Oberlin’s Controlling Environmental Policy

Environmental Policy (adopted by the Board of Trustees in March 2004)

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 (adopted by the Board of Trustees in March 2005)

Strategic Direction: Move toward Environmental Sustainability

Rationale: Oberlin is in a favorable position to be a national leader in promoting sustainability on and off campus. The College has already committed itself to pursuing the goal of sustainability, as expressed in the “environmental policy statement of Oberlin College,” adopted by the Board of Trustees in March 2004. It should abide by this commitment by continuing to work toward developing an environmentally sustainable campus. Justifications include the unprecedented environmental challenges our students will face in the future; the great importance attached by current and prospective students to efforts to achieve sustainability; the learning experiences afforded to students as a result of these efforts; and the continuing example Oberlin can set for other institutions, academic and otherwise.

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.
Oberlin’s Major Commitments

**CARBON**

**Neutral by 2025**

Oberlin was the first of its peers to sign the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment. We plan on achieving carbon-neutrality by 2025.

**BUILDINGS**

**LEED Silver**

Oberlin’s trustees adopted a minimum LEED Silver equivalent building standard. Since adoption, all construction and major renovations have or are expected to achieve LEED Gold ratings.

**How We’re Getting There**

**Electricity**

- Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System recently signed agreements that will change its portfolio to 85% renewables by 2013 and 90% by 2015.

- The Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) commissioned a campus lighting audit (summer 2011) that will identify opportunities to increase the efficiency of indoor and outdoor lighting on campus.

- OES commissioned an electric distribution grid study to design a centralized campus microgrid, which would allow Oberlin to better meter buildings’ electricity use, provide backup power generation in the event of a service disruption or during peak loads, and directly connect to local renewable energy generation (e.g. a PV array).

- OES is designing a green office and green dorm room certification program to promote behavior change to further reduce campus electricity use.

- OES is evaluating additional renewable energy generation opportunities.

**Heating**

- OES commissioned a Central Heating Plant replacement study to explore alternatives to our current two coal and one natural gas boilers. Stantec will provide Oberlin with a final report by the end of the year.

- Over the past three years, Oberlin has aggressively replaced steam traps throughout the steam distribution system. Replacing broken steam traps increases the efficiency of the delivery system.

- With the help of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, Oberlin replaced windows and curtain walls in six residence halls (Barnard, Bailey, Barrows, Dascomb, East, and Zechiel) and added steam metering, which will soon be connected to the Campus Resource Monitoring System.

---

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions at Oberlin College in FY10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>MT CO2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>30912.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>20125.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>19186.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offsets</td>
<td>-8400.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>2891.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Waste</td>
<td>405.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total less offsets</strong></td>
<td><strong>42609.23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34209.02</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transportation

- Last year Oberlin partnered with Hertz on Demand to expand our car-sharing program to three vehicles and provide free membership to any qualified driver over eighteen.

- Through a Department of Energy National Energy Technology Laboratory award, Oberlin commissioned a study outlining ways our community could move to a zero fossil fuel, zero emissions transportation system by 2050. We are now working on implementing the early pieces of that plan.

Solid Waste

- Last year, Oberlin piloted a student-run in-dorm composting program in Kahn Hall, the new sustainability-themed first-year residence hall. We’re expanding that program to other residence halls this year. This year we installed a pulper in Stevenson Dining Hall that will allow for post-consumer and paper composting, which will increase our landfill diversion.

- This year OES will work with Facilities Operations to reinvigorate campus recycling.

Other Initiatives

Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS)

Oberlin, the Great Lakes Colleges Association, and many of our peer institutions have adopted STARS, a self-reporting framework that helps colleges analyze their sustainability and learn from each others’ successes. STARS is administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

Additional Student Initiatives

- Green EDGE Fund: recent projects include a replacing exit sign bulbs with LEDs, retrofitting lights in Hales Gym, water efficiency improvements in Firelands, and study the feasibility of high-altitude wind power

- Gardens: Students started Johnson House Garden, an organic market garden and orchard managed by the Resource Conservation Team, in 2010. In 2011, kitchen gardens were started in Stevenson and Dascomb dining halls.

Questions or Ideas?

The Office of Environmental Sustainability is eager to answer questions or hear ideas—please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Colin Koffel ’10
Environmental Sustainability Fellow
colin.koffel@oberlin.edu
(440) 775-6354