

For Immediate Release
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UCSB Graduate Students Introduce “Community Greenhouse Gas Solutions” to Ventura

Santa Barbara, CA – A group of master’s students from the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at the University of California Santa Barbara presented their thesis topic to VC Green Coalition at the City Corp building this evening. The members of the Bren|AECOM group presenting were Michael Conrardy and Aaron Sobel. The remainder of the group includes Gavin Feiger, Allison King and Justin Whittet, all second-year Bren master’s students.

Each year, the master’s students at the Bren School complete Group Projects as the culmination of their master of Environmental Science and Management Degree. These Group Projects, which serve as the Bren master’s thesis, are selected from many proposals the school receives from outside businesses, community groups, and other organizations.

This year, the *Community Greenhouse Gas Solutions Group Project* is addressing the pertinent environmental issue of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the community scale. Through a partnership with the Environment branch of the AECOM consulting company, the project will develop a software program that selects efficient, cost-effective strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

California’s Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, AB 32, has set an emissions reduction goal of reaching 1990 levels by the year 2020, and provided possible reduction strategies for communities. The strategies will include building efficiency, renewable energy sources, transportation solutions, and conservation practices.

The Bren group is using the City of Ventura as a case study to test its model and methods used. Ventura was chosen based on its proximity to UC Santa Barbara and characteristics that make it representative of a typical California community, such as demographics and land use. Ventura also voluntarily conducted a GHG inventory for municipal operations, a requirement of project client, AECOM. This initiative also indicated Ventura’s interest in addressing climate change at the local level.

The Bren|AECOM group recently completed a GHG inventory for the city of Ventura and has begun to prioritize reduction strategies (such as renewable energy, efficiency, and conservation) based on economic, geographic, and political feasibility. On April 8, 2010, all 16 current Bren Group Projects will be presented to the public at an event held on the University of California’s Santa Barbara campus.

The final results of the project will include:

- Software for California communities to use in selecting GHG reduction strategies based on geographic, economic, and political constraints.
- Recommended strategies tailored specifically to Ventura.
- A final report detailing the group’s motivation, methods, and conclusions following the completion of the project.

For more information about the Bren School and the Group Project, please go to www.bren.ucsb.edu. Details about the Bren|AECOM project can be found on the project website at www.brenaecom.org.

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