



## WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is commonly defined as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It relates to the continuity of economic, social, institutional, and environmental aspects of human society, as well as the non-human environment. Beyond some sufficient level of continuous functioning, however, sustainability represents more than just the mere ability to survive and get by. A more inspiring concept of sustainability is that of an assemblage of mutual interests between equity, economics, aesthetics and the environment. The Sustainable College is one that recognizes these interconnected mutual interests and creates productive affiliations between them.



## SUSTAINABILITY AND OBERLIN'S MISSION

What does sustainability have to do with Oberlin's mission? Quite simply, a lot. The core mission of Oberlin College is the education of its students. For the college to pursue its mission of education requires meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. That is to say it requires sustainability in order to educate generation after generation of students. One aspect of such education is the demonstration by its actions of the College's concern for, and protection of, its physical environment.



## COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In November 2006, the General Faculty approved the creation of the Committee on Environmental Sustainability (CES) as a body to review, propose, and oversee implementation of the Oberlin College Environmental Policy as set forth by the President's Environmental Policy Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees in March of 2004. Additionally, the CES supports and facilitates efforts by the College to publicize its role as a leader in campus sustainability and environmental citizenship in general. As such, it is charged with ensuring that the campus and general public are educated as to the progress Oberlin is making towards a green campus.

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OBERLIN COLLEGE OFFICE OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY



# OBERLIN COLLEGE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Providing leadership to the Oberlin community in implementing a comprehensive Environmental Policy in support of the College's strategic goal of sustainability.



[WWW.OBERLIN.EDU/SUSTAINABILITY](http://WWW.OBERLIN.EDU/SUSTAINABILITY)



OBERLIN

## VISION STATEMENT

The Office of Environmental Sustainability's vision is that sustainability in many ways represents the ultimate liberal art and as such is fundamentally important to a liberal arts college. A community that recognizes the interconnections between the environment, economics, equity, and aesthetics is one that understands the dynamic interactions of species and communities over time and during changing ecological conditions. A college that embraces sustainability commits itself to instilling a consciousness of these interrelationships and developing the skills necessary to create new possibilities and extending our ecological imaginations through any discipline, field, endeavor, or area of study.

## HISTORY AND TIMELINE

### MARCH 2004:

Board of Trustees adopts Environmental Policy Statement.

### JUNE 2004:

Green energy purchase agreement to obtain more than 50 percent of electricity from green sources.

### MARCH 2005:

Board adopts Strategic Plan with Environmental Sustainability as a key directive.

### FEBRUARY 2006:

Sustainability Working Group recommends plan for achieving environmental goals outlined in Strategic Plan.

### FEBRUARY 2006:

Student activists initiate CityWheels car-sharing program.

### JUNE 2006:

Board of Trustees adopts LEED Silver standard for all new construction and major renovation on campus.

### SEPTEMBER 2006:

Oberlin College creates Office of Environmental Sustainability.

### NOVEMBER 2006:

Faculty approves Committee on Environmental Sustainability.

### DECEMBER 2006:

Oberlin president pledges the College will become "climate neutral" through the nationwide American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment.

### APRIL 2007:

The College initiates an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and a Campus Climate Action Plan.

### April 2007

Committee on Environmental Sustainability approves Green Purchasing Policy.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

In March 2004, the Board of Trustees adopted the following Environmental Policy Statement, proposed and approved by the General Faculty Planning Committee:

*The core mission of Oberlin College is the education of its students. One aspect of such education is the demonstration by its actions of the College's concern for, and protection of, its physical environment.*

*Oberlin College must be a responsible steward of the environment. As such, the College will seek*

- 1) to reduce the rate at which it contributes to the depletion and degradation of natural resources;*
- 2) to increase the use of renewable resources; and*
- 3) to consider other measures that can enhance the physical environment in which we live. The development of priorities and the implementation of decisions regarding energy production and use, the use and development of our grounds, facilities construction, modernization, maintenance, transportation, and materials use will be informed by the environmental impact they have. The President or delegated officials will periodically advise the community of the College's progress in this area.*

## STRATEGIC PLAN

One of the key components of the strategic plan is a commitment to move toward environmental sustainability.

### STRATEGIES

- Seek to reduce the rate at which the College contributes to the depletion and degradation of natural resources, to increase the use of renewable resources, and to consider other measures that can enhance the physical environment in which we live.
- To the extent practicable, develop and implement state-of-the-art standards for building design, construction, and performance, and for land use, consistent with the above goals of energy efficiency and prudent resource use.
- Work toward environmentally sound as well as aesthetically pleasing means of maintaining the physical plant, the landscape, and their surroundings.
- Enhance and develop further opportunities for students and faculty to participate in the continuing "greening" of the campus and the wider community through promoting course work in various curricular areas, independent research projects, and community service.

[www.oberlin.edu/sustainability](http://www.oberlin.edu/sustainability)

## THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Interacts with the administration, faculty, staff, and students to focus attention on ways to maximize the environmental performance of Oberlin College and develop the awareness and tools required to respond dynamically to issues affecting them. We also reach out to the wider community and provide a connection between Oberlin and regional and national activities.

To learn more about sustainability efforts at Oberlin College, please visit our web site at:

[www.oberlin.edu/sustainability](http://www.oberlin.edu/sustainability)

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB INCLUDE:

*Oberlin's sustainability portfolio  
Climate Neutrality information  
Campus sustainability groups  
Volunteer opportunities  
On campus resources  
News and events*

