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UMass gets 'green' report card

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The University of Massachusetts has received a C+ on the 2009 College Sustainability Report Card, which is used to rate the nation's greenest colleges and universities.

The Sustainable Endowments Institute, based in Cambridge, Mass., graded 300 schools in nine categories: climate and energy use, green building, food and recycling, transportation, administration, student involvement, endowment transparency, shareholder engagement and investment priorities.

The results said UMass excels in climate change and energy, as well as food and recycling. The University received an A in both categories. However, the overall grade was brought down with Fs in endowment transparency and shareholder engagement.

"The campus is pleased to have been rated well in categories that make a major difference, such as climate change and energy, and food and recycling," said Ed Blaguszewski, director of the Office of News and Information. "We expect to work more on student involvement, where we can certainly improve our performance."

Despite scoring well in some categories, some students are displeased with the overall outcome.

Junior Justin Trenga and senior Weston Neff, both environmental design majors, said they are "disappointed" and "ashamed" at the University's C+.

"I don't think we're very green," said Adrianne Economu, a senior majoring in hospitality and tourism management. "I don't see much effort around campus."

Last year, the five UMass campuses were assessed as one group and also earned a C+. This year only the Amherst campus was reviewed, and received the same grade. In comparison, two thirds of the schools earned higher scores than a year ago, according to the analysis.

Lisa Tuska, a research fellow for the Sustainable Endowments Institute, said one way UMass can boost its marks for next year is to, "get the administration's policies for sustainability out to the public."

"Every year it gets a little more competitive," she said, meaning improvement is likely necessary for UMass to maintain its position.

Continued...

POLL

This month, UMass Chaplain Kent Higgins was reprimanded by the University for offering credits to students for their participation in the Obama campaign. Should a state university offer credits to students for partisan campaigning?

- Yes -- it encourages educated citizenship.
- No -- it compromises the University's ethic.
- It's all the same to me.

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