



Sustainability in Higher Education

Sustainability in the Higher Education World: A Tremendous Opportunity

The sustainability movement in higher education comes as no surprise: a recent study showed that 64% of prospective college students felt that having information about a school's commitment to the environment would influence their decision to apply to or attend the college.¹ Thus, many colleges across the country are making sustainability a priority in their teaching, research, student life, and campus operations.

To date, over 600 colleges and universities have committed through the Second Nature organization to take action on climate and to prepare students to solve the challenges of the 21st century. Also, over 600 institutions are members of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Institutions are recognizing that not only will

sustainability initiatives protect our natural resources, they will also save money and enhance reputations.

With over 4,500 institutions of higher learning in the U.S. that are, quite simply, massive consumers of resources, there is a great opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the environment while educating students and improving workplace satisfaction.

Our in-depth experience working in the higher education sector uniquely situates us to help colleges and universities identify and implement sustainable solutions that will result in energy and water cost reductions, improved waste management and recycling, higher levels of active transportation to and from campus, and more engaged students who are better prepared for the future.

Our Higher Education Clients

Over the last nine years, we have built great expertise in the higher education sector through working with institutions of varying size and complexity. The logos at right represent a sampling of our higher education clients.



Services

Our higher education services include:

- Sustainability Master Planning
- Climate Resilience Assessment & Planning
- Sustainability Engagement Survey & Assessment
- Active Transportation Program Development
- GHG Inventory Validation & Verification
- Waste Reduction & Recycling Advising
- Behavior Change Campaign Creation
- STARS Benchmarking
- Dining Services Advising
- Sustainable Grounds Care Advising



The Verdis team offered invaluable support and guidance as we moved forward with our sustainability efforts. Their methods are backed by research, and they have strong knowledge of how to enact behavior change on a large scale. Thanks to Verdis, we now have an initiative that benefits the environment, saves money, and increases employee satisfaction."

Melanie Stewart

Sustainability Manager

University of Nebraska Medical Center

¹Princeton Review 2017 College Hopes & Worries Survey Report, Princeton Review, 2017.

At right: Craig Moody (Verdis Group Managing Principal) captures notes while Daniel Lawse (Verdis Group Principal and Chief Century Thinker) facilitates conversation during UNO's Sustainability Leadership Immersion. We often facilitate these types of workshops with key stakeholders to dig into the detail of what sustainability means for an institution of higher learning and to begin envisioning the future.



More on Key Services

sustainability master planning

Many clients come to us because they know they want to improve their sustainability efforts, but don't know where to start, how to prioritize efforts or how to allocate resources. Our custom, in-depth planning process will get you to a place where your entire campus will feel energized about achievable new goals. We will help you recognize past successes, set benchmarks, identify key indicators that work for your campus, set new goals that capture the spirit of your institution, develop realistic and prioritized strategies to meet those goals, and finally deliver a complete Sustainability Master Plan that will guide your campus's efforts for the next 10-15 years and beyond.

climate resiliency planning

Forward-looking institutions know that they need to be prepared to weather future climate impacts. Our climate resiliency planning service invites your regional partners to engage in a process to identify climate change risks and vulnerabilities, create a campus/community resilience assessment, and make plans to ensure that your campus and community continue to thrive well into the 21st century.

active transportation planning

Most campuses experience pain points around parking. Creating and implementing a program that increases the percentage of your campus community to use active transportation modes (bus, bike, walk or ride share) can result in enormous cost avoidances at delaying or preventing the construction of new parking infrastructure. And it can also improve student, faculty and staff satisfaction. We have a proven track record of helping our clients achieve measurable results in getting people out of their lonely cars—which happens to have health benefits, too.

waste reduction + recycling

For many institutions, waste reduction and recycling is the highest area of need in their sustainability program. Waste management is much more complex than it may seem, and diverting materials so that they are recycled, re-used or composted comes with a huge set of challenges for any institution. We have helped dozens of clients work through their waste challenges successfully and put them on the path toward achieving their waste reduction goals.

We can help your institution cement its reputation as an environmentally and fiscally responsible organization that is also a great place to work. For more information, see verdisgroup.com/highered

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triple
bottom
line



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The Verdis team has been a pleasure to work with. They were able to take a large and complex issue and turn it into a measurable, actionable plan which all parties on campus supported. The final result is a plan that our campus is truly excited about and which will allow us to make demonstrable progress in our sustainability efforts. We couldn't have done it without them.

Kathy Johnson

Vice President for Finance and Administration
Black Hills State University