



University of Arizona Student Sustainability Survey

Executive Summary Fall 2014



Sustainability at the University of Arizona

The University of Arizona continues to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability through various curricular and co-curricular student offerings; more information on sustainability at the UA is available at sustainability.arizona.edu.

For the purposes of this survey, sustainability refers to efforts by the UA to help address society's challenges to meet human needs over the long term in a socially equitable way, without disrupting the earth systems upon which society depends.

The UA's sustainability efforts include the way the University campus operates and the daily decisions of students, faculty, and staff. It also includes the knowledge and skills students gain through their programs and the new knowledge created through University research and innovation.

About the Survey

To support the sustainability efforts at the UA, a survey of the entire University student body was implemented that gauged students' behaviors and perceptions as they relate to sustainability. Findings illustrate important aspects of UA students and their engagement in sustainability through four main themes: sustainability issues of concern, preferred ways to learn about sustainability, student support for UA sustainability initiatives, and students' sustainability-focused behavior. Additionally, students applying to college are increasingly interested in the sustainability of prospective schools, and many UA students would like to work in careers that make a difference in sustainability.

The survey was administered by the University of Arizona's Division of Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Academic Initiatives, and Student Success as a collaborative assessment project with the UA Office of Sustainability and the UA's Students for Sustainability. The survey was distributed December 2014 to January 2015 to a UA student sample (N=18,982) and elicited a 9.9% response rate (N=1,885). Page six of this report provides a closer look at survey respondent demographic information. For more information about this report, please contact Ben Champion, director of the UA Office of Sustainability: bchampion@email.arizona.edu.



Survey Findings

Sustainability Issues UA Students Consider Important*

1. Water conservation (93%)
2. Recycling (91%)
3. Minimization of waste (90%)
4. Energy conservation (90%)
5. Working towards social equality (84%)
6. Working to transition away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energies (84%)
7. Students helping lead UA efforts toward sustainability (81%)
8. Alternative transportation (80%)
9. Purchasing environmentally friendly products (76%)
10. Access to educational opportunities about sustainability (73%)

**Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of importance they placed on each sustainability issue. Possible answers were Very Important, Important, Neutral, Unimportant, Very Unimportant, and Unsure. The above percentages represent the combination of responses indicating Important and Very Important.*



70% of UA students are interested in or passionate about sustainability.

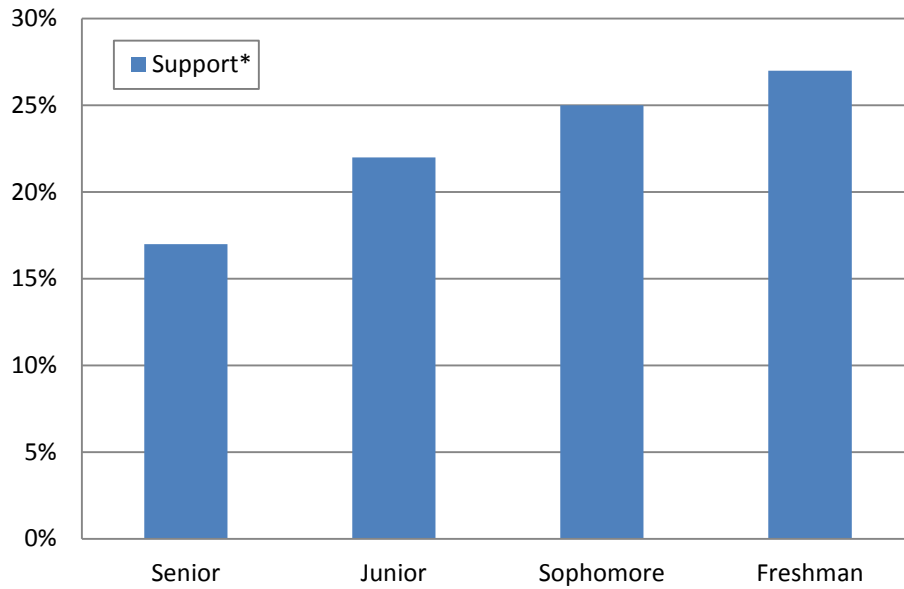
Preferred Methods to Learn about Sustainability Outside the Classroom*

1. Social media (43%)
2. On-campus signs (35%)
3. Websites (33%)
4. Large educational events (32%)
5. In-person workshops/classes (31%)
6. Email communication (28%)
7. Blogs (19%)
8. Public forums (17%)
9. Online workshops/classes (16%)

63% of students believe they make an effort to be knowledgeable about sustainability issues.

**Respondents were asked which resources they would find most beneficial to help them learn more about sustainability and selected all that applied from a list.*

Sustainability as a Factor in the College Selection Process



**Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement that sustainability was a factor in their choice of college. Possible answers were Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The above percentages represent the combination of responses indicating Agree and Strongly Agree.*



Sustainability increasingly is important for students choosing where to attend college.



71% of UA students support improving the environment through sustainable building and landscaping choices at the University.

Student Support for UA Sustainability Initiatives

UA Sustainability Initiatives	Support*
UA should do more to improve the environment through its buildings and landscaping	71%
UA should do more to improve the environment in its educational offerings, such as classes and research	66%
UA should do more to improve the environment in its co-curricular offerings, such as organizations and on-campus programs	62%
I would like to learn more about sustainability while in college	56%
I would like to see more investment in the UA Green Fund and Office of Sustainability for UA sustainability leadership	54%
I would support an initiative to provide more resources for UA sustainability programs through student fees	42%
Sustainability influences where I choose to live	38%
Sustainability was a factor when choosing where to attend college	19%

** Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement. Possible answers were Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The above percentages represent the combination of responses indicating Agree and Strongly Agree.*

66% of UA students support doing more to improve the environment through University educational offerings, such as classes and research.



UA Student Engagement in Sustainability-Related Behaviors

Sustainability Behavior	Percent of Students Actively Engaged in Behavior
Refill water bottles	87%
Recycle	86%
Engage in energy reduction practices (i.e. turn off heat/ac, turn off lights, high efficiency lightbulbs)	85%
Donate unwanted possessions	64%
Think about sustainability issues	51%
Purchase sustainable products (e.g. recycled paper notebooks)	50%
Use public/alternative transportation (e.g. Zipcar, Sun Link, Sun Tran, Carpooling)	39%
Have conversations outside of class with faculty, staff, or friends about sustainability issues	38%
Purchase locally-sourced, organic, sustainably harvested fish, sustainably/humanely raised animal protein food options	37%
Bike to campus	36%
Use UA Bike resources (e.g. routes, bike lanes, lockers, free repairs)	35%
Garden	25%
Volunteer time or money to an environmental or social justice organization	23%
Composting	20%
Perform research on a sustainability topic	19%
Take classes on sustainability subjects	16%
Attend a program/event related to sustainability	15%
Attend lectures focused on sustainability	15%
Participate in student organizations focused on sustainability	15%
Participate in campus recreation outdoor trips	10%
Attend Residence Life programming on sustainability	9%

Participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they did each activity. Response choices were Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never. The above percentages represent the combination of responses indicating Always and Often.



87% of UA students always or often refill their water bottles.



40% of Wildcats hope to pursue a career option that makes a difference in sustainability.

Survey Respondent Demographic Information*

		Survey Respondents N=1,764	Fall 2014 UA Students N=42,127
Gender	Female	67%**	52%
	Male	33%**	48%
	Transgender	1%	–
Race/Ethnicity	African American/Black	3%	4%
	Asian American/Pacific Islander	10%	9%
	Hispanic/Latino	22%	22%
	Multiracial	4%	–
	Native American	2%	3%
	White	51%	53%
	Other	1%	–
	Prefer not to respond	6%	9%
Class Level	Undergraduate	73%	78%
	Graduate/professional	27%	22%
Current Residence	Living at home with family	13%	–
	Fraternity/Sorority housing	1%	–
	Off-campus housing	70%	–
	Residence Hall	16%	16%

Source: UAIR Enrollment Highlights Fall 2014

*Given the survey’s response rate of 9.9%, a 1.3% margin of error (with 95% confidence), and the comparability between the major comparison areas highlighted in this table, the UA Student Sustainability Survey results can be considered reasonably representative of the UA student population as a whole.

**The difference in response rates between female and male students is typical of UA student surveys and is not unique to this sustainability survey.