The University of Vermont

STARS: PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION & ENGAGEMENT (PAE)

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Strengths

Public Engagement
Institutional partnerships have been formed including service learning and internships and additionally, inter-campus collaborations with local universities to help build the campus sustainability community.

Human Resources
Sustainable compensation means that UVM is providing a pay at which its on campus faculty and staff receive sufficient funding for them to meet their daily needs as defined by the university. An evaluation is completed once every 3 years.

Overview: What is PAE?

There are five categories that represent PAE (Planning, Administration and Engagement): in which plans and resources are put towards a more sustainable campus. The second category, Diversity and Affordability addresses sustainability through perspectives of all social classes. The third category is called Investment which evaluates schools by benchmarking how socially responsible their investments are. The fourth category, Human Resources, assesses the transfer of sustainability initiatives to staff and faculty through various programs and policies. Lastly, Public Engagement examines how institutions work with surrounding communities through community service, engagement and partnerships.

Areas for Improvement

Investment
Engage in further positive sustainability investments and divest from fossil fuel businesses.

Human Resources
The University of Vermont lacks a program that not only educates employees about everyday sustainability, but encourages them to promote it to students and peers.

Planning and Coordination
The University of Vermont is making a lot of progress, as it relates to sustainability. However, the University of Vermont has yet to provide a Sustainability Plan for the school. A sustainability plan would help support future sustainability goals for the University.

Diversity and Affordability & Planning and Coordination

In order to build a sustainable society, a diverse community will need to collaborate equally. This is achieved by connecting social classes and cultures. With programs offering affordability, this removes income as a limiting factor for admission, and promoting culture clubs helps to welcome and engaging minority groups.

The University of Vermont offers financial aid for students and support programs for faculty and staff such as the Henderson Fellowship and an English class for the janitorial staff. Regarding diversity, support programs for underrepresented groups are very important to the University. The ALANA Coalition, UVM Black Student Union, and extensive gender neutral facilities encourage a diverse student body to flourish.

Earning the entirety of the credits offered, the University of Vermont has taken a pledge to continue the improvement in creating diverse body of students, faculty and staff through a supportive culture and aid providing programs.

Public Engagement, Human Resources, & Investment

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that give back to their communities through community service, engagement, and partnerships. Community engagement can help students develop leadership skills while deepening their understandings of practical, real-world problems.

Out of 31.75 points, the University of Vermont currently has 21.78 within the Public Engagement subcategory (one of the largest subcategories under PAE). While a number of the categories such as Community Partnerships, inter-campus collaborations, Sustainability in Higher Education, and Sustainability Policy Advocacy earn full points or are very high, there are others that have received very few or no points.

What UVM has low points towards includes Community Service Participation and Hours, Trademark Licensing, and smaller, more specific credits such as a Graduation Pledge and Community Service on Transcripts.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources works to recognize how the university incorporates sustainability into human resources plans, policies, and programs. Some programs include the hiring department, employee benefits, and information for faculty and staff.

UVM isn’t meeting the requirements for the Employee Satisfaction Evaluation and Sustainability in New Employee Orientation. Both of which are very easy to obtain because the evaluation is just a survey sent out to faculty and staff asking about their wellbeing, and the orientation requires for UVM to provide a professional to speak on sustainability at UVM to the new employees.

UVM is succeeding in Staff Professional Development in Sustainability because they provide opportunities for staff to be trained in the three pillars of sustainability. There is a three day Signature Staff Development Event which staff can sign up for different sessions. An example of a session is balancing well-being and work.

INVESTMENT

With a globalized financial sector, choosing markets to invest in has become a social statement. With the Apartheid regime in South Africa, tobacco companies, and today with fossil fuel businesses, many institutions and individuals have divested from these companies on the basis of values - or sought out new companies to support.

UVM has a history with socially responsible investment. It has divested from companies linked with South Africa during the Apartheid regime as well as the tobacco industry altogether. UVM has a socially responsible investment advisory council (SRIAC), that promotes conversations about shareholder advocacy and resolutions for future divestment and positive investment.

Fossil fuel divestment has received a lot of attention at UVM - other opportunities with investments also exist - in particular, increasing positive sustainability investments in companies UVM wants to support.

Office of Student and Community Relations

The Office of Student and Community Relations, or OSCR, is committed to creating a safe and socially just environment in which the UVM students living off campus can live in a productive harmony with their neighbors. The leading program that they are noted is called SMOP or the Spring Move Out Project. Partners for SMOP include UVM, CSWD (Chittenden Solid Waste District), and ReSource, a local reuse store. Students moving out recycle their items they no longer want, which helps to keep 20,000 lbs. of material out of the garbage. This promotes a positive relationship with the community, is economically viable for those of the lower class, and environmentally conscious.