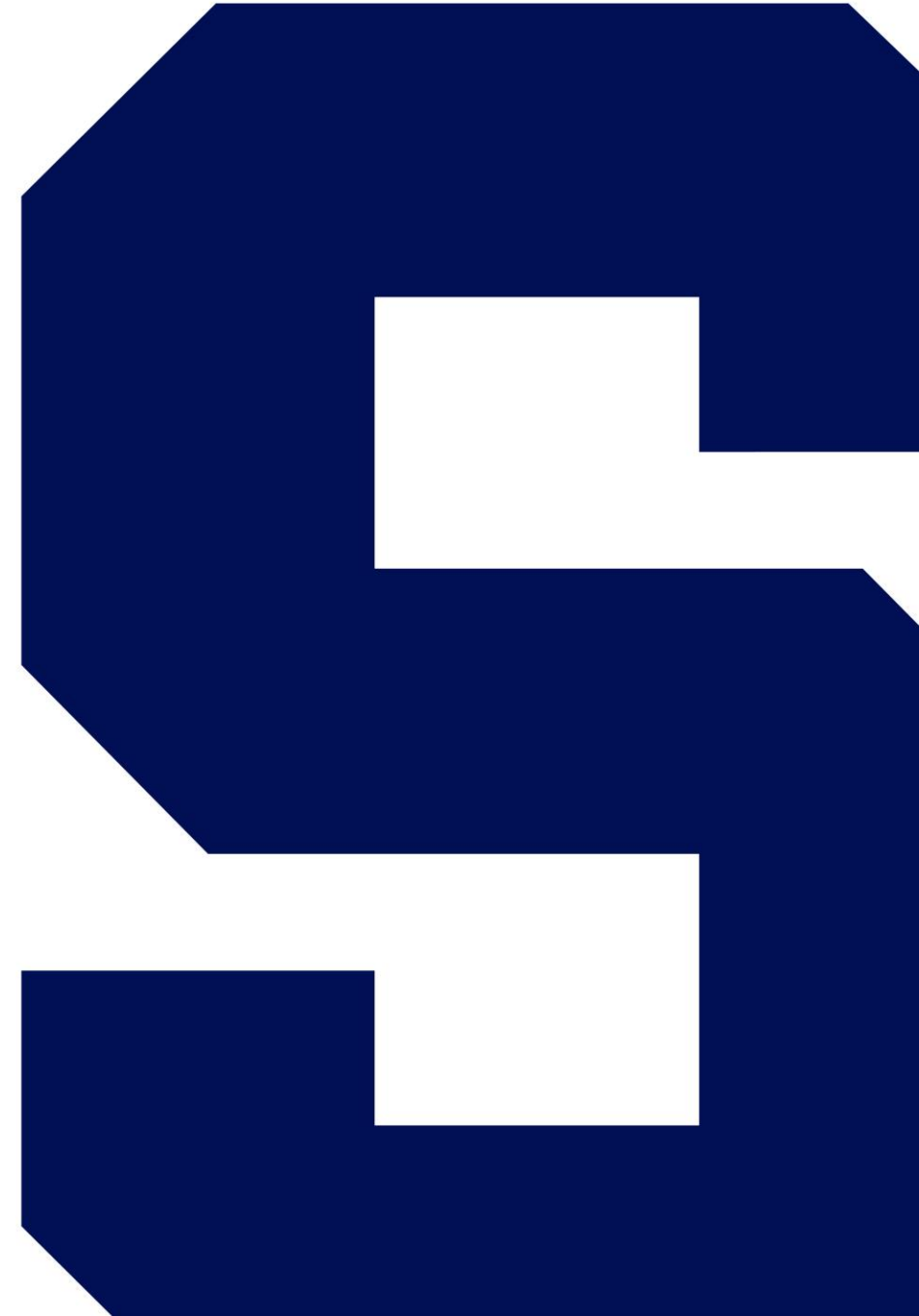




# Sustainability Culture and Literacy Survey 2023 Results

Sustainability Management  
October 2023



# Syracuse University Mission to Sustainability

Syracuse University has a [history](#) of implementing sustainable practices on its campus. In 2007, the University signed the [American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment](#). Since then, the University has developed sustainability within the classroom, assessed its energy usage, developed a [climate action plan](#) to be carbon neutral by 2040, and implemented renewable energy on campus. In 2023, the University announced its new commitment to carbon neutrality by 2032.

## Vision

Reduce Syracuse University's environmental impact in a responsible manner by identifying, promoting, and implementing sustainable practices. Ensure those practices will meet current needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

# About the Survey

- Administered between April 10 - 23, 2023, to a random sample of students.
- Average response rate: 9.6%
  - 8.4% for undergraduates (n=420)
  - 12.6% for graduates (n=263)
  - 7.6% for law students (n=17)
  - 9.1% for College of Professional Studies (online degrees and cert) students (n=1)
- Survey includes two sections: sustainability on campus and sustainability literacy

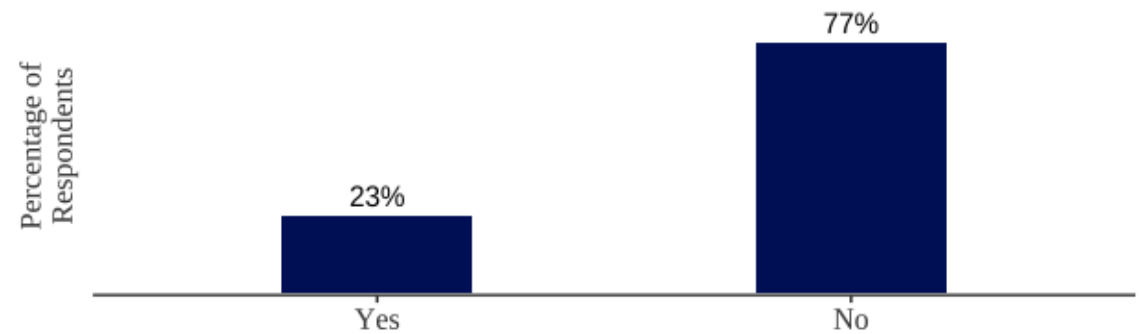
# Sustainability on Campus

Survey questions in this section  
address respondents' familiarity with  
sustainability initiatives on campus.



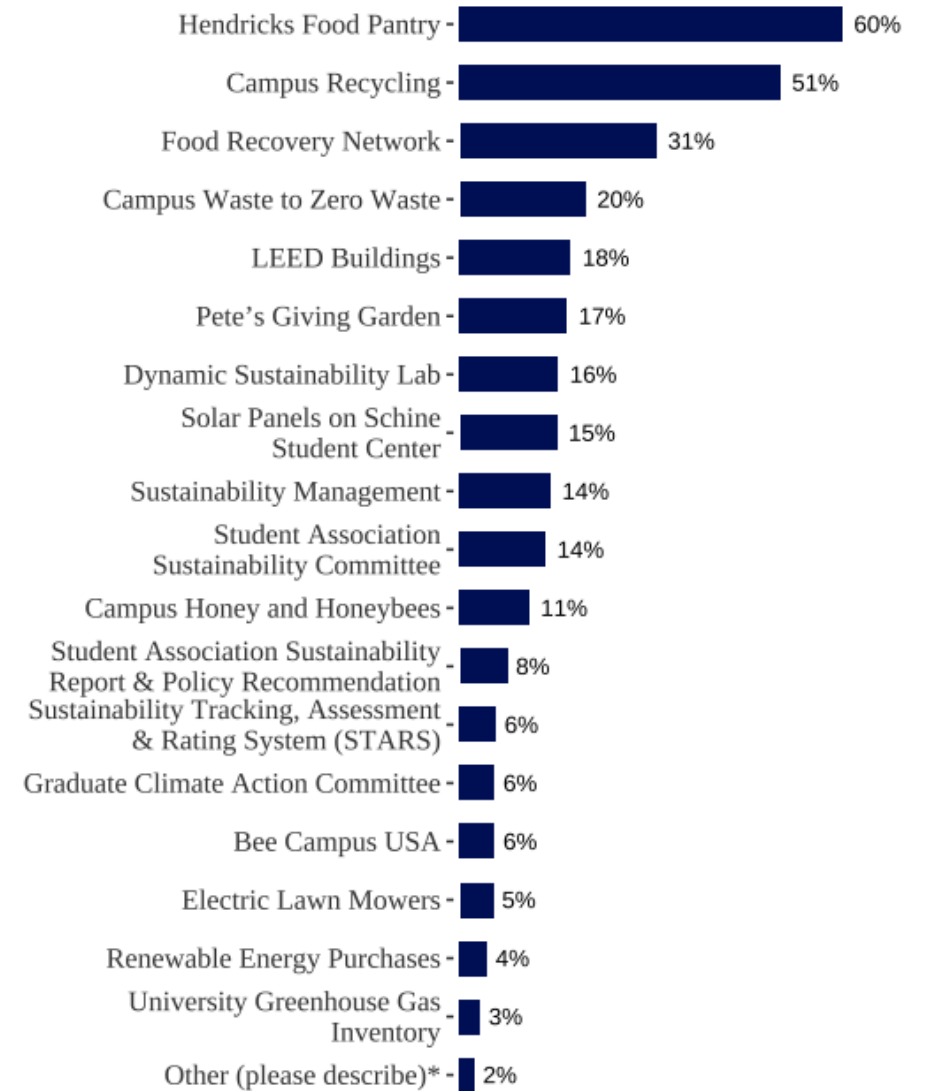
# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: *Have you heard of Syracuse University's Sustainability Management department?*
  
- Students who had heard of the Sustainability Management department most often heard about it through emails (n = 46), the Syracuse website (n = 19), word of mouth (n = 8), or Student Association (n = 4).



# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: Which of the following sustainability initiatives on campus are you familiar with? Select all that apply.
- Respondents are most familiar with the Hendricks Food Pantry and campus recycling initiatives.
- We will continue to disseminate information out on social media and Syracuse University news (potentially once a month), particularly on topics with less than a 20% response rate. We will better communicate with the University's communication and marketing departments about events & programs.



Percentage of Respondents

# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not familiar at all and 5 being very familiar), how familiar are you with Syracuse University's Climate Action Plan?
- Most respondents are not familiar with the University's Climate Action Plan (CAP), with over half indicating they are not familiar at all.
- Through tabling events, Human Resources workshops and information sessions, and social media posts, we will continue to promote and inform the campus community about the [Climate Action Plan](#). We regularly meet with the Student Association Sustainability Forum and Graduate Student Climate Action Committee.



Figure 2: Emission Sources

# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not influenced at all and 5 being very influenced), how influenced were you by the University's sustainability initiatives when deciding to come to Syracuse University?
- Most respondents were not influenced by the University's sustainability initiatives when deciding to come here, with over two-thirds saying they were not influenced at all.
- While Syracuse University's sustainability initiatives generally did not have an impact on students' decision to attend, in 2022, the University ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the [The Princeton Review: Top 50 Green Colleges](#). Read more [here](#).





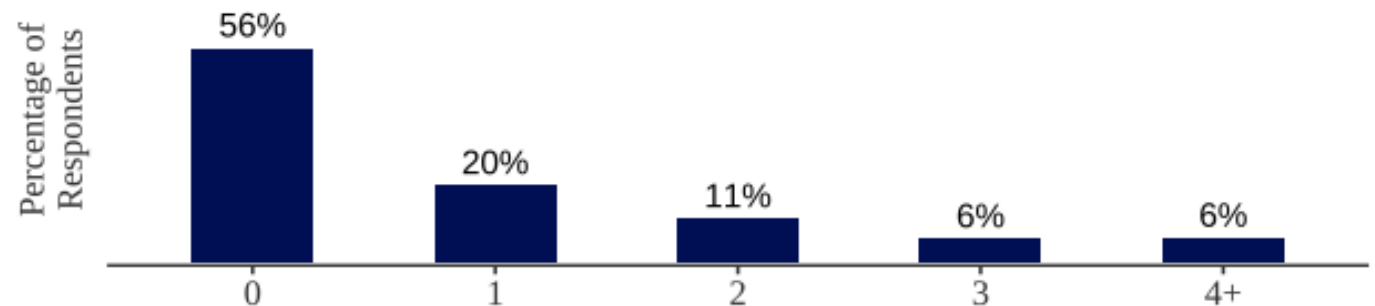
# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: To what extent, if at all, have any of these factors influenced your personal actions when it comes to sustainability? (1 being not influenced at all and 5 being very influenced.)
- Respondents indicated their personal sustainability actions are most influenced by peers and social media. They are least influenced by campus sustainability initiatives. This also promotes expansion of our peer-to-peer education program.

	Not at all influenced				Very influenced
	1	2	3	4	5
Campus sustainability initiatives (n = 585)	46%	17%	21%	11%	5%
Federal/state policies (n = 582)	23%	17%	30%	20%	10%
Other (please describe)* (n = 135)	53%	7%	12%	6%	22%
Peers (n = 590)	19%	12%	24%	27%	18%
Social media (n = 592)	22%	14%	20%	23%	21%
Sustainability courses (n = 554)	42%	12%	16%	15%	14%

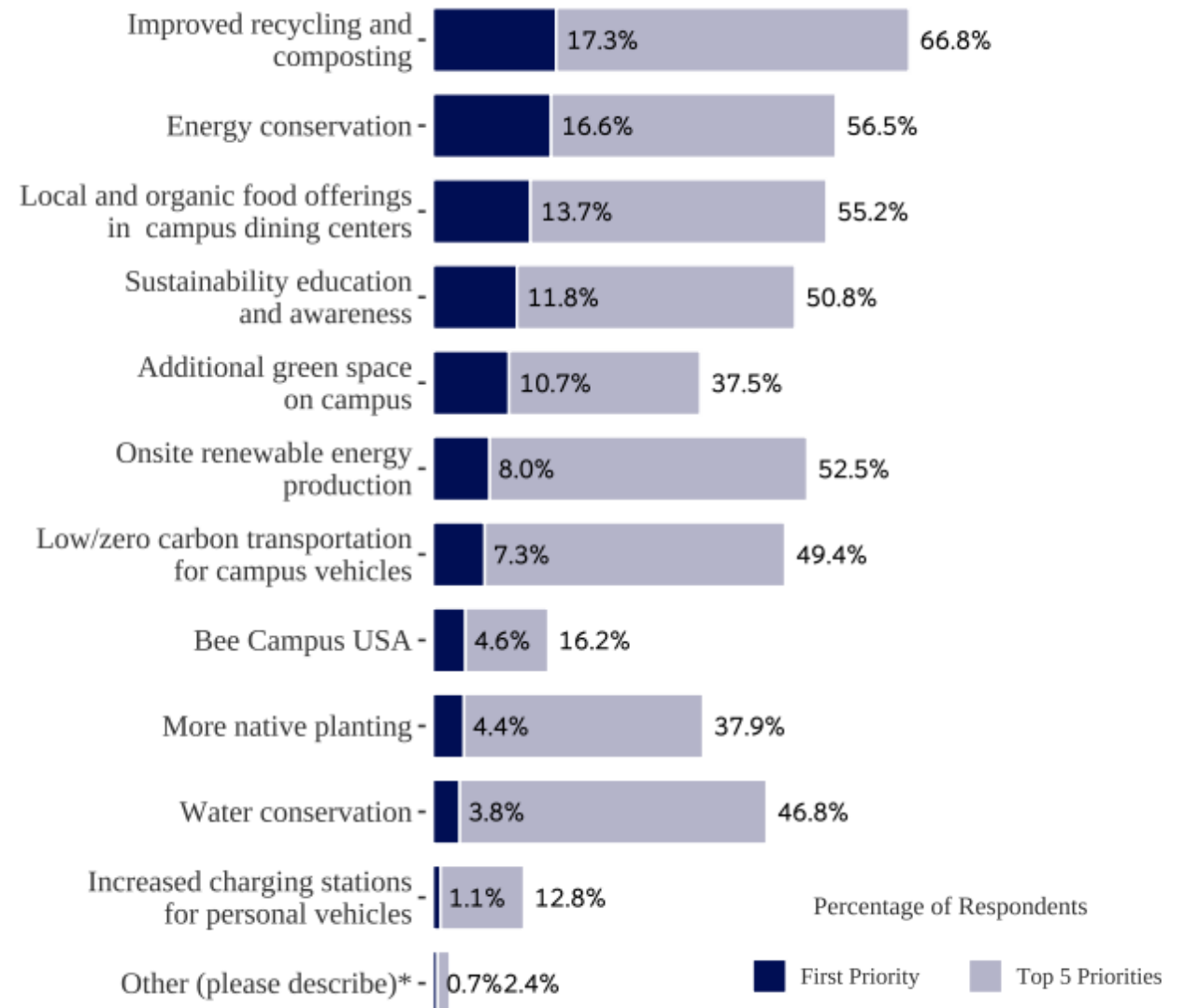
# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: *How many classes have you taken at Syracuse University that addressed the topic of sustainability?*
- Just over half of respondents have not taken any courses that address sustainability. About a quarter of respondents have taken two or more.
- In our Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) report, we list all sustainability related courses offered.



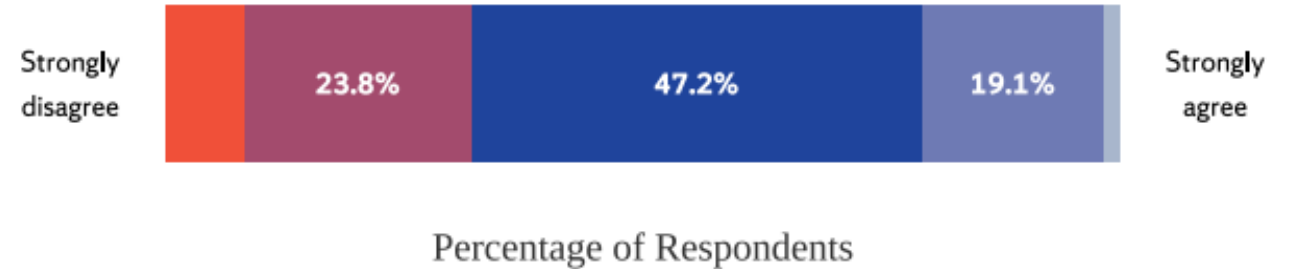
# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: In terms of campus sustainability efforts, which areas would you like to see prioritized? Please rank the top five in order of priority with 1 being top priority.
- In terms of campus sustainability efforts, improved recycling and composting and energy conservation were most often listed as respondents' first priority. More than half the respondents also listed local and organic food offerings, onsite renewable energy production, and sustainability education and awareness in their top five priorities.
- With the new goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2032 and the source of 60% of our emissions coming from heating and cooling buildings, energy conservation is a primary focus. Additionally, we continue to work with students to improve our recycling and composting efforts.



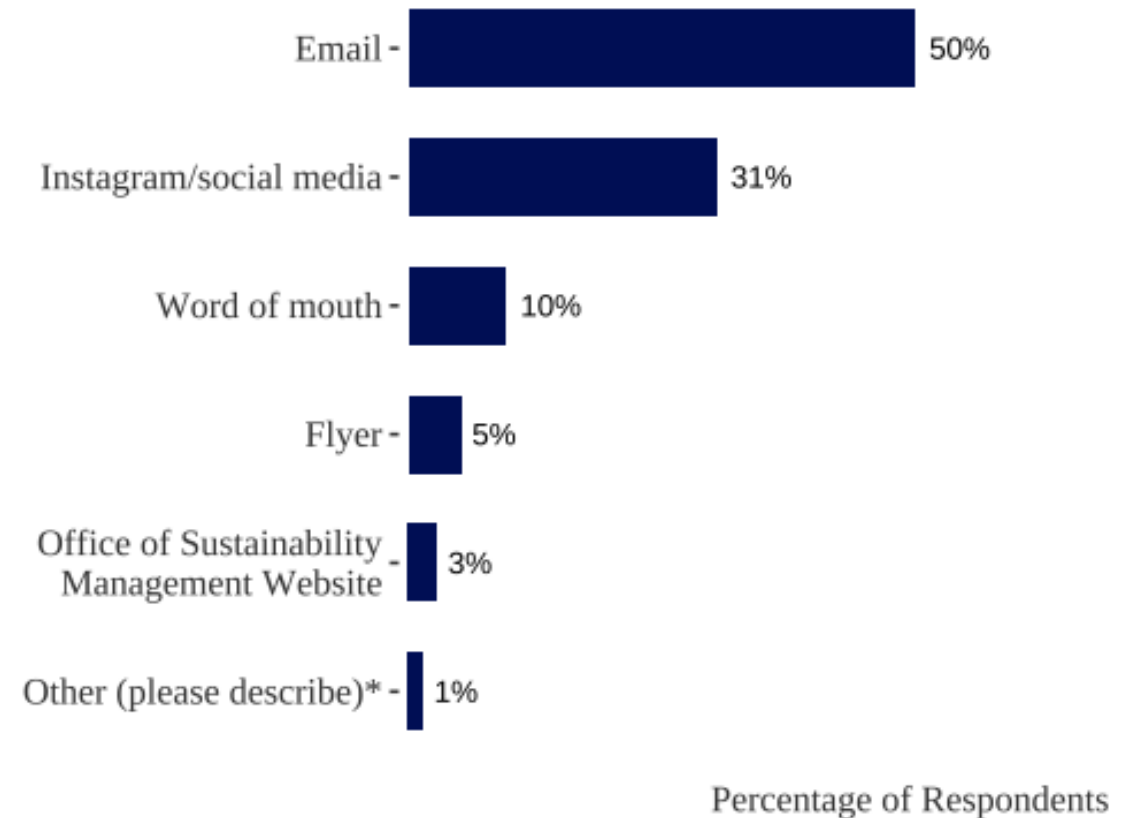
# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Syracuse University is doing enough to address sustainability concerns on campus.*
- When asked if Syracuse is doing enough to address sustainability on campus, nearly half of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.
- We believe these responses speak to a lack of awareness of sustainable initiatives on campus. Our goal will be to improve education and outreach through tabling events, social media, and news releases.



# Sustainability on Campus

- Question: *How would you most want to find out about sustainability initiatives on campus?*
- Respondents indicated they prefer to be contacted about sustainability initiatives on campus via email or social media.
- Going forward, our plan is to send out sustainability related Syracuse University news articles on both the student, and faculty and staff green school listservs. If you're interested in being added to the green school listserv, email [sustain@syr.edu](mailto:sustain@syr.edu).



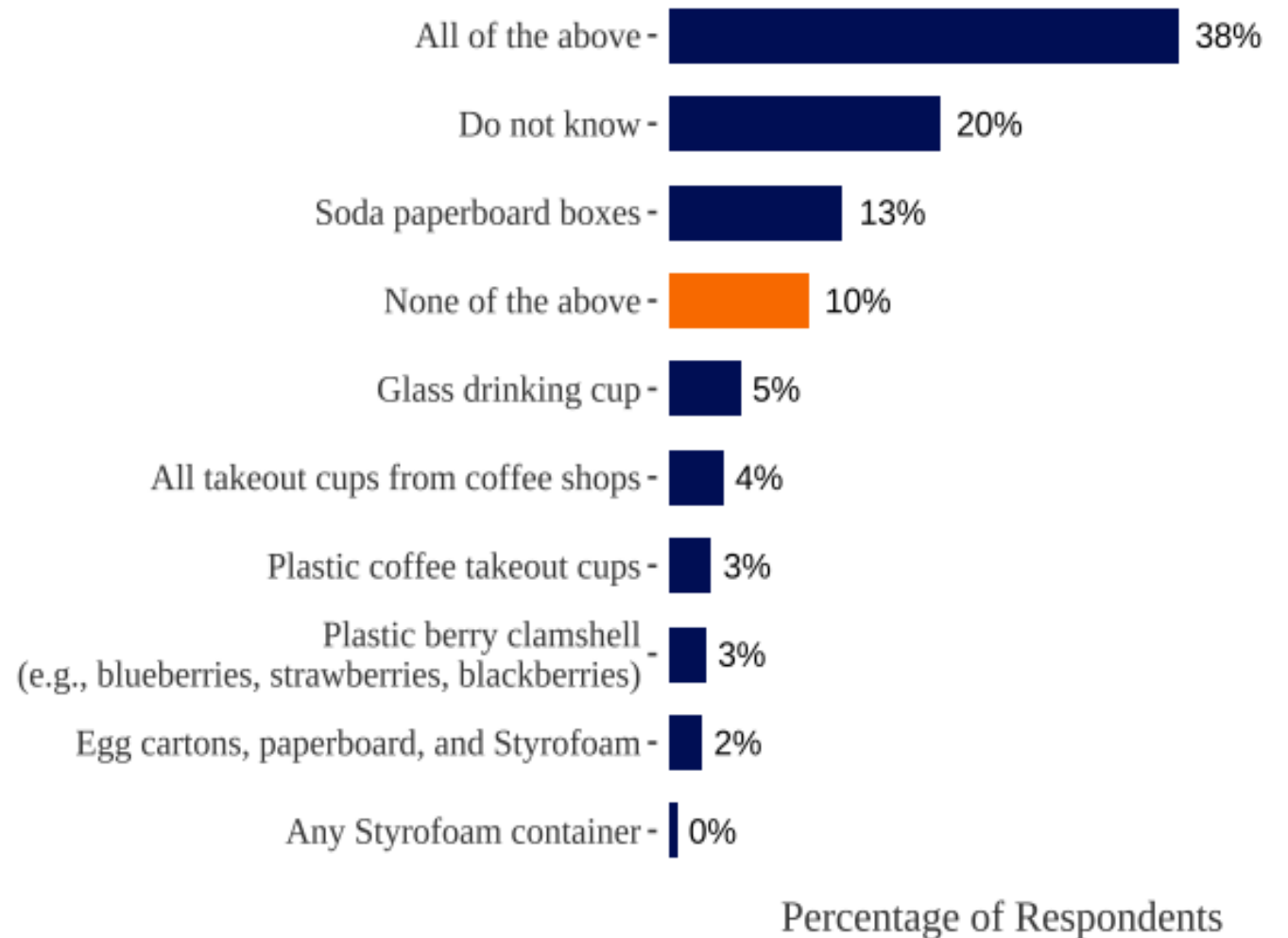
# Sustainability Literacy

The survey questions in this section assess respondents' knowledge about sustainability. The correct response for each question is highlighted with an orange bar.



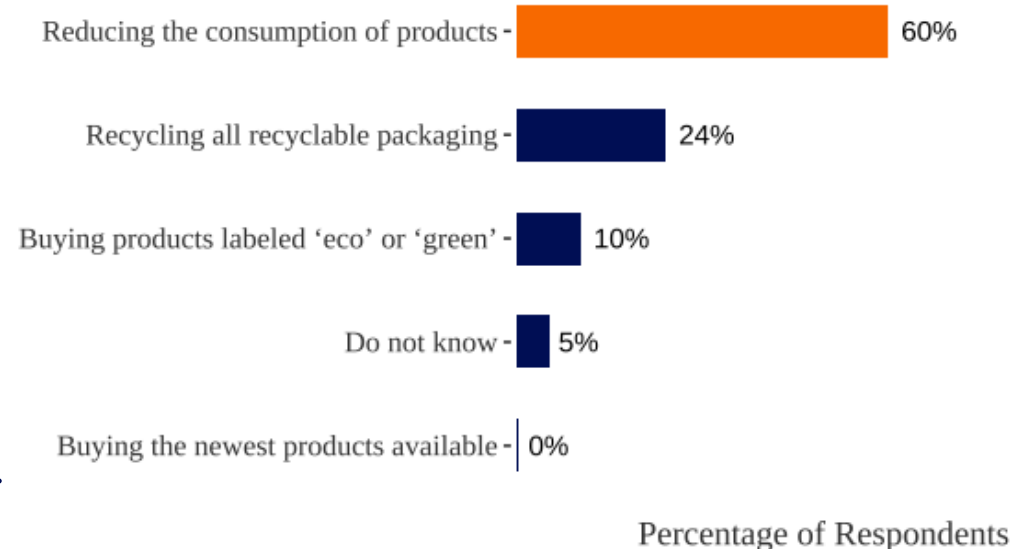
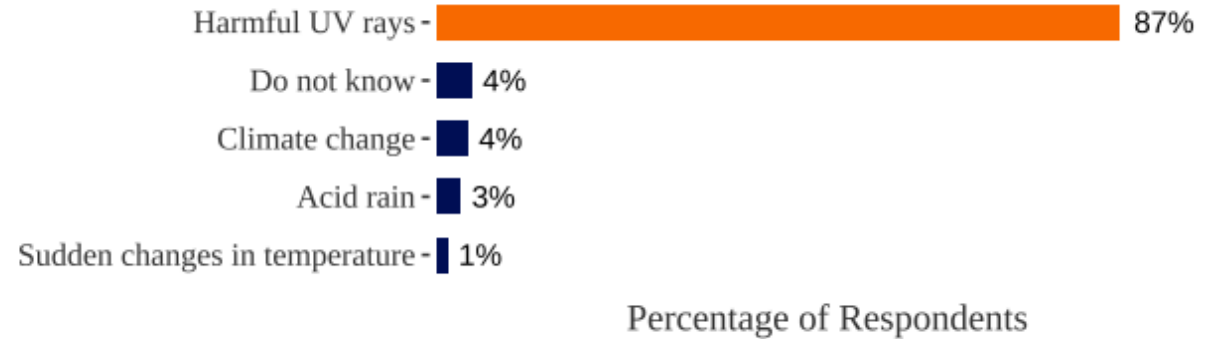
# Sustainability Literacy

- Question: Which of these items are recyclable on campus?
- We've noticed a major point of confusion is how to dispose of coffee shop cups. We have made a point to inform students at welcome events and any tabling events that ALL coffee shop cups are trash.



# Sustainability Literacy

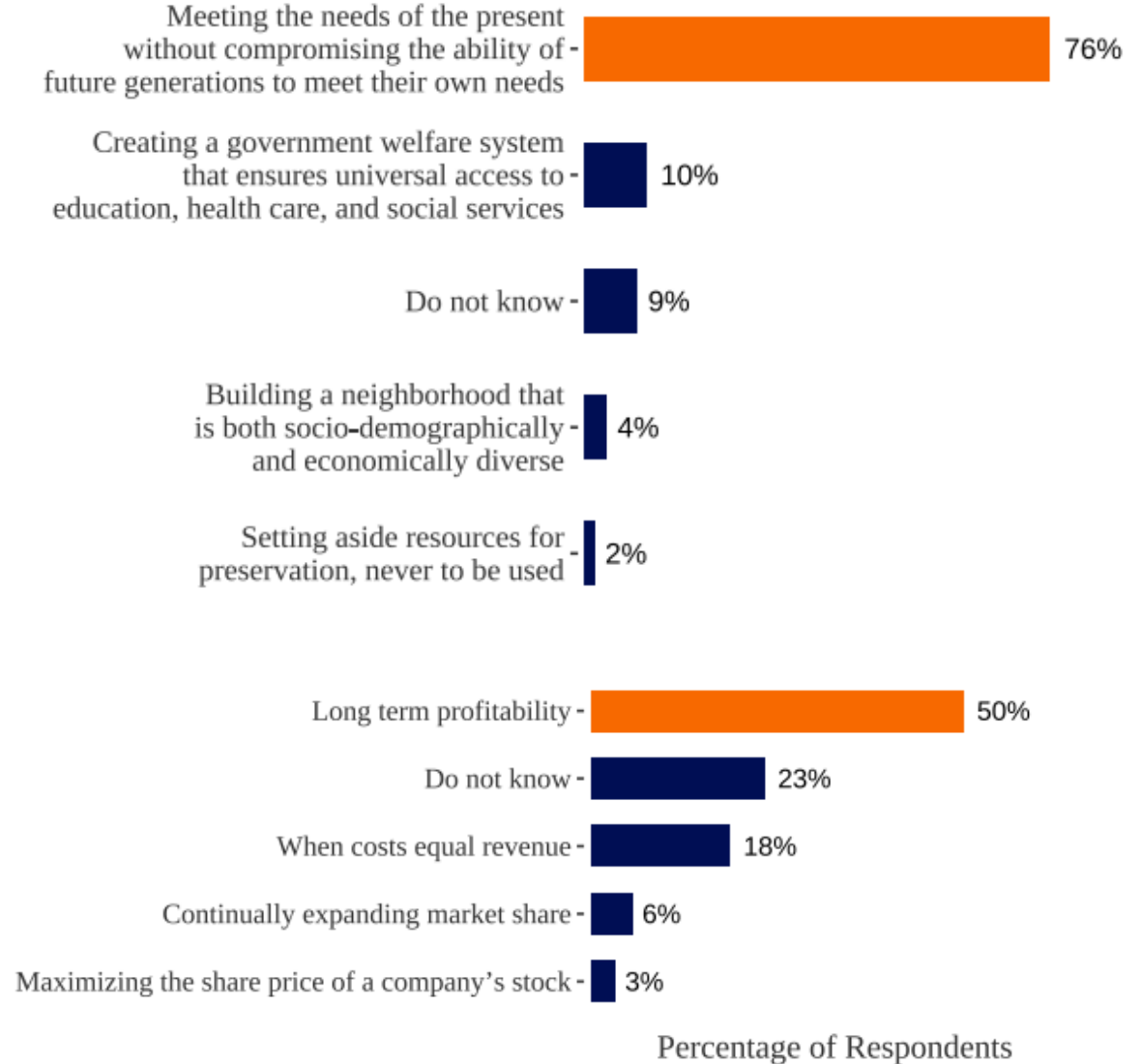
- *Question 1: Ozone forms a protective layer in the Earth's upper atmosphere. What does ozone protect us from?*
- It is encouraging to see the majority of respondents understand the importance of the ozone layer.
- *Question 2: Which of the following would be considered living in the most environmentally sustainable way?*
- Recycling is often top of mind when people think of sustainability which makes sense why it is the second ranked choice. However, more than half of respondents realize overconsumption is not a sustainable practice, aligning with the correct answer.





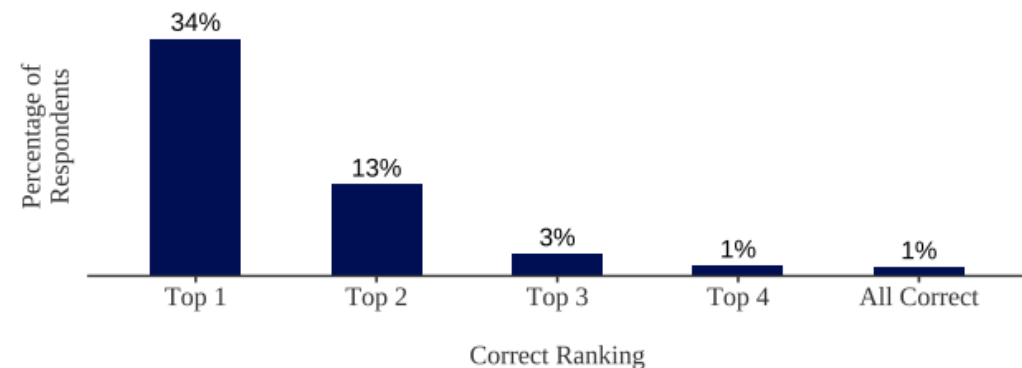
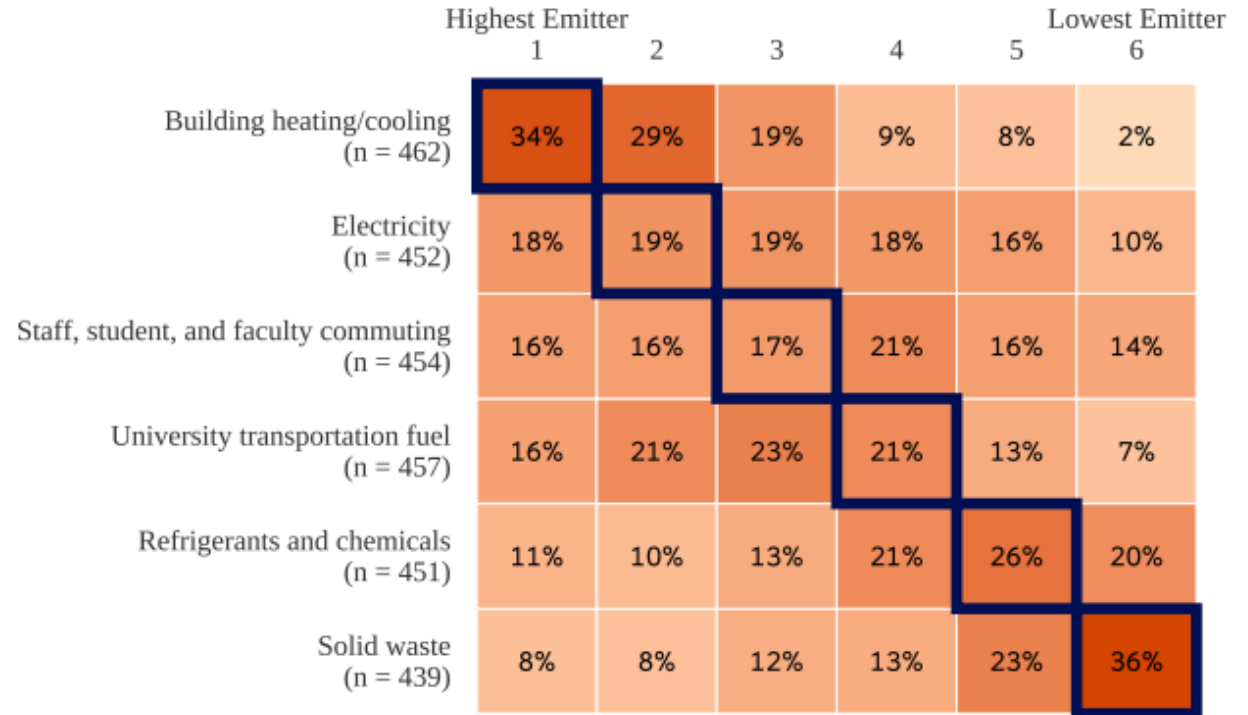
# Sustainability Literacy

- Question 1: Which of the following is the definition of sustainable development?
- Question 2: Which of the following is the definition of economic sustainability?
- The responses to these two questions proves the majority of respondents generally agree with our vision.



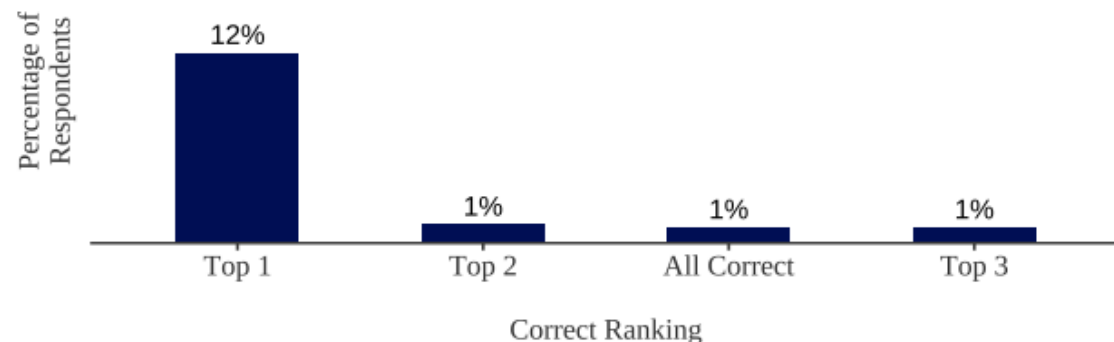
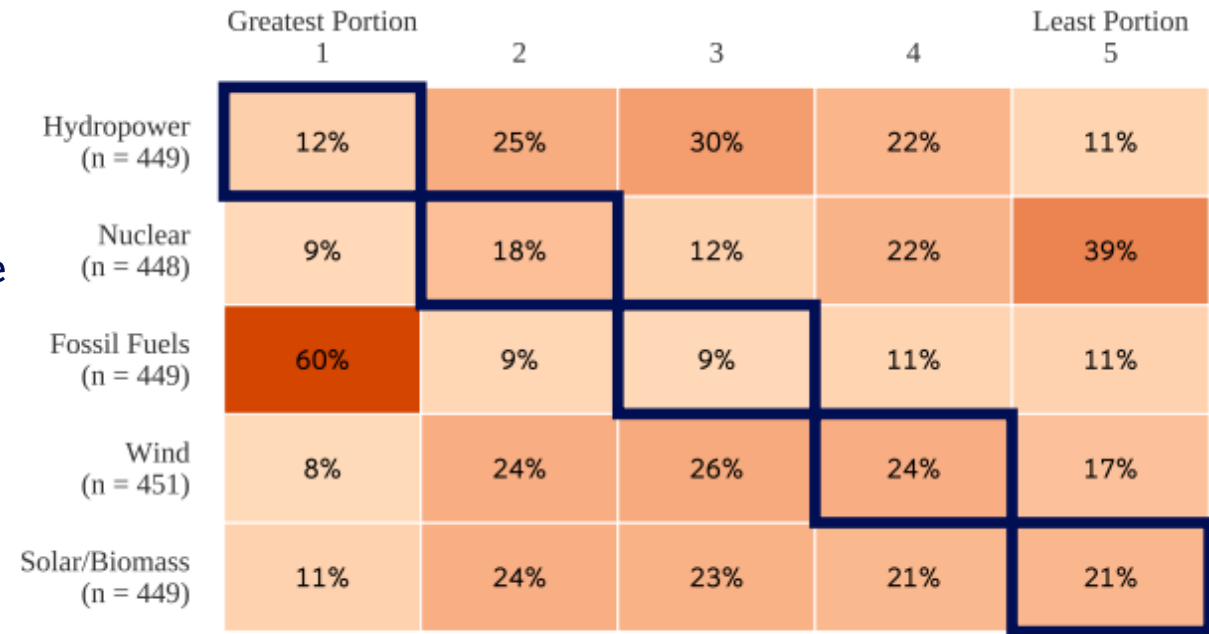
# Sustainability Literacy

- The heat map below displays how respondents ranked the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of each item, with the correct rankings highlighted with a dark blue border. Just over a third of respondents correctly ranked building heating/cooling and solid waste.
- Question: Each of the items below create CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on campus and are present on the University's greenhouse gas emission charts. Please rank these items in order of highest to lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter on campus (1 being highest emitter and 6 being lowest emitter).*
- The figure to the right shows the percentage of respondents that correctly ranked the highest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter (Top 1), the top two highest emitters (Top 2), etc. Very few respondents ranked all the items in the correct order.



# Sustainability Literacy

- The heat map below displays how respondents ranked the fuel mix of each item, with the correct rankings highlighted with a dark blue border. Respondents tend to overestimate the use of fossil fuels and underestimate the use of nuclear, wind and hydropower in Upstate New York, emphasizing the need for better education about the electrical grid.
- Question: In 2021, New York ranked fifth in the nation in the amount of electricity generated from renewable resources. Please rank the fuels below with 1 being the greatest and 5 being the least portion of the fuel mix for upstate New York electricity.*
- The figure below shows the percentage of respondents that correctly ranked the item with the greatest fuel mix (Top 1), the top two greatest fuel mix (Top 2), etc. Very few respondents ranked all the items in the correct order.



# Sustainability Literacy

- Question: Which of the following is the best example of environmental justice?

