Sustainability Cultural Assessment Informational Report
Contents

- **Background:** What is sustainability culture? Why are we assessing it? What has been done so far?

- **Results:** fall 2017 pilot assessment
  - General survey summary
  - Area specific themes from interviews

- **Next Steps:** spring 2018 survey
  - Our approach
  - Your insight
Sustainability Cultural Assessment

Why? Continuous improvement:
● Evaluate the success, awareness, understanding of and satisfaction with current initiatives
● Identify areas for improvement
● Share findings with other departments to inform their work

Why? Success in STARS, Princeton Review and Sierra Club:
● Receive points for Sustainability Cultural Assessment STARS credit
● Inform approach to Outreach Campaign and Employee Educator Program STARS credits
● STARS informs Princeton Review and Sierra Club’s campus sustainability ranking lists

How do you assess culture?
● Measure awareness of campus sustainability initiatives
● Measure personal values and behavior
● Create replicable research methods to show change over time
CDAE 250 Research Methods

Introductory course to qualitative and quantitative research methods and statistical procedures. Partnered with OoS to pilot a sustainability cultural assessment.

1. **Direct Observations**
   Each student was responsible for directly observing on-campus locations related to sustainability (e.g. waste sorting area)

2. **Informational Interviews**
   Each student was responsible for issuing ten in-person questionnaires to students and faculty on campus

3. **Survey**
   Each student was responsible for issuing 20 online surveys. 717 total responses.

4. **Final Report**
   Four-person student groups were responsible for analyzing and reporting on data gathered from previously listed methods.
Results
Demographics: Affiliation with UVM, Residence, and Gender

Large sample size but NOT representative!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residency | Percent
---|---
Off-Campus | 75.4%
On-Campus  | 24.6%

n = 678

n = 684
Demographics: Colleges and Participation Rates for Individual Colleges

Survey Representation for Individual Colleges/Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/School</th>
<th>Percent of College/School Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Life Sciences</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business (General)</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and Natural Sciences</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Social Services</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing and Health Sciences</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Physical Sciences</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Representation of Total College/School Population (based on Spring 2017 enrollment data)
UVM defines sustainability at “the pursuit of ecological, social, and economic vitality with the understanding that the needs of the present must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

Respondents answered these questions based on this definition of sustainability
Results: Sustainability Attitudes and Awareness

- UVM’s definition of sustainability includes three pillars: ecological, social, and economic. How would you rate UVM’s sustainability performance overall and to each pillar individually?
Results: Priorities

- “How important do you think the following areas are to making UVM more sustainable”
- “How well do you think UVM is performing in regards to sustainability in the following areas?”
  - **Academics**: curriculum, research
  - **Engagement**: outreach materials, publications, community partnerships, staff and student ambassador programs
  - **Operations**: air, climate, buildings, energy, food, dining practices, grounds, purchasing standards, transportation options, waste, water
  - **Policy**: coordination, planning, diversity, affordability, investment, well-being
Results: Sustainability Education

- Consider the following intended learning outcomes of sustainability-designated classes and rate them based on your sustainability-designated (SU) class experience.
Results: Sustainability Behaviors

- How often do you participate in the following actions?
  - **Energy conservation** (turning off lights, reducing A/C and heat use, efficient electronics)
  - **Waste reduction** (reusable mugs/bottles/utensils/to-go containers, printing double-sided, avoiding excess packaging, buying used instead of new items)
  - **Sustainable transportation habits** (reducing driving, avoiding idling, taking the bus, carpooling)
  - **Sustainable dietary choices** (purchasing local/organic/humane/fair trade foods, eating fewer animal products)
  - **Water conservation** (taking shorter showers, turning off water not in use)
  - **Reporting building or facility concerns** (leaky faucet, drafty window, broken bike rack)
  - **Engaging with sustainability** (attending sustainability events or presentations, participating in sustainability-related clubs or committees)
Themes

*From interviews, observations & open-ended survey questions*

**Overarching:**

**Sustainability initiatives and transparency**
- Students are supportive of sustainable efforts, but are concerned that the University may not live up to its reputation
- Sustainable initiatives are clear in operations and infrastructure, but not as reflected in student/faculty body
- Concerns of greenwashing
- Need for increased communication about sustainable initiatives

**Departmental:**

**Education and understanding of sustainability as a concept**

**Transportation**

**Waste**
Next
Spring 2018 Survey

1. Adjust pilot survey questions
   a. Consider questions/methods used in other previous, and similar studies
      i. Student Perceptions of UVM’s Environmental Stewardship Efforts (2000)
      ii. Envisioning Helps Promotes Sustainability in Academia (2009)
   b. Seek stakeholder feedback
   c. Test survey

2. Email survey through Limesurvey

3. Interpret & share results
   a. Format for STARS submission and AASHE Hub
   b. Share findings with UVM community

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4. Repeat process to assess again in 2019

5. Submit to AASHE in 2020