

## ACADEMIC



### CURRICULUM

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that have formal education programs and courses that address sustainability. By training and educating future leaders, scholars, workers, and professionals, higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to prepare students to understand and address sustainability challenges. Institutions that offer courses covering sustainability issues help equip their students to lead society to a sustainable future.

### RESEARCH

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are conducting research on sustainability topics. By researching sustainability issues and refining theories and concepts, higher education institutions can continue to help the world understand sustainability challenges and develop new technologies, strategies, and approaches to address those challenges.



# ENGAGEMENT



## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that provide their students with sustainability learning experiences outside the formal curriculum. Institution-sponsored co-curricular sustainability offerings, often coordinated by student affairs offices, help integrate sustainability into the campus culture and set a positive tone for the institution.

In addition, this subcategory recognizes institutions that support faculty and staff engagement, training, and development programs in sustainability. Equipping faculty and staff with the tools, knowledge, and motivation to adopt behavior changes that promote sustainability is an essential activity of a sustainable campus.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that help catalyze sustainable communities through public engagement, community partnerships and service. Engagement in community problem-solving is fundamental to sustainability. By engaging with community members and organizations in the governmental, non-profit and for-profit sectors, institutions can help solve sustainability challenges. Community engagement students develop leadership skills while deepening their understandings of practical, real-world problems and the process of creating solutions. Institutions can contribute to their communities by harnessing their financial and academic resources to address community needs and by engaging community members in institutional decisions that affect them. In addition, institutions can contribute toward sustainability broadly through inter-campus collaboration, engagement with external networks and organizations, and public policy advocacy.





# OPERATIONS



## AIR AND CLIMATE

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are measuring and reducing their greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions. Global climate change is having myriad negative impacts throughout the world, including increased frequency and potency of extreme weather events, sea level rise, species extinction, water shortages, declining agricultural production, and spread of diseases. In addition, institutions that inventory and take steps to reduce their air pollutant emissions can positively impact the health of the campus community, as well as the health of their local communities and regions.

## BUILDINGS

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are taking steps to improve the sustainability performance of their buildings. Buildings are generally the largest user of energy and the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions on campuses. Buildings also use significant amounts of potable water. Institutions can design, build, and maintain buildings in ways that provide a safe and healthy indoor environment for inhabitants while simultaneously mitigating the building's impact on the outdoor environment.



## DINING SERVICES

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are supporting a sustainable food system. Institutions can use their food purchases to support their local economies; encourage safe, environmentally-friendly and humane farming methods; and help eliminate unsafe working conditions and alleviate poverty for farmers. These actions help reduce environmental impacts, preserve regional farmland, improve local food security, and support fair and resilient food systems.

## OPERATIONS

### 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. For most institutions, energy consumption is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, which cause global climate change. Implementing conservation measures and switching to renewable sources of energy can help institutions save money and protect them from utility rate volatility. Renewable energy may be generated locally and allow campuses to support local economic development. Furthermore, institutions can help shape markets by creating demand for cleaner, renewable sources of energy.



### GROUNDS

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that plan and maintain their grounds with sustainability in mind. Beautiful and welcoming campus grounds can be planned, planted, and maintained in any region while minimizing the use of toxic chemicals, protecting wildlife habitat, and conserving resources.

### PURCHASING

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are using their purchasing power to help build a sustainable economy. Collectively, institutions spend many billions of dollars on goods and services annually. Each purchasing decision represents an opportunity for institutions to choose environmentally and socially preferable products and services and support companies with strong commitments to sustainability.





# OPERATIONS



## TRANSPORTATION

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are moving toward sustainable transportation systems. Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that contribute to health problems such as heart and respiratory diseases and cancer. Campuses can reap benefits from modeling sustainable transportation systems. Bicycling and walking provide human health benefits and mitigate the need for large areas of paved surface, which can help campuses to better manage storm water. Institutions may realize cost savings and help support local economies by reducing their dependency on petroleum-based fuels for transportation.

## WASTE

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are moving toward zero waste by reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. These actions mitigate the need to extract virgin materials from the earth, such as trees and metals. Reducing the generation of waste also reduces the flow of waste to incinerators and landfills which produce greenhouse gas emissions, can contaminate air and groundwater supplies, and tend to have disproportionate negative impacts on low-income communities. Source reduction and waste diversion also save institutions costly landfill and hauling service fees. In addition, waste reduction campaigns can engage the entire campus community in contributing to a tangible sustainability goal.



## WATER

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are conserving water, making efforts to protect water quality and treating water as a resource rather than a waste product. Pumping, delivering, and treating water is a major driver of energy consumption, so institutions can help reduce energy use and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy generation by conserving water. Likewise, conservation, water recycling and reuse, and effective rainwater management practices are important in maintaining and protecting finite groundwater supplies. Water conservation and effective rainwater and wastewater management also reduce the need for effluent discharge into local surface water supplies, which helps improve the health of local water ecosystems.

# PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION



## COORDINATION, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE

This subcategory seeks to recognize colleges and universities that are institutionalizing sustainability by dedicating resources to sustainability coordination, developing plans to move toward sustainability, and engaging students, staff and faculty in governance. Staff and other resources help an institution organize, implement, and publicize sustainability initiatives. These resources provide the infrastructure that fosters sustainability within an institution. Sustainability planning affords an institution the opportunity to clarify its vision of a sustainable future, establish priorities and help guide budgeting and decision making. Strategic planning and internal stakeholder engagement in governance are important steps in making sustainability a campus priority and may help advocates implement changes to achieve sustainability goals.

## DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are working to advance diversity and affordability on campus. In order to build a sustainable society, diverse groups will need to be able to come together and work collaboratively to address sustainability challenges. To achieve environmental and social justice, society must work to address discrimination and promote equality. The historical legacy and persistence of discrimination based on racial, gender, religious, and other differences makes a proactive approach to promoting a culture of inclusiveness an important component of creating an equitable society. Higher education opens doors to opportunities that can help create a more equitable world, and those doors must be open through affordable programs accessible to all regardless of race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status and other differences. In addition, a diverse student body, faculty, and staff provide rich resources for learning and collaboration.



## HEALTH, WELLBEING & WORK

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that have incorporated sustainability into their human resources programs and policies. An institution's people define its character and capacity to perform; and so, an institution's achievements can only be as strong as its community. An institution can bolster the strength of its community by making fair and responsible investments in its human capital. Such investments include offering benefits, wages, and other assistance that serve to respectfully and ethically compensate workers and acting to protect and positively affect the health, safety and wellbeing of the campus community. Investment in human resources is integral to the achievement of a healthy and sustainable balance between human capital, natural capital, and financial capital.

## INVESTMENT

This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that make investment decisions that promote sustainability. Collectively, colleges and universities invest hundreds of billions of dollars. Like other decisions that institutions make, these investments have impacts that are both local and global in scope. Institutions with transparent and democratic investment processes promote accountability and engagement by the campus and community. By using the tools of sustainable investing, institutions can improve the long-term health of their endowments, encourage better corporate behavior, support innovation in sustainable products and services, support sustainability in their community, and help build a more just and sustainable financial system. Throughout this subcategory, the term "sustainable investment" is inclusive of socially responsible, environmentally responsible, ethical, impact, and mission-related investment.

