



Dan Sperling takes time from his travels to work with Kurt Kornbluth, Director of the Program for International Energy at the Institute for Transportation Studies.

Dan Sperling, Pivot Point to a More Energy Efficient Future By Claire Black-Slotten

Dan Sperling is a busy man. He is a Professor of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science and Policy, and founding Director of the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Davis (ITS-Davis) as well as interim director of the UC Davis Energy Institute. He also serves as the “car guy” on the California Air Resources Board, and this year, he is also chair of the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies in Washington DC.

Dan is leading the way to an environmentally sustainable transportation technology. When asked, “What are we waiting for?” Dan answers, “The revolution is underway but not evolving in a predictable way—in large part because it depends on consumers and policy.”

Where there is work on cleaner transportation, electric vehicles or advanced bio-fuels for transportation, he is there. As the founder of the Institute of Transportation Studies at UC Davis, he has helped develop the ideas that have moved California to leadership in environmentally friendly transportation systems. In short, Dan is looking for “air quality benefit, climate change benefit, and advanced replacements for oil”. Currently, he is on a campaign to direct the new Uber-like mobility services toward the public interest—to make sure it reduces overall vehicle use and greenhouse gases, and leads to greater access by those economically and physically disadvantaged.

Dan is known for combining high tech with high “touch” – by building strong partnerships with industry, government, and the environmental community, integrating interdisciplinary research and education programs, and connecting research with public outreach and education. He also teaches classes at UCD, inspiring the next generation of engineers and environmental scientists.

Dan walks the walk. He lives close to everything in Central Davis in a highly energy efficient (zero net energy) home. His only vice is excessive air travel.

At Cool Davis, we can’t think of anyone we would rather see leading the charge.