

America's Campuses In 2008: Leading The Way To A Greener Future

National Wildlife Federation's Campus Environment 2008:
A National Report Card on Sustainability in Higher Education

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America's institutions of higher education, through their management and operations, are progressing toward a greener future. The nation's largest survey created to gauge campus sustainability—with more than 1,060 participating schools—demonstrates how our learning hubs integrate green programs into day-to-day operations such as transportation, landscaping, energy conservation, and waste reduction.

But schools fall behind when it comes to providing students with the academic preparation needed to face environmental challenges and seize the opportunities of the future.

From the survey results, **National Wildlife Federation** in partnership with Princeton Survey Research Associates International has devised a report card on national campus environmental performance and analyzed trends compared to the same study conducted in 2001.

REPORT CARD HIGHLIGHTS		
WATER EFFICIENCY UPGRADES	A	
PROTECTING NATURAL HABITATS	C+	
LANDSCAPING	B-	
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	C	
RECYCLING	A	
ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION	B+	

Daily Operations

Efforts to green our campuses shine most brightly in day-to-day operations. Facilities leaders, together with students and faculty, have been instrumental in driving programs to conserve energy and water, increase the amount of clean energy used to power the campus, and reduce waste.

Little progress has been made to date in reducing the congestion, pollution and other environmental impacts associated with campus commuting.

Since 2001, a new movement to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and shift to cleaner sources of energy has taken hold in a whole variety of ways. For example, 32 percent of colleges and universities use off-campus renewable energy sources to meet some of their electricity, heating and cooling needs, and more than 36 percent of schools say they have plans to generate more renewable energy on campus.



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Campus Management

American colleges show greener overall leadership than they did in 2001. The study reveals that management generally values environmental, social and economic sustainability and are putting structures in place to broaden and sustain engagement campus-wide.

Indicators of this commitment include more staffing for sustainability, and a rise in orientation programs for "greener" practices. However, environmental and sustainability programs still face roadblocks such as inadequate funding.



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The Weakest Link: Environmental Lessons In the Classroom

Results show that academics still lag behind the vision of a sustainable campus—even more so than when this survey was first conducted in 2001.

Sustainability-related education offerings and recruitment programs have declined, as have faculty doing environmental and sustainability research. Just over half of colleges and universities now offer either an undergraduate major or minor in environmental and sustainability studies, down from two-thirds in 2001.

Environmental curriculum requirements are slipping and students are less likely to be environmentally literate when they graduate than their predecessors. The men and women who, in 20 years, will lead our businesses, educational institutions and government agencies are in school now. We need to offer them the kind of academic and professional preparation that will ready them to envision and create a more sustainable world.



Survey Highlights

AMERICA'S CAMPUSES ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. THESE KEY RESULTS ILLUSTRATE SOME ENCOURAGING NEWS AS WELL AS

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT:

- **Most promising new development:**
Rising percentage of campuses setting goals for reducing emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases.
- **Most prevalent environmental initiative:**
2008: Water conservation and efficiency
2001: Recycling
- **Most popular performance goal:**
In 2008: Conserving energy
In 2001: Environmental performance in new buildings
- **New motivator for sustainability programs:**
In 2008, the cost effectiveness of environmental and sustainability improvements is a much stronger motivator than it was in 2001.
- **Still struggling:**
Little progress in the congestion, pollution and costs associated with students and staff driving alone to campus.



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Exemplary Programs

- More than 240 schools are recognized in the report for having exemplary levels of sustainability activities, as determined by survey responses. The school engaged in the greatest number of such activities is Willamette University in Salem, Oregon.
- Other campuses with relatively high numbers of exemplary marks include the Georgia Institute of Technology; Michigan State University; University of Arizona; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Cascadia Community College in Bothell, Washington. Dozens of other campuses are recognized in the report for specific programs.

- MORE THAN 18 MILLION STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES, OFFERING A COMPELLING OPPORTUNITY FOR CLIMATE LEADERSHIP.
- CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT 2008: A NATIONAL REPORT CARD ON SUSTAINABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION REVEALS JUST HOW WELL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGH LEARNING ARE PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE CHALLENGES THEY WILL FACE CONCERNING GLOBAL WARMING AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.CAMPUSECLOGY.ORG.

