

## **UCCS Earns designation of Colorado Department of Higher Education 2016 Green Ribbon Award Nominee**

By Linda Kogan

UCCS has been selected by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to represent Colorado in the 2016 US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Awards competition. UCCS was chosen based on an extensive submission and review in the fall, as well as a site visit from CDE reviewers in January.

The aim of U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) is to inspire schools, districts and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to strive for 21st century excellence, by highlighting promising practices and resources that all can employ. To that end, the award recognizes schools, districts, and IHEs that:

1. Reduce environmental impact and costs;
2. Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and
3. Provide environmental education, which teaches many disciplines, and is especially good at effectively incorporating STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways.

At the postsecondary level, these Pillars help to support the goals of reduced college costs, increased completion rates, higher rates of employment, and robust civic skills among graduates. The recognition award is part of a U.S. Department of Education (ED) effort to identify and communicate practices that result in improved student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness; and reinforces federal efforts to increase energy independence and economic security.

Preparation of this submission was comprehensive, requiring information from numerous departments on campus including the Student Health and Wellness Center, Service Learning Internship and Engagement Center (SPLICE), Dining and Food Services, UCCS Farm and Greenhouse, Environmental Health and Safety, the Compass Curriculum, STEM, Institutional Research, and many others. "It was impressive to learn about all of the activities and progress occurring throughout the university, included in this award, which contributes to greater health, safety, and sustainability," shared Linda Kogan, sustainability director.

The UCCS submission for this award, with significant student input, can be accessed at <http://www.uccs.edu/~sustain/index/events/green-ribbons-school.html>. An accompanying video, also completed by students is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swp1ylnkDSY>.

The Education Department will announce honorees on Earth Day, April 22, 2016. If selected, UCCS will be invited to a reception in Washington D.C. to receive the award.