

**MAY
2021**

EARTH MONTH ECOCHALLENGE SUMMARY REPORT

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SUSTAINABILITY OFFICERS
COLLABORATION**

**Prepared by Katie Koscielak
Sustainability Analyst, Humboldt State University**

CSU SUSTAINABILITY OFFICERS



PARTICIPATING CAMPUSES

Stan State

CSU Monterey Bay

CSU Northridge

CSU Long Beach

Cal State East Bay

CSU Channel Islands

Humboldt State

CSU San Marcos

CSU Fullerton

Cal Poly Pomona

SF State



WHAT IS ECOCHALLENGE?

From the website

(<https://earthmonth.ecochallenge.org/about/event-info>):

"Earth Month Ecochallenge: Drawdown is a solutions-oriented engagement program focused on individuals taking action to reduce greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The actions in this Ecochallenge connect to global solutions highlighted by Project Drawdown, a research-based organization that is leading the efforts to map, measure, model, and describe existing, amazing solutions to climate change.

Earth Month Ecochallenge is an engagement opportunity for sustainability leaders across business and education institutions to create teams, assign custom actions for team members to take, engage with their team throughout the Ecochallenge, and lead their team to create substantial positive impact."



WHY WAS ECOCHALLENGE SELECTED FOR CSU ENGAGEMENT DURING EARTH WEEK 2021?

A group of roughly 10 campus sustainability officers worked together to curate a collaborative Earth Week celebratory experience for Spring 2021 comprised of two modalities; one of these strategic experiences was an online tool called EcoChallenge while the other was a focused panel discussion event. Due to the ongoing Coronavirus, both modalities were held in virtual format.

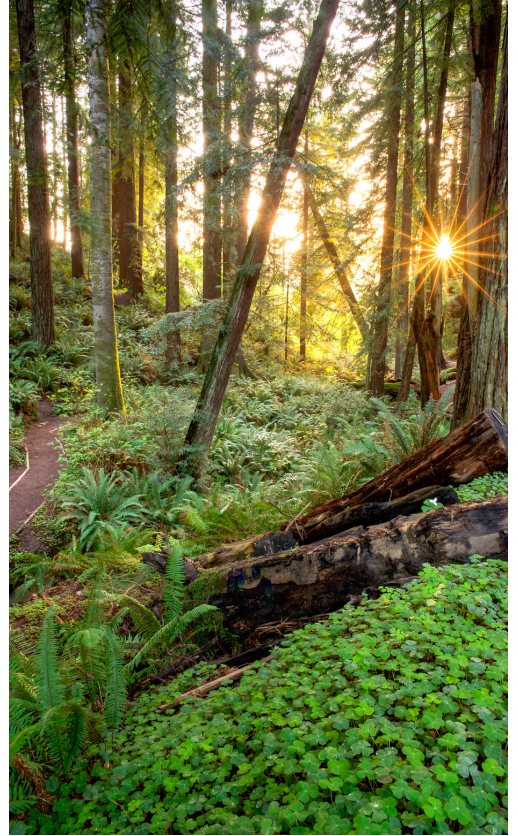
The EcoChallenge tool was selected as a pathway for engagement because it was already existing (sustainability officers would not have to create anything from scratch) and it was thought to solicit **action** (participants would have to 'do something', rather than solely be passive listeners/audience members). In addition, metrics & engagement could be tracked and exported easily.

TOTAL REACH

11 campuses across the CSU formed teams.

20 students were established as winners based on the most action taken.





DATA SUMMARY

401 PARTICIPANTS

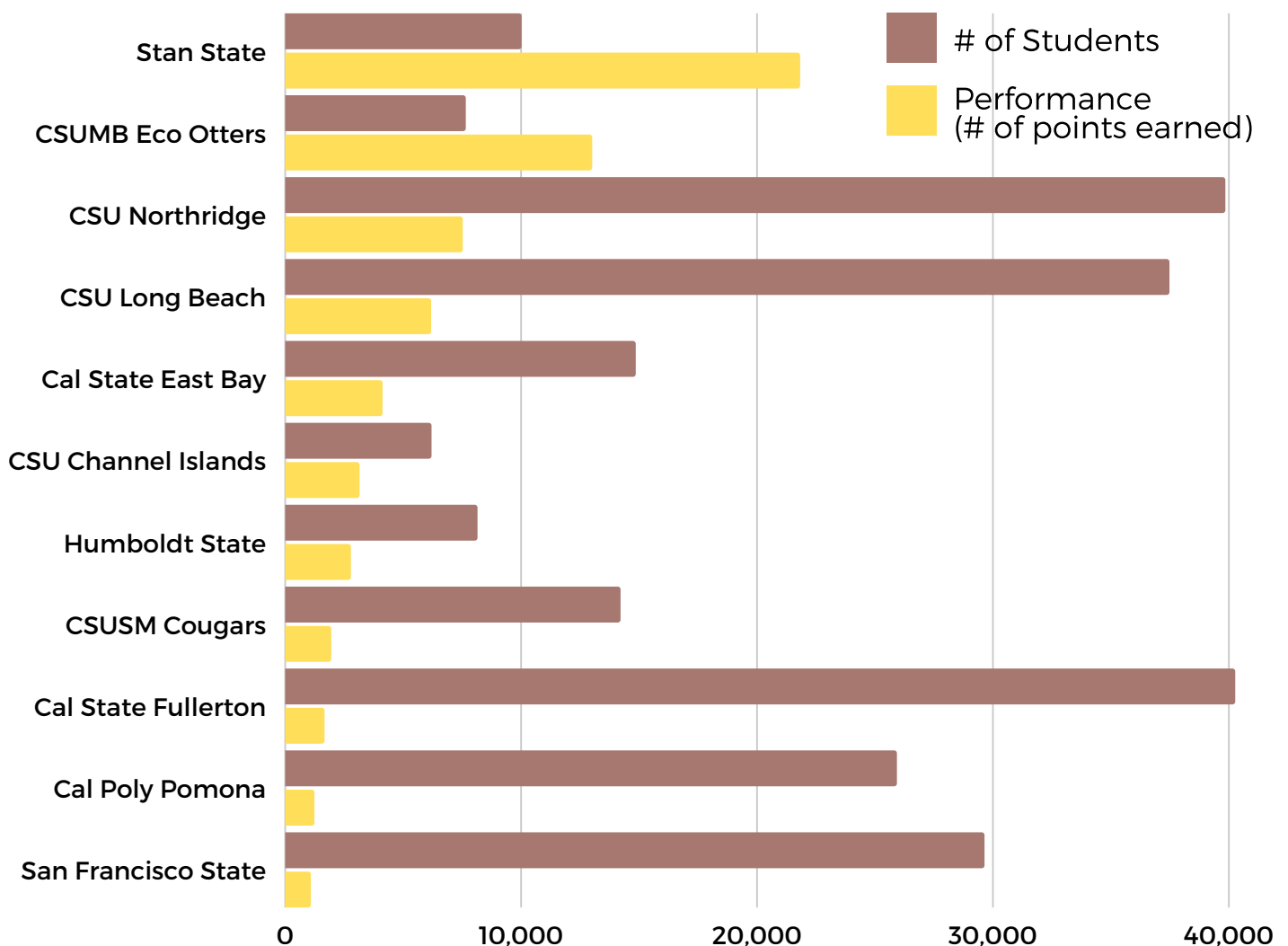
64K POINTS EARNED

265 AVERAGE POINTS
EARNED PER
PARTICIPANT

With hundreds of students engaging with the Project Drawdown: EcoChallenge tool, and with this engagement leading to substantial sustainability and climate action across the CSU system, the program was a success! Furthermore, anecdotal evidence from participants suggests that in addition to eliciting feelings of fun and self-esteem, participants also enjoyed learning new information and having a place to interact with peers from other campuses.

TEAM INFO

**HOW DID PERFORMANCE
CORRELATE TO CAMPUS
SIZE?**
ANSWER: IT DIDN'T



The graph above shows that performance (a.k.a. achievement of points within the EcoChallenge tool) did not have a clear correlation to school size. In other words, the big schools did not trend toward outperforming the smaller schools, and vice versa.

HIGHLIGHTS

5,381 LBS CO2E AVOIDED

Lbs equivalent to the carbon sequestered by 6,500 acres of forest (or a forested area of roughly 5,000 football fields)!

18,690 GAL H2O CONSERVED

Gallons of water equivalent to eliminating over 1,000 average American showers

17,238 MINUTES LEARNING

Time equivalent to 287 hours, or roughly 12 full days of learning, or roughly 42 minutes per participant!

113 ADVOCACY ACTIONS

These represented specific advocacy actions for public policy change with climate impacts

118 PUBLIC OFFICIALS CONTACTED

Included writing letters, emails, and making calls to people in leadership or government positions

333 ZERO WASTE MEALS CONSUMED

Number of meals with zero food waste or to-go containers sent to landfill

NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS

- While **Stan State** led with the most points achieved (with 87 participants achieving roughly 21,000 points), **CSU Monterey Bay** achieved the largest team with 128 participants achieving roughly 13,000 points.
- **CSU Northridge** saved the most water by a longshot, at 10,620 gallons saved (the next highest achiever was **CSU Long Beach** at 3,240!)
- **CSU Long Beach** tied **CSU Northridge** for first place in the average number of miles traveled by bike, at .87 miles/participant.
- **Cal State East Bay** was a close second with .75 bike miles traveled per participant on average!
- **Humboldt State** spent the second highest amount of time outdoors at 937 minutes (or 15.6 hours, or just over 1 hour/participant!) **Stan State** achieved the most overall, which equated to 42 minutes outdoors per participant!
- **CSU Channel Islands** led the smaller schools in number of hours spent exercising, at 2,095 minutes (or 35 hours total, or 1.25 hours/participant!)
- **CSU Monterey Bay** contacted the greatest number of public officials, logging 63 contacts. They logged more than double the number of actions the second place performer logged!
- **CSU San Marcos** logged the most zero waste meals consumed on average per participant, at 7.4 meals per person (across 59 participants).

NEXT STEPS

Lessons Learned

While successful in accomplishing the group's initial vision of getting participants to take action, coordinating formulas to assign winners and prizes across all participating campuses was significantly complicated. As such, there are a few different approaches to future programming with this tool:

Future Option A

Rather than focusing on inter-campus competition, rework the program to focus on intra-campus competitions (i.e. focus on engagement within a single campus thereby eliminating competition across the system).

Future Option B

If cross-campus competition is desired, then creating a system for weighting performance across differently sized campus populations should be a priority. This should be established before advertising and recruiting.

