The director of sustainability’s vision for SJSU is to be recognized as a center of expertise in sustainability. Katherine Cushing, who was appointed to the job in 2009, said her role is to oversee sustainability activities in curriculum, research, facilities and community partnerships.

“Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” Cushing said. SJSU is trying to be a more sustainable institution by focusing on the three “E’s” of efficiency, economic development and social equity.

Cushing said the three “E’s” of efficiency are: environmental protection and enhancement, economic development and social equity. Environmental protection and enhancement focus on clean air, clean water and not generating too much waste, Cushing said.

Economic development and sustainability relates to the jobs generated by green energy, Cushing said. Social equity focuses on the impact industrialized nations have on underdeveloped countries.

Cushing said the e-waste (electronic waste) generated by larger countries can negatively impact the environment in other parts of the world. According to the White House website, the country exports billions of dollars each year to import energy into the country.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included more than $80 billion to expand manufacturing capacity for renewable energy sources and to expand manufacturing capacity for clean energy technology, according to the White House website.

Cushing said since her time as sustainability director, she has seen the university take many steps toward sustainability.

A major initiative at SJSU was last year’s Ecological Footprint Challenge, Cushing said. “I think it went well,” she said. “We had over 2,700 people participate (mostly students). We found out that the average ecological footprint by 10 percent over the course of the last academic year, Cushing said. “I think it went well,” she said. “We had over 2,700 people participate (mostly students). We found out that the average ecological footprint by 10 percent over the course of the last academic year,” Cushing said. “I know we went down about 50 percent of what potable water costs,” Cushing said. “Recycled water costs about 50 percent of what potable water costs.”

Cushing said even though SJSU has to invest money to change pipes or convert valves, the school will save money over time.

Cushing also said SJSU recently went through a series of lighting retrofits, an effort which made the campus more sustainable and saved the university money. “I think they saved us over $1.6 million over the past several years,” Cushing said. “So there is definitely energy savings to be had by engaging in these kinds of activities.”

“Silicon Valley is kind of the heart of so many clean development and technologies being worked on right now,” Cushing said.

The Green Economy Initiative, by the United Nations, exists to assist governments in “greening” their economies by rethinking policies and redirecting investments into clean technology, according to the U.N. website.

Cushing said SJSU is focusing on finding ways to be a part of this emerging industry. According to the U.N. website, the world is headed toward global economies, can create large amounts of green jobs across many sectors of economies and can fuel growth.

“I feel it will be a natural fit for San Jose State to be a part of this emerging green economy,” Cushing said.

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A mechanical engineering professor said he thinks SJSU is getting close to a point where solar power might be a realistic alternative to powering the campus.

Mechanical engineering professor James Mekić said he has been involved in the process of researching photovoltaics, or solar panels, and its impact on SJSU for a long time.

Mary Panchenko, a sophomore international business major, said she wished she knew more about solar panels.

"We should utilize what is free, like sunlight," she said. "But when does it start paying for itself?"

Senior nursing major Lauren Powell said she thinks getting energy from solar panels is a good thing.

"My mom used to heat us to hot water at her house in Santa Cruz," she said. "It saved her money and did something for the planet at the same time. On campus it's a good way to save money and lower tuition."

Curtis Fox, a junior chemical engineering major, said solar panels are too expensive and they haven't developed enough efficiency yet, he said.

"They'd be more effective if they were in the 70-80 percent range," he said, "and we're not anywhere close to that."

University police officer Dave Pegan said the campus has been running on a cogeneration plant for 35 years and he doesn't think it will ever be taken down.

The cogeneration plant is clean and efficient, he said. "Efficiency refers to the amount of steam that is captured to power other parts of the plant. It's also a big cost-saver — that's one of the motivations for having it," Isaacson said.

Jared Issacson, an energy analyst for SJSU, points out a high voltage power box inside the cogeneration power plant at SJSU.

"Were always using the steam," Issacson said. "In addition, that steam can be used in absorption chillers, so it can take that extra steam that we're not using in the summer especially, and it runs through a process in the absorption chillers and it can create cold water."

A lot of water is used in the process, he said.

"As it is going through the system, it eventually can't be used because the chemistry gets changed a little bit," he said. "So it's going to be blown down to the sewer, so we do use a lot of water."

Annually, the cogeneration plant uses 40 million gallons of potable and recycled water combined, Issacson said.

Issacson said it is standard for large institutions such as hospitals or colleges campus to have cogeneration plants.

The backup diesel generators on campus are not used frequently because they are harmful to the environment and not cost-effective, he said.

"We have a central plant here at San Jose State that makes electricity, by the business building," he said. "It is a big power plant and they take natural gas, just like a jet engine, a gas turbine engine, it's called, and it runs a generator to make electricity and the excess heat. The exhaust from the engine is used to cool the building."

"Solar panels are an expensive system, but we spend a lot of money on electricity now," Mekić said. ""When we did the report and evaluated five stations, that's one of the motivations for having it," Isaacson said.

"It's also a big cost-saver — that's one of the motivations for having it," Issacson said. "We estimate that if we didn't run the cogeneration, and we just ran those boilers, which are less efficient for our steam needs, and took all of the power we needed from PG&E to run the campus, it would cost us somewhere about a million dollars more per year to do that."

"Here, what we've done is rather than pushing power across power lines where there's loss," he said. "... We have distributed generation, so we're on-site, you're pushing the power just a few hundred yards and you don't have as many line losses."

However, because it is natural gas combustion there are some emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide.

Overall, Issacson said the cogeneration plant is clean and efficient and does not cause damage to the environment.

The group has done a number of these projects for the city of San Jose, he said.

"We have evaluated parking structures and last September for the Student Union we evaluated the PV system and we evaluated the library also," he said. "We have had student projects going on for several years."

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Student dies after fall from 10th Street garage

TYLER DO & JORDAN LIPPMEN
Staff Writers

At 7:15 a.m. Wednesday, a 23-year-old male student was found dead in front of the 10th Street garage, according to a UPD press release.

“We received a report of an unattended death at the 10th Street garage,” said Pat Lopes Harris, media relations director for SJSU. “Unattended death means there were no witnesses present at time of death.”

The student’s family has not been notified of the incident, according to a UPD press release.

“It’s just really daunting, I had a 7:30 class so I came to school and I normally park on the side of the stairwells and it was blocked off,” said Jessica Park, a senior marketing major.

“I thought the elevator was broken and I heard all these cop cars,” she said. “She is thankful she didn’t see the body or blood at the scene, but she said she was able to see the body being covered by sheets from paramedics.

Harris said the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner-Coroner’s Office has yet to disclose any information regarding the body.

“No cause of death has been determined,” she said.

“It’s unfortunate that it happened, but I am assuming it wasn’t an accident because it would be quite a fluke,” said Chloe Meza, a senior human resources major.

She suggests the university raise the guardrail and take further action to prevent this from ever happening again, because she said it has occurred in the past.

The southwest corner of the garage was blocked off for a couple of hours after the incident, Harris said, and students and staff were restricted from entering the parking structure to avoid contamination of evidence.

UPD officials, San Jose Fire Department and paramedics arrived at 7:18 a.m., said Sgt. John Laws of the University Police Department Administrative Services Division.

Laws said a man fell from one of the top floors of the 10th Street garage and was declared dead by paramedics at approximately 7:20 a.m.

“I am assuming it wasn’t self-inflicted,” he said.

“The case is currently being investigated as a suicide and has been turned over to the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner-Coroner’s Office, according to a UPD press release.

Harris said the UPD will be open to any information regarding the death.

“We always want students to know there is counseling services 24/7,” she said.

Campus breaks ground on new Student Union

ALEX SPICER
Staff Writer

Several hundred students were in attendance for the new Student Union’s groundbreaking ceremony that took place at noon Wednesday at the Paseo de Cesar Chavez.

Those at the celebration were provided with free coffee, beverages, T-shirts and musical entertainment by “So Timelorn,” a local band whose members include SJSU alumni.

Those involved in the ceremony included Interim President Don Kassing, Larry Carr, the associate vice president for public affairs, and Associated Students President Thomas Kolodziejak.

The ceremony began with speeches by Kassing, Kolodziejak and others before proceeding to the cleared area where the Old Cafeteria building used to stand.

Key people involved in the development process of the new Student Union then scooped dirt into a pile to signify the beginning of construction on the new facility.

Carr said it was important for the campus to be able to celebrate such a significant moment in its history.

“The ceremony recognizes what SJSU has become,” he said. “People want to be together academically like it will be well worth the money, and I believe we spent a lot of money on this,” she said.

Kassing said the new Student Union will complement the other new buildings on campus, such as the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library and Campus Village, all while providing support and a sense of community among students.

Michael Kaufman, a physics and astronomy professor, said the new Student Union will bring students together academically like never before.

Kaufman cited the difference in work quality between groups of students who live on campus and those who live off campus, and that the around-the-clock operations of the new Student Union will greatly benefit students living on campus.

According to an SJSU news release, the 235,000-square-foot facility will be completed in 2013 and will cost $90 million to construct.

The new Student Union is designed to centralize student organizations and services, and will feature a food court, coffee house, print shop and a computer center, according to the news release.

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Cups could take 5,000 years recycled, an aluminum can placed in a landfill instead of GreenEcoServices website, if last year, the total in tonnage of since 2004 from 59.4 percent ed that the rate has increased be recycled. [presentation, diversion rates refer to how much trash can actually to reuse reclaimable resources were Vital. Recycling is a never-ending concern in a world in which consumption is increasing on a daily basis.

According to Ramirez’s presenta- tion, diversion rates refer to how much trash can actually be recycled. Her presentation also stat- ed that the rate has increased since 2004 from 59.4 percent to 86.9 percent in 2010, and last year, the total in tonnage of recycling and composting on campus reached 5070.5 tons, with 670 tons being as a mulch.

According to the GreenEcoServices website, if placed in a landfill instead of recycled, an aluminum can could take up to 500 years to biodegrade, while Styrofoam cups could take 500 years and glass bottles 1 million years.

Ramirez said her focus is to make reusable resources as opposed to leaving them to biodegrade for up to millions of years. She said one form of recy- cling the school participates in is grasscycling.

Ramirez said grasscycling in the prac- tice of leaving grass clippings on the lawn when mowing. Ramirez said “we estimate that we generate over 390 tons of grass clippings per year on both campuses. Grass clipp- ings easily break down and return to the soil within one to two weeks, acting as a fertilizer and also as a mulch.

She said grasscycling also reduces the use of plastic bags for collecting yard waste and reduces the amount of hazardous waste that is shipped to landfills. Potentially hazardous mate- rials, which she said are produced hourly by the science laboratories, are cleaned from landfills and must either be re- cycled or treated as hazardous waste. Most electronic items con- tain at least some hazardous materials such as lead, chromi- um, cadmium and sometimes mercury.” Ramirez said “Here at San Jose State, those items are sent to processing facilities for recycling.

There are recep- tacles around school made specifi- cally for recyclable materials such as paper, bottles, cans and cardboard, but some students said they don’t know where to put them, so they just throw his water bottle into the grasscycling, he said. "Lab waste is tracked and kept inventory in an accumulation room, said Ramirez. Most of this waste is generated from Duncan Hall and the Science, Art and Engineering build- ings, he said. After absorption on campus, the waste is sent to a treatment plant off-site, said Ramirez. In contrast, the amount of abatement waste generated per year is a highly variable based on the amount of work done to campus, he said, and the construction company is responsible for its removal. As soon as it’s generated, it’s gone,” Good said. Maintenance waste includes antimite and oil from vehicles and other activities necessary to sustaining the campus, he said. Universal waste is the accumulation of items such as batteries, light bulbs and thermostats, he said.

Universal waste is kept in a storage location under Washington Square Hall until enough has been built up to warrant disposal by his off-site company.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency regulates the standards by which these wastes are disposed of, but each state varies in regulations. "Most electronic items contain hazardous materials, such as lead, chromium, cadmium, and sometimes mercury. At the MRF, recyclable and compostable items are removed and processed, and the remaining waste that can’t be otherwise diverted is sent to the landfill,” she said. "We have experienced a significant increase in our diversion from landfill with this new service, increasing our diversion per- cent from 15 percent in 2007 to 85.8 percent in 2008, and 88.5 percent for 2009,” Good said. She said that the pending Senate Bill 737 set a statutory diversion goal of 75 percent, requires commercial buildings also require counties and cities to implement a commercial recy- cling program. Assembly Bill 747, which is under review in the state Sen- ate, encourages school districts, California State Universities, Universities of California and city colleges to establish and maintain with beverage container recycling programs. “I really don’t know much about what the school does on the green side, but I have a couple of teachers that are trying to be more green,” said Chris Fox, a junior chemical engineering major. “I have a teacher that has us write up our own tests, which is better than printing out packets.” With student cooperation alongside faculty and staff, an effective recycling program can be implemented, and campus can continue to grow green.

Dills said. Ramirez said GreenWaste Recovery Inc. takes waste that hasn’t already been sorted and picked up by the universi- ty’s various recycling partners to its material recovery facility. At the MRF, recyclable and compostable items are removed and processed, and the remaining waste that can’t be otherwise diverted is sent to the landfill,” she said. "We have experienced a significant increase in our diversion from landfill with this new service, increasing our diversion per- cent from 15 percent in 2007 to 85.8 percent in 2008, and 88.5 percent for 2009.” She said that the pending Senate Bill 737 set a statutory diversion goal of 75 percent, requires commer- cial buildings also require counties and cities to implement a commercial recy- cling program. Assembly Bill 747, which is under review in the state Sen- ate, encourages school districts, California State Universities, Universities of California and city colleges to establish and maintain with beverage container recycling programs. “I really don’t know much about what the school does on the green side, but I have a couple of teachers that are trying to be more green,” said Chris Fox, a junior chemical engineering major. “I have a teacher that has us write up our own tests, which is better than printing out packets.” With student cooperation alongside faculty and staff, an effective recycling program can be implemented, and campus can continue to grow green.

The California Environmental Protection Agency was created in 1991 and is made up of six departments which specialize in certain environ- mental or health areas.

Gowda said all chemicals must be properly contained and labeled according to the nine haz- ard classes of these, Class One, or explosive materials, must not be allowed on campus, he said. Class Seven is known as nuclear material, which is present in minute amounts in the nuclear science department, Gowda said. When it comes to safety, he said it all depends on how the chemicals are used.

"If you take a Class Three (flammable) and a Class Four (oxidizable), that equates Class One (ex- plosive)," Gowda said — that’s why it is so impor- tant to segregate the various classes and keep them contained.

"It’s definitely important to try to get people to recycle," said Jeff Dills, a junior political science major. "There aren’t a lot of recycling receptacles around campus and there should be more. If you see them, you’re more likely to use them.” He said if he doesn’t see a recycling can nearby, he’ll just throw his waste into the trash. “If you have them inside classrooms, they’re more likely to get used,” Dills said.

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Remembering a professor’s green legacy

Frank Schiavo, a professor at SJSU for 30 years, pioneered environmental activism on campus.

Matthew Truog, a junior electrical engineering major, said he thinks it’s important that students have a positive change on the environment.

"Some of the biggest issues we are facing center around global warming and arguments about the fate of our environment," he said. "As the next generation, we have to take steps to try to save the damage and improve our surroundings.

This semester the ERC is co-directed by Wilson and Candice Carbonell, who are both senior environmental studies majors previous- ly involved in the class and were motivated to lead the organization after the previous di- rector stepped down.

"We need to catch up with other college campuses as far as sustainability," Carbonell said. "The class is fun, active and geared to- ward saving our planet.

To serve the student body, the ERC par- ticipates in a variety of ongoing environmental activities and projects while encouraging the campus community to become more sustain- able in its use of water, energy and material consumption, she said.

"SJSU has some steps to take in the di- rection of sustainability and we want to help make and see those steps happen," Carbonell said.

Over the years, the ERC has hosted a variety of events including composting workshops, bike to school days and discussion panels on environmental issues such as transportation, energy and waste management. Wilson recently. Recently, the ERC began the urban farm project, which is focusing on the Green Wave this year — to increase environmental awareness on campus.

"Events like the ones mentioned help en- gage our campus community and give them opportunities to learn about problems and participate in solutions with respect to issues like global climate change, the faulty of our water supplies, social equity and others," she said.

Advised by environmental studies Professor Lynne Truog, Wilson said the ERC is funded primarily by Associated Students, Transporta- tion Solutions and the department of environ- mental studies.

Although he was unable to disclose the amount of funding the center receives, Wilson said the center also hosts bake sales and raffles and applies for grants.

"It’s pretty much changed my life forever and I get my foot in the door for a lot of opportu- nities that I wouldn’t have otherwise," Former ERC Director Anna Le said. "I get involved because I love working with other students. Again and again, students surprise me with so much incredible effort and the enthusiasm that is shared."
Alternative transportation options for commuters lighten environmental load

Since then results have shown that VTA ridership has steadily increased throughout the years from 18.2 percent in 2000 to 31.5 percent in 2009, a 13.3 percent increase. Although results show that the number of solo drivers has decreased, 40.3 percent continue to drive solo rather than taking VTA.

Eying said she thinks there are a lot of benefits in using transportation to get to school. “It’s a lot less stressful,” she said. “You don’t have to look for or pay for parking.” She said she being able to use VTA to get to school you save money by not having to operate and maintain your car.

Cushing said according to Zonobi, the cost of operating a car is $7,800 per year when you include insurance and the cost of maintenance.

Although results show that driving to alternative transportation is to retrofit the existing capacity by 150 percent,” he said. “People who show up on time and maintain your car.

Zonobi said he is working with the San Joaquin Regional Railroad Commission to implement a discount pass exclusively for SJSU students and employees.

That’s 50 percent off their monthly pass and 20 percent ride passes to encourage ridership of that train from the Central Valley to here, Zonobi said.

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From July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010, SJSU’s campus used 142 million gallons of water — approximately 215 Olympic-size swimming pools per year (not including South Campus, the Aquatic Center and the Event Center).

In 2000, the campus used nearly 196 million gallons of water per year.

"In addition to the 142 million gallons, the central plant cooling towers for our system uses recycled water and that uses about 20 million gallons per year."

JARED ISAACSON
Energy Analyst

SJSU uses 142 million gallons of water, approximately 215 Olympic-size swimming pools per year (not including South Campus, the Aquatic Center and the Event Center).

Projects reduced SJSU’s water usage in 1999-2000 by 45 percent.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library recycled Water for Toilets Project will save the campus about 39 million gallons of water per year.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library recycled Water for Toilets Project will save the campus about 39 million gallons of water per year.

The SJ State plant and cooling towers use 20 million gallons per year of recycled water.

South Campus uses an additional 20 million gallons of recycled water per year to irrigate athletic fields and two million gallons of water for facilities.

Wells under SJSU feed campus water needs
Solar engineering classes complete evaluations on buildings and compounds to determine their solar viability. One SJSU professor thinks solar energy might be a viable option on campus.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library saves 5 million gallons of water per year using recycled water in urinals and toilets. SJSU uses 142 million gallons of water each year.

SJSU’s cogeneration plant produces 36 million kilowatt hours of energy per year.

SJSU produces more than 5,000 tons of waste each year. Five to six tons of waste are considered hazardous.

An overview of SJSU’s footprint