

UC Davis lands new national center on climate change

Kat Kerlin, Davis Enterprise, 9-25-13

UC Davis was selected in a national competition this week to lead a two-year, \$11.2 million research consortium for the U.S. Department of Transportation, focused on addressing and preparing for climate change.

Based at the UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies, the new National Center for Sustainable Transportation will help the federal agency reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from passenger and freight travel that contribute to climate change, and also prepare U.S. transportation infrastructure for the extreme weather that climate change is expected to produce.

“The United States has sharply reduced many of the transportation sector’s most damaging environmental impacts on air, water, natural ecosystems and human health,” said Susan Handy, a UCD professor of environmental science and policy and director of the new national center.

“However, one major impact that hasn’t received enough attention is climate change, which is a game-changer. Fortunately, almost all strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation also improve economic efficiency, energy security, social equity, livability and health.”

The other consortium members are UC Riverside, University of Southern California, Cal State Long Beach, University of Vermont and Georgia Institute of Technology.

The center will:

- * Mobilize a network of universities to generate knowledge and tools that address climate change and environmental sustainability in transportation;
- * Design and evaluate real-world strategies that contribute to mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts; and
- * Deliver knowledge and tools to state transportation departments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and local governments to support implementation of these real-world strategies.

“The goal of the National Center is to transform the transportation system to improve environmental sustainability nationwide,” said Dan Sperling, director of the UCD Institute of Transportation Studies and the new national center’s executive director. “We aim to provide leadership that produces meaningful action by mobilizing innovative research teams and partnering with influential stakeholders.”

The National Center for Sustainable Transportation will receive \$5.6 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation and \$5.6 million in matching funds from state, regional and local agencies to support its research.

Caltrans, the California Air Resources Board and the South Coast Air Quality Management District have committed to providing matching funds for projects at UCD, USC, Cal State Long Beach and UC Riverside, and the Georgia Department of Transportation has agreed to match projects at Georgia Tech.

Rep. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,

applauded the news.

“UC Davis is a recognized leader in cutting-edge research to reduce our impact on climate change,” he said in a statement. “This is the second big federal grant in a week for such research at UC Davis, following the \$1.5 million ARPA-E grant to convert ethylene to a liquid fuel, and I couldn’t be happier for the researchers, administrators and students involved.”