

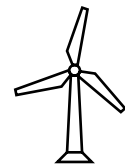


# Sustainability at UW-Madison

2021-2022

## Strategic Initiatives

- UW-Madison [completed its second comprehensive sustainability report](#) through the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS). Though UW-Madison remained within the scoring band for a Silver rating, the university increased its total score by almost 10 points.
- UW-Madison is working with Alliant Energy to plan a [small-scale solar and agricultural research project](#) to be located at the Kegonsa Research Campus near the Physical Sciences Lab outside of Stoughton, Wisconsin. The proposed solar array would generate enough electricity to power ~600 homes. Office of Sustainability staff are managing this project for the university, which will receive Renewable Energy Credits and revenue for future sustainability projects.
- The new [Sustainability Advisory Council \(SAC\) website](#) includes updates on the SAC process as well as results from the work of the SAC, including a [definition of sustainability for UW-Madison](#) and a framework for achieving sustainability leadership.
- As part of the third-year activities for the [Second Nature Resilience Commitment](#), Office of Sustainability staff are implementing a portfolio of 22 sustainability pilot projects and working with campus stakeholders to gather input for a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- The UW Zero Waste Initiative has made significant advances, including hiring three undergraduate project assistants; designing a new pilot program for back-of-house food waste collection; undergoing a waste bin study at Ingraham Hall; assisting with a food waste reduction technology proposal with University Housing and Dining; and beginning work on a campus-wide Recyclopedia.
- The [UW-Madison Green Fund](#) was selected for the [2022 Senior Class Gift](#). The Green Fund enables students to contribute to campus sustainability by proposing and implementing projects like [lighting retrofits](#), food waste mitigation, pollinator-friendly landscaping, an [art competition](#), and [solar arrays](#).
- Office of Sustainability staff are chairing a working group consisting of colleagues across UW System campuses as well as building industry and academic professionals to pursue the development, adoption, and application of more rigorous Sustainability Standards & Implementation Guidelines to all UW System capital projects.



**46.6%**  
reduction in  
greenhouse gas  
emissions per  
building square foot  
since 2007



**86%**  
students who  
commute to campus  
by any means other  
than driving alone

*Sustainability at UW-Madison  
unites equity, efficiency,  
education, and research in service  
of environmental health for all.*

— SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (2022)



## Students in Sustainability

- UW–Madison participated in the [Worldwide Teach-In on Climate Solutions and Justice](#), which featured concurrent sessions led by faculty, staff, and students as well as a plenary discussion on next steps for climate action at the university.
- Dr. Barbara Hendrie, the Regional Director for the UN Environment Programme’s North America Office, was a special guest on the [SustainUW Podcast](#), which is hosted by Office of Sustainability interns.
- The [Amplifying BIPOC Voices in Sustainability Series](#), hosted by Office of Sustainability interns, held its second year of conversations on topics like [Black Entrepreneurship](#), [Indigenous Activism](#), and [Food Justice](#).
- UW–Madison student Natalie Tinsen co-organized the second annual [Student Systems Conference](#) under the aegis of the [Midwest Climate Collaborative](#). Students registered from each of the Big 10 schools, as well as other universities like UC-Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, and Cornell.
- Students in Associate Professor Carey McAndrews’ “Climate Action Planning: Sustainable Transportation” class [held a workshop](#) that brought together experts to discuss the future of transportation infrastructure on campus and in the City of Madison.

## Regional Leadership

- UW–Madison, alongside more than 40 partners across the region, [launched the Midwest Climate Collaborative](#), a cross-sector network of organizations committed to accelerating climate action in the Midwest by leveraging science and research, shaping public understanding and policy, accelerating climate solutions, and developing future leaders.
- Study Abroad released an update to their [Handbook](#) that documents the various impacts of international travel and includes tips and opportunities for traveling more sustainably, showcasing Study Abroad’s [Commitment to Sustainability](#).
- UW Health became one of the first health systems in the country to join the U.S. Department of Energy’s [Better Climate Challenge](#), committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent within 10 years.
- UW–Madison Director of Sustainability Dr. Missy Nergard will join Maria Redmond, Director of the Wisconsin Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy, to give a Badger Talks Live presentation on the impact of the new statewide clean energy plan.



**600**

equivalent number of homes whose electricity needs will be generated by a new solar and agricultural research project at the Kegonsa Research Campus



## Research and Scholarship

- PhD candidate Gesangyangji is [analyzing climate modeling data](#) in unprecedented ways to reimagine how we design buildings in the face of climate change.
- Researchers from UW–Madison, Penn State, and the University of Illinois Chicago will use a \$2.3 million grant from the Department of Energy to develop a [carbon-negative replacement for portland cement](#), turning the widely-used, carbon-intensive building material into a carbon sink.
- Kasey Keeler, Assistant Professor of Civil Society & Community Studies and American Indian Studies, is [leading an interdisciplinary community-engaged project](#), “[Mapping Dejope: Indigenous Histories and Presence in Madison](#),” which will collect histories from UW and Dejope community members—past and present—to reveal the Indigenous histories and presence of this shared environment.
- CALS launched the [nation’s first in-person undergraduate certificate in organic agriculture](#), which provides opportunities for undergraduates to not only understand the production and processing approaches that define organic agriculture but also gain insights into the organic industry.
- UW–Madison is participating in the [Tree Canopy Working Group](#), which seeks to collectively maintain, protect, and expand

public and private tree canopy across Dane County where ecologically appropriate, and to ensure equitable access to trees and their associated benefits. [Elizabeth Berg](#), one of the UW–Madison members, studies the urban heat island effect in Madison.

## Honors and Recognitions

- UW–Madison was [designated as a Fair Trade University](#), making it just the second school in the Big Ten to attain this status, as well as the third within the UW System.
- For the second year in a row, UW–Madison was among the [top 30 colleges and universities](#) in the country to be recognized as a leader in clean energy use. The ranking reflects the percentage of green power out of a university’s total electricity use.
- UW–Madison was [recognized as one of the nation’s Best Universities for Commuters](#). A significant percentage of the campus population chooses alternative or active transportation methods, such as riding the bus or biking.
- Dr. Andrea Hicks, Director of Sustainability Education and Research at UW–Madison, was [one of two recipients](#) of the 2021 Laudise Medal from the International Society for Industrial Ecology. Hicks is a leader in using life cycle assessments to determine the long-term environmental impact of various systems, products and processes.



# 76

departments that conduct sustainability research at UW–Madison



# 3,705

tons of municipal solid waste recycled, composted, or re-used in FY20





## On, Wisconsin: The Year Ahead

- The Office of Sustainability and Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies will be hosting a Sustainability Symposium in October at the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery Building. The event will include a keynote, lightning talks, and poster presentations.
- The Office of Sustainability will partner with the state's Office of Sustainability & Clean Energy to implement the [Lead by Example initiative](#), which will include greenhouse gas emission tracking and reduction, sustainable procurement, clean fleet practices, and waste and water reduction.
- The Office of Sustainability and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies will invite the first cohort of a new faculty scholars program that focuses on building a community and advancing the state of sustainability research and teaching on our campus.

## 2021-2022 Designations and Accolades

Bee Campus USA Affiliate

Fair Trade University

Post-Landfill Action Network Member

Platinum Rated Bicycle Friendly University

Signatory, Second Nature Resilience Commitment

STARS Silver Rated University

US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award, 2021

Voter Friendly Campus, 2021-2022

Zero Waste Atlas Fellowship Participant

*Thanks to funding and support from MGE Foundation and the Green Fund, Dining & Culinary Services launched the newest sustainable food truck in Spring 2022. The 100% electric food truck is operationally advised by the Electric Eats Task Force, a group of students and staff who meet regularly to uphold the mission of the truck, assess the targeted sustainability goals, and represent the interests of the truck's internal and external stakeholders.*

