



Sustainability Culture and Literacy 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.

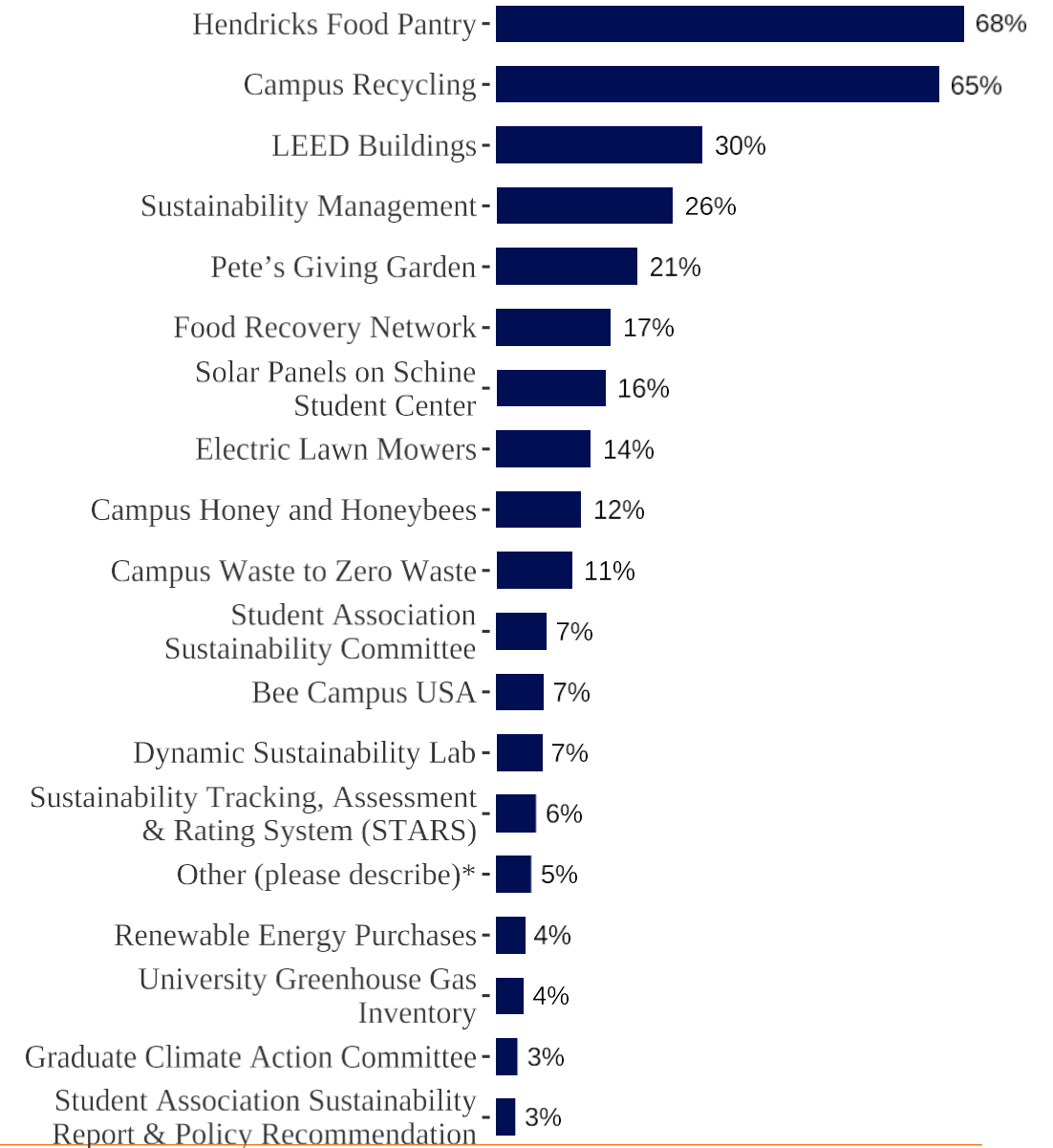
Sustainability Culture and Literacy Survey

Faculty and Staff

- Sustainability Management administered its first Sustainability Culture and Literacy Survey between April 10 and April 23, 2023, to a random sample of Syracuse faculty and staff. The overall response rate was 33%; 22.6% (n = 210) of faculty and 37.9% (n = 745) of staff responded. This undertaking aimed not only to enlighten but also to steer the development of involvement and instructional initiatives geared towards strengthening awareness and encouraging sustainability at Syracuse University. Furthermore, the survey's intent extended to establishing a foundational benchmark for gauging advancements on the path towards achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2032, as prescribed by the climate action plan.
- The survey was comprised of three main sections Sustainability on Campus, Sustainability Practices and Sustainability Literacy. This report will delve into each of these sections.

Sustainability on Campus

- *Question: Which of the following sustainability initiatives on campus are you familiar with? Select all that apply.*
- The survey questions in this section address respondents' familiarity with sustainability initiatives on campus. The figure to the right shows respondents are most familiar with the Hendricks Food Pantry and campus recycling initiatives.
- All programs with a response below 21% will be highlighted through social media platforms, Syracuse University news articles, and Sustainability Management tabling events. Our aim is to improve awareness of these programs, organizations, and initiatives going forward.



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?



Percentage of Respondents

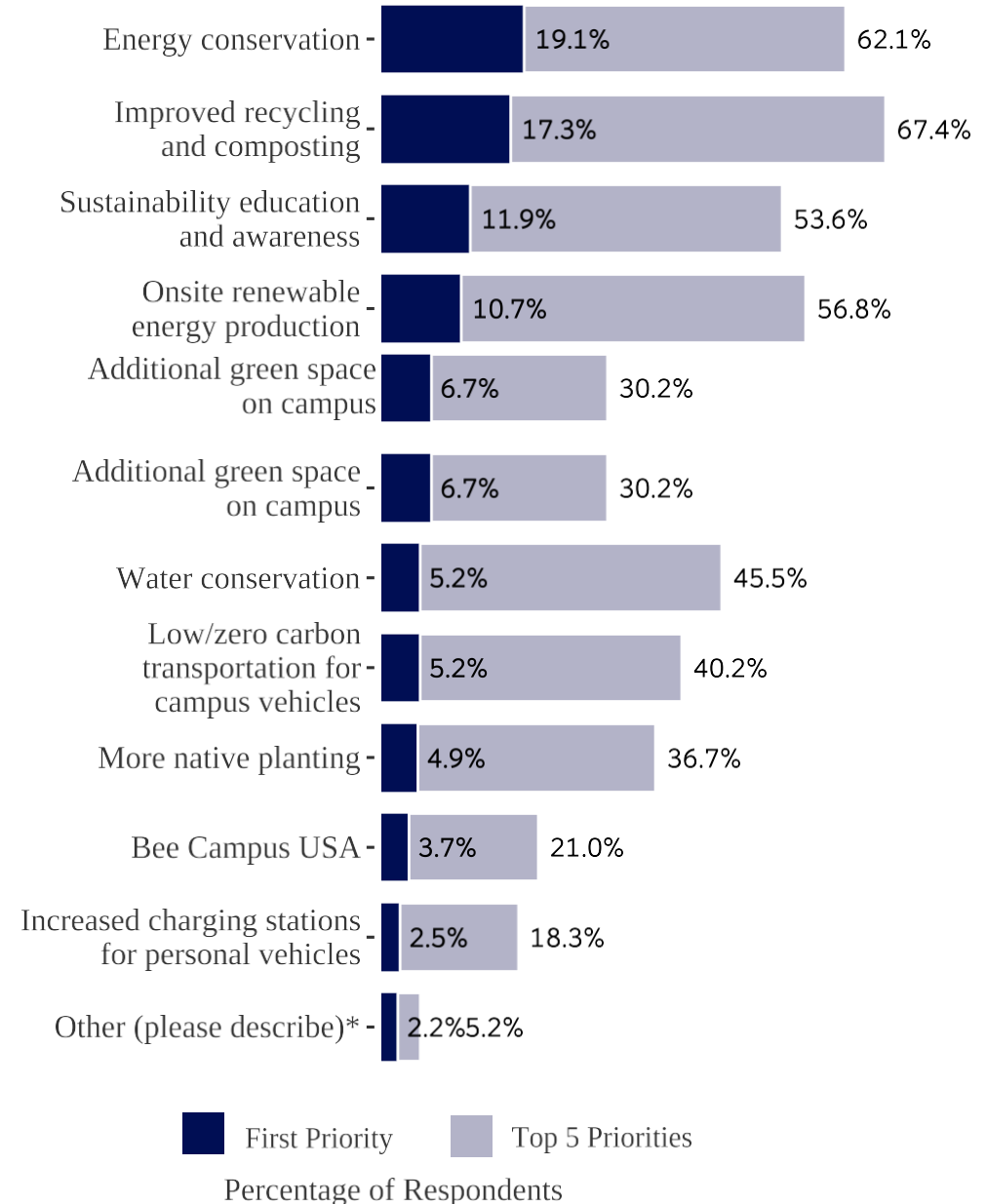
- Most respondents are not familiar with the University's Climate Action Plan with over half indicating they are not familiar at all. In the plan, we highlight the University's source of emissions (see right).
- Through tabling events, Human Resources workshops and information sessions, and social media 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 to communicate updates to the plan and projects underway.



Figure 2: Emission Sources

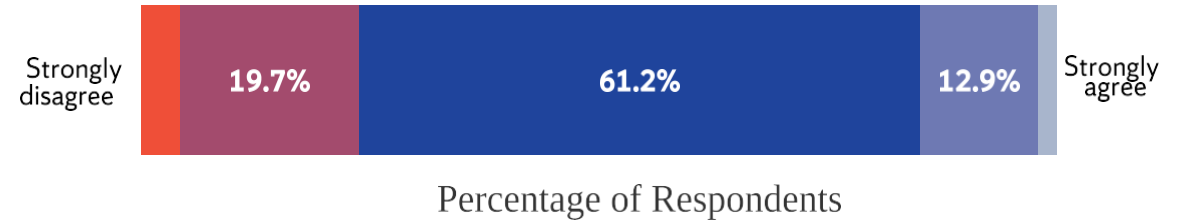
Sustainability on Campus

- 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.
- Energy conservation and improving recycling and composting were most often listed as respondents' top priority. More than half the respondents listed onsite renewable energy production and education and awareness in their top five priorities.
- With the primary source of greenhouse gas emissions coming from steam and chilled water to heat and cool buildings, our main focus is currently on energy conservation, aligning with the majority of respondents. We are actively working to improve our recycling and composting efforts and improve education and awareness. We are collaborating with students to improve recycling signage and enhance education using a peer-to-peer program. Onsite renewable generation will be considered when it works in parallel with another project(s).



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 the University is doing enough to address sustainability on campus, nearly two-thirds of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.
- We believe the reason for this is due to a lack of awareness. Many are unaware of Sustainability Management and the actions we are taking. We have found the best way to engage with students, faculty and staff is through social media and Syracuse University news articles which is where we will continue to focus our efforts. Students also noted they are heavily influenced by peers which is why there are plans to expand our peer-to-peer education program.



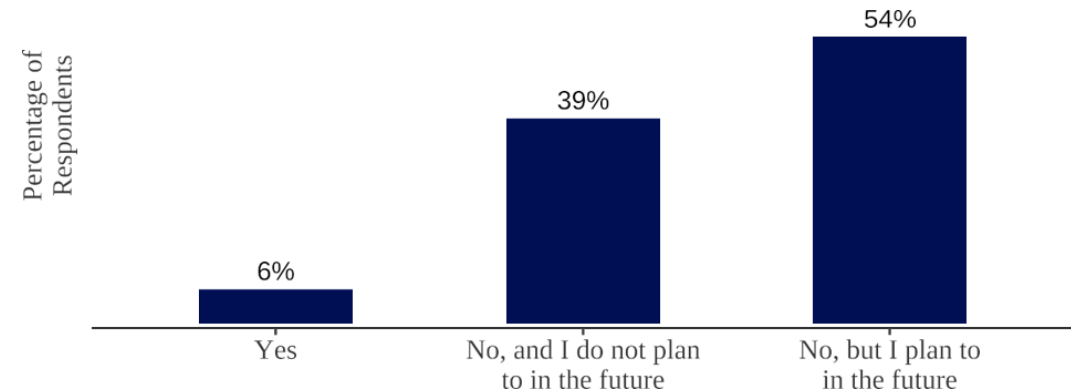
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Head to our [website](#) to check out the latest sustainability news.

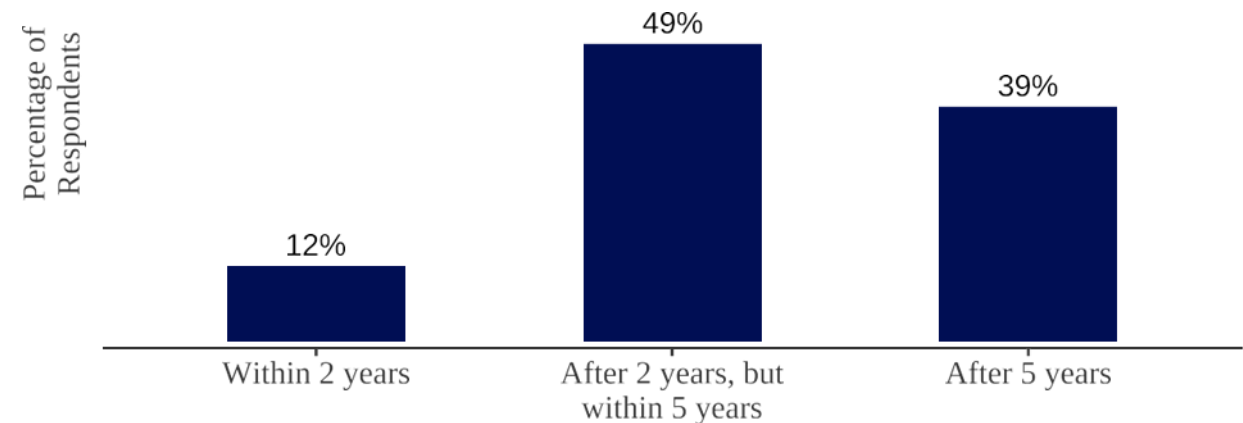
Sustainability Practices

- The survey questions in this section asked respondents about their engagement with various sustainability practices. While only 6% of respondents currently own an electric vehicle, 54% plan to purchase one in the future. Of those that plan to purchase an electric vehicle, more than half plan to purchase one within five years.
- We currently have six EV charging stations (12 ports) on campus. We monitor station usage and demand and typically half are vacant during business hours. Commuter transportation also amounts to only 5% of our total greenhouse gas emissions. We will continue to monitor demand and usage when making decisions about installing additional charging stations.

- Question: *Do you currently own an electric vehicle?*



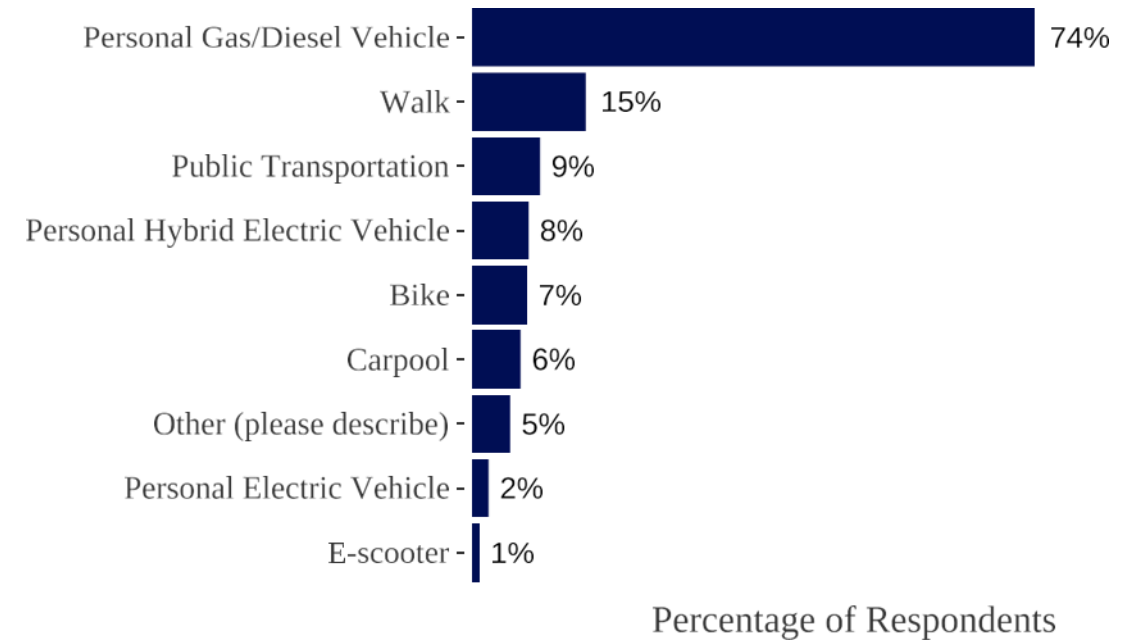
- Question: *When do you plan to purchase an electric vehicle? (Respondents who indicated they plan to purchase in the future.)*



Sustainability Practices

- The vast majority of respondents commute to campus with a personal gas/diesel vehicle.
- We will work with parking and transportation to gain better insight into what types of vehicles people are driving and streamline this process. When applying for a parking pass, our goal is to ask faculty and staff a few additional questions regarding vehicle type.

- Question: *What type of transportation do you use to get to campus? (Please exclude transportation from campus parking lots to your workplace.) Select all that apply.*



Sustainability Practices

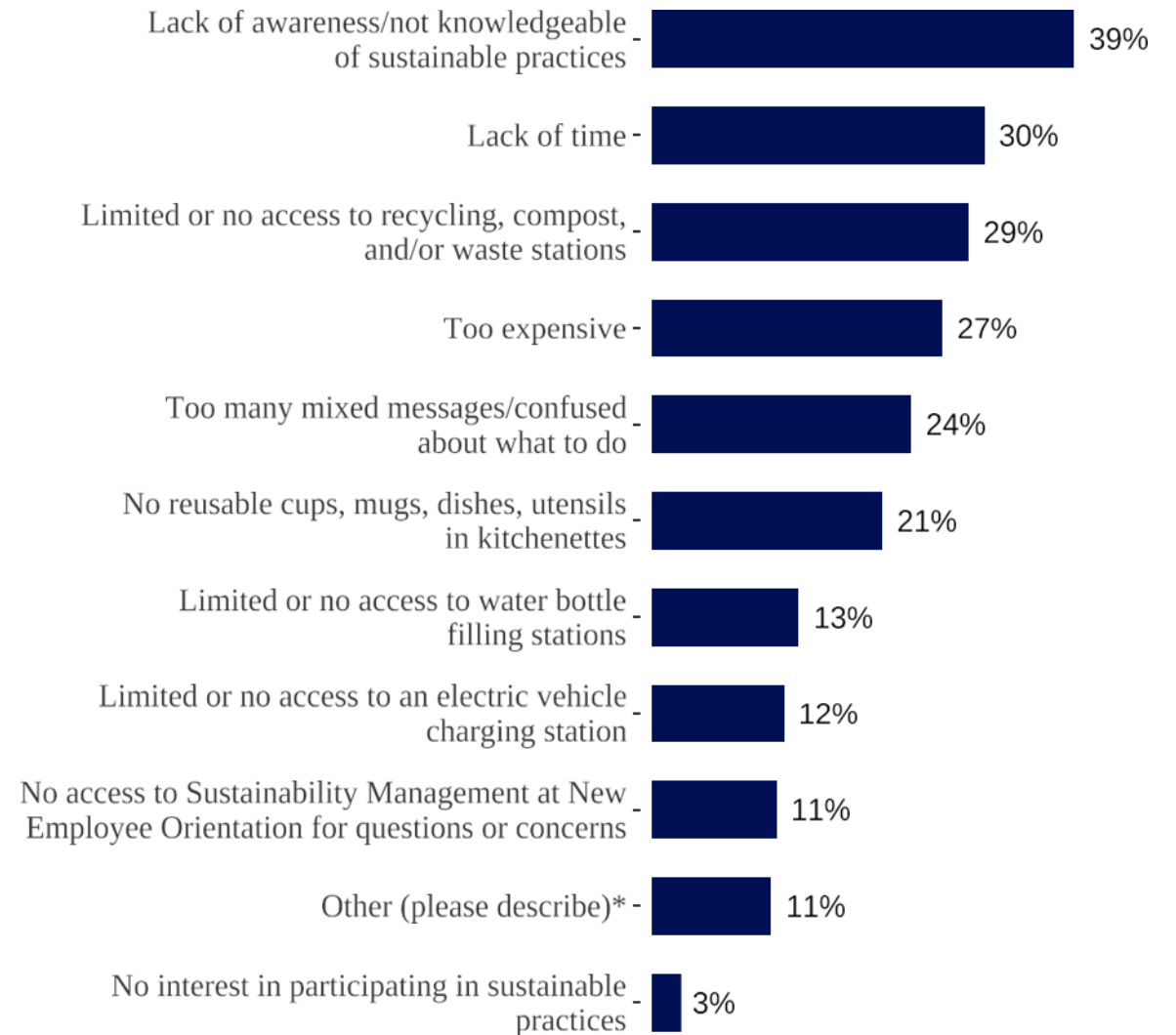
- Question: During the last month, how often did you carry out the following behaviors?

Item	Never	Less than half the time	About half the time	More than half the time	Always
Carefully sort waste into appropriate recycling, compost, or waste bins, rather than dumping all waste together into one bin.	2.0%	5.6%	10.4%	30.2%	51.9%
Choose a sustainable mode of transportation (carpool, walk, ride a bike, take public transit).	31.8%	33.4%	14.0%	11.7%	9.0%
Conserve paper (take fewer paper towels or use cloth towels, print less often, use recycled paper, print double-sided, etc.).	3.1%	9.5%	28.6%	33.7%	25.0%
Conserve water (minimize water use while showering, washing dishes/hands, or brushing teeth, etc.).	5.7%	13.9%	26.9%	30.3%	23.1%
Follow a plant-based diet (zero or minimal meat).	43.4%	24.9%	15.4%	10.0%	6.3%
Make sustainable purchasing decisions (buy local, organic, Fair Trade, etc.).	8.5%	26.5%	34.7%	23.9%	6.3%
Reduce energy (use natural lighting, turn off lights, AC/heat and electronics when not in use).	1.7%	5.1%	18.6%	37.6%	36.9%
Reduce plastic waste (use reusable shopping bags, decline single-use items, use a reusable water bottle, etc.).	1.4%	4.2%	14.5%	40.7%	39.3%
Visit greenspaces (parks, forests, the beach, nature reserves, etc.) for restorative time or recreation.	7.6%	18.4%	23.4%	31.0%	19.7%

- Consistent with the findings that most respondents commute to campus via a personal gas/diesel vehicle, respondents indicated they do not choose sustainable modes of transportation. Many also indicated they do not follow a plant-based diet. Respondents more often sort waste into recycling, compost, and waste bins and reduce plastic waste and energy.

Sustainability Practices

- Question: *Do any of the following cause you to not participate in sustainable practices as much as you would like to on campus? Select all that apply.*
- Over a third of respondents indicated they do not participate in sustainable practices as often as they would like on campus due to lack of awareness and knowledge about sustainable practices.
- These responses highlight the need for better outreach, education and engagement from our department. This is again why this is a major focus in the 2022 Climate Action Plan.

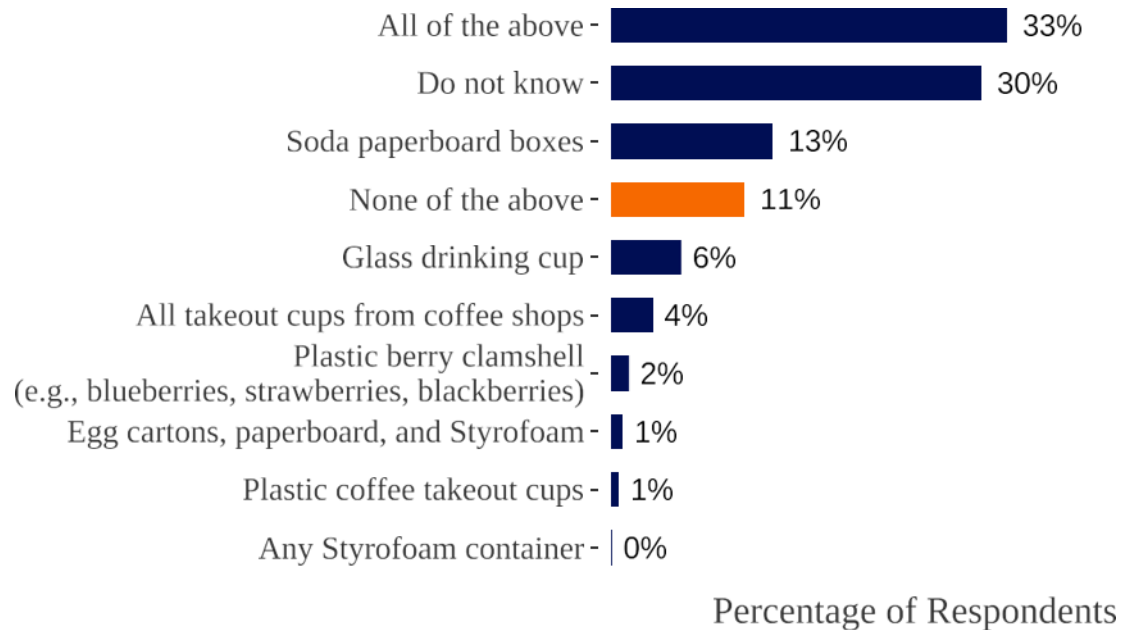


Percentage of Respondents

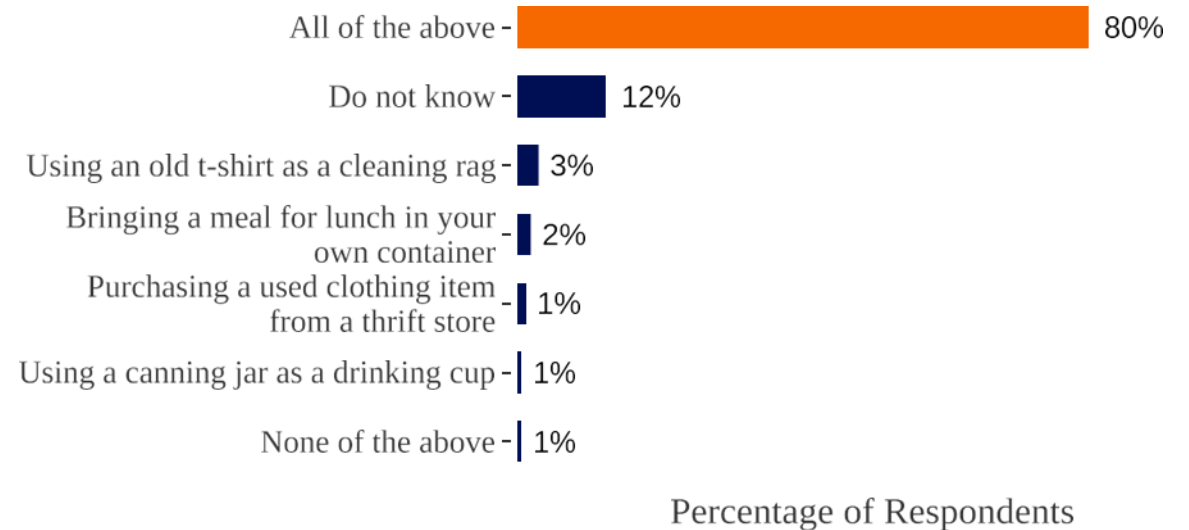
Sustainability Literacy

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

- Question: Which of these items are recyclable on campus?



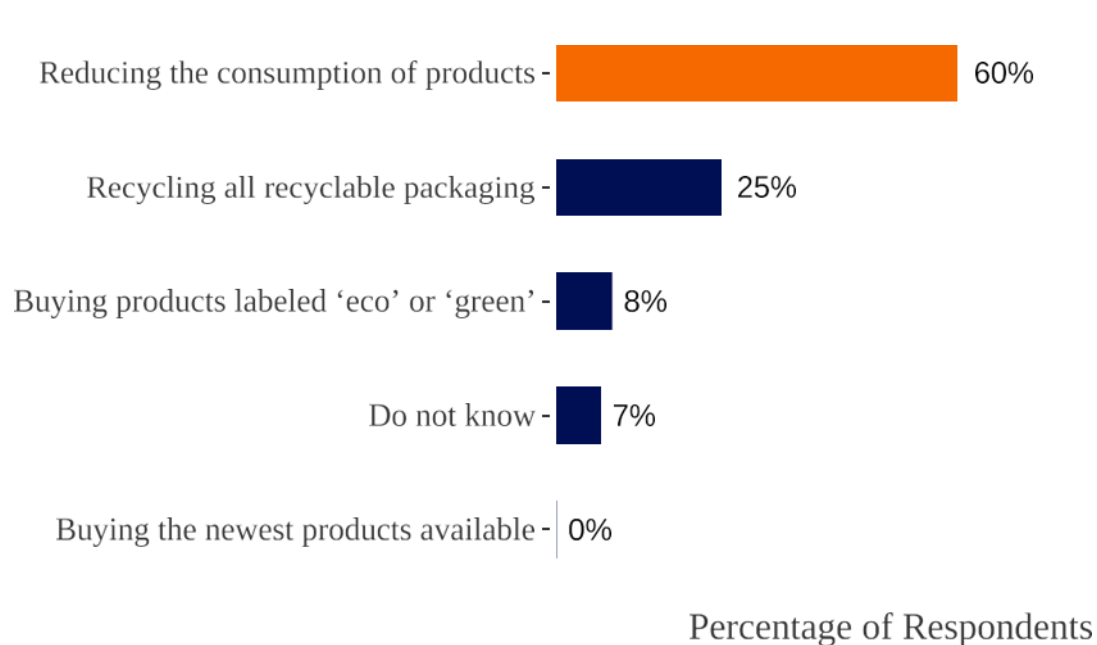
- Question: The “Three Rs” are commonly discussed in waste management, and each has a different level of impact on natural resources. Which of the following is an example of the Three Rs?



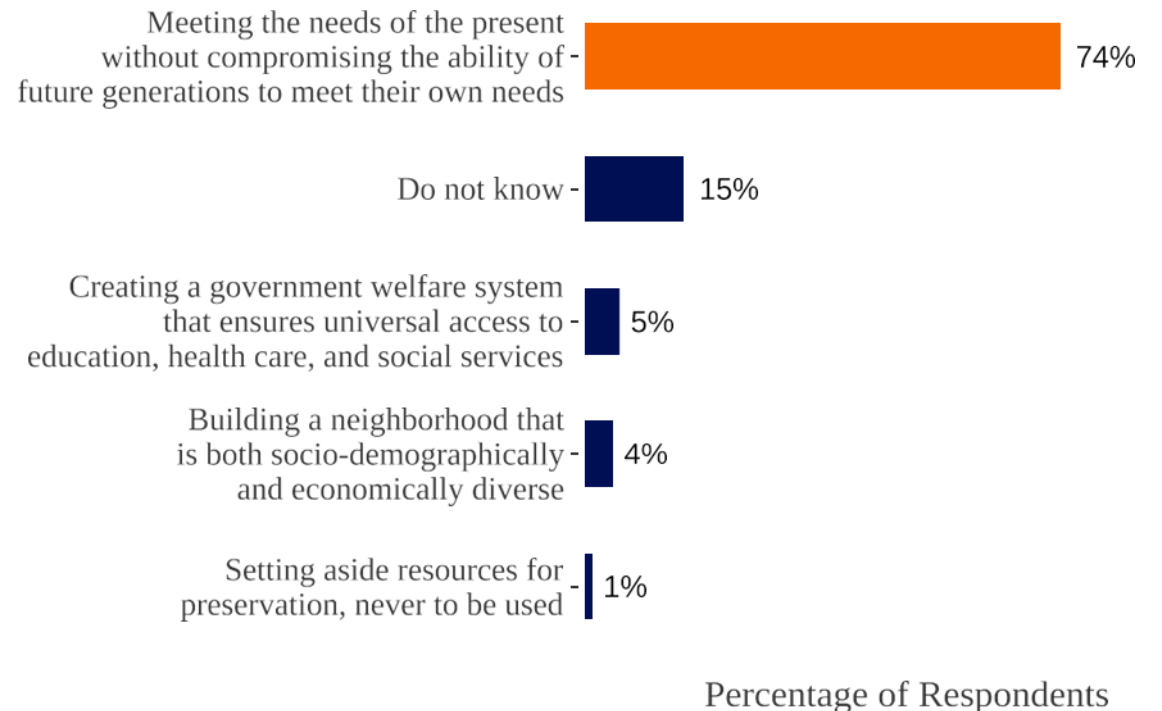
- The limited amount of correct responses further emphasizes the need for recycling education.

Sustainability Literacy

- Question: Which of the following would be considered living in the most environmentally sustainable way?



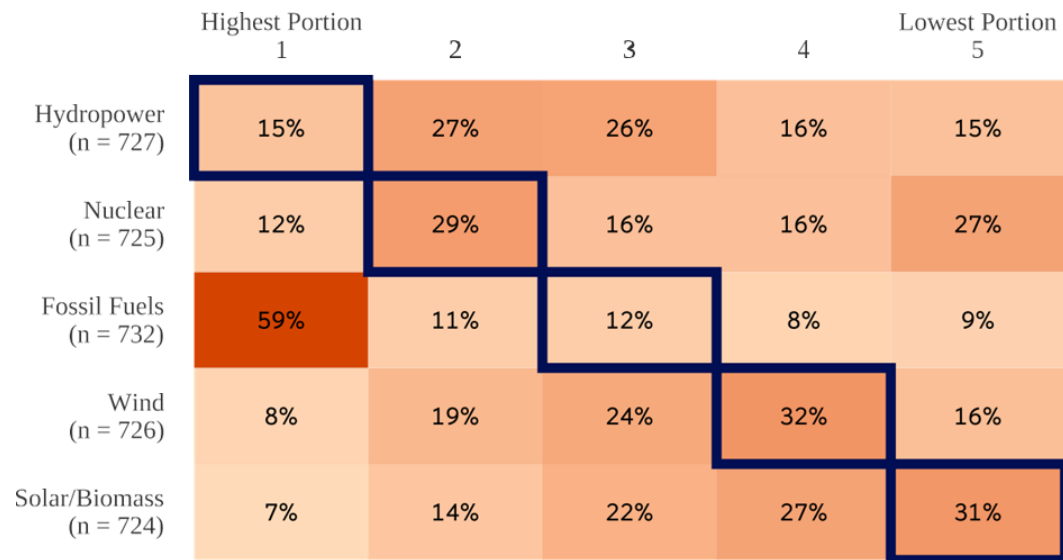
- Question: Which of the following is the definition of sustainable development?



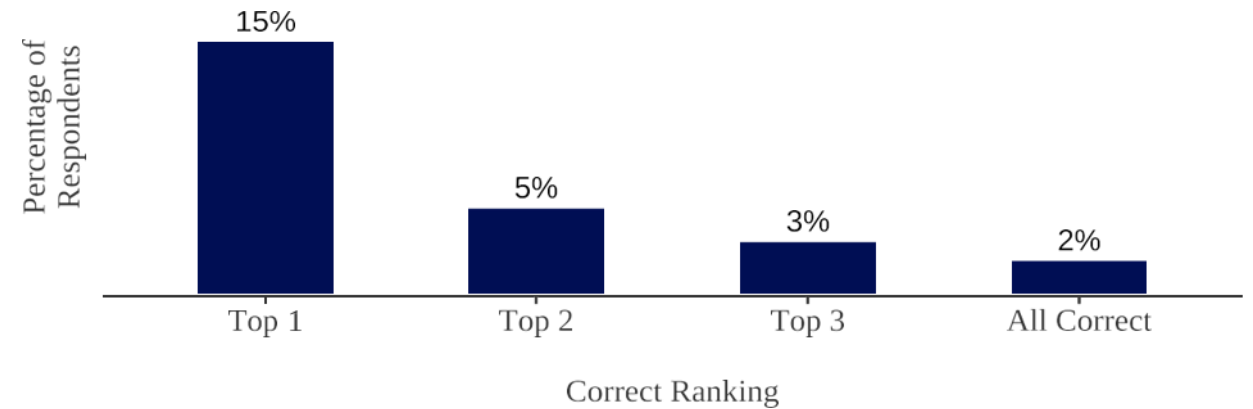
- These responses prove the majority of respondents generally agree with our vision.

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.



- The following figure 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.



- Respondents tend to overestimate the fuel mix of fossil fuels and underestimate the fuel mix of nuclear, wind and hydropower. This emphasizes a need for better education of the electrical grid.