



# Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

## MIIS Moves to Solar

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In a move that champions sustainability, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) is seeing a significant transition to renewable energy with solar panels being installed on seven of its principal buildings. Andrew Hernandez, the Director of Facilities at MIIS, has been the driving force behind this initiative, collaborating with Mynt Systems, a Santa Cruz-based renewable energy firm. Impressively, this collaboration brings MIIS's own alumni back to their roots, as Mynt Systems boasts MIIS graduates within its ranks.

Hernandez explains the careful decision-making process behind choosing Mynt Systems: "The decision to go with Mynt wasn't taken lightly. We weighed our options and ultimately the PPA model made the most sense for us financially and logistically". The institute decided on a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), ensuring a fixed price for solar-generated energy for 20 years, while Mynt Systems handles the installation and ongoing maintenance.

This ambitious project includes a 309.72 kW solar photovoltaic system and is expected to offset about 60% of the energy consumption of the involved buildings, which is roughly

600,000 kWh each year. "This is a conservative estimate. We are aiming high and we believe the impact could be even greater," Hernandez adds, indicating the potential for an even more profound environmental impact.

The MIIS community, including its students, has been actively involved in the green transformation from the beginning. They've participated in initial tours and discussions, embodying the institute's dedication to involving its community in its sustainable development. Hernandez shared a personal anecdote that underscored the connection between MIIS and Mynt Systems, "Mynt's involvement brought a personal touch to the project. I didn't even realize at the time, but they have two MIIS alumni on their team. Discovering this in the middle of our feasibility study only solidified my belief that we had chosen the right company".

Addressing the potential disturbances caused by the installation, Hernandez noted the community's understanding and focus on the larger goal: "People understand that there's a greater good to this... so the noise hasn't been a big issue".

The installation process, which began in late August, is on a fast track to completion, expected to be finished by early December. The timing is strategic, with the goal to finalize integration during the Winter break, thereby minimizing any disruption to the campus activities.

With this solar panel project, MIIS not only upgrades its infrastructure but also takes a deliberate stride towards a sustainable future, reinforcing its commitment to environmental stewardship and leadership in eco-friendly practices.