Strengths

Cleaning Product Purchasing
The use of ozonated water has eliminated our need to purchase harmful chemicals that pollute our water system and negatively impact human health.

Food Waste
The Eco-Rep program at UVM now makes composting available in every dining facility and dormitories, further decreasing the amount of waste sent to landfills.

Subcategories: Building a Better Campus

Buildings
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are taking steps to improve the sustainability performance of their buildings. UVM currently has 12 LEED projects. Due to the fact that buildings are generally the largest user of energy and source of greenhouse gas emissions, these projects have contributed to UVM’s outstanding indoor air quality (OP3).

Climate
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are measuring and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. UVM is currently receiving most of the credits for this subcategory through a greenhouse gas emission inventory (OP4). The university could benefit more by focusing on greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction (OPS).

Dining
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are supporting a sustainable food system. UVM has adopted many sustainable alternatives such as providing tray-less dining, utilizing locally produced goods, and recycled paper products (T2)

Energy
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are reducing their energy consumption through conservation and efficiency, and switching to cleaner and renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, geothermal, and low-impact hydropower. UVM has installed lighting sensors, LED’s, and meters (T2) to measure and track energy use. This is vital to the university due to the fact that energy consumption is the largest source of GHG emissions.

Overview: What is OP?
The Operations section of STARS focuses on creating a sustainable infrastructure for universities to operate in. It contains nine categories that cover sustainable best practices in every aspect of a university’s campus: buildings, climate, dining, energy, grounds, purchasing, transportation, waste, and water. This section of STARS focuses on the physical, day-to-day activities and operations, as well as planning for the future in the form of greenhouse gas emission reductions and purchasing power.

Areas for Improvement

• Food & Beverage Purchasing: 2.5 / 6.0
• Clean and Renewable Energy: 1.5 / 7.0
• Building Energy consumption 4.2 / 8.0
• Campus Fleet: 0.12 / 2.00
• Waste Reduction: 2.05 / 5.00
• Waste Diversion: 1.34 / 3.00

The biggest area of improvement in the Operations category of STARS, is in Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions. UVM currently has a score of 3.5 out of 14. As a result of the university’s Climate Action Plan and Clean Energy Fund, UVM will begin to implement more renewable energy sources.

Subcategories: A Sustainable Future

Grounds
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that plan and maintain their grounds with sustainability in mind. UVM’s integrated Pest Management Plan (OP19) has eradicated the use of harmful and dangerous chemicals. In addition, the use of Magic Salt (T2) has helped the university to decrease the amount of salt, which is both harmful and corrosive to both roads and green space.

Purchasing
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are using purchasing power to help build a sustainable economy. UVM has been responsibly allocating money to better cleaning products (OP11). As a result, most of the points received from this subcategory have come from this specific purchasing decision. In addition, the on-campus computer depot consciously purchases computers with the best possible environmental impact ratings (OP10).

Transportation
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are implementing a sustainable transportation system. Transportation is a major source of GHG emissions and other pollutants that contribute to human health problems. Currently, 82% of UVM students have adopted sustainable transportation methods (OP15).

Waste
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are moving toward zero waste by reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. UVM’s Encores have worked hard to offer and provide compost bins throughout campus as a sustainable way to improve and reduce waste. This has increased waste diversion (OP18) and lessened the amount that would be otherwise sent to landfills.

Water
This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are conserving water and making efforts to protect water quality. UVM’s Stormwater Management (OP23) policy uses best management practices to prevent, control, and treat stormwater runoff on campus. The policy aims to mitigate runoff for new construction and regular campus operations.

EcoMachine
The University of Vermont’s newly renovated Aiken Center includes an EcoMachine, an innovative way to treat wastewater. An living machine mimics the natural purifications processes found in wetland, groundwater, stream and pond ecosystems. The EcoMachine is home to communities of aquatic micro-organisms, invertebrates and wetland plants working together to degrade pollutants and to transform nutrients and energy in sewage into a profusion of life. The buildings wastewater is treated in the system and reused for non-potable use, reducing water consumption.