

UA

SUSTAINABILITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Sustainability Strategic Plan

COMMUNITY GARDEN

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Abstract

This document analyzes the sustainability of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) campus by using the university's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). STARS is a self-reporting network in which the university reports on 5 categories: Academics (AC), Engagement (EN), Operations (OP), Planning & Administration (PA), and Innovation & Leadership (IN). These categories are then judged on a point based system, with the total equating to a level of ranking (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, or Reporter). As of March 2022, UAH maintained its Bronze rating. This project hopes to increase this ranking by developing an action plan which, if implemented, would increase the ranking of the university to Silver for following reporting years.

Introduction

“The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) is committed to the promotion of a more sustainable campus focused on energy, environment, and engagement through its commitment to energy conservation, environmental stewardship, and social engagement.”(Jackson , 2023)

In the School year of 2021-2022, the Sustainability Department reported data into the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) Report. STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance (Cite STARS Website). This report is comprised of 5 sections: Academics (AC), Engagement (EN), Operations (OP), Planning & Administration (PA), and an optional section of Innovation & Leadership (IN). There is an additional section of the Report Preface (PRE), but points are not received for this section so it will not be included. The section Innovation and Leadership will also not be analyze since this section is optional and catered towards the years of submission. These categories are then judged on a point-based system, with the total equating to a level of ranking (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, or Reporter). As of March 2022, UAH had a total of 34.89 points in the STARS report, maintaining its Bronze rating. Of these total points, 3.5 points were from the optional section of Innovation & Leadership, leaving 31.39 points for the other four sections. The point breakdown can be seen in Figure 1 below. By implementing the proposed action plan strategies, the university aims to increase its ranking to Silver for future reporting years.

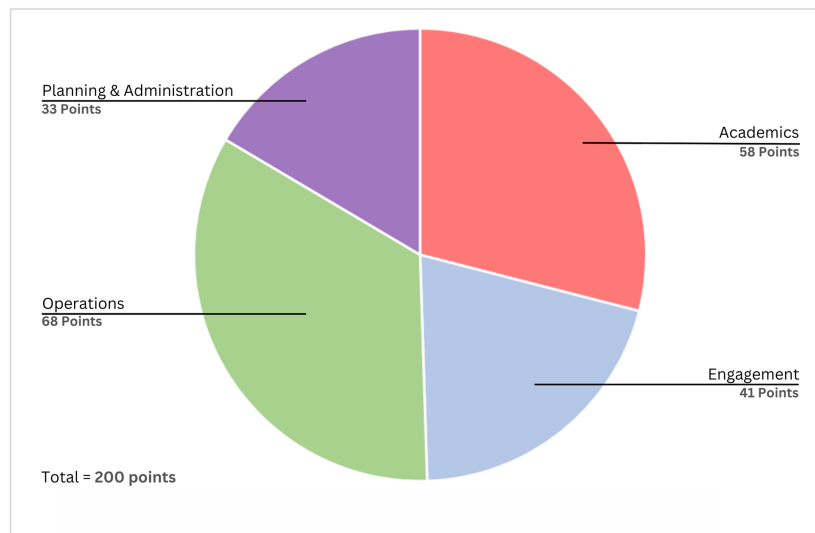


Figure 1 shows a pie chart of possible points for each section in the STARS report.

Academics (AC)

The Academic (AC) section of the report covers a broad range of criteria within education, including subjects such as coursework, open-access research, academic majors, and many more. These subjects are split into two sections: Curriculum (AC 01 - AC 08) and Research (AC 09 - AC 11). These sections comprise a total of eleven subsections with a total of 58 points available. In 2022, UAH was awarded 27.64 points in this section, which accounts for 55.28% of the available points. The point breakdown is shown in Table 1.

Section	Points Awarded	Possible Points
AC 01	3.92	14
AC 02	0.41	8
AC 03	3	3
AC 04	3	3
AC 05	2	2
AC 06	1	4
AC 07	0	2
AC 08	4	4
AC 09	7.31	12
AC 10	3	4
AC 11	0	2
Total	27.64	58

Table 1 displays the point distribution for the Academic section, indicating both the points awarded and the points possible.

As shown in Table 1, there are many ways in which UAH can improve in this area and earn points. The following section will go through the list of subsections and analyze ways in which UAH can implement strategies to increase points within this area.

Curriculum

AC 01: Academic Courses

About

The purpose of this subsection is to show a percentage of sustainable classes that were available and conducted in a three-year period. With this, it was asked to also describe how the classes addressed sustainability.

Methodology

To determine the total number of courses offered, an Excel sheet counting all the courses taught in 2019, 2020, and 2021 was compiled. All the courses were arranged by course number. Undergraduate course numbers range from 100-499 whereas graduate range from 500-799. The total number of course offerings in the past 3 years was obtained by contacting the Registrar's Office. For identifying sustainability courses, the department chairs were asked to identify them in their respective departments. If they weren't sure, then the course descriptions for each course in their department were reviewed and then the syllabuses for those courses were reviewed carefully to check whether they have any content related to sustainability.

Results

The university was awarded 3.92/14.00 points. This is due to the fact that only 3.12% of all of the courses on campus are sustainability-oriented. Also of the 40 different departments on campus, only 16 of them offer sustainable classes.

Proposed Strategies

To further enhance their score in this subsection, the Sustainability Department can collaborate with all academic departments to integrate more sustainability-focused courses into their curriculum. While some departments offer seminars on sustainability, these do not count towards the total number of sustainability-oriented courses required for maximum points. Therefore, the most effective way to increase points in this subsection is to introduce new sustainability-oriented courses into the curriculum

AC 02: Learning Outcomes

About

The purpose of this subsection is to assess whether the institution has incorporated sustainable learning outcomes that are applicable to a significant proportion of the student body or the entire student population. Additionally, it evaluates the percentage of students who have graduated from the university with a degree that requires them to possess knowledge about sustainability concepts.

Methodology

The data was collected by using the university's website and corresponded with various departments. Additionally, we obtained figures from the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Assessment. The data includes graduates for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Results

The university was awarded 0.41/8.00 points for this subsection due to not adopting one or more sustainability learning outcomes and only having 5% of graduates who are required to have an understanding of sustainability.

Proposed Strategies

To score points in this subsection, the university could consider adopting a sustainable learning outcome that applies to all students upon graduation. Given the university's focus on STEM fields, a relevant outcome could be "Students will recognize the global implications of their actions" to prepare them for their future research and careers.

AC 03: Undergraduate Programs

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine if the institution offers an undergraduate major and/or minor that specifically focuses on sustainability. Such programs should provide students with a comprehensive understanding of sustainability topics, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle sustainability challenges.

Methodology

This data was collected by reaching out to various departments within the university, as well as consulting the university website.

Results

The university scored a perfect 3.00/3.00 points in this subsection for having at least one undergraduate major and minor program focused on sustainability.

Proposes Strategies

To earn points in this subsection, the university should offer an undergraduate program that provides students with the opportunity to specialize in sustainability and develop the necessary skills to address sustainability challenges. It is important for the university to maintain this program to retain the points.

AC 04: Graduate Programs

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine if the institution offers a graduate major and/or minor that specifically focuses on sustainability. Such programs should provide students with a comprehensive understanding of sustainability topics, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle sustainability challenges.

Methodology

This data was collected by reaching out to various departments within the university, as well as consulting the university website.

Results

The university scored a perfect 3.00/3.00 points in this subsection for having at least one undergraduate major and minor program focused on sustainability.

Proposes Strategies

To earn points in this subsection, the university should offer a graduate program that provides students with the opportunity to specialize in sustainability and develop the necessary skills to address sustainability challenges. It is important for the university to maintain this program to retain the points.

AC 05: Immersive Experience

About

The purpose of this subsection is to evaluate whether the institution provides sustainability-focused immersive programs, such as study abroad or community-based internships. These programs are intended to provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding of sustainability.

Methodology

The data was collected by reviewing the university website and searching for programs that meet the criteria of sustainability-focused immersive programs.

Results

The university received the full 2.00/2.00 points for this subsection as it offers a variety of sustainability-focused immersive programs such as study abroad and community-based internships to enhance students' understanding of sustainability.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain these points, it is important for the university to prioritize and prioritize its efforts to offer sustainability-focused immersive programs. The Sustainability Department can collaborate with various organizations and departments to ensure that these programs are not only maintained, but also expanded upon to provide students with meaningful and impactful sustainability learning experiences.

AC 06: Sustainability Literacy Assessment

About

The purpose of this subsection is to evaluate whether the institution has an effective method for assessing the success of its sustainability education initiatives. The assessment should be given to a significant portion of the student body or an unbiased pool of students to ensure accurate results. Data can be collected through surveys or other evaluation methods.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was collected through a survey that was created and made available on the university website for the entire community to participate in. Additionally, the OEHS Department and their website were consulted for any surveys they had previously conducted.

Results

The university received a score of 1.00/4.00 points, as the survey conducted was a one-time evaluation without any follow-up assessment of the same cohort or representative samples. The sustainability survey, as well as a survey created by the OEHS department on Stormwater, were used for this evaluation.

Proposed Strategies

To improve the score in this subsection, the Sustainability Department can enhance its approach by conducting regular and comprehensive surveys that accurately measure sustainability-related behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of students, faculty, and staff. This would provide valuable insights and data to inform and guide the university's sustainability initiatives and strategies.

AC 07: Incentive for Developing Courses

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine if the institution provides any incentives to academic staff to expand the sustainability courses offered. These incentives may include offerings such as release time, funding for professional development and training, and other related incentives. The purpose of this subsection is to determine if the institution provides any incentives to academic staff to expand the sustainability courses offered. These incentives may include offerings such as release time, funding for professional development and training, and other related incentives.

Results

Due to the fact that the Sustainability Department lacks this type of program the university did not pursue this subsection resulting 0.00/2.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

To obtain points in this subsection, the Sustainability Department could collaborate with the university administration to allocate a budget for a program that offers professional development training and release time for academic staff to expand their knowledge of sustainability. This program would enable the staff to develop and lead courses that cover sustainability-related topics, contributing to the overall sustainability education offered at the institution.

AC 08: Campus as a Living Laboratory

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine if the institution utilizes its infrastructure and living spaces to encourage student participation in making the campus more sustainable. This also includes research and interdisciplinary learning that takes place within these areas.

Methodology

The data was collected by contacting various departments across the university, as well as consulting the university website and the student engagement website, Charger Connect.

Results

The university received a perfect score of 4.00/4.00 points in this subsection, as multiple areas were identified that promote research and interdisciplinary learning.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain these points, the university should continue to provide infrastructure and living spaces that promote sustainability and research. This can include providing resources for student-led sustainability projects and supporting interdisciplinary research initiatives that tackle sustainability challenges. Additionally, the university can continue to collaborate with community partners to develop sustainable solutions and provide opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning through internships and community-based projects

Research

AC 09: Research and Scholarship

About

The purpose of this subsection is to assess whether institutions have employees who conduct research or any form of scholarship related to sustainability. There are two criteria: sustainability research measured by the percentage of employees, and sustainability research by department measured by the percentage of academic departments.

Methodology

The data was obtained from the university's website and, in some cases, from personal websites of the researchers. These interests were compiled into an Excel sheet along with the researchers' names and affiliations. Each description was reviewed carefully to determine whether the topics were relevant to sustainability research.

Results

The university was awarded 7.31/12.00 points for this section. Due to the fact that only 11.79% of the total employees at the university are involved in sustainable research.

Proposed Strategies

Points for this subsection can be earned by the Sustainability Department working with the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development to search for grants and research opportunities that the university can participate in related to sustainability research.

AC 10: Support for Sustainability Research

About

This subsection is to determine if the institution has a program in which sustainability research is encouraged. This includes providing support for the students and faculty as well as encouraging them to broaden their research.

Methodology

The university research page on the universities website was thoroughly searched and the description came directly from the home page. The salmon library website was also thoroughly searched for resources available to students.

Results

The university was awarded 3.00/4.00 points for this subsection due to having programs that encourage sustainable research and providing free access to journals for students through a database.

Proposed Strategies

A way for the university to earn points in this subsection is by implementing policies that provide positive recognition for conducting interdisciplinary research during promotion or tenure decisions. Such policies could promote a healthy research environment and encourage researchers to explore other fields while at the university.

AC 11: Open Access to Research

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine whether the institution has established repository programs and policies that promote open access to newly published peer-reviewed research and scholarship. Such initiatives would allow scholarly writing to be accessible to a wider audience, thereby fostering learning and innovation. For further information on this section, please refer to the relevant guidelines.

Results

As the university did not have a program of this type at the time of submission, this section was not pursued and resulted in it being awarded 0.00/2.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

Unknown at the time of this submission, the university had open access to the public for a few journals, including the Honors College projects and the Research Horizon, which displayed student and professor research and posters. If this is recorded in the next report, then points should be added.

Engagement (EN)

The Engagement (EN) section of the report covers a broad range of criteria for engagement on campus and within the community. This includes subjects such as student life, outreach campaigns, and community involvement, among others. These subjects are split into two sections: Campus Engagement (EN 01 - EN 09) and Public Engagement (EN 10 - EN 15). Within these sections, there are fifteen total subsections with a total of 41 points available. In 2022, UAH was awarded 14.03 points, which accounted for only 34.22% of the available points in this section. The point breakdown is shown in Table 2.

Section	Points Awarded	Possible Points
EN 01	0	4
EN 02	2	2
EN 03	2	2
EN 04	1.6	2
EN 05	4	4
EN 06	0.25	1
EN 07	0	3
EN 08	1	1
EN 09	0	2
EN 10	2	3
EN 11	1	3
EN 12	0	5
EN 13	0.18	5
EN 14	0	2
EN 15	0	2
Total	14.03	41

Table 2 displays the point distribution for the Engagement section, indicating both the points awarded and the points possible.

As shown in Table 2, there are many ways in which UAH can improve in this area and earn points. The following section will go through the list of subsections and analyze ways in which UAH can implement strategies to increase points within this area.

Campus Engagement

EN 01: Student Educators Programs

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine whether the institution has a program in place that utilizes students as peer-to-peer educators in sustainability outreach. Such a program could take the form of an ambassador initiative or involve representatives from the student body.

Results

As there was no program available within the submission timeframe, this section was not pursued, resulting in the university being awarded 0.00 / 4.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

The Sustainability Department can establish a program similar to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, where ambassadors are selected from each college to peer educate other students. One way to implement this program is by utilizing the student representatives in the Sustainability Committee as ambassadors.

EN 02: Student Orientation

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine whether the institution incorporates sustainability into its orientation program. This demonstrates the institution's commitment to sustainability as a goal and encourages students to adopt and engage in more sustainable practices.

Methodology

Despite the absence of orientation and WOW events during the 2020-2021 academic year, the university received a perfect score of 2.00/2.00 in this section and was awarded all available points.

Results

For this section, the university was awarded 2.00/2.00. Even though we were not allowed to have orientation and WOW in the 2020- 2021 school year we were still awarded all of the points for this section.

Proposed Strategies

In order to maintain a consistent point total, the sustainability department should organize a Week of Welcome event that educates students on sustainable practices. A successful example of this was seen in the 2022-2023 WOW event, which involved a partnership between the Grounds Department and the Honors College. During the event, approximately 200 plants were planted by students in front of Charger Union.

EN 03: Student Life

About

The objective of this subsection is to evaluate whether the institution has co-curricular programs and initiatives that augment students' comprehension of sustainability beyond the classroom setting. These programs should also encourage students to incorporate sustainability into their daily lives, promoting active engagement with the topic. The topics covered may include a variety of areas, such as cultural arts events, symposia, outdoor programs, investment funds, and many other relevant subjects.

Methodology

The data was collected through personal knowledge and by utilizing Charger Connect, the university's student engagement website. Based on this information, a list of clubs and their descriptions was compiled. In addition, input was obtained from various departments on campus regarding sustainability-related programs that were conducted within the relevant timeframe

Results

The university received a perfect score of 2.00/2.00 points for this section, as all the required information was provided, demonstrating that the university has all the programs inquired about.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain a perfect score in this subsection, the university should ensure that the sustainability department keeps track of all sustainability-related events occurring on campus and also establish a program that supports student engagement with sustainability. This program should allow the student to be supported financially

EN 04: Outreach Materials and Publications

About

The objective of this subsection is to evaluate if the institution produces materials and publications that enhance the students' understanding of sustainability outside of the classroom.

Methodology

Data was gathered through personal knowledge and by utilizing Charger Connect, the university's student engagement website. The university website and social media platforms, including Instagram and Facebook, were also utilized.

Results

The university received a score of 1.60/2.00 points for this section. This was due to the fact that the university does not have a walking tour map which resulted in losing 0.4 points.

Proposed Strategies

As all the other criteria have been met, the university may consider developing a sustainability walking map or campus tour that highlights the sustainable aspects of the campus. This can be done by creating a Google map that showcases the different sustainable features available on campus. Additionally, the university may also consider including sustainability-related information in their campus tours or having designated sustainability tour guides. This can further promote the university's sustainability efforts to prospective students and visitors.

EN 05: Outreach Campaign

About

The objective of this subsection is to examine whether the institution has a sustainability outreach campaign that yields positive results, such as a reduction in energy or water usage, and improves the university's sustainability performance.

Methodology

The data was collected from the university's website and from the staff of the sustainability department.

Results

The university scored a perfect 4.00/4.00 points in this section thanks to the Earth Day Event in 2021, which attracted volunteers to help clean the campus. At the event, clubs such as the Beekeeping Club sold honey produced by their hives, and the Community Garden gave out blackberry plants.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain these points, the university should continue organizing campaigns similar to the ones in previous years. For example, in the previous submission, they organized an educational lunch that taught students and staff about sustainability. A good strategy could be to utilize the Week of Welcome or partner with the organization SOAR to create more events that align with the University's sustainability goals.

EN 06: Assessing Sustainable Culture

About

The purpose of this subsection is to evaluate the sustainability culture within the campus community. This assessment should focus on the values, behaviors, and beliefs of the student body regarding sustainability.

Methodology

A form was created to gather feedback on the sustainability culture of the campus. This form included questions related to the values, behaviors, and beliefs of the campus community regarding sustainability. The form was made available on the university website to allow students. An assessment form for stormwater training was also included, as it evaluates the community's understanding of stormwater and its impact on campus. The form was retrieved from the OEHS website., faculty, and staff to share their opinions on the sustainability culture on campus.

Results

The university received a score of 1.00/4.00 points for this subsection because there was no record of progress or change over time in the campus community's sustainability culture. The assessment form was created in 2021, and there was no analysis of any changes that may have occurred.

Proposed Strategies

A way to increase the score in this section is to conduct a yearly survey to track changes in the campus community's sustainability culture. By encouraging students, faculty, and staff to complete the survey annually, the university can better understand the progress being made in improving sustainability attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs on campus.

EN 07: Employee Educators Programs

About

The objective of this subsection is to determine if the institution has implemented a program to educate its employees about sustainability. This includes initiatives and programs aimed at promoting sustainable practices among employees.

Results

We chose to not pursue this due to the fact that the university does not have this type of program. Due to this, the points given were 0.00/3.00

Proposed Strategies

The most effective way to obtain points for this section would be to incorporate sustainability education into the Finance and Administrative Survival Training. This event provides an opportunity for different departments to educate one another about their plans and initiatives for the upcoming year. If sustainability is included in this training, employees can learn about sustainability practices on campus and how they can contribute to improving sustainability efforts.

EN 08: Employee Orientation

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine whether the institution incorporates sustainability into its orientation program. This demonstrates the institution's commitment to sustainability as a goal and encourages students to adopt and engage in more sustainable practices during their time of employment.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was collected by communication within the Department of Facilities and Operations as well as Human Resources.

Results

For this subsection, the University received a perfect score of 1.00/1.00 points for this subsection as they introduced the 3 E's - Energy Conservation, Environmental Stewardship, and Social Engagement - during the orientation program.

Proposed Strategies

The best way to maintain this point is by collaborating with the Human Resources department to ensure that sustainability education is included in employee orientation.

EN 09: Staff Professional Development and Training

About

This subsection assesses whether the institution provides opportunities for staff members to participate in professional development and training programs focused on sustainability. The aim of these programs is to educate staff on sustainable practices and model sustainable behavior for students and the rest of the community.

Results

We chose to not pursue this due to the fact that the university does not have this type of program. Due to this, the points given were 0.00/2.00

Proposed Strategies

To earn points for this subsection, the Sustainability Department could conduct training sessions for all employees, educating them about sustainable practices that they can incorporate in their daily routine as well as practices followed by the university. Another way is to present at the FAST conference hosted by the university, which would inform departmental directors, who in turn can pass on the information to their employees.

Public Engagement

EN 10: Community Partnerships

About

The objective of this subsection is to evaluate whether the institution has established partnerships with the local community to promote sustainability. This includes collaborations with

government agencies, school districts, and private sector organizations to collectively advance sustainable practices in the community.

Methodology

The data was obtained by reviewing the university's website, specifically by analyzing news articles and tracking the longevity of the partnerships.

Results

For this subsection, the university was awarded 2.00/3.00 points, as only three out of the four program requirements were met.

Proposed Strategies

The university could earn points in this subsection by establishing a community partnership that helps in advancing sustainability. This could involve partnering with a company such as Energy Alabama, a non-profit organization that aims to transition Alabama to a more sustainable energy source. By establishing this partnership, the university would be able to meet the requirement of having at least four community partners to receive full points for this subsection.

EN 11: Inter-Campus Collaboration

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize if the institution collaborates with other colleges or universities to promote sustainability and share knowledge and experience in this area. This can help to advance sustainability efforts on all campuses involved.

Methodology

The data was obtained by contacting Facilities and Operations and obtaining the names and information of the sustainability initiatives.

Results

The university was awarded 1.00/3.00 points. This is due to the fact that we only had two initiatives at the time giving 0.5 points each.

Proposed Strategies

This section's points can be increased by the university joining more local and national sustainability initiatives. Since the last report, the university has already joined initiatives such as Tree Campus USA and is actively seeking out other initiatives to adopt.

EN 12: Continuing Education

About

The purpose of this subsection is to assess if the institution offers continuing education courses and programs for the community in the field of sustainability. These courses should aim to educate community members on sustainability topics and help build their knowledge in this area. The institution may also offer certificates or other credentials to help promote career advancement in green jobs.

Results

Due to the lack of a program in place the university decided not to pursue this subsection ,as a result, the total points awarded were 0.00/5.00.

Proposed Strategies

The university could potentially earn points for this subsection by implementing a sustainability certificate program for business owners within the College of Business. This program could offer courses on subjects such as environmental economics, sustainable supply systems, and more, providing participants with a recognized credential in sustainability practices.

EN 13: Community Service

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize if the institution's students and employees engage in community service. This includes volunteering activities such as tutoring students, removing invasive species, participating in food drives, and more. These acts of community service help develop the fundamentals of sustainability. This section takes into account the number of volunteers and hours as well as types of programs on campus.

Methodology

The number of volunteer hours and participants were obtained by contacting the Office of Student Life and accessing the engagement website Charger Connect.

Results

The university received a score of 0.18/5.00 points for this subsection. The decrease in volunteering opportunities on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor in this low score. Additionally, no faculty programs were found that allowed faculty members to volunteer during paid hours during the evaluated years.

Proposed Strategies

Since COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, we expect to see higher numbers of hours and participants for volunteering in the next report. Furthermore, investigating whether there is a program that allows faculty to volunteer during paid hours could increase the points. The Sustainability Department could also organize a program that allows F&O staff and other faculty and staff to volunteer in a community project during regular work hours. A good organization to collaborate with is the Staff Senate.

EN 14: Participation in Public Policy

About

The purpose of this subsection is to investigate whether or not the institution promotes sustainability through public policy at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Results

The university chose not to pursue this subsection because it does not have this type of program, resulting in a score of 0.00/2.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

A possible strategy to earn points in this section is to collaborate with the political science department to host events related to sustainability and public policy. For example, the university could hold a seminar or workshop on environmental justice, inviting national speakers and representatives from communities that have been affected. Involving the student government association (SGA) in the planning and execution of the event could also demonstrate support from the student body, which would increase the credibility of the university's efforts.

EN 15: Trademark Licensing

About

The purpose of this subsection is to investigate whether the institution monitors and verifies organizations to ensure that the apparel bearing the institution's name is produced under fair conditions. This means that the merchandise sold by the institution is made under fair working conditions that promote the safety and healthy livelihood of the workers involved in its production.

Results

We chose to not pursue this due to the fact that the university does not have this type of program. Due to this, the points given were 0.00/2.00.

Proposed Strategies

A possible strategy to earn points within this section is to examine whether the Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) has a program in place to monitor the companies producing the merchandise sold by the university. However, this section can be challenging to obtain points in due to limited communication between producers and consumers.

Operations (OP)

The Operations (OP) section of the report covers a broad range of criteria for operations and management around campus, including subjects such as sustainable dining, campus fleet, water usage, immersions, and many more. These subjects are split into nine sections: Air & Climate (OP 01 - OP 02), Buildings (OP 03 - OP-04), Energy (OP 05 - OP 06), Food & Dining (OP 07 - OP 08), Grounds (OP 09 - OP 10), Purchasing (OP 11 - OP 14), Transportation (OP 15 - OP 17), Waste (OP 18 - OP 20), and Water (OP 21 - OP 22). Within these sections, there are a total of twenty-two subsections with a total of 68 points available. In 2022, UAH was awarded only 12.97 points, which is just 19% of the possible points in this section. The point breakdown is shown in Table 3.

Section	Points Awarded	Possible Points
OP 01	0	3
OP 02	0	8
OP 03	1.63	3
OP 04	0	5
OP 05	2.91	6
OP 06	0	4
OP 07	0	6
OP 08	1.23	2
OP 09	0	2
OP 10	0	0
OP 11	0	3
OP 12	0	1
OP 13	0	1
OP 14	0	1
OP 15	0	1
OP 16	0	5
OP 17	1	1
OP 18	0	8
OP 19	0	1
OP 20	1	1
OP 21	3.2	4
OP 22	2	2
Total	12.97	68

Table 3 displays the point distribution for the Operations section, indicating both the points awarded and the points possible.

As can be seen in the Table 3, there are many ways in which UAH can improve within this area and gain points. The following section will be going through the list of subsections and analyze ways in which UAH can implement strategies to increase points within this area.

Air & Climate

OP 01: Emission Inventory and Disclosure

About

The purpose of this subsection is to determine whether the institution is monitoring and publicly disclosing the amount of greenhouse gases and air pollutants emitted as a result of its activities.

Results

Due to the university's lack of access to the necessary technology or knowledge to accurately measure and track greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions resulting from institutional activities, we chose not to pursue this section and earned 0.00/3.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

To earn points in this section, the university could start using greenhouse gas tracking software to monitor emissions on campus. One approach would be to track the mileage of the university fleet to calculate greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the university could consider hiring an outside entity to conduct an analysis. Once data is collected, it could be shared on the university's website and in an annual report. This would increase transparency and help the university be accountable for its emissions.

OP 02: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have reduced their net Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Results

Due to the university's inability to track and monitor their greenhouse gas emissions, the institution was unable to pursue this subsection and as a result, it earned 0.00/8.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

To earn points within this section, the university must find a way to keep track of its GHG emissions. One approach is to invest in technology and software or contract an outside entity to do so. Alternatively, working with professors within the AES department to develop strategies for tracking and reducing Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions could also be explored.

Buildings

OP 03: Building Design and Construction

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have incorporated environmental features into their design and construction projects. These features can include aspects such as building design, the use of sustainable materials, building safety, and more. These buildings can have a certificate for a green rating system, indicating their sustainability attributes, such as energy and water efficiency, human health and well-being, and more.

Methodology

The data was collected through communication with the Architecture Department and consulting the Facilities and Operations Department's website.

Results

The university was awarded 1.63/3.00 points in this subsection for having 50.08% of its newly constructed or renovated building space certified under a green building rating system for design and construction in the past five years.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain and earn more points in this section, the university should ensure that any new construction or renovations are designed and built to meet green rating standards. This could include incorporating features such as charging ports for electric vehicles in parking areas, energy-efficient light fixtures, and air quality control measures. By prioritizing environmentally sustainable design in all new construction projects, the university can demonstrate its commitment to reducing its impact on the environment.

OP 04: Building Operations and Maintenance

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that operate and maintain their buildings in a way that protects the health of building occupants and the environment, in accordance with a sustainability management policy or green building rating system.

Results

Due to the university lacking this type of maintenance this subsection was not pursued to earn 0.00/5.00 total points.

Proposed Strategies

To earn points in this subsection, the university could consider implementing sustainable maintenance practices such as using eco-friendly cleaning products, reducing water consumption, and ensuring proper waste management. The university could also consider obtaining a sustainability management policy or green building rating system to ensure that they are operating and maintaining their buildings in a way that protects the health of building occupants and the environment. As a start, the implementation of LED lights in every building is a positive step towards energy efficiency and sustainability

Energy

OP 05: Building Energy Efficiency

About

The purpose of this subsection recognizes institutions that are making improvements in the energy efficiency of their buildings. This takes into account factors such as site energy per unit area, as well as reductions in source energy use per unit of floor area.

Methodology

The data was collected from the universities' utility provider, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which provides information on the energy consumption of the campus buildings.

Results

The university earned a total of 2.90/6.00 points in this subsection. This was due to the small amount of energy used in the fiscal year reported.

Proposed Strategies

In addition to the university's efforts to replace all lights with LEDs, educating students, faculty, and staff about energy efficiency and how to reduce energy consumption on campus could be another way to earn more points in this subsection.

OP 06: Clean and Renewable Energy

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that support the development and use of energy from clean and renewable sources, such as renewable electricity, thermal energy, and other energy products.

Results

Due to the university does not have this type of electricity this subsection was not pursued earning a total of 0.00/4/00 points

Proposed Strategies

To earn points in this subsection, the university could purchase green energy from our power provider TVA. TVA has a program that allows businesses to purchase a certain amount of kilowatts of renewable energy.

Food & Dining

OP 07: Food and Beverage Purchasing

About

This subsection aims to recognize institutions that support sustainable food systems and beverage purchasing in their operations, which includes purchasing plant-based and sustainably and ethically made food products.

Results

Since the food provider for this time period (Sodexo) did not provide data for this section, the university chose not to pursue this subsection, resulting in 0.00/6.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

To earn points in this section, the university could work with its food provider, Sodexo, to track and report on their purchases and usage of plant-based and sustainably produced food products. As there is already a vegetarian option available in the campus cafes and other food establishments, there is likely to be some purchasing of plant-based products. By encouraging Sodexo to prioritize and increase their use of sustainable and plant-based ingredients, the university could make progress towards this subsection.

OP 08: Sustainable Dining

About

This subsection aims to recognize institutions that support sustainable food systems by minimizing the impacts of their dining services operations. This can be achieved by reducing food waste and diverting it from the waste system, promoting low-impact dining options, and implementing other sustainable practices.

Methodology

The data was collected by contacting the food service provider (Sodexo) and utilizing their webpage on the university website.

Results

The university earned 1.23/2.00 points for this subsection due to having some sustainable systems in place.

Proposed Strategies

Since the university already has sustainable practices such as grease trap recycling, reusable utensils and plates, buying from local businesses, and donations to the food bank, to earn more points, the university could implement a food waste diversion plan, such as composting.

Grounds

OP 09: Landscape Management

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have sustainable grounds management, which involves treating the grounds using organic methods instead of inorganic fertilizers and chemical pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides. This can also include integrated pest management.

Results

Since the university did not practice sustainable grounds management specified during the recorded time period, it did not pursue this subsection, resulting in 0.00/2.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

The university can earn points in this subsection by transitioning parts of its grounds to be organically managed. Since some of the university is not fully owned by the university and is leased to other businesses, it may not be possible to have 100% of the grounds organically managed. However, the university can still earn points by transitioning some areas to be organically managed.

OP 10: Biodiversity

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have a biodiversity management strategy designed to identify vulnerable ecosystems and spaces on campus to prevent, manage, and/or remediate damage to the natural habitats and sensitive areas.

Results

Due to the university not having significant biodiversity on campus, this section was marked as not applicable, resulting in 0.00/0.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

One way the university could potentially earn points is by setting up a system to identify the biodiversity on campus and determining areas that need to be protected due to their ecological significance.

Purchasing

OP 11: Sustainable Procurement

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that apply sustainability criteria when making procurement decisions. This includes implementing an institution-wide sustainability procurement policy or conducting a life cycle cost analysis.

Results

Due to the fact that the university does not meet either of the criteria for this subsection, the university chose not to pursue this subsection, resulting in a total of 0.00/3.00 points..

Proposed Strategies

A way in which the university could earn points for this subsection is by conducting a life cycle cost analysis through an external entity. Additionally, the sustainability department can collaborate with procurement to make more environmentally conscious decisions regarding purchasing and shipping.

OP 12 Electronic Purchasing

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that are supporting markets for environmentally preferred computers and other electronic products.

Results

Due to the university's lack of these types of computers and electric products, this subsection was not pursued, resulting in 0.00/1.00 points..

Proposed Strategies

The university can potentially earn points in this subsection by encouraging the purchase of environmentally preferable computers and electric products, such as those that are energy-efficient and have minimal impact on the environment during production and disposal. The sustainability department can work with procurement to develop guidelines and policies that prioritize the purchase of such products.

OP 13: Cleaning and Janitorial Purchasing

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that purchase green cleaning and janitorial supplies. These supplies should meet the criteria of one of the eco-friendly standards such as the U.S. EPA Safer Choice label.

Results

Since the university did not have these types of cleaning products, this subsection was not pursued, resulting in 0.00/1.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

One solution for the university to earn points in this subsection is to transition to purchasing green cleaning and janitorial supplies that meet eco-friendly standards such as the U.S. EPA Safer Choice label. The sustainability department can work with procurement to identify and source these products from vendors that meet the criteria. Additionally, the university can implement policies and guidelines to ensure that these eco-friendly products are used consistently throughout the campus.

OP 14: Office Paper Purchasing

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that purchase recycled content and third-party certified office paper. This paper should be made with post-consumer recycled content, agricultural residue, and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified content.

Results

The university did not pursue this subsection as it lacked the purchasing of recycled content and third-party certified office paper with post-consumer recycled content, agriculture residue, and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified content, resulting in 0.00/1.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

To earn points for this subsection the sustainability department can work with procurement to identify a vendor that can source sustainable paper products that meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) minimum post-consumer recycled content standard.

Transportation

OP 15: Campus Fleet

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize an institution that uses cleaner and fuel-efficient vehicles. These vehicles may include gasoline-electric hybrids, 100% electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and other types of environmentally-friendly vehicles.

Results

Due to the fact that the university did not have these types of vehicles during the reporting period, this subsection was not pursued, resulting in the university earning 0.00/1.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

Since the university is adding electric vehicles to the fleet, there should be additional points in the future. The university can continue to earn points by ensuring that there are hybrid or electric vehicles in the university fleet.

OP 16: Commute Modal

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that provide options for transportation other than a single-occupant vehicle for both students and employees to travel to and from the university.

Results

Due to the lack of transportation options for both students and employees, this subsection was not pursued, resulting in a total of 0.00/1.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

One way for the university to earn points in this subsection is to implement a bus and/or shuttle system, which would provide students and employees with an alternative mode of transportation to and from the university. This would enable the university to meet the criteria and earn points towards this section of the sustainability report.

OP 17: Support for Sustainable Transportation

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that actively support sustainable commuting options for both students and employees. This can include transportation modes such as bicycles, car-sharing programs, fuel-efficient vehicles, and others.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was gathered by using the university website, as well as contacting the university's recreation center as well as facilities and operations.

Results

The university was awarded 1.00/1.00 points for this subsection. This is because the university offers bicycle rentals to students and provides many employees working in facilities and operations with fuel-efficient vehicles to navigate around the campus.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain the points earned in this subsection, the university should ensure that the sustainable transportation programs that were put in place continue to operate effectively. This can be achieved by maintaining the bicycle rental program and gradually replacing older, less fuel-efficient vehicles in the fleet with newer, more efficient ones. By continuously evaluating and improving these programs, the university can further encourage sustainable commuting practices among both students and employees.

Waste

OP 18: Waste Minimization and Diversion

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that are minimizing their production of waste, diverting materials from landfills and incineration, and conserving resources by recycling and composting.

Results

Due to the lack of a waste diversion program, this subsection was not pursued, resulting in the university earning 0.00/8.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

A way for the university to earn points in the sustainability report is to implement a composting program. Due to the lack of a recycling facility in Huntsville, the university has been forced to stop single stream recycling and limit recycling to only cardboard. Therefore, implementing a composting program could be one of the best options to divert food waste while also providing the grounds team with nutrient-rich compost. The composting program can involve collecting food scraps from dining halls, cafes, and other areas on campus and then processing them into compost that can be used for landscaping and gardening on campus. This would not only help to reduce waste, but also promote sustainability and environmental responsibility within the university community. By maintaining and expanding the composting program over time, the university can continue to earn points in this subsection and work towards a more sustainable future.

OP 19: Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize if institutions are minimizing their production of waste from construction and demolition activities.

Results

Due to the absence of a recycling facility in the Huntsville area, the university is unable to recycle, resulting in this subsection not being pursued and earning the university 0.00/1.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

One way for the university to earn points in this subsection is by including a clause in their construction contracts that requires waste recycling. Since there are no recycling facilities in Huntsville, this would be a proactive step in reducing the amount of construction waste that ends up in landfills.

OP 20: Hazardous Waste Management

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize if the institution is minimizing and safely disposing of all hazardous, universal, and non-regulated chemical waste and if they have programs in place for electronic waste recycling or reuse.

Methodology

The data was collected by contacting the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) and reviewing the university website.

Results

For this subsection, the university was awarded 1.00/1.00 points due to the OEHS department safely disposing of hazardous waste and setting up a program to recycle electronics.

Proposed Strategies

To maintain these points, the university should ensure that the OEHS department is able to safely remove all hazardous materials, and continue to support their electronic recycling program.

Water

OP 21: Water Use

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have reduced their water use. This can be done by reducing potable water use per person, per floor, and in total, as well as reducing withdrawal per unit of vegetated grounds.

Methodology

The data was collected from the Huntsville Utilities reports provided to the university annually.

Results

The university was awarded 3.20 out of 4.00 points for this section, based on its achievement of a 21% to 28% reduction in water use. This data was obtained from the Huntsville Utilities reports provided to the university annually.

Proposed Strategies

The university is already implementing ways to save water by improving the irrigation systems on campus with the grounds department. The sustainability department can also educate students about reducing water consumption to help maintain the points earned in this subsection.

OP 22: Rainwater Management

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize if the institution implements policies and programs to reduce stormwater runoff and resultant water pollution, and to treat rainwater as a resource rather than a waste product.

Methodology

The data was collected by contacting the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) and reviewing the university website.

Results

The university was awarded 2.00/2.00 points for this subsection. This is due to the stormwater plan and report that the OEHS department wrote.

Proposed Strategies

To ensure that the university keeps these points, it is important that the OEHS department's report and plan are regularly updated and followed. The sustainability department can also assist in educating the students about stormwater on campus.

Planning & Administration (PA)

The Planning & Administration section of the report covers a broad range of criteria for planning and administration around campus, including subjects such as diversity and equity, investments, wellness programs, and many more. These subjects are divided into four sections: Coordination & Planning (PA 01 - PA 04), Diversity & Affordability (PA 05 - PA 08), Investment & Finance (PA 09 - PA 11), and Wellbeing & Work (PA 12 - PA 15). Within these sections, there are a total of fifteen subsections with a possible 33 points available. In 2022, UAH was awarded 8.16 points, which is only 24.72% of the possible points in this section. The point breakdown is shown in Table 4.

Section	Points Awarded	Possible Points
PA 01	1	1
PA 02	0	4
PA 03	1.12	3
PA 04	0	1
PA 05	1.33	2
PA 06	1	1
PA 07	1.92	3
PA 08	0.79	4
PA 09	0	2
PA 10	0	4
PA 11	0	1
PA 12	0	3
PA 13	0	1
PA 14	1	1
PA 15	0	2
Total	8.16	33

Table 4 displays the point distribution for the Planning & Administration section, indicating both the points awarded and the points possible.

As can be seen in the Table 4 there are many ways in which UAH can improve within this area and gain points. The following section will be going through the list of subsections and analyze ways in which UAH can implement strategies to increase points within this area.

Coordination & Planning

PA 01: Sustainability Coordination

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions with active committees, officers, or officers charged by the administration or board of trustees to coordinate sustainability work on campus.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was collected from the Sustainability Department, as well as by consulting the university website.

Results

The university earned 1.00/1.00 points in this subsection due to having at least one sustainability committee.

Proposed Strategies

The point for this subsection can be maintained if the Sustainability Department continues to have their Sustainability Committee. If this is not possible, the Grounds Department created a Tree Campus Committee in the fall semester of 2022, which can serve as a replacement for this committee in the report if needed.

PA 02: Sustainability Planning

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have developed a comprehensive plan to help the university move forward in regard to sustainability. This plan should help guide the program moving forward and act as a roadmap for decision making.

Results

As there was no such plan in place at the time of submitting this report, this subsection was not pursued, resulting in a score of 0.00/4.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

If the university takes this document and submits it, it should earn points towards the STARS rating as well as help to increase sustainability on campus. The Sustainability

Department could also use this plan as a guide to create a more tailored plan that addresses current needs and timelines.

PA 03: Inclusive and Participatory Governance

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that engage campus and community stakeholders in ongoing governance of the college or university. This includes a variety of organizational functions and decision-making processes, such as strategic planning, financial oversight, and much more.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was collected by speaking to representatives from SGA, Staff Senate, and Faculty Senate. The Board of Trustees website, as well as the university's website, were also referenced.

Results

The university was awarded 1.12/3.00 points for this subsection. These points were earned for having governing bodies for students, faculty, and staff, as well as having 37.50% of the board of trustees consisting of women.

Proposed Strategies

This subsection may be challenging to earn points for due to the nature of how board members and governing bodies operate. The university could only earn additional points if faculty members from the university were allowed to serve on the board of trustees, as well as if more women were appointed to the board of trustees.

PA 04: Reporting Assurance

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that engage in a data quality and assurance policy before submitting the STARS report. This can be done internally within the institution or externally by a third party to ensure accurate and reliable data.

Results

Due to the lack of internal or external review of the data, the university did not pursue this subsection, earning 0.00/0.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

To earn points for this subsection, the Sustainability Department should conduct an internal review with another department to ensure that the data collected and submitted is correct.

Diversity & Affordability

PA 05: Diversity and Equity Coordination

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have active committees, offices, or officers charged by the administration or governing body to coordinate diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights work on campus.

Methodology

The data was collected by contacting the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and reviewing the university website.

Results

The university was awarded 1.33/2.00 points for having ODEI as well as some on-campus engagement.

Proposed Strategies

More points can be earned in this subsection if the entire campus community could engage in their events. One way to achieve this is for the Sustainability Department to collaborate with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to organize an event during the Week of Welcome that would allow the entire student body to learn about cultural competence, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and/or social inclusion.

PA 06: Assessing Diversity and Equity

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that assess diversity and equity on campus. This includes topics such as the campus social climate, as well as student and employee outcomes related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Methodology

The data was collected by contacting the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Human Resources. The university's website was also consulted.

Results

The university was awarded 1.00/1.00 points for this subsection due to the use of the biannual climate essay, as well as the resources available from the Human Resources and ODEI websites

Proposed Strategies

This point can be maintained if the university continues to improve its efforts to educate students, faculty, and staff about the ever-changing social climate. This can be reflected in future iterations of the climate essay and showcased on the ODEI and Human Resources websites

PA 07: Support for Underrepresented Groups

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that have programs in place to support underrepresented groups and foster a more diverse and inclusive campus. This includes having a non-discrimination statement publicly available, programs to recruit students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented groups, and much more.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was collected from Title IX, Career Services, ODEI, and other relevant sources. The university's website was also consulted.

Results

The university was awarded 1.92/3.00 points for this section due to having a nondiscrimination statement published and having programs in place that support underrepresented groups among students, faculty, and staff.

Proposed Strategies

To earn full points for this section, the Sustainability Department should work with Human Resources to start a program that recruits non-academic staff from underrepresented groups. Additionally, they can work with Career Services to develop a program that helps students from underrepresented groups prepare for their careers.

PA 08: Affordability and Access

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that are affordable to low-income students. This includes topics such as need-based aid, loan debt, low-income percentage, and graduation/success rate.

Methodology

The data for this section was collected by contacting the office of the university provosts.

Results

The university earned 0.79/4.00 points for this section, which is based on the scholarships offered to students, as well as some data on graduation rates and the percentage of low-income students.

Proposed Strategies

To earn more points in this section, the university can conduct research into the financial situations of its students. This could involve conducting a survey to better understand the financial scope within the student body. By doing so, the university could not only earn more points for this report, but also demonstrate a need for its students and potentially attract more scholarship funding.

Investment & Finance

PA 09 Committee on Investor Responsibility

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize if the institution has an established and active Committee on Investor Responsibility (CIR). This committee makes recommendations to fund decision-makers on socially and environmentally responsible investment opportunities across various asset classes, including proxy voting.

Results

Due to the university lacking this type of committee, this subsection was not pursued and earned a total of 0.00/2.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

This subsection might not be applicable to our university due to the nature in which it is operated. To receive points for this section, the university must have an endowment of \$1 million or more, and the committee must comprise faculty, staff, and students.

PA 10 Sustainable Investment

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that use their investment power to promote sustainability. This can be through investments in sustainable industries, businesses selected for exemplary sustainable performance, sustainability investment funding, and many more.

Results

Due to the lack of investments of this type, the university chose not to pursue this subsection, earning a total of 0.00/4.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

This subsection may not be applicable to the university due to a lack of knowledge about investments made to the institution. One potential approach to earning points in this category could be to track the environmental mandates and practices of companies that invest in the university and use that information to answer the required questions

PA 11: Investment Disclosure

About

This subsection recognizes if institutions regularly make their investment holdings public available. This includes the specific funds and proxy voting record, specific non-proxy voting record, and investment managers.

Results

Due to the lack of investment disclosure, the university did not pursue this subsection and earned a total of 0.00/1.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

One possible way for the university to earn points in this subsection is by making all of its investment holdings and records open to the public, including voting records and information about investment managers.

Wellbeing & Work

PA 12: Employee Compensation

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that ensure their lowest-paid employees and contractors make a livable wage.

Results

Due to the lack of available data, the university was unable to pursue this subsection, resulting in a total of 0.00/3.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

The best way for the university to earn points in this section is to investigate whether their employees and contractors are receiving a livable wage and benefits for the area. This would require collecting data on employee and contractor pay and benefits, and comparing it to local cost-of-living standards to ensure that all workers are able to make ends meet. By making a commitment to fair compensation practices, the university can ensure that all of its employees are able to support themselves and their families.

PA 13: Assessing Employee Satisfaction

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that support employee engagement by conducting regular surveys that ask about their satisfaction with working at the institution. The survey should cover topics such as job satisfaction, learning and advancement opportunities, work culture, and work-life balance.

Results

Due to the lack of a survey of this type, the university chose not to pursue this subsection, resulting in a total of 0.00/1.00 points

Proposed Strategies

The university could earn points in this section by having the Sustainability Department work with Human Resources to conduct an annual survey for employees. This survey could

cover topics such as job satisfaction, opportunities for learning and advancement, work culture, and work-life balance.

PA 14: Wellness Program

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that support the health and well-being of their employees and students. This includes having smoke-free environments, counseling and well-being services, and referrals.

Methodology

The data for this subsection was obtained by contacting Human Resources, the Counseling Center, and the Health Clinic. The university website was also consulted.

Results

The university was awarded 1.00/1.00 points for this subsection due to having many programs that focus on the wellbeing of the students, faculty, and staff.

Proposed Strategies

The university can continue to earn this point by ensuring that the current programs aimed at promoting the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff are maintained and supported.

PA 15: Workplace Health and Safety

About

The purpose of this subsection is to recognize institutions that prioritize the health and safety of their employees. This is achieved through the implementation of a health and safety management system, as well as incident reporting procedures for full-time employees.

Results

Due to the lack of having such a system and report, the university chose not to pursue this subsection, resulting in a total of 0.00/2.00 points.

Proposed Strategies

The university could earn points in this subsection by working with the OEHS Department to implement a system that follows nationally recognized standards and guidelines

for safety precautions. An annual accident report should also be made, recording the number of accidents to allow for flaws within the safety management plan to be identified and fixed.

Conclusion

After analyzing the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) report of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, it becomes evident that there is room for improvement in various sections to increase the university's standing from Bronze to Silver in the upcoming reporting years. The report is divided into five sections: Academics (AC), Engagement (EN), Operations (OP), Planning & Administration (PA), and Innovation & Leadership (IN). Although the university has achieved a commendable score in the Academics section, receiving 55.28% of the available points, there is a significant gap in the Engagement, Planning & Administration, and Operations sections, with only 34.22%, 24.72%, and 19% of the available points achieved, respectively.

To address these gaps, the recommended strategies focus on three areas: Operations, Engagement, and Planning & Administration. In the Operations section, there is a significant potential for improvement. The university received only 12.97 points out of 68 possible points, indicating that there is a lot of room for growth. By following the proposed strategies, such as increasing the number of energy-efficient buildings and implementing sustainable waste management practices, UAH can significantly improve its performance in this section and potentially earn more points.

Similarly, the Engagement section offers a total of 41 points, but UAH only scored 14.03 points, which is only 34.22% of the possible points in this section. By implementing the recommended strategies, such as increasing the number of community outreach campaigns and enhancing the quality of student life on campus, UAH can improve its performance in this section and potentially earn more points.

Finally, the Planning & Administration section covers various aspects of planning and administration around campus, including diversity and equity, investments, and wellness programs. UAH was awarded only 24.72% of the possible points in this section, indicating that there is a lot of room for growth. By implementing strategies such as increasing investments in diversity and equity programs and enhancing wellness programs for staff and students, UAH can improve its performance in this section and potentially earn more points.

In conclusion, the University of Alabama in Huntsville has the potential to increase its STARS ranking from Bronze to Silver by following the action plan strategies proposed in this project. The university's commitment to energy conservation, environmental stewardship, and social engagement is commendable, and by improving in the Engagement and Operations sections, it can further solidify its commitment to sustainability. With the world facing ever-growing environmental challenges, it is essential for universities to take the lead in promoting sustainable practices, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville has the opportunity to be at the forefront of this movement. Therefore, it is crucial for UAH to implement the proposed strategies and improve its performance in the Operations, Engagement, and Planning & Administration sections of the STARS report to increase its standing from Bronze to Silver in the upcoming reporting years.

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