



THE OFFICE OF
sustainability
WWU

2017-18 Report

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Office of Sustainability

Western Sustainability Report 2017-18

Preface

The 2017-18 Western Washington University Office of Sustainability Annual Report presents samples of the dedicated work of students, staff, faculty, and administrators across the University's campus toward creating a habitable, healthy community and planet through creative, progressive projects and initiatives. Western's ongoing commitment to create a more equitable, environmentally-secure world is reflected in its reputation as a national leader in sustainability education.

Western Washington University's Sustainable Action Plan, completed in 2017 and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2018, serves as the guiding document for the next two decades of sustainability initiatives on campus. The past academic year provided the first opportunity to begin to align efforts across campus to the plan, and throughout it significant progress was made on many goals and objectives. As the university's sustainability activities are now rooted in this plan, the 2017 Office of Sustainability Annual Report will provide information directly-relating to our advancement of the measures designated by the Sustainable Action Plan.

The plan, and this report, provides goals for the university to achieve across ten areas of activity that reflect the framework of STARS, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's framework for campus sustainability assessment. This tool is utilized with full awareness that there are infinite intersections among these categories, and that all sustainable undertakings are ultimately holistic and interdisciplinary. This report offers a survey of progress toward goals under the ten dimensions provided by the Sustainable Action Plan; it does not endeavor to list every act taken to improve sustainability at Western in the past academic year.



Executive Summary

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- Office of Sustainability Communication
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- Huxley College of the Environment Sustainable Business Certificate program

Campus and Community Engagement

For many decades, Western has played an important role in preparing students and conducting research to address local, regional, and global environmental challenges. Faculty and staff across the university support sustainability efforts on all scales through their ongoing research and teaching, participation in natural resource governance, and advocacy. Western strives to build, support, and sustain equitable and mutually-enhancing relationships throughout our campuses, our communities, the Salish Sea region, and the world. Western intends to expand and more fully formalize these efforts in order to engage the people on our campuses and our in communities to create a more sustainable world.

Progress

Western's culture and community engagement efforts is founded upon a strong commitment to sustainability. The Office of Sustainability communications team is working to redevelop student, staff, faculty, and visitor orientation programs to emphasis an appreciation of the ecosystems and communities that populate our campus and region. It have begun working on materials for all Western students, staff, and faculty, and intends to implement first versions of programs for the 2018-2019 academic year. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.1.

Western Reads is a campus-wide, common-reading program that serves the university's first-year mission by promoting intellectual engagement, community and conversation with new students through experiences related to selected texts. It creates opportunities for students to engage academically and socially in varied academic communities and conversations across campus. These include academic courses; interdisciplinary learning experiences; panel discussions; presentations by and engagement with guest speakers; film series; dialogues and activities with faculty, staff, students, and administration; book groups; community based learning experiences & dialogues; student-led experiences; and additional creative programming based on interest & need.

Every year the Western Reads team selects a book and develops events, discussions and programming around the themes in the book. The books invariably prompt discussion on multiple concepts, many of which are invariably rooted in sustainability. Tulalip, *From My Heart*, by Harriette Shelton Dover was the book for 2017-2018. This year's book is *Octavia's Brood*, edited by Adrienne Marie Brown and Walida Imarisha. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.2.

Dorceta Taylor, one of the nation's leading environmental justice scholars and activists, spoke at two public events on Feb. 26 and 27 at Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College. Her talk, "Power, Privilege, and Conservation: The Quest for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion", covered topics from her book "The Rise of the American Conservation Movement." This work examines the emergence and rise of the multifaceted U.S. conservation movement from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. Taylor shows how race, class, and gender influenced every aspect of the movement, including the establishment of parks; campaigns to protect wild game, birds, and fish; forest conservation; outdoor recreation; and the movement's links to 19th-century ideologies. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2 objective 2.6.

An American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) and First Nation Relations and Tribal Liaison to the President has been created. The hiring process to bring someone into this valuable new permanent position is underway, with the intention of having it filled in the fall. The liaison will then manage the new Tribal Advisory Committee, which will advise the president and university community on curriculum, campus-life, and gathering spaces, interactive facilities and operations, and engagement activities. Sustainable Action Plan goal 4, objective 4.2.

Student Life

Student learning and leadership take place in both the curricular and co-curricular activities of Western Washington University. The co-curricular environment, the world outside the classroom, is a place where many students take their classroom learning and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities they will carry with them throughout life. This engagement through student leadership and action for sustainability that has been a hallmark of the Western experience.

Western intends to increase all students' sustainability-based literacy, in order to attach the university experience to a broader and systemic context, and create and enhance opportunities that lend to campus-based research, and praxis, the intentional development of learning through engaged research outside the classroom.

Progress

During the 2018 Spring Quarter, a new Sustainability Ambassadors program was funded by the Sustainable Action Fund. The program offers a new model of equitable internship opportunities in sustainability work, provides increased clarity for student interns about career pathways relating to sustainability, and develops stronger pathways for collaboration between Western and sustainability oriented community organizations. Program collaborators include the Salish Sea Institute at Canada House, Enrollment and Student Services, the Office of Sustainability, and the Center for Community Learning.

Over 300 applications were received for eight community internships. The ambassadors were been placed at the Eastern Whatcom Regional Resource Center, York Community Farm, Sustainable Connections, and the City of Bellingham, where they developed valuable skills while strengthening the bond between university and the local community. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.4.

The Sustainable Action Fund significantly enhanced its outreach and engagement with Western Community in the 2017-2018 academic year. In the past year, over \$400,000 was approved to fund student projects to increase all four pillars of sustainability: Ecology, economy, human health, and social justice. Over 100 students participated in concept creation, grant writing, and project management. Using Western's sustainability framework of "equity-environment-economy-health", approximately 40% of last year's projects focused on the equity, 30% focused on environmental sustainability, 25% on human health, and 5% on economic issues. The fund has surpassed over one million dollars in projects funded since its inception in 2010. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.4

Students at Western Washington University are designing and building a zero-net-energy house to address local housing issues and educate the University and community about sustainable home design as part of an initiative called "Project ZeNETH." When completed, the house will produce at least as much energy as it consumes through a rooftop solar PV array, energy efficient systems and smart building design. The project is funded by a grant from the Sustainable Action Fund. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.5.

Transportation

Western strives to enable and empower everyone in the community to choose safe, accessible, sustainable transportation throughout the campus, community, and the world. Western will continue to display its leadership in sustainable transportation by expanding development of its pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure. The university has a long history of tackling community transportation concerns with innovative, people-focused solutions, including controlled parking, reduced-cost bus passes for employees, a universal bus pass for students, increased Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) bus service, and encouragement of walking and biking.

Progress

Sustainable Transportation and Environmental Health and Safety coordinated the development of improved pedestrian safety programming in the spring of 2018, and agreed to shift information about transportation safety to the Sustainable Transportation website. Sustainable Transportation also added safety information in their Summer Start information session. Moving forward, Sustainable Transportation plans to develop a comprehensive program that addresses safety education around the different transportation modes on campus. The office also coordinated with Parking Services and New Student Services to strengthen the language in the Family and Student Handbooks that encourages students to live car-free while in school. The university is also investigating changes to the built environment that will improve safety for all modes of transportation. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.1

The university's late night shuttle, a service strictly for Western students that is funded by the Alternative Transportation Fee, adopted a real-time shuttle-tracking app in 2018 to better serve riders with reliable information on bus location. The Whatcom Transportation Authority is plans to implement a real-time bus-tracking app within the next year. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.1.3

Three Western students worked with the Sustainable Action Fund program team to acquire funding for the university to purchase and install six level-two electric vehicle chargers on campus. Now active, they are the first such chargers established on Western's campus. Located near Fairhaven College, the stations provide students, staff, faculty, and visitors with the means to charge their electric vehicles while they visit Western, and represent the university's commitment to carbon-neutral future. Sustainable Action Plan goal 3, objective 3.3

Waste

From procurement to disposal of materials, Western is committed to sustainable approaches for materials management. In order to minimize the universities' human health and ecological consequences arising from waste management practices, this chapter outlines goals and strategies to incorporate sustainable practices into waste disposal. The ultimate goal is to achieve a zero-waste, closed-loop system where all inputs are either recycled, composted, reused, reprocessed, or remanufactured locally.

Progress

Western's Zero Waste Western Team is developing the assessment of all trash, compost, and recycle bin locations around campus. This survey will guide the placement of additional resources and help create a map for students of all such fixtures. A grant from the Sustainable Action fund facilitated this activity. Currently, the university installs four-part sorting stations during the construction or remodeling of all buildings on campus, and this system will ultimately serve as the model for all locations across campus. Aligned to this practice, the Viking Union also added compost bins to most of its sorting stations in the past year. Sustainable Action Plan goal 1, objective 1.4.

The Sustainable Action Fund also provided for the university to purchase five new Big Belly outdoor recycling stations. This new station bring the total number on Western's campus to nine, and will be installed this fall. These solar-

powered stations alert Western's Facilities Management team when they need to be emptied, thereby saving time and money for the university. Their prominent profile also increases student awareness of the university's commitment to become a zero-waste institution. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.3.

Again in 2018, Move-out Madness helped to keep the streets of Bellingham clean by minimizing and properly disposing of waste during move-out. Each year, Move-out Madness continues to reduce Bellingham's previous problem of student belongings being left on city sidewalks after move out. "The people of Bellingham have noticed an extreme reduction in furniture left on sidewalks over the year, largely as a result of Move-out Madness," said Gwen Larned, Zero Waste Coordinator. Sustainable Action Plan goal 3, objective 3.1.

Academics: Curriculum and Research

As an institution of higher learning, Western's responsibility has a clear responsibility to provide its students with a breadth of curriculum and research opportunities. The administration is striving to increase access to sustainability education and improve its instruction throughout social, economic, human health, and environmental disciplines, in both academic theory and practice. Due to this intensive effort, every college at the university now offers courses and academic programs related to sustainability.

Progress

Western supports scholarship and teaching that contributes to our regional understanding sustainability through its continued support and promotion of the Washington and Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC). The Pacific Northwest has long been known for its engagement in sustainability activities, and this conference is an annual opportunity to collaborate with other education institutions that are developing creative solutions to sustainability-related challenges. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.1.

Ten Western faculty members will again selected to be Sustainability Fellows in the upcoming academic year, a designation that awards \$1,000 for the purpose of integrating sustainability concepts and pedagogical methods into their courses. Sustainability Fellows represent all colleges at Western, and interact as a cohort, training each other and promoting the program across campus. \$10,000 was provided by the Provost's Office to continue this program for this year. Sustainable Action Plan goal 3, objective 3.1.

The Huxley College of the Environment, in partnership with Sustainable Business Consulting, commenced a new professional learning opportunity in Sustainable Business. Through this non-credit executive learning opportunity, students gain practical, cutting-edge skills in the field of business and sustainability. The entire Certificate of Completion consists of 24 skill-building and career-advancing workshops that can be taken remotely. Sustainable Action Plan goal 1, objective 1.4.

Operations: Built Environment

The built environment encompasses all facilities owned by Western, including academic and office buildings, residence halls, dining facilities, and all satellite facilities. Western intends for its entire built environment to become carbon neutral through the management of energy resources used to operate and maintain the institution.

Progress

In 2016 Western joined other institutions and organizations around the state to invest in a new Puget Sound Energy wind farm that will provide carbon neutral energy for its stakeholders. The wind farm, which is set to become operational in 2019, will allow the university to cease purchase of renewable energy certificates by directly owning a

green-energy source. This investment allows the institution to meet its carbon emissions reductions by 15%, per state requirements, by 2020. It also brings Western closer to its goal of carbon neutrality: reducing the carbon intensity of university energy supply sources and achieving 100% net university carbon reduction. Sustainable Action Plan goal 1, objective 1.1

The most relevant strategic initiative of the Institute for Energy Studies is our initiative to use the WWU campus and its community as a living laboratory, in collaboration with Facilities Management, Office of Sustainability and external partners. The idea is to build on students' coursework and give them hands-on learning in projects where they have the chops to make real contributions. Sustainable Action Plan goal 6, objective 6.1. Some ongoing projects include the following:

- Via a course, MA thesis, and two independent study projects, students initiated work on a solar project siting, design, permitting and financing to establish the WWU campus as a location for a community solar program, and were awarded forty hours free consulting from NREL researchers.
- With support from Institute for Energy Studies, the IDEA Institute sponsored an Energy Changemaker Fellow, a student who worked on rental building energy efficiency and alternative finance and business models for this hard-to-reach efficiency target market.
- A student team, working with Smart Building Center in Seattle, received a Sustainable Action Fund grant for an Energy Efficiency Tool Lending Library at WWU.

Operations: Dining Services

Western strives to be a leader in sustainable food service practices through implementing goals and policies that keep ambitions high and progress continual in all service areas, including purchasing, production efficiencies, waste reduction, and energy consumption and monitoring. In recent years, sustainability efforts have progressed quickly in University Dining Services (UDS), including replacing equipment with energy and water efficient appliances, and using eco-friendly cleaning practices and products.

Progress

University Residences recently invested \$100K to upgrade to more efficient equipment in its dining facilities. Sustainable Action Plan goal 1, objective 1.1.

Western continues to make steady progress toward its Real Food goal of 25% by 2020. As of August 2018, we are at 19.6%. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.3.3

In an effort to become zero-waste in all dining locations, University Dining Services has a champion in charge of overseeing recycling and composting. Once a month trainings are held, including waste management. The large straws at Starbucks remain the only item to make compostable. Sustainable Action Plan goal 4, objective 4.2

Operations: Grounds

Western is situated in a unique ecological, geographic, and climatic setting between the Salish Sea and the Cascade Mountains. This setting offers an abundance of challenges and opportunities for the grounds maintenance program. Regional environmental priorities, such as the protection of salmon habitat, water conservation, and stormwater pollution prevention are intricately woven into the daily responsibility of maintaining a visually spectacular learning environment.

Progress

Supporting the goal of reducing air and noise pollution using sustainable landscape equipment, Grounds doubled its inventory of electric lawnmowers, weed eaters, and blowers since last year, as well as purchasing two electric chain saws. Sustainable Action Plan goal 2, objective 2.1.

To enhance stormwater treatment and reduce pollutant runoff from impervious surfaces across campus, Grounds recently purchased a high-efficiency street sweeper to keep fine particulates from our roads and parking lots from entering stormwater. Sustainable Action Plan goal 4, objective 4.2.

Grounds continues to employ at least six seasonal student employees in the Outdoor maintenance shop, providing education on sustainable practices and utilizing campus grounds to foster environmental stewardship. Sustainable Action Plan goal 5, objective 5.1.

Operations: Procurement

Western's procurement department directly facilitates the acquisition of goods and services between suppliers and the university, ensuring those transactions occur within the guidelines of state regulations and university policy. There are three areas of procurement on Western's campus not managed by Western's Business and Financial Affairs office. They include the Western's Associated Students Bookstore, Western Libraries, and Western Vehicle Procurement.

Progress

The AS Bookstore increased e-book sales from \$36K in FY17 to \$59K in FY18, an increase of more than 60% fulfilling its objective to increase sustainable textbook options by 10% by fiscal year 2018. Library acquisitions staff continue to ask requesters, whenever available, whether an e-book will suffice in lieu of a print book. This intervention at the point of need is often enough to divert a potential print purchase to an electronic one. However, due to a variety of factors (including faculty turnover within the Libraries and the evolution of the role of the faculty librarian) it is difficult to determine how consistently this message has been carried to departments. Moving forward, the Libraries plans to more clearly define expectations regarding departmental outreach, thus laying the groundwork for more proactive communication in this area. Sustainable Action Plan goal 4, objective 4.1.

Library acquisitions policies discourage the purchase of dual formats, except in very rare circumstances that must be approved by the Director of Collections. However, as with Strategy 4.1.1, it is difficult to ensure that this message, and the ethos of sustainability that underlies it, are reaching departments in a consistent manner. Sustainable Action Plan goal 4, objective 4.1.

Prioritizing methods of accessing library materials that have a smaller carbon footprint, the Libraries' current demand-driven purchasing model includes criteria related to curricular relevance, ensuring that all materials purchased are tied to Western's curricular needs. In addition to this demand-driven purchasing, the Libraries is also implementing an approval plan, which will ensure that materials related to areas of documented need (i.e. subject areas with high usage and heavy resource sharing requests) will be added to the collection automatically. This combination of proactive, strategic purchasing and demand-driven purchasing ensure that we are meeting Western's curricular needs efficiently and effectively. Sustainable Action Plan goal 4, objective 4.2.

Planning and Administration: Investments

The Western Washington Foundation, a distinct entity with its own governance is proud to collaborate with University to progress the cause of sustainability in within its purview of responsible investment, and consistently considers environmental, social, and governance (ESG) aspects of all companies being considered for fund investment.

Progress

This academic year all Wilder Sustainability Speakers focused on ESG investing, advancing educational opportunities for greater student learning in the management, and oversight of endowments and sustainable investing. Each quarter, approximately 100 students attended these lectures. Presentations were illuminating and discussion was animated. Commonfund—the company hired to manage the Foundation’s investments—was the Wilder Sustainability Speaker for the spring of 2018. Deborah Spalding, Deputy CIO and Managing Director of Commonfund, outlined the general landscape of ESG investing and how Commonfund is increasingly interested in this investment space. Goal 3, objective 3.1

In 2018 Saturna Capital made a gift of \$110,000 to fund initial construction, equipment purchase, and software licensure for the Saturna Sustainable Investing Lab in Parks Hall. While this gift was not made in response to the Sustainability Action Plan, the next cycle of the gift—and the naming rights are soon scheduled to sunset—will include explicit reference to the goals of the university’s sustainable action plan. Sustainable Action Plan goal 3, objective 3.2

