

MCC by the Numbers:

Students: 32,000+
 Employees: 750
 Majors & programs: 100+
 Campus area: 197 acres
 Building area: 975,000 ft²

How We Helped:

Sustainability Master Plan & Implementation

- Development of sustainability vision statements
- Baseline performance metrics
- Improvement goals for 2025 and beyond
- Development & prioritization of strategies
- Grant writing and coordination - \$1.7 million
- College-wide engagement and implementation
- Curriculum Development
 - Weatherization Training Center
 - Solar Technology

Metropolitan Community College Case Study



METROPOLITAN
Community College



A Sustainability Leader in Practice

In July 2009, Metropolitan Community College (MCC) took a huge leap as a sustainability leader by hiring the first full-time Sustainability Coordinator in higher education in the entire state of Nebraska. Daniel Lawse had the honor of filling this role and helping MCC take the lead in sustainable practices during his four year tenure.

A Sustainability Master Plan and its process of engaging dozens of faculty and staff from across campus helped MCC realize that sustainability is a strategy for achieving its goals. The outcome was a plan with clear direction, bold goals, and an empowered staff to help make the vision a reality.

One challenge was many of the sustainability metrics and resource-use information either didn't exist or weren't well recorded. Part the process was to identify, collect, and analyze data and put it into a useful format for informed decision-making. Once established, on-going data collection empowered the college to make data-informed decisions based on what was most important at the time, enabling wise use of human resources.

Through intentional focus on and success with the integration of sustainability into everything it does, MCC shines as a community leader and example for others.



Daniel Lawse, in his role as Assistant Director for Campus Planning and Sustainability at MCC, helped our college develop our present sustainability efforts and positioned us for progress in this area for the future. Daniel was especially skillful in helping the various stakeholders, from faculty to staff, understand the need for sustainability to be embedded into the culture of the organization. Holistic thinking, clearly communicated is his forte."

Stan Horrell

Director, Campus Planning and Sustainability
Metropolitan Community College



Results

With the Sustainability Master Plan as a guide, MCC was successful in improving educational opportunities for students, quality of life on campus, the college's environmental impact, and it both saved money and received additional money in the form of grants.

Green Job Training

MCC saw a community need to meet the growing market demand for Home Energy Professionals by creating an IREC accredited Weatherization Training Center. Additionally the college developed a Solar Technology program for solar electric, water, and air systems.

Waste

MCC went from **recycling** only 3% of its waste to recycling over 25% of its waste by transitioning to a college-wide single-stream recycling system. The college **reduced** the amount of paper **purchased** by nearly 400,000 sheets per year, and now 36% of their office supplies are green purchases.

Transportation Demand Management

The college was the first to pilot a student transit pass program in Omaha, and it is now successfully implemented at two other colleges in town. The program improves access to education, reduces wear and tear on roads and parking, and helps keep pollution out of our air. Since MCC's Pass to Class started in late 2010, the program has logged over one million rides.



As part of MCC's Sustainability Plan, the college developed new programs that meet the changing needs of our community. Solar Technicians, Home Energy Professionals, and small market farmers can all get degrees from MCC to further their careers and improve their communities. Pictured above is the college chicken coop in the on-campus farmyard located at MCC's Fort Omaha Campus.

Notable Achievements

- * MCC Sustainability Biennial Reports [2010](#), [2012](#)
- * [AASHE Campus Sustainability National Award Winner](#)
- * [Leadership in Greener Purchasing National Award](#), 2013
- * [IREC Accredited Weatherization Training Center](#)
- * [Pass to Class logs 1,000,000 rides](#)
- * [Solar Technology Career Certificate](#)
- * [Sustainability Dashboard](#)
- * [Small Market Farming Career Certificate](#)
- * [Bicycle Maintenance and Repair Series](#)
- * [Bioretention \(Rain\) Garden and Shelter Demonstration](#)

Sustainability in Higher Education

Many colleges across the country are making sustainability a priority in their academics, student life, and campus operations. There is a sincere and growing interest among students in identifying and applying to colleges where there is a demonstrated commitment to sustainability. Additionally, the clean economy is driving innovation and creating opportunities for students that didn't exist a decade ago.

To date, over 650 college and university presidents have signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, which is an important step towards

creating a more sustainable campus. Also, over 800 institutions are members of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Institutions that do not commit to being more sustainable must be cautious not to fall behind the trend.

There are over 4,500 institutions of higher learning in the U.S., and many are, quite simply, massive consumers of resources. What a great opportunity to make a meaningful positive impact on the environment and educate students that will graduate and do the same in their careers.