus community to use less water in your daily routines, such as taking shorter showers in the residence halls and making a conscious effort to utilize the dual-flush toilets properly. The majority of potable water consumed on our campus is for domestic uses such as toilets, faucets and showers. The conservation efforts of our students, faculty and staff are going to be an essential part of our response to the drought. A coordinated public awareness campaign will also soon be launched with information about additional simple actions that all of us can take to conserve water.

While we have made tremendous strides in reducing our potable water consumption through the introduction of new and innovative water conservation and efficiency practices, we will continue to take proactive steps to conserve water well into the future.

At UC Santa Barbara, we fully recognize the worth of our water resources. Through proper planning and foresight, and through all of our collaborative efforts, we are committed to never allowing the well to run dry.

Sincerely,

Henry T. Yang
Chancellor