

Organization for Economic Cooperation and
Development's (OECD) Higher Education for
Sustainable Development Program

Self-Evaluation for Oberlin College

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OBERLIN

Responses to Questions

Question 1: How does your HEI contribute to reducing the extraction of natural resources?

a) **Consciousness of Resource Flows—Creation of Environmental Policy**

Oberlin College was one of the first colleges to carefully study its resource flows and food system. Beginning in 1988 with a course entitled “Campus in the Biosphere,” Oberlin students, faculty, and staff joined together to look at these issues and begin to assess ways that the college could reduce its ecological footprint, and consequently reduce the need to extract natural resources. The class conducted a comprehensive study of resource flows on campus and discussed ways that the college could reduce its impact. The culmination of this work was the adoption of a comprehensive Environmental Policy Statement in 2004, addressing a wide range of sustainability issues on campus. The policy includes sections on: energy production and use; grounds management; facilities construction, modernization, and maintenance; transportation; materials, purchasing, reuse, and disposal.

b) **Clothing Swap and Swap Room**

At the end of spring and fall semesters, a group of 10 student employees called the College Recycling Assistants hold a campus-wide event called “The Big Swap.” At last semester’s Big Swap, College Recyclers collected 388 bags of clothing, books, and dorm room items. The items are collected from each dorm by the College Recyclers and taken to a centralized location in the student union building. For about a week, the Recyclers keep everything that has been collected in this main space and people are able to come and take items they can put to use. At the end of that week, College Recyclers then take the remaining items to local charities. This greatly reduces the amount of useful items entering the waste stream when students clean out their dorm rooms and off-campus houses at the end of each semester. While in the past this “swap” only took place twice a semester, the college has located a permanent space for a “Swap Room” starting in February 2007. This new Swap Room will provide an excellent avenue for reuse of materials on campus, diverting useful items from the landfill and consequently reducing the extraction of natural resources.

c) **Carpet Recycling and Vendor Selection**

Oberlin College both purchases and recycles all of the carpet on campus through Legacy Flooring. In 2003 the college won the State of Ohio Department of Administrative Services STS Recycler of the Year Award for the amount of carpet it recycled. Over the past four years, Oberlin has recycled 177,057 square feet of used carpet (equal to 111,507 lbs). According to the Antron Reclamation Program Calculator, this is equivalent to a savings of 208.8 cubic yards of landfill space, 112,136.1 gallons of water, 184,434.4 pounds of CO₂, and 1,227,418,143 BTUs of energy. When carpet must be removed from a building, all of it is recycled. Oberlin then purchases the “new” product from the same company. Through recycling its old carpets and in turn buying carpet from the company, Oberlin reduces the necessity to extract new resources by both

keeping its old carpet out of landfills and also helping to create economic demand for recycled-content carpets.

Question 2: How does your HEI contribute to reducing the use of natural resources?

a) LEED Green Building Rating System Silver Standard Adopted

In June of 2006 the Oberlin College Board of Trustees adopted a policy that all new construction and major renovations on campus have to be designed and built in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver standard. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. The adoption of this standard will significantly reduce the use of resources on campus in the future, as the built spaces will both be built more efficiently and perform more efficiently.

b) Production of Solar Energy

The installation of a new solar parking pavilion adjacent to the existing photovoltaic (PV) array on the roof of the innovative Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies makes Oberlin College the home of the largest PV array in Ohio, with a total rated production of 159 kW. By using the solar energy produced by the PV array, the college avoids using other resources necessary to produce electricity.

c) Student Employees Educate Campus on Sustainability

The college employs students engaged in a variety of efforts related to reducing the use of resources on campus. Since the mid-1980s a group of about 10 student employees called The College Recycling Assistants have been employed by the Facilities Department 5-10 hours each per week. The College Recyclers work on a wide range of resource-use reduction initiatives and manage Oberlin College's comprehensive recycling program. One of their main campaigns at the moment is addressing paper consumption. They have put together a separated-stream paper-only recycling bin system to decrease the contamination of paper to be recycled, met with the staff who purchase office supplies in each department to encourage the purchase of recycled-content paper, have worked to have campus printers default to double-sided, and will conduct a comprehensive study of the campus waste stream in spring 2007.

Since the late 1990's, another group called the Campus Dining Service Recyclers have employed a few students at a similar number of hours per week. The CDS Recyclers work primarily in the dining halls and initiate waste-reducing projects such as waste audits, assessment of packaging options, and a composting program. The CDS Recyclers educate students and staff in the dining halls about reducing resource use in particular through reducing food and packaging waste.

Question 3: How does your HEI contribute to improving biological diversity?

a) Local Wetland Restoration and Research

The college has provided land and support for the creation of six experimental wetland restoration cells on the George Jones Memorial Farm, a college-owned organic farm. These wetland cells have been created through a partnership between various professors at the college and the New Agrarian Center—an Oberlin alum's non-profit that manages the farm. This project was undertaken to assess the ability to successfully restore previously-existing Ohio wetlands. Less than a year after establishment, indicators of healthy wetland function emerged. This project helps improve the understanding of wetland establishment and management by comparing base conditions with the long-term effects of initial planting and management strategies. Experimental treatments for the wetland cells are assessed through a series of ecological indicators and a collection of computerized maps that can trace changes over time. This research adds to the understanding of how to increase local biological diversity through the successful reintroduction of local wetland species.

b) Native Ecosystem landscaping

The grounds surrounding the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies integrate native ecosystems into the landscaping. The main feature of the grounds is a restored wetland that serves as a repository for native species diversity. The wetland incorporates 50 emergent and open-water wetland plants, all endemic to Ohio. Three species of native cacti thrive in the rock garden surrounding the building, and there are local deciduous trees planted throughout the grounds. The lawn areas are the only areas planted with species that are not local to Ohio, but in contrast to most other commercial lawns the development of a diverse and multi-species assemblage is encouraged.

c) Butterfly Garden

In celebration of Earth Day in 2006, the College Recyclers began the installation of a butterfly garden on South Campus. The Recyclers selected plants in consultation with the Grounds Department and various professors in the Environmental Studies Program and the Biology Department. The Recyclers plan to continue the expansion of this project each year in celebration of Earth Day.

Question 4: How does your HEI contribute to improving the health and well being of staff and students?

a) Green Cleaning Chemicals

Oberlin is currently in the process of switching to the use of an environmentally-friendly multi-purpose cleaner called H2Orange2 made by Envirox. The new cleaning solutions are hydrogen peroxide based and are biodegradable. There is one solution used in different dilutions, reducing the potential for hazardous mixing of chemicals. The product is far less toxic than typical cleaning solutions due to the elimination of chemicals used in common janitorial cleaning products (phosphates, high pH detergents, alcohols, ammonia, amines, chlorine bleach, APE's, acids, caustics, quaternary

ammonium compounds, dyes, and fragrances). The new multi-purpose cleaner is equally effective as a sanitizer to less environmentally-friendly products, and it is non-toxic to humans and aquatic life. It contains no carcinogens or eye/skin irritants, so it is less harmful to those using the product. Nor does it affect indoor air quality, as many chemicals do, so it does not affect the respiratory health of those using the product.

b) No VOC Paints Used in All Campus Buildings

Oberlin College uses Harmony Paints in all campus buildings. These paints have no odor, no silicates, and no volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Oberlin protects the health of the campus community by carefully selecting products such as these that will not negatively impact indoor air quality.

c) Oberlin Campus Dialogue Center

In addition to an ombudsperson and a counseling center, Oberlin maintains an innovative system of conflict resolution: the Oberlin Campus Dialogue Center. Coordinated and overseen by the ombudsperson, the Oberlin Campus Dialogue Center promotes social change through conflict transformation, mediation, community building, and dialogue. The center's mediation team includes students, faculty members, and staff members who represent various constituencies on the Oberlin campus. These individuals are trained to mediate using the social justice model. Through the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Oberlin Campus Dialogue Center also assists individuals and the College community in confronting and resolving sources of community tension, particularly those stemming from racism and other socially derived sources of prejudice and misunderstanding.

Question 5: How does your HEI contribute to building the learning and social skills of staff and students so that they are empowered citizens?

a) Dorm Resource Monitoring System

In 2005 faculty and students collaborated to design and build a campus resource use monitoring system with real-time web-based feedback on electricity consumption. This system educates dorm residents about their electrical usage and empowers them to make a difference in campus resource use through becoming more aware of the effects of their own habits. In combination with dormitory competitions this system has resulted in up to 56% reductions in electricity use in winning dorms. The system has been funded through a variety of grants including an EPA "People, Prosperity and the Planet" (P3) award. Oberlin was the only undergraduate institution and the only institution without an engineering program to receive a \$75,000 P3 Phase II grant to support this work.

b) Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA)

The Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA) is a student-run housing and dining cooperative system that has been in existence since 1950. It has about 640 members in total and currently operates 9 cooperative dining halls and 4 cooperative housing programs. The OSCA housing co-ops range in size from 64-15 members each, and most of the dining co-ops have about 80-115 members each. These co-ops are

located on campus in college-owned buildings and membership is open to all students--based not on seniority, but on a random lottery system. OSCA is one of the largest student cooperatives in the US and is a crucial part of the college experience for many Oberlin students. OSCA uses a consensus-based decision-making process in which each member has one vote, creating a unique and thoughtful community in which political, social, and environmental concerns of all kinds are carefully addressed. Members of the dining co-ops each work a set number of hours per week for their co-op (typically 4 or 5) taking care of all the things that must be done—everything from washing dishes and cooking to managing the compost program to membership on various committees. Students cite the OSCA experience as one that has taught them the value of a close community, engaged them in new ideas, and empowered them to seek the change they wish to see in the world.

c) **Tuition Remission for Faculty and Staff**

One of the benefits provided to Oberlin College employees is tuition remission for their children. Staff may also take up to 5 credit hours per semester themselves without paying tuition.

Question 6: How does your HEI provide access to varied and satisfying opportunities for personal creativity, wellbeing and recreation for all stakeholders?

a) **The “Experimental College” (ExCo)**

The Experimental College (ExCo) was begun in 1968 as an experiment in alternative education, and today it still provides the Oberlin community with perhaps some of the most enjoyable and most rewarding experiences in college learning. The ExCo is run as a student organization and headed by a volunteer committee which is solely responsible for choosing the curriculum and maintaining the integrity of the program throughout the academic semester. In a given semester there may be between 60 to 90 courses, so there is always plenty of variety. Anyone may take classes--students, faculty members, staff members, and townspeople alike. Those who demonstrate expertise and enthusiasm may teach a course as long as that course is judged to have educational merit and a reasonably serious purpose. Due to its flexible nature ExCo reflects the current academic, intellectual, social, ideological, philosophical, political, emotional, sexual, and fashion trends of the Oberlin community.

b) **Bike Co-op**

Oberlin’s campus is incredibly bike-friendly. Most students and other Oberlin residents own bikes. For those who do not, bikes can be rented by the semester from the Bike Co-op for a small fee, a cooperatively run bicycle repair, rental, and education center that is housed in a college building and run primarily by Oberlin students. The Bike Co-op has been in operation since 1986 and runs a variety of activities for local children, including the chance to earn a bike through working 10 hours with the bike mechanics learning how to build and maintain bicycles. Most parking lots are located on the periphery of campus, successfully encouraging walking and biking around campus. Most campus buildings have their own bike racks, and very few have parking lots.

Question 7: How does your HEI improve governance systems so that they are trusted by all stakeholders and accessible to them?

a) Alumni-elected Trustees and Class Trustees

The Oberlin College Board of Trustees is the governing body of the college. It consists of 30 trustees together with the president of the College, who is ex officio a member of the Board. A chair of the Board is elected from the members and serves no more than two successive three-year terms. Twenty-one trustees may be Board-elected trustees, and six are alumni-elected trustees. Three additional trustees (class trustees) shall be elected, one from the class most recently graduated, and one each from the two preceding classes; each is elected for a term of three years. In addition, before each Board meeting, the class-elected Trustees host an Open Trustee Forum where students are encouraged to come voice their opinions to the Board.

b) Faculty Governance

Faculty governance is prominent on campus. Oberlin College has long been a leader in energetic faculty governance, dating back to the founding of the college in the 1830's. The two main faculty-led governance bodies are the General Faculty and the General Faculty Council. These two groups are charged with managing the internal affairs of Oberlin College, in partnership with the Board of Trustees. The General Faculty Council is charged with the responsibility of nominating and recommending changes in rank and salary to the college President. This Council also acts as an advisory body to the President on the budget and other issues.

c) Student Governance

The Student Senate is comprised of a student-elected group of 15 students. It is the principal advocate for the interests of the student body as a whole to the Oberlin administration and faculty, and ensures effective student participation in the faculty governance system. The Senate is a central forum for common dialogue within the student community, and for the development of legislation to actualize common goals. The Senate is responsible for insuring the coordination, effectiveness and accountability of all student government organizations. The Senate also encourages and supports student organizations, initiatives, and activities.

Perhaps Senate's most significant power is the appointment of students to the College's committees, which make many decisions about Oberlin's operations and policies. Student Senators sit on the General Faculty of Oberlin College, and thus discuss and vote on major policies in the same forum as professors and administrators. Senate also serves as a board of appeal for Student Finance Committee budget allocations to student organizations. In addition, Senate organizes student-led committees called Advisory Councils focused on issues of particular importance to the student body. Finally, both the Senate as a whole and individual senators meet frequently with administrators to discuss issues of importance to students and advocate for student interests.

Question 8: How are your HEI's policies, teaching practices, research and third stream activities contributing to a shared understanding of sustainable development amongst internal and external stakeholders?

a) American College and University President's Climate Commitment

In keeping with Oberlin College's Environmental Policy Statement of March 2004, the college became a signatory of the American College and University President's Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in November 2006. Oberlin is one of the nation's first institutions of higher education to accept the goal of climate neutrality by signing the ACUPCC. As a charter signatory, Oberlin becomes one of four schools in the United States and the first in its peer group to sign the ACUPCC, an environmental initiative developed by Second Nature, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, and ecoAmerica to address global climate change in institutions of higher education. As a first signer, Oberlin's President Nancy Dye also has opted to become a member of ACUPCC's Presidents Leadership Group, a cadre of 10 to 20 presidents and chancellors representing institutions currently at the forefront of sustainability in higher education pledging to build support among college and university administrations across America. The Presidents Commitment project has set as its goal the participation pledge of at least 200 college and university presidents by June 2007.

c) Environmental Studies Program

Oberlin College created its Environmental Studies Program in the Fall of 1978. David Orr, a national figure in the environmental movement, was hired as a professor for the program in the fall of 1990. Students may either major or minor in Environmental Studies. The program offers a wide variety of classes and provides an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human interactions with the environment. Of central concern are the impact of technology on natural environments and its implications for human welfare. The program seeks to apply the different perspectives of the humanities, social sciences, biology, and the physical sciences to environmental and natural resource issues. These perspectives, combined with complementary training in a traditional discipline, will prepare students for graduate work and careers in the environmental sciences, law, public health, public policy, or public administration. The program empowers students by providing them with the knowledge necessary to address global and local environmental issues in a thorough, thoughtful, and effective manner.

c) Living Machine Wastewater Treatment System

The Living Machine is designed to process wastewater into reusable grey water via the natural cleansing methods that occur in a wetland—plants, bacteria, protozoa, and other aquatic microorganisms are used to clean and condition the water for reuse. It is located in the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, and it is operated by a group of about 10 students. The Living Machine provides excellent opportunities for Oberlin College students and the community to explore issues of wastewater, wetland ecology, microbiology and plant dynamics. It has served as a laboratory for students of Systems Ecology, Mathematics, Environmental Chemistry and Microbiology. It has been

the focus of several independent student research projects. Area elementary through high school students visiting the Living Machine learn about the importance of wastewater treatment for maintenance of healthy rivers and lakes and how wetland ecosystems purify polluted water.

Question 9: How does your HEI support other businesses, the public sector and voluntary groups in society to promote stewardship of natural, social and economic resources?

a) Car-sharing Program

Oberlin College hosts two car-sharing vehicles on campus through a Cleveland non-profit called CityWheels and has agreed to subsidize membership costs for students. Membership in this car-sharing program is available to anyone in the community over the age of 21. Everyone can join—students, academic departments, local business-owners, and residents. The partnership with CityWheels offers affordable access to clean, fuel-efficient vehicles, promoting stewardship of resources through reducing the need for privately-owned, inefficient vehicles.

b) Eco-Purchasing Initiative

In an effort to implement Oberlin's Environmental Policy Statement, a committee called the Eco-Purchasing Committee was created in September 2006. The Purchasing Department has tried over the years to initiate various efforts to encourage the purchase of environmentally preferable products with varying degrees of success. The Purchasing Department decided to hire a student Eco-Purchasing Intern beginning during the summer of 2006 to spearhead this work, leading to the creation of the Eco-Purchasing Committee. The Eco-Purchasing Committee is currently working with the intern to create a comprehensive policy on environmentally preferable purchasing to unite the campus in this initiative. By creating this policy, the college is committing to supporting businesses that are strong stewards of natural, social, and economic resources.

c) Development of Creativity and Leadership Program

On December 10, 2006 Oberlin received a \$1,126,382 grant from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation of Hudson, Ohio, and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City, Missouri, as part of a five-year project to develop campus-wide entrepreneurship initiatives in Northeast Ohio. Oberlin was one of five colleges selected to share a total of \$6.6 million in grants through the foundations' Northeast Ohio Collegiate Entrepreneurship program; the others are Baldwin-Wallace College, Hiram College, Lake Erie College, and The College of Wooster. The funded colleges will share their models nationally, and the foundations hope to expand the program across the country if it is successful.

The Creativity and Leadership Program will feature concept development grants awarded on a competitive basis to individual students or teams of students from all majors, who will spend the year after graduation moving their ideas from theory to implementation. The program also will offer semester and half-semester courses, mentored experiential opportunities, workshops, and lectures by alumni and northeastern

Ohio entrepreneurs to prepare students for the challenges of implementing their projects. Entrepreneurial Oberlin College and Conservatory alumni will mentor students in their experiential projects.

Question 10: How does your HEI contribute to safe and supportive local communities?

a) The Center for Service and Learning

The Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning (CSL) works in partnership with the surrounding community to link students with educational service opportunities. Community service, advocacy, grassroots organizing and applied research are the norm at Oberlin, where each year over 55% of Oberlin undergraduate students do some form of curricular or co-curricular community service. The CSL encourages all students to become involved in community efforts in the Oberlinian belief that intellectual inquiry and community involvement reinforce and enrich one another.

To support Oberlin's mission of "preparing students for intelligent and useful response to the present and future demands of society," the Center for Service and Learning: 1) Develops programs that combine community involvement with intellectual and artistic pursuits; 2) Links students with community organizations in need of volunteers; 3) Sponsors events and conferences designed to enhance College and community interaction.

In the 2005-2006 academic year, an estimated 1159 total participants completed 64,438 hours of community service.¹

b) Local Food in Campus Dining Halls

In 2000 the campus dining program began a "Buy Local" program. When that program began, local food was essentially non-existent in campus dining halls. As of 2006, about 35% of food in campus dining halls is now locally grown and purchased from local suppliers. The "Buy Local" program defines local as within 150 miles of the college. By supporting local farms, this program contributes to the economic health of the community while decreasing the college's reliance on the unsustainable practice of shipping food long distances.

Question 11: How does your HEI contribute to the development of infrastructure, technologies and processes that minimize use of natural resources and maximize use of human innovation and skills?

a) Sustainable Reserve Fund

When Oberlin College agreed to purchase an estimated 60% of its electricity from green sources, the college worked with the municipal power utility and the City Council to create a Sustainable Reserve Fund from the money paid towards green attributes. This fund contains the \$2 per MWhr that Oberlin pays as a premium for green power. This

¹ For further information, a document entitled "10)a)Oberlin Community Service Data" containing a chart with detailed information is attached.

money is overseen by the City Council and is available for local energy conservation and greenhouse gas reducing projects. So far, portions of these funds have gone towards two local projects: the purchase and erection of a wind monitoring tower to assess the potential for local wind energy generation, and the infrastructure for a local biofuels station that sells biodiesel and ethanol fuels.

b) Innovative Green Building Techniques in the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies.

The Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies (AJLC) was one of the first and most innovative green buildings on a college campus. It helped launch the green building movement of the mid 1990's. Its innovative systems have since inspired green buildings in many other locations and settings. The AJLC was conceived as a demonstration project, testing ground, educational venue, and catalyst for the emerging field of ecological design. It was designed to be a building that would teach, providing endless research opportunities for students and faculty in multiple disciplines. The AJLC is intended to be more than just a demonstration. It is a part of the larger education of the Oberlin community aimed to promote the practical skills and analytic abilities necessary to reweave the human presence in the world. The AJLC contains numerous innovations in energy systems, HVAC systems, landscaping, wastewater treatment, and materials use. Most notably, with over 150 environmental sensors installed throughout the building and landscape, the AJLC's data monitoring and display system provides a unique opportunity to visualize in real-time the flows of energy and cycling of matter that are necessary to support the built environment.

c) Co-generation Plant

Oberlin College was one of the first institutions to construct a co-generation plant capable of providing both steam for heat and electricity for the campus.

Question 12: How does your HEI ensure economic sustainability including the financial valuation of natural (eg the extra cost of green energy) and social capital?

a) Investing in the Social Capital of the City of Oberlin: Partnerships with the Local Public School System

Oberlin College values the education of local residents and contributes to this in two main ways: the Oberlin Partnership and the new Graduate Teacher Education Program.

The Graduate Teacher Education Program will begin accepting students in June of 2007. The program was initiated as a partnership with the local school system. Teachers in this program will work in the local schools, developing a partnership of reciprocal collaboration in which Oberlin students gain from working with experienced teachers in a richly diverse setting and teachers will be given support and time to think about classroom goals.

The Oberlin Partnership, established in 2000, is a collaborative effort headed by leaders from Oberlin College and the City of Oberlin. Its purpose is to find cooperative

and innovative solutions to pressing local issues of education, housing, economic development, and recreation. Through the work of the Oberlin Partnership, in the 2001-02 academic year, Oberlin College began offering full tuition scholarships to qualified graduates of Oberlin High School. In the 5 years that the program has been in existence, 20 students have received the scholarship.

b) Valuing Natural Capital—Green Energy Purchase

Oberlin College has maintained a course in Environmental Economics since the fall of 1990. The college puts this dedication to valuing natural capital into practice in many ways, with the most direct example of this being the college's decision to purchase 60% of its electricity from green sources. In June of 2004 the college signed an agreement to pay \$2 per MWh to purchase an estimated 13,000 MWh per year in green attributes from the local utility, Oberlin Municipal Light and Power. The college purchased all of the green attributes that the utility had available at the time, and the college is currently undergoing negotiations to increase that amount if possible. Based on a carbon inventory of Oberlin College completed by the Rocky Mountain Institute in 2002, the purchase of these green attributes should off-set approximately one quarter of Oberlin's carbon emissions—amounting to about a 12,600 ton reduction in carbon emissions.

c) Valuing Human Rights--Anti-Sweatshop Purchasing Policy

In June of 1999 the college adopted a comprehensive Anti-Sweatshop Purchasing Policy that bans purchasing from vendors or manufacturers who engage in human rights abuses or poor labor practices. The Purchasing Department hires a student intern to research the human rights and labor histories of companies with which Oberlin does business. This intern makes recommendations to the Anti-Sweatshop Committee for vendors to add to an approved-vendors list. The most recent ban due to this policy was a campus-wide ban on coca-cola products stemming from the company's failure to adequately address allegations of human rights abuses at a bottling plant in Columbia.

Question 13: Could you please state the barriers to implementing sustainable development at your institution and any policy suggestions you have.

At this point in its history, Oberlin College is working to actively lower barriers to the implementation of sustainable development practices. Over the past 5 years, the college has been engaged in a process of creating the institutional structures necessary to address issues related to sustainability.

This process began in the spring of 2000 when an initial Presidential Advisory Committee on environmental issues was created. This first committee recommended the formation of a permanent committee on environmental issues, which subsequently led to the creation of the Environmental Policy Advisory Committee to the President (EPAC). EPAC drafted an Environmental Policy that was adopted unanimously by the Board of Trustees in March of 2004. When the college adopted a new Strategic Plan in March of 2005, one of the seven Strategic Directions was a "Move Toward Environmental Sustainability."

In response to this, the Office of Environmental Sustainability was created in September of 2006 with the hiring of a full time Assistant Coordinator for Environmental Sustainability. The college has signed a contract to hire a full time Environmental Sustainability Coordinator to lead the effort to implement the college's Environmental Policy beginning in February of 2007. An Eco-Purchasing Intern hired by the Purchasing Department, an Eco-Purchasing Committee tasked with the creation of an Eco-Purchasing Policy, and a new faculty committee—the Committee on Environmental Sustainability—are all new developments of 2006 as well. With the recent hiring of an Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, Oberlin stands poised to begin to address the many challenges in campus sustainability.