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STARS RESULTS SUMMARY: ACADEMICS

PREPARED BY:

Katie Koscielak
Sustainability Analyst
Office of Sustainability

ABOUT ACADEMICS

Background

Sustainability is a hallmark pillar of the Humboldt State University identity, and this is perhaps best evidenced by the expertise and talent the campus has demonstrated with regard to incorporating sustainability themes and topics into academics. The Office of Sustainability has measured the degree to which sustainability has been integrated to academics over time using the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS), a standard sustainability benchmarking tool used worldwide throughout higher education.

STARS Categories & Points

Within the STARS assessment framework, there are 11 credit categories by which sustainability is measured in Academics. In 2020, HSU achieved 49.88 out of 58 points, or 86% of all points available in Academics. This demonstrates robust accomplishment and that the campus is a premier institution for students seeking such learning opportunities.

For this assessment, the Office of Sustainability has adopted a consistent framework by which to define or measure sustainability wherein sustainability topics are those that explore interconnections between social, environmental, and economic systems.



SUSTAINABILITY COURSES



17%

Percentage of overall courses that are designated as either sustainability-related or sustainability-focused in the course catalog



sustainability-related course: explores the relationship between any two dimensions of sustainability (society-environment, environment-economy, or society-economy)

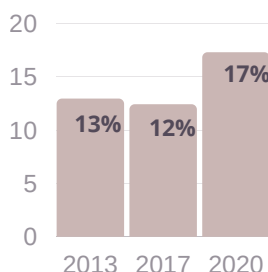


sustainability-focused course: concentrates on the concept of sustainability, including intersections between social, economic and environmental dimensions, or examines a topic using sustainability as a lens



79%

Percentage of academic departments offering at least one sustainability designated course



4.6%

Increase in percent of classes with a sustainability designation, since the last STARS report was submitted in 2017

Recommendation



Add sustainability content to greater number of existing courses & greater diversity of departments



Institutional Sustainability Learning Outcomes

ILO #1: Equity and Social Justice

HSU graduates will be able to identify and evaluate systems of power and privilege and identify methods for creating diverse, inclusive, and racially just and equitable communities.

ILO #2: Sustainability & Environmental Awareness

HSU graduates will be able to explain how the functions of the natural world, society, and the economy depend on the resilience, sustainability, and conservation of ecological systems.

Program-level Sustainability Learning Outcomes

40%

Percentage of students who graduate from programs that require an understanding of the concept of sustainability in order to graduate

Percentage above was calculated by summing graduates from:

- (1) degree programs with a sustainability-focus (listed on page 4)
- (2) degree programs that have adopted sustainability-focused learning outcomes
- (3) degree programs that require all students in the program to take at least one sustainability-focused course

Recommendation



Incorporate consistent sustainability learning outcome language across increased number of programs

Sustainability-Focused Academic Programs

The programs listed below have been identified to have a sustainability focus, because they train students to understand interconnections between social, economic, and environmental systems, which is evident in their program description and course requirements.

Undergraduate Programs

Environmental Science & Mgmt B.S.
Environmental Resources Engineering B.S.
Environmental Studies B.A.

Minors

Environmental Ethics
Environmental & Natural Resources Planning
Environmental Policy
Indigenous Peoples, Natural Resource Use & the Environment

Graduate Programs

Social Science M.A. (Environment & Community)
Environmental Systems M.S. (Focus in Environmental Resources Engineering or Energy Technology & Policy)
Business M.B.A.



Recommendation



Create a program with "sustainability" in the name and with explicit focus on sustainability in the description and learning outcomes.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Costa Rica Field Course: International Environmental Issues & Globalization

Course: ESM/GEOG 301

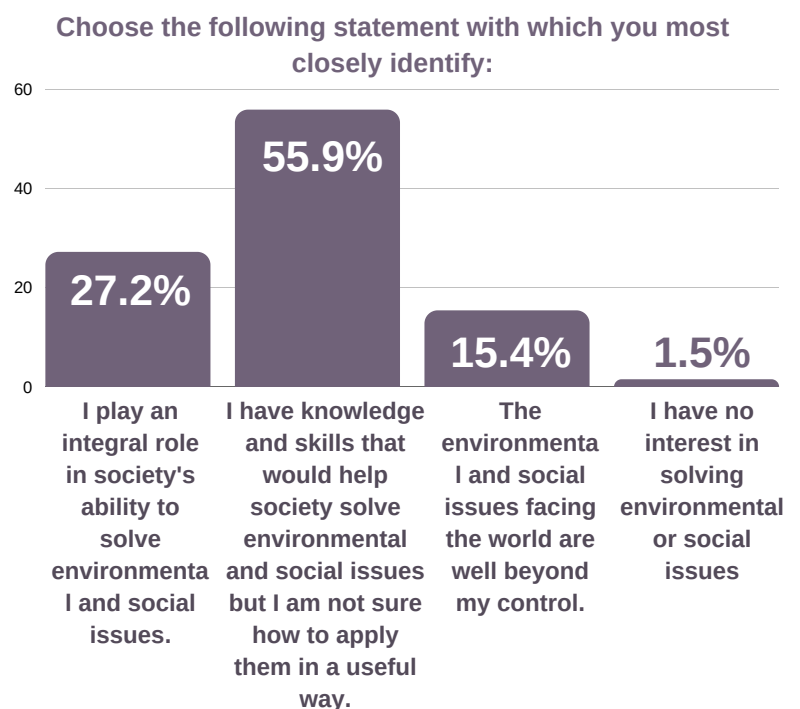
Fulfills General Education Area D Requirement

This course is an interdisciplinary synthesis of environmental issues within the broader context of globalization. The emphasis of the curriculum is on local sustainability efforts in Costa Rica/Central America, and associated global-local connections. Specific topics include: sustainable community development, free-trade, agriculture & land use, renewable energy, biological conservation and restoration of tropical ecosystems.



Assessing Sustainability Literacy

HSU routinely conducts an assessment among students which contains questions specific to sustainability literacy and some questions about sustainability behavior & attitudes. Results of the assessment are used to establish a literacy baseline, and help the campus track student understanding of sustainability concepts and initiatives over time, as well as their engagement with sustainability and their interest in learning more.



CAMPUS AS A LIVING LAB

Campus As A Living Lab (CALL) is a concept under which students help to address a sustainability goal while at the same time work to solve a real-world campus problem.

Of the 15 subject areas STARS uses to measure CALL, HSU hosts a class project for every one.

Examples

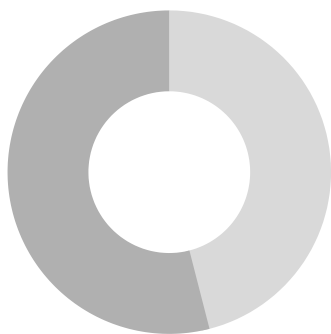
In Environmental Education & Interpretation Graphics (ESM 353), student teams develop interpretive signs for the campus. The intent of these signs is to generate awareness of and participation in campus sustainability programs.

In Environmental Resources Engineering (ERE) 532 graduate seminar, entitled “Energy, Environment, and Society,” students conduct greenhouse gas emissions inventories for the University utilizing annual energy and fuel use data supplied by Facilities Management.



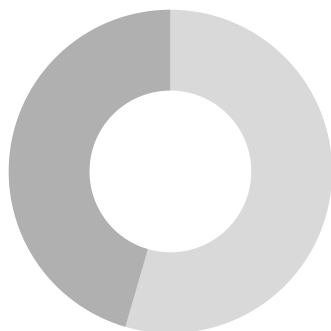


RESEARCH



46%

Percentage of research employees are engaged in sustainability research



54.5%

Percentage of departments conducting research that are engaged in sustainability research

Example

Principal Investigator (ESM Faculty)
Laurie Richmond conducted research in which she collaborated with the state of CA to develop a set of recommended long-term socioeconomic monitoring indicators and locations related to the state's marine protected area network.

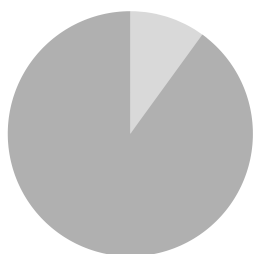
Recommendation



Increase number of researchers and diversity of departments conducting sustainability research.

Open Access to Research

- Open Access Repository: digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/
- Open Access Journal Hosting: [Humboldt State University Press](#), [IdeaFest Journal](#), [Redwood Roots Magazine](#), [Toyon](#), [Digital Commons](#)



10%

Estimated percentage of peer-reviewed scholarly works published annually by the institution's employees that are deposited in a designated open access repository

Overall Gap Analysis

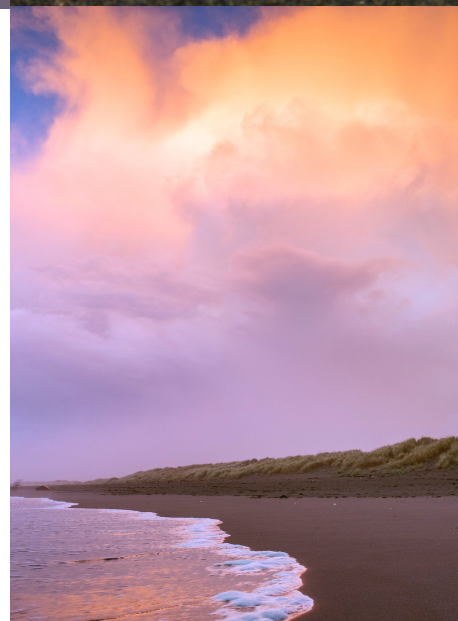
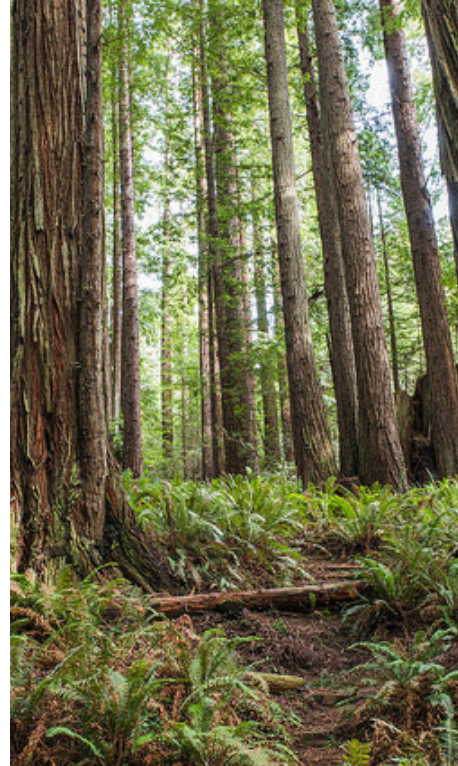
While the campus has demonstrated achievement with the robust integration of sustainability into Academics, there are a few areas that remain gaps.

Specifically, there are currently minimal formal incentive programs to encourage faculty to develop new sustainability courses or incorporate sustainability into existing courses, and there are no support programs intended to encourage students, staff or faculty to conduct research in sustainability.

STARS Points Summary

AC 1 Academic Courses: 12.19 / 14 (87%)
AC 2 Learning Outcomes: 8 / 8 (100%)
AC 3 Undergraduate Program: 3 / 3 (100%)
AC 4 Graduate Program: 3 / 3 (100%)
AC 5 Immersive Experience: 2 / 2 (100%)
AC 6 Sustainability Literacy Assessment: 4 / 4 (100%)
AC 7 Incentives for Developing Courses: 0 / 2 (0%)
AC 8 Campus As A Living Lab: 4 / 4 (100%)
AC 9 Research & Scholarship: 10.36 / 12 (86%)
AC 10 Support for Sustainability Research: 2 / 4 (50%)
AC 11 Open Access to Research: 1.33 / 2 (67%)

Overall Score for Academics: 49.88 / 58 (86%)



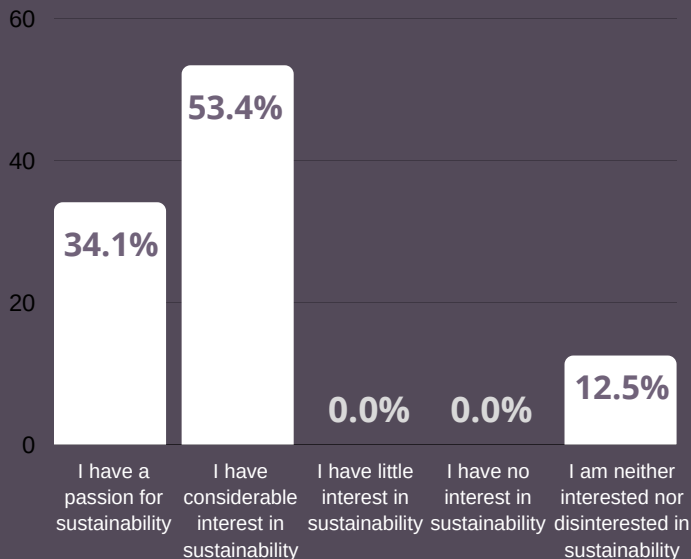
CONCLUSION

Sustainability is integrally incorporated as a core part of academic life at HSU, making the campus a leading institution for students seeking sustainability training and opportunities.



What do students say?

Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your level of interest in sustainability:



+40%

Percentage of bi-annual campuswide survey respondents who answered yes to the question "Was HSU's commitment to sustainability a reason you chose to come here?"

+60%

Percentage of bi-annual campuswide survey respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I would prefer more sustainability-related content in my courses."

More Information

Find out more by visiting:

- STARS: <https://stars.aashe.org/>
- 2020 HSU STARS Report: <https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/humboldt-state-university-ca/report/2020-05-07/>
- Sustainability at HSU: <https://facilitymgmt.humboldt.edu/sustainability>