

“Drought emergency bringing changes to campus” – May 15, 2015

Dear Campus Community,

As we enter another year of drought and an official emergency declaration by the state, we need to increase our efforts to conserve water and other resources.

As a campus, we have already made reductions – water use per person is down over 20% in the last 10 years. We are also following new restrictions that apply to everyone in the state – individuals, businesses, homeowners associations, schools and other public entities, including:

- Strict limits on frequency and timing of irrigation.
- No watering allowed within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- No washing of driveways and sidewalk, except as needed for health and safety. Campus uses non-potable water for any necessary wash-downs.

But as the drought lingers and deepens, we are taking new steps to support campus-wide efforts and requests by our water provider, EBMUD, to reduce use by 20% in the coming year.

Irrigation, which accounts for about 8% of the total campus water use, will be further reduced; many lawns will be watered no more than one day per week and are expected to go mostly dormant. In addition, a number of campus lawns have been identified for conversion to lower water plantings, and some lawn areas have been identified for conversion to mulch. Irrigation to these areas will be turned off before the summer months.

New water-reduction projects are also underway in other areas of campus. Labs use approximately 30% of the annual 605 million gallons the campus consumes. Facilities Services staff has identified a number of water-saving projects for existing labs and is pursuing these infrastructure/system improvements. Other upgrades include repairs to heat exchangers and pumps that will not only reduce water use in the heating and steam system (which currently uses 12% of consumption), but will also save energy. Campus bathrooms (where 25% of campus water is used) are being renovated in several buildings to include low flow fixtures. Residence halls, where 25% water is used, have reduced irrigation, retrofitted bathrooms, and installed more efficient shower heads.

The campus has five fountains and two decorative pools. Four of the fountains are/will be emptied and maintained to minimize possible damage. The fifth fountain is integral to a teaching exhibit at the Lawrence Hall of Science and will continue to have water in it for safety.

Outreach efforts continue across campus, and posters with tips are available online or from the Office of Sustainability and Energy. Please visit realestate.berkeley.edu/drought-response for more details, additional information on the campus response, and for resources on how to reduce water use on campus and at home.

Sincerely,

Robert Lalanne
Vice Chancellor Real Estate