This was an exciting year in sustainability at DU. As a University we stepped forward, building a strong foundation for future, gaining momentum through innovative projects and programs. Although the COVID pandemic and response impacted the end of the year, and may alter the timeline for future work, the inequity exposed by the virus and in the surging Black Lives Matter movement drive a deeper dive into the overlap of social justice and sustainability we have discussed at DU for years.
Building a just and sustainable future must be centered in equity. Sustainability solutions will not come without social justice. In order to address growing economic and educational disparities, we need to deeply examine the foundations of how our society and cities are planned and managed. We need all voices to be heard, beginning with those that have been marginalized for years, in order to build a coalition for action. Together, we may then address root systems in order to bring about necessary changes to the power structures that lead to injustice, inequity and an unsustainable future. As a University, we must examine our own structures, even as we host conversations and create knowledge for the future we desire.

Highlights of sustainability efforts on campus showcase all aspects of the University. We are designing and building cutting edge buildings, such as the Burwell Career Achievement Center with its novel cross laminated timber design demonstrating a low embodied carbon, high efficiency building. This building will become a laboratory and classroom for green building for campus and the region. Our Denver Advantage Buildings were designed to build community on campus. Economically these projects are building wealth in the Denver region, as we set and achieved goals for attracting and including local, women, minority and veteran owned contractors, with over $30 million going to these companies. Photovoltaic solar arrays constructed on 18 roofs will provide on campus renewable energy production for decades, starting in the fall of 2020. Our campus shuttle continues to provide innovative mobility options, introducing app based on demand last mile connections, modeling microtransit for the city.

Deep planning efforts are leading to action in sustainability focused community engaged learning and emerging research. The Sustainability Council, a representative shared governance body that includes students, staff and faculty, has a new charter, an operating structure that promises to reinvigorate and broaden sustainability planning, projects, policies and reporting. The DU Grand Challenges Urban Sustainability Cohort has engaged community members in growing collaborations, including metro Denver Nature Alliance (a collaborative of over 50 organizations working on equitable greenspace planning for the Front Range), the City of Denver, Denver Public Schools, and regional experts seeking to quantify human and ecological well-being. The concept of an Institute for a Just and Sustainable Future, a research institution to address inequity and sustainability, continues to evolve, with co-development of a research agenda based on conversations with regional experts.

In all of these efforts, we have centered the student experience. Opportunities abound for students to become active participants in advancing sustainability efforts on campus and in the community. Courses and degree programs build foundational knowledge, often with projects allowing deep learning through applied projects and research. Independent studies allow students to follow their passion and work directly with faculty. Our on-campus internship program provides rich experiential learning that bridges academic outcomes and career readiness, while hosting peer educational programming to engage and educate students from across campus. Off campus internships allow students to begin on their career path. Collectively, these opportunities develop the whole person and embed sustainability concepts and action across all degree programs.

In this annual report, we have prepared a snapshot of the last year. Highlighting achievements and outcomes from across campus, illustrates that this is the work of everyone at the University of Denver. We celebrate these successes collectively. From our operations to our academics and research, we are taking steps toward our sustainability and climate goals. We hope this report inspires you to join the effort.

Sincerely,
Chad King
Executive Director for Sustainability
University of Denver
Sustainability efforts at the University of Denver are embedded across the whole institution. These efforts are grounded in our Sustainability Principles (Appendix I) and Commitment (Appendix II) and seek to achieve our ambitious 25 goals by 2025 (Appendix III). We will meet these goals through intentional planning and collaboration, led by several key organizational structures (the Sustainability Council, Center for Sustainability, and the Sustainability Executive Committee, Appendix IV). Through the work of many contributors, we made significant steps towards our goals this past year through innovative projects and planning. This work builds on a history of progress over the last 12 years (Figure 1) This report provides an update on our achievements for fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019), with reporting, compiling and analysis leading to this time lag. We also share activities and projects highlighting efforts in fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020).
Figure 1: A Timeline of Key Sustainability Milestones at DU

- **2008**: Chancellor Coombe signs carbon neutrality commitment
- **2009**: Sustainability Council is formed and writes first Sustainability Plan
- **2012**: First full-time Sustainability staff is hired, Center for Sustainability launches
- **2014**: 2014-2017 Sustainability Plan written by Sustainability Council
- **2015**: Cultivating a Sustainable Community: University of Denver Just and Sustainable Future Initiative
- **2016**: Impact 2025 is published as DU’s Strategic Plan
- **2017**: Board of Trustees statement on Climate Change & Sustainability
- **2018**: Investment in Sustainability: Recommendations in response to BOT statement, including 25 goals for 2025
- **2019**: DU Grand Challenges Urban Sustainability Cohort
- **2019**: Knowledge Bridge Proposal: Research Institute for a Just and Sustainable Future
Sustainable DU
2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS, IMPACTS, AND OUTCOMES

Sustainability Council Charter
Approved in April, refocusing efforts to
gather input from across campus on report-
ing and project and policy development. The
charter sets expectations around
Council purpose
Council role
membership
meetings
reporting structures
responsibilities
goals and priorities
& metrics for success.

In 2019, DU reported a
26% decrease in carbon emissions
compared to our 2006 baseline.
Our goal was to reach a
24% reduction by 2020,
45% reduction by 2025, and
carbon neutrality by 2050

This year, we finished the installation of over
2 Megawatts of solar panels, spread across
18 rooftops
These solar panels will meet about
7% of DU’s electrical needs and reduce our carbon footprint by
2-4% Our goal was for DU to generate
5% of its energy on-site by 2025. This project accomplishes this goal
4 years ahead of schedule.

72% of students reported
using a non-SOV* mode to get to campus most days

43% of faculty and staff reported using a
non-SOV* mode to get to campus
*a non-SOV mode refers to any mode of transportation that is not a Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV), such as walking, biking, light rail, bus, or carpool.

In its mission to serve as an
Anchor Institution
in Denver, DU exceeded its goals and spent
more than
$30 million with women-, minority-, and veteran-owned contractors in the construction of the Denver Advantage buildings

In partnership with The Denver Anchor Network & The Center for
Community Wealth Building, DU supported training for
12 local caterers owned by women and minorities to become vendors for campus. These caterers showed their menus for over
100 event planners at DU.
Launched phase II of the **campus shuttle** using the Tripshot app. The campus shuttle debuted on-demand microtransit for the city of Denver.

Over five months, the shuttle saw **8,985** rides to the 15 different stops on and around the DU campus.

12% of rides utilized the on-demand feature that was launched in December 2019.

For FY19, DU reported diverting **20.4%** of campus waste to recycling and compost, and a reduction of total waste by more than **213** tons, compared to last year, a reduction of more than **12%**.

In summer 2020, DU completed construction on the Burwell Center for Career Achievement, which is on track to be the first LEED v.4 Platinum rated new building in Colorado, and the first Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) building in the region.

In 2014 DU signed onto the **Real Food Challenge**, which set a goal of purchasing 20% of food for the dining halls from sustainably certified or local sources. In 2019, DU and Sodexo reached **20.2%** local and sustainable food in dining halls across campus.

DU’s new **Sustainable Food Policy** will further these efforts, setting goals in food procurement, preparation, education, and waste management.

The DU Grand Challenges **Urban Sustainability Cohort** of faculty, staff, students, and community members is collaborating with partners in the Denver metro region to host conversations, generate ideas, and support knowledge development towards a just and sustainable future.

This year, domestic water used in buildings was **7.3 million** gallons less than last year, and the lowest amount in the last 5 years.

In FY19, DU invested more than **$420,000** in energy efficiency upgrades on DU’s campus. These upgrades will save **2,034,000** kWh of energy annually.

To date, DU has invested more than **$2.1 million** in energy efficiency upgrades, annually saving more than **9.5 million kWh** and **$918,000**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>82 students in the minor in 2020</th>
<th>27 majors represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The **Sustainability Minor** continues to be a popular major among students in a wide diversity of majors across DU, showing students’ continued interest and commitment to the topic.

The 2019-2020 academic year cohort was the second largest since the minor began, and represented the greatest number of majors it ever has, a **12.5%** increase over last year’s major representation.

**Contact**

sustainability@du.edu

www.du.edu/sustainability
DU’s overarching goal is carbon neutrality by 2050. This means having no net emissions from our operations. Every year we measure gross emissions from three scopes (Figure 2). Scope one includes emissions that happen on campus, such as natural gas building heating and fleet fueling and accounts for 21% of our footprint. Scope two includes the emissions from all purchased electricity and makes up 36% of our footprint. Scope three includes less direct emissions associated with operations, such as commuting, travel, purchasing, wastewater treatment, and more, contributing 43%. In years past we purchased carbon offsets, that contribute to new renewable energy and effectively reduce our net emissions. For fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019), we achieved a 26% reduction in our carbon footprint over a 2006 baseline, without purchasing any carbon offsets as we have done in the past (Figure 3). Even with new building construction, we are on track to meet our goal of a 24% carbon footprint reduction by 2020.

DU has an aggressive approach to energy efficiency, since electrical consumption is the largest single contributor to our carbon footprint. This strategy has led to the greatest reduction in our carbon footprint, while saving hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. In 2019, energy efficiency projects focused on LED lighting, taking advantage of Xcel Energy rebates. This included converting all the lights in the Ritchie Center to LED,. These projects cost $421,175 after rebates, a cost that will be repaid in savings in 2.3 years, as this will save 2,034,730 kWh and $183,125 annually. Since 2008, DU has spent over $3.3 million on efficiency projects, receiving nearly $1 million from Xcel Energy in rebates, for a modeled savings of 9.5 million kWh and $918,000 annually (Table 1).
Travel constitutes 40% of the carbon footprint (Figure 4). Over half of that is from university supported air travel, including trips for athletics, research, and conferences. Study abroad travel and commuting each account for about a quarter of travel emissions. We recognize that travel is an essential to the educational experience. For that reason, departments and individuals have the opportunity to contribute to purchasing carbon offsets, funds used to invest in projects that reduce carbon emissions in a measurable way.

The University of Denver has made significant investments in reducing single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips in commuting to campus. Addressing commuting emissions has multiple benefits. Less cars on the road improves congestion and air quality, which in turn improves the health of thousands of people across the Front Range who have respiratory issues. Commuting by modes other than driving a car have been shown to lower stress, reduce sick days, and it eliminates the cost of parking. DU provides RTD passes to all full-time benefitted employees and students, encouraging the use of transit. Partnerships with carshare providers, weekly buses to ski resorts in the winter quarter, and free services at the campus bike shop all provide additional amenities to so that students and employees
don’t need a car on campus. The campus shuttle continues to add services, providing fixed route transport across campus and on demand service to over 15 locations in the surrounding neighborhoods from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. This service provides a last mile connection between the light rail station and classrooms and offices, while also providing easy access to amenities.

We measure the impact of these programs through data collected through an annual commuting survey. Graduate and undergraduate students are increasingly living closer to campus, and rarely commute alone, single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips are only 13% of undergraduate trips and 27% of graduate trips. Employee commuting is also below the regional average for drive alone trips (a 73% drive alone rate) as 51% of faculty trips and 62% of staff trips are by SOV. Combining all commuting trips to campus yields a 26.5% drive alone rate, exceeding our 2025 goal of 40% (Figure 5). Efforts will continue to provide options in order to reduce drive alone rate among all user groups to below 40%.
Waste diversion is a measure of how much municipal solid waste produced on campus is diverted to recycling and compost, avoiding the landfill. Waste diversion rates in 2019 increased to a five year high at 20.4% (Figure 6). This is still below Denver’s diversion rate of 23%, but better than the Colorado state-wide rate of 17% (the national average is 35%, The State of Recycling in Colorado, 3rd edition, 2019). This includes some remodeling waste but does not include construction waste from new buildings. This year total waste was reduced by 12% to 1,609 tons. Focused programs across campus show very high diversion rates, such as an 88% diversion rate at hockey games, 69% in the Anderson Academic Commons, and 89% at Newman Events. These programs show great potential for the rest of campus, when there is focus on purchasing recyclable and compostable materials, streamlining collection, and focusing on education. Actions in 2020 to improve diversion rates included new waste bin signage across campus and the addition of compost and recycling bins in all residence hall lobbies.
Water

Water is a precious commodity in the arid West. DU has a number of goals to reduce overall water consumption. Water use on campus includes interior uses (67% of the total use), irrigation (26%), and cooling towers (7%) (Figure 7). Interior water use is dependent on total number of campus users and their conservation behaviors. Irrigation and cooler use are dependent on the weather, with use increasing during hotter summers. In 2019, total municipal water use was 97.9 million gallons (Figure 8), half a million gallons below the average of the last five years, with an increase in irrigation and cooling tower use offset by reductions in interior use. More details are needed to better norm this use against efficiency standards which are typically measured by consumption per campus user and irrigation per square foot.
The University’s purchases have a significant impact on sustainability goals and the local economy. Consistent reporting in sustainable procurement has focused on paper and food. Central paper purchasing, not including individual procurement by individuals or units, has decreased 63% from 2009 to 2019, while amount of recycled content paper has increased from 46% to 97% (Figure 9). Sustainable food procurement has been driven by the University and Sodexo becoming signatories to the Real Food Challenge, committing to purchasing 20% of food for the dining halls from sustainably certified or local sources (within 250 miles of DU) by 2020. In 2019 Sodexo met that goal with 20.2% of food purchases falling into these categories. This demonstrates creativity and dedication, to meet this goal a year early, after starting from a baseline of 3% local and sustainable food purchases in 2014. The new Sustainable Food Policy will lead food service practices into the next decade, setting broader and more aspirational goals. Additional goal setting, measurement, and reporting is required to improve sustainable purchasing of other commodities such as electronics, office supplies, and trademarked items.
Engagement

Students have many opportunities to actively participate in sustainability efforts at DU, in co-curricular and curricular settings. The Center for Sustainability’s a robust student internship program, provides opportunities for up to 35 undergraduate students and 10 graduate students. These interns and fellows turn passion into purpose through authentic experiential learning that moves the University towards our sustainability goals. A number of student organizations across campus provide additional opportunities for impact and leadership development. These include Undergraduate Student Government’s Sustainability Committee, Food Recovery Network, DU Pollinators Association, Divest DU, Eco Conscious (Graduate School of Social Work), and Net Impact (Daniel’s College of Business). Curricular options include the Sustainability Minor, an interdisciplinary minor with 82 students from 27 majors enrolled in 2019 (Figure 9). While all colleges have courses focused on sustainability, several degree programs or concentrations specifically focus on sustainability. These include the Environmental Science major for undergraduates, a suite of master’s degrees in Environmental Policy and Management concentrations in sustainability, such the Sustainable Development and Global Practice concentration in the Graduate School of Social Work, and the Global Environmental Change and Adaptation concentration in the Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

Collectively, these accomplishments illustrate a deep commitment to sustainability across the institution, a commitment activated by collaborators representing all corners of the University. Through this commitment and action, we will continue to move toward our goals, bridging operations and curriculum to enrich the student experience at every step.

Figure 10: Students and Majors in the Sustainability Minor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Pursuing Sustainability Minor</th>
<th>Majors Represented in Sustainability Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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</tr>
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<td>85</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Project Success: 2019-2020

We also want to celebrate several major successes that happened this year, projects that will impact our sustainability goals for years to come.

Campus Solar Photovoltaic Project
DU now has an on-campus solar array! With over 7,000 panels on 18 roofs across campus, this project will provide 5-7% of our electrical consumption. This project is funded through a power purchase agreement, meaning DU did not pay any money upfront, but agreed to buy energy at a set rate for the next 20 years. Most panels were installed on flat roofs using ballasted systems, with a few placed on sloped roofs. For full transparency, DU kept all renewable energy credits (RECs), so we retain the environmental attributes associated with this project. Because of this, the project will lower our carbon footprint by 3-4%. After several years of planning, procurement, and contracting, this project will begin producing power in the fall of 2020.

Real Food Challenge
In 2014, in response to student activism, Chancellor Coomb and Ira Simon, Director of Denver Dining for Sodexo, signed DU up for the Real Food Challenge. This commitment set a goal of purchasing 20% of all food for the dining halls from local and/or sustainably certified sources. In 2015, an audit showed only 3% of purchases met these requirements. Through ceaseless work on supply chain and with Sodexo’s corporate office, an audit completed this year showed that Sodexo exceeded 20% in fiscal year 2019. This effort has is a model for local food procurement. Meeting this goal is a significant achievement that keeps more money in the local economy while supporting growing methods that improve ecosystem health, are more humane, and improve workers’ conditions.

Campus Shuttle
In the second year of a strategic plan implementation pilot, Parking and Mobility Services unveiled a new shuttle service provider, new app and innovative operational changes leading to increases in ridership. Tripshot was implemented as the app to access the service, providing real time shuttle location and arrival time, locations of all stops, and easy access boarding passes. This app also provides great data on how the service is used, driving flexibility and adaptability. This allowed DU to launch the first on demand microtransit service in Denver, where after the morning commute one shuttle provided point to point service between any two of the fifteen designated stops when a ride was requested through the app. This provides access to shopping, entertainment, and groceries across the neighborhood, from Broadway to Colorado, Louisiana to Yale. Use of the shuttle peaked in February at over 3,200 rides that month, prior to being impacted by the Covid response. We continue to explore ways to improve operations to best serve our campus and community to provide more options to increase ridership.

Sustainability Council Charter
The Sustainability Council provides shared governance for campus sustainability efforts. This council builds community by providing a space for students, staff and faculty to collaborate on policy and project development to move us towards our goals and improve our reporting. After several years of development and changes in senior administration, a new organizational charter was approved this spring. Under this new approach, the Council will meet once per quarter with expanded membership to ensure voice and reporting from most units on campus. Meetings will still be open to the whole DU community, and participation in committees will be highly encouraged. This work occurs in topical committees with representation from faculty experts, students, and operational or facilities staff, to create policy and project proposals. We invite you to join a committee or council meeting to see what this is all about. Join the open Sustainability Council Microsoft Team (link here) to find ways to participate.
Diverse Business Participation in Denver Advantage Buildings

For the first time at DU, senior administration in Business and Financial Affairs and Facilities Management and Planning set goals for diverse and local business inclusion. This intentional approach to including women, minority and veteran owned businesses is founded in community wealth building with businesses that may have been marginalized in the past. A concerted recruitment effort by Facilities Management and Planning and the participating general contractors led to DU far exceeding our goal of 15% participation. Across the three buildings the average was 27% diverse business participation (with a high of 35% in the Dimond Family Residential Village). This totaled over $30 million in economic impact with diverse business. The impact of these projects to the local economy was nearly $84 million, as 74% of the construction business participation was from locally owned businesses.
The Center for Sustainability is the hub for sustainability planning, reporting, and support of University goals. This includes work with many key stakeholders across campus, in collaboration and coordination toward shared goals. Sustainability programs are led by student interns in the Center, with focused programming enriching this holistic personal, professional, and leadership development opportunity.
The Center for Sustainability facilitates opportunities to link operational and the curriculum. This includes utilizing campus buildings, grounds and operations as a laboratory for learning. The Center also serves as the client for student class projects and independent studies. These projects provide authentic experiential learning as they address questions and challenges of campus sustainability. This problem-based learning allows students to apply knowledge and research skills to create tangible sustainability solutions. This year, class partnerships included faculty in Communication, Geography, and GIS, with students producing literature reviews and written materials, researching effectiveness of Center programs, and developing maps and websites to display campus sustainability effort.

The deepest learning opportunity offered out of the Center for Sustainability is the Sustainability Internship Program, which brings together dozens of passionate and motivated students to investigate best practices and their applications across DU. From learning how to run a full-service bike shop, to managing a food pantry that serves DU’s most vulnerable communities, to strategizing how to impact tens of thousands of sports fans, these rich experiences build a portfolio of skills to succeed in future careers. Hands-on experiences are paired with intentional professional, personal, and leadership development training, much self-reflection, and mentorship from experienced staff and graduate fellows.

Highlights of accomplishments of the programs of the Center for Sustainability are found on the next two pages.
**DU Bike Shop**
Crew of 6 students performed 185 total services on 107 different bikes. Services provided had a retail value of over $6,300 with an average turnaround time of only 2 days.

**Sustainability Internship Program**
45 Undergraduate Students from 24 different majors at DU.
8 Graduate Fellows from 6 different schools at DU.
Students ran 30 distinct programs that reached more than 7,100 people despite restrictions in spring due to COVID19.

**DU Food Pantry**
The DU Food Pantry distributed 3,112 pounds of food to 87 unique users over 509 individual visits. 1,587 pounds of food were donated from 14 organizations and departments all across the DU campus.

This year, the Center for Sustainability planned events with 15 major partners including: The Library Sustainability Committee, the Center for Community Engagement to Advance Scholarship and Learning, Health Promotion, DU Programming Board, Housing and Residential Education, Denver Dining by Sodexo, DU Dialogues, DU Backpacking Club, the Bridge Community Garden, Advancement, Alumni Engagement, Discoveries Orientation, Parent and Family Engagement, the ESLLC, and Indigilogix.

**Zero Waste Athletics**
We continued to see great diversion rates across all sports, with increased diversion in both soccer (+2%) and basketball (+5%).

- **Recycling**: 86% diversion rate in soccer
- **Compost**: 85% diversion rate in basketball
- **Landfill**: 84% diversion rate in hockey
The relationships our students build while working at the Center for Sustainability increases a sense of community, gives students a feeling of purpose, and allows them to spend time with people who share their core values. These all lead to greater rates of persistence and feelings of satisfaction.

We provided various sustainability trainings to 7 Organizations at DU, including Resident Assistants, Orientation Leaders, Admissions Office, DU Programming Board, Alpha Phi Omega Advancement, and Office of International Ed.

DU Gear Garage

- 305 rentals in 2019-20
- 109 rentals in 2018-19

Gear Garage saw our rentals increase despite being closed during Spring 2020, which has historically been our busiest quarter.

Presentations

- Staff at the Center presented at:
  - 5 classes in different programs
  - 15 events hosted by other units at DU
  - 4 regional conferences and summits
  - 6 Talks at the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education national conference. These talks reached nearly 2,000 people at DU and beyond

Communications

- 38% of event attendees heard about our events through word-of-mouth from friends and staff at the Center.

Renters Efficiency Program

- Completed 20 Audits
- Educated 40 Renters
- Replaced 83 light bulbs
- Installed 18 low flow faucets
- Fixed 10 drafty doors
- Fixed 12 drafty windows
- Gave away 6 smart power strips
- Programmed 6 thermostats
- Adjusted 6 hot water tanks
- Installed 27 feet of insulation

Our audits will save renters a total of:
- 11,367 kWh & $1,256 on energy bills every year

Fundraising

- In partnership with the Advancement Office, the Center for Sustainability raised $15,000 for programs such as DU Food Pantry, Carbon Offsets, Sustainability Programming, Sustainability Internships through projects like One Day for DU, Text to Give Campaigns, and the Alumni Night at Zoo Lights.

Contact Us:

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- foodpantry@du.edu
- bikeshop@du.edu
- geargarage@du.edu
Eat Local Food

As a “private university dedicated to the public good” DU is also a key economic driver in the city. In fall of 2019, the Center for Sustainability partnered with the Denver Anchor Network and the Center for Community Wealth Building and key event planners from the Graduate School of Social Work, Advancement, Conference and Event Services and support from Shared Services to build intentional, specific partnerships as an Anchor Institution. The goal of this event was to highlight ways to use existing budgetary costs to support and Women- or Minority-owned businesses in Denver. By focusing spending in this way, we can support marginalized businesses, build wealth in our community, and we bring rich flavors to our gatherings. Ten caterers went through three trainings in preparation to succeed as a vendor at the University. A successful tasting event allowed caterers to introduce themselves and their food to over one hundred event planners across the University.

What is an Anchor Institution?

What is an anchor institution? Anchor institutions are enterprises that are necessarily tied (anchored) to their locations, such as universities or hospitals. Because these institutions can’t move to another city the way most private businesses can, anchor institutions have a great opportunity to build long, meaningful relationships, partnerships with other local businesses, non-profits and community members. Additionally, institutions like universities and hospitals wield vast economic, human, intellectual and institutional resources, which can serve to improve and grow local economies and build stronger communities.
The DUGC Urban Sustainability Cohort is one of DUGC’s four collective impact cohorts in which faculty, staff and students partner with community leaders from the public, private, and civic sectors to improve daily life, now and in the future. Each cohort aims to increase the number of faculty, staff, and students engaged in community-based scholarship, increase the number of community partners actively engaged with DU, and increase the strength of existing community-university partnerships. Projects that emerged from this cohort include work to define a Human and Ecological Well-being Index, the Community Voice project, a partnership with DPS sustainability staff, students and champions, the concept of a Sustainability Clinic, and development of support structures for this group, including organization, networking, and grant writing. Quarterly Sustainability Community Collective meetings were launched to connect community partners with faculty staff and students to build long term relationships focused on community research needs. The goal is to build relationships where courses, class projects, capstones, independent studies, and theses can address these needs, providing solutions to the community. This cohort will continue to focus on creating deep and meaningful relationships that go beyond a single project or school year, developing rich projects over years and multiple project opportunities to create a sustainable Denver region where all thrive.

What is DU Grand Challenges

Our local and global communities face complex, urgent, and persistent challenges. DU Grand Challenges is a family of programs that bring together university and community change-makers to address the most difficult and far-reaching issues facing our society today. DU Grand Challenges addresses three inter-related issues in our communities: improving daily living, increasing economic opportunity and advancing deliberation and action for the public good. Each issue area is addressed in a 3-year cycle, allowing us, in partnership with our communities, to co-create Aspirations, Actions, and Achievements.

Knowledge Bridge Proposal: Institute for a Just and Sustainable Future

Through a collaborative development process, an interdisciplinary team of faculty produced a well-received proposal for a research institute. This proposal focused on research to support the development of a just and sustainable future. The concept of “just sustainability” offers an unparalleled foundation for innovation, interdisciplinary research, and experiential education. As our population grows, becoming increasingly urbanized and straining the limits of our natural systems, the tensions between environmental protection and equity mount. Issues at the intersection of economic vitality, environmental quality, and social justice are among the greatest challenges of our time and require innovative thinking, creative problem solving, and a diverse community of scholars and collaborators. This concept merges existing faculty strengths with ongoing research partnerships to propose the DU Institute for a Just and Sustainable Future—a vibrant, interdisciplinary network to support rigorous scholarship that addresses the issues of just sustainabilities across multiples scales.

DU Programming Council

The DU Programming Council was formed in 2018 as a way for event planners in Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence to coordinate with one another, find opportunities for collaboration, and to share best practices across units. The Programming Council continues to grow across units, providing a way to infuse sustainability across more programs and departments on campus. These programming partnerships will help to shape student engagement activities to both operate in a more sustainable manner—from waste reduction to local food offerings—and to continue to show students that sustainability is a core value of the University of Denver.
Looking Forward

Even as we celebrate the successes of the year, we look forward to the future. As the Denver Advantage buildings open, we will see opportunities to deepen our research into building efficiency and utilization, we will explore new options in food procurement and preservation (thanks to the commitment to a cook chill facility in the Community Commons), we will open access to our first green roof, and the Center for Sustainability will move into our new home in the Community Commons. As our solar array begins to provide power to campus, we will meet several energy goals while we gain access for the first time to real time energy consumption and production data, opening the door to a wide range of research projects. Our internship program will continue to reach out to partners and students across campus, while exploring new possibilities in research and consulting work in the community. We will expand our connections to internships
in local companies and nonprofits and grow our work with the City of Denver. We will take next steps from our campus framework plan and facilities planning to provide clear guidelines for campus landscape and bikeways, while firming up our understanding of ways to reach our carbon neutrality goals. We will continue to develop clear research agendas for co-creating knowledge with regional and national experts towards a just and sustainable future, and we will explore graduate certificates that provide a foundation for this work.

The future is full of opportunity, for ways to participate in meaningful action, action that must be impactful and urgent given the climate, justice, and economic crises that we face. Join us in this work for a just and sustainable future.
Appendix 1: DU’s Sustainability Principles

As a campus, we will adopt ways to adhere to the following principles through policies, commitments, standard practices and everyday actions to realize our vision of incorporating sustainability into our research, teaching, operations and campus life.

Inclusion and Interdependence

- Increase the University’s role as an anchor institution that actively contributes to a thriving local economy.
- Build a more inclusive and cooperative community and enhance the One DU concept.
- Frame our operational and educational missions to emphasize systems thinking and the connections among our actions, natural systems and ecological services.
- Emphasize the understanding that a healthy economy and thriving environment is impossible without creating a just society.

Advancement of Application

- Emphasize and enhance existing and new research and teaching on sustainability and systems thinking.
- Increase interdisciplinary approaches in addressing sustainability in the curriculum.
- Utilize campus as a “living laboratory” for innovative applied research and teaching in operations.
- Provide clear methods for transferring innovation, research and operational best practices to the broader community.
- Provide clear pipelines for classroom innovations to become part of operational practice.
Resiliency and Well-being

- Improve human and ecosystem health and well-being.

Innovation and Identity

- Engage innovative ideas to eliminate our carbon footprint.

- Develop a distinct identity by integrating sustainability with our other priorities.

- Market our sustainability efforts to attract and retain excellent students, faculty and staff.

Core Value and Accountability

- Frame sustainability as a core value at the University of Denver.

- Improve energy, water, labor and other efficiencies in operational practices.

- Improve our sustainability metrics and implement clear modes and protocols for sustainability reporting.
The University of Denver recognizes that one of the great challenges of our time is to make the decisions and investments — of both effort and money — that will simultaneously advance economic vitality, ecological integrity and social justice. Economic vitality, environmental integrity and social justice are deeply connected in both the short- and the long-term. This triple challenge and deep connection are embodied in the concept of sustainability.

Recognizing sustainability as a core University value, we commit to exercising leadership in our community and throughout society by providing the knowledge, research and curriculum to produce informed graduates who are able to create a positive, just and sustainable future.

We will fully embrace sustainability and address climate change in our operations by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our approach to managing the built environment, energy, water, dining, purchasing, policies and transportation operations.

By integrating sustainability into the curriculum, research, co-curricular experience and campus operations, we will better serve our students and meet their social mandate to help create a vital, ethical and prosperous civil society.

We believe that our commitment to sustainability requires us to work with community partners in the public and private sector to ensure a thriving local economy, a sustainable urban environment and an equitable human community.

We reaffirm our commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050, as just one part of a holistic approach to becoming a sustainable University.
## Appendix III: DU’s 25x25 Goals

1. Reduce carbon emissions by 24% by 2020 and 45% by 2025 from 2007 levels.
2. Produce 5% of DU’s energy needs on-site through renewable sources.
3. Continue reduction of on-campus electrical consumption by 500,000 kWh/yr.
4. Investigate a 20-year PPA for 20% of DU’s total energy needs.
5. Reduce Energy Use Intensity on Campus to 40% below national standards.
6. Reduce SOV commutes to less than 40% of total trips.

7. Eliminate the need for first and second year students to have a car on campus.
8. Create a “Green Fleet” consisting of 50% alternatively fueled vehicles.
9. Achieve Bicycle Friendly University gold status by 2020, platinum by 2025.
10. Achieve a 70% diversion rate, on the way to a waste-free campus by 2035.

11. Advance DU’s role as an anchor institution by supporting and investing in local, women and minority owned, and alumni-owned businesses.
12. Create and implement a campus Sustainable Purchasing Policy.
13. Write and implement a campus Sustainable Storm Water Policy.
14. Achieve a Water Use Intensity of 30% above national standards.
15. Reduce indoor water use by 30% from 2007 levels.

16. Reduce outdoor water use for irrigation by 40% from 2007 levels.
17. Purchase 40% of food from local or sustainably certified sources.
18. Manage 50% of the grounds organically through a phased Integrated Pest Management approach, beginning with turf maintenance.
19. Engage the entire DU community in sustainability programming or practice.
20. Provide training in sustainability through a social justice lens for all new students and employees.

21. Assess sustainability literacy, attitudes, and culture longitudinally through annual campus-wide surveys.
22. Implement a curricular and co-curricular sustainability learning outcome for all students, and identify or create at least one class per degree program that explicitly focuses on sustainability.
23. Increase the total students taking more than one sustainability-related course.
24. Develop an Interdisciplinary Institute to serve as the backbone to support community-engaged collective impact through curriculum and research projects.
The sustainability structure at the university consist of three main organizations. These are the Sustainability Council, the Center for Sustainability, and the Executive Committee.

The Sustainability Council is the shared governance body, open to all students, staff, and faculty. Comprised of a mix of appointed members and volunteers, this body has several goals. The council builds community across campus silos through its composition and necessity for networking and collaboration. Work in topically focused committees includes idea generation, information sharing and reporting, and project and policy development. The council meets once per quarter, with committees meeting monthly. Proposals that emerge from the council go to the executive committee.

The Executive Committee provides administrative oversight. Comprised of the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance Administration, and facilitated by the Executive Director for Sustainability, this committee receives recommendations from the Council quarterly and provides the final decision for prioritization, budgetary impacts, and implementation. This committee also has final oversight of the AASHE STARS and President’s Climate Commitment reporting.

The Center for Sustainability is the central hub for campus sustainability efforts, providing leadership, and coordination. As an interface between curriculum and research and university operations and practices, the Center facilitates research that utilizes campus as a laboratory. It engages students in a co-curricular capacity and supports class projects, data sharing, and students in applied research independent studies. The Center works closely with partners from across campus that are involved in planning, implementation, communication, and reporting, and advises sustainability focused student organizations.