

# UCSC UNDERGRADUATES & THE ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEF PARADOX

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DATA ANALYSIS PROVIDED BY IRAPS

The People of Color Sustainability Collective is an award-winning campus initiative based on a partnership between the Ethnic Resource Centers, Colleges Nine and Ten, and the Sustainability Office.

The findings below are from a survey administered in Spring 2019 (n= 2,546). UCSC undergraduates identified various environmental concerns on a scale of "not important" to "very important". Below, we report the combined percentages of those labeled "important" or "very important".

Pearson et al. (2018) found that the stereotype of an "environmentalist" as white and wealthy is widely held by people across race and class.

Yet **people of color reported significantly higher levels of environmental concern than whites in a nationally representative survey**, even when controlling for gender, education, income and political ideology.

They labeled this prevalent and dismissive misrepresentation the "environmental belief paradox."

Pearson, A.R. et al. 2018. Diverse segments of the US public underestimate the environmental concerns of minority and low-income Americans. PNAS 115(49): 12429-12434.



The data speaks to how important environmental issues are to students as a whole at UCSC.

**White students** ascribed slightly higher levels of importance to some mainstream environmental concerns such as **renewable energy, green buildings, sustainable transportation, and conservation**, while **students of color** valued **food sovereignty and environmental justice** more.

The goal of the People of Color Sustainability Collective is to foster a more **inclusive environmental movement**, where the concerns, expertise and accomplishments of **people of color** are recognized.

PoCSC starts from the tenet that environmental sustainability is inextricable from social, economic and racial justice and must value different cultures, places and knowledge.

\* = statistically significant

