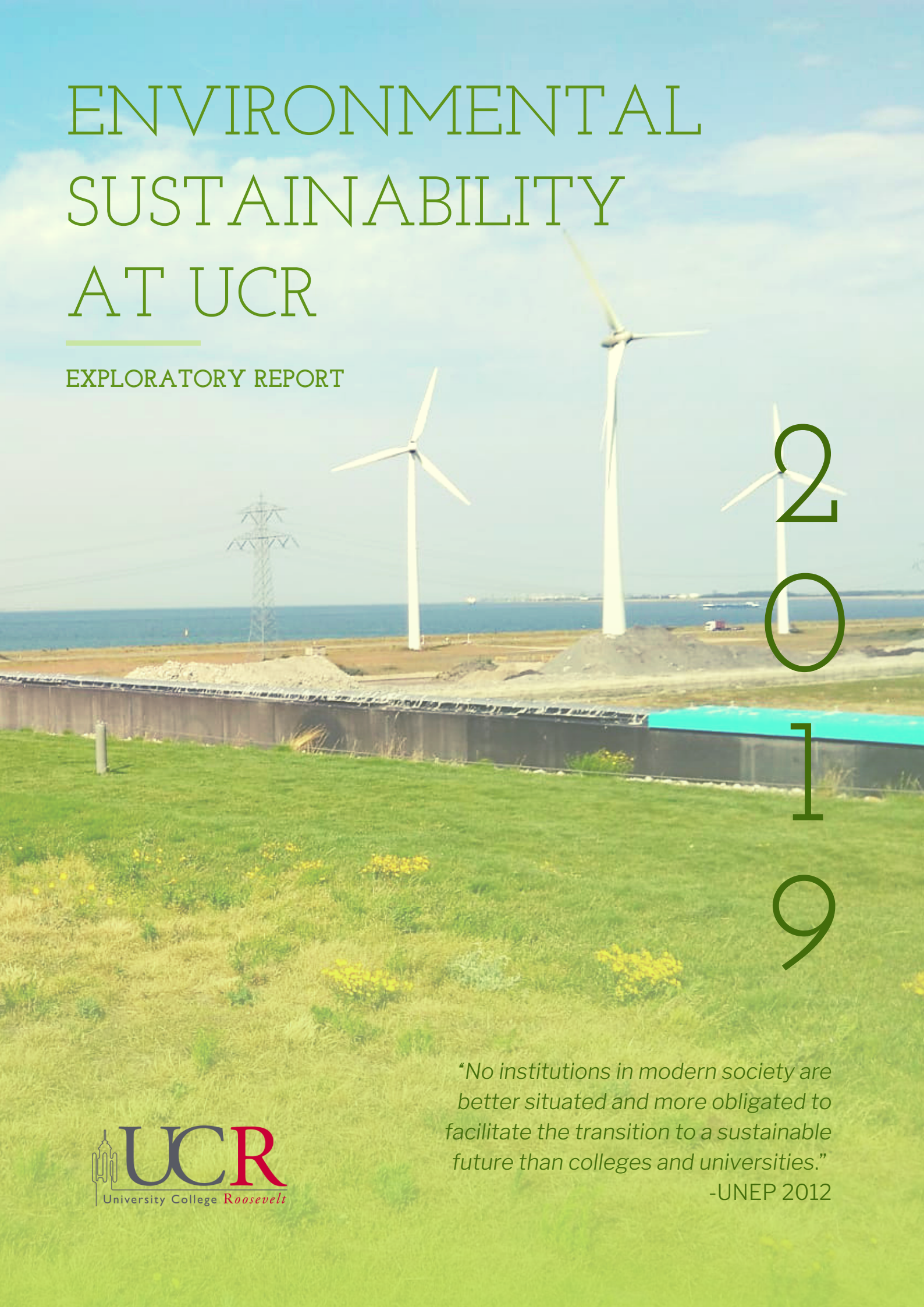
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT UCR

EXPLORATORY REPORT

2019



"No institutions in modern society are better situated and more obligated to facilitate the transition to a sustainable future than colleges and universities."
-UNEP 2012

UCR
University College Roosevelt

FOREWORD

This report was written as part of a summer internship, aiming to establish the state of sustainability at UCR. I wrote this report on my own, under the supervision of Huib Hubregtse and Herman Lelieveldt. Initially, my goal was to adhere to internationally recognised standards for sustainability reporting. However, I learned that UCR is not yet ready for this level of scrutiny. Obtaining relevant data has been a long and difficult task, and ultimately only partially successful.

Full-fledged reports consider a wide range of topics, and much of the necessary information is not readily available. Additionally, while there are strict reporting guidelines, the assessment remains qualitative in nature. The guidelines stipulate that the report must reflect an "unbiased picture of the organization's performance" (Foundations, 2016). While I have done my best to provide this, my opinion is still likely to influence the language of the report, and there are no other authors to balance this out. Therefore, rather than providing a clear assessment, this report remains largely descriptive.

GRI standards require that sustainability reports also reflect on social and economic aspects. Unfortunately, I had neither the time nor the resources necessary to address these factors. Hence, these remain for someone else to work on, so that eventually UCR might be able to present a full report. Whether UCR chooses to do so depends on the goals it sets for itself. Considering these factors, the structure of this report does not follow international guidelines, but presents the data that was made available. It considers first a discussion on the goals we wish to set for ourselves, followed by the current status quo and how this could be addressed in order to raise the quality of sustainability at UCR.

The information in this report was mainly provided through first-hand accounts and interviews. A list of contributions as well as references can be found at the end of this document. Much of this report was inspired by the 2018 *Duurzaamheidsverslag* published by UGent.

As I will be part of the new Eleanor Green Office, this report simultaneously serves as a baseline for operations of the Green Office.

by Tabita Houtman

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

As a young and relatively small institution, University College Roosevelt has had little practice producing reports to the public regarding university matters. It is therefore not surprising that there has not yet been a sustainability report written or published in the past 15 years. However, in order to activate the student community on issues of sustainability, UCR must show that it is committed to these issues itself. A key part of this is transparency, best realised in the form of a recurring sustainability report. Publishing such a report encourages involvement, which in turn increases support. Many students are already active on environmental topics, but feel that there is little room for this at UCR aside from the student-led Sustainability Committee (SusCo). The report would also serve to encourage staff to consider sustainability not just in their personal lives, but their professional lives as well. Ideally, this would strengthen environmental consciousness within the curriculum. Of course, this requires much more than a report, but it is a solid place to start. This report serves as an instigator. Not only to produce further reports, but to ensure that the process of reporting is simplified and indicators are made easier to measure.

UCR garden initiative, 2015

STANDARDS

A widely held definition for the term sustainable development is that of the 1987 Brundtland Report, which introduced the concept and described it as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In 2015, the UN General Assembly followed this up by setting 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as guideline for all development in the world. The UN has undertaken many steps to spread awareness of these goals, and how you, your school, your company, etc. can contribute. Many sustainability reporting guidelines rest on these ideals, as the SDG framework makes it possible to assess how a given institution performs in relation to each goal. A widely used reporting standard is that of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), issued by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB). In one of their explanatory documents, the GRI state that "through their activities and relationships, all organizations make positive and negative contributions toward the goal of sustainable development. Organizations therefore have a key role to play in achieving this goal". It is for this reason that it is important for universities to report on these topics as well. However, the GRI G4 guidelines, as well as other prominent frameworks such as the ISO, are made specifically for businesses and are not entirely suited to universities. This has been addressed by several adapted frameworks. The most expansive of these is the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), developed by the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). This is not just a reporting framework but also a ranking tool, allowing for comparison between universities. The reporting process requires a team and considerable resources. As a small university, UCR lacks these resources. Furthermore, the sustainability movement has only just gotten underway, meaning there is too little to report on so far, and standards would not be met.

A less expansive, yet nevertheless effective framework is the Graphical Assessment of Sustainability in Universities (GASU), which directly adopts the GRI standards and adapts them to fit higher education institutions (HEI's), most notable by introducing the Educational Dimension. There are several indicators pertaining to curriculum and research, and a 5-point scale on which to assess the quality of information, from 0 to 4. It would be beneficial to keep this framework in mind throughout the report. However, as this is a first report – hopefully of many – it is largely exploratory in nature.

GOALS

Before we take action, we must first ask ourselves: what is our goal? How far do we want to go, and to what extent do we want to be part of the movement toward a sustainable future? It has become clear that some form of action is necessary, but we can still disagree on how to go about it. Do we wish to make far-reaching and all-encompassing changes the way UGent has through their ambitious 'Transitie UGent' plan? Or do we take our smaller scale to mean we must act less ambitiously? These are questions that we must answer as a university, following critical dialogue and debate. However, it is important that we do not stop at discussion, but realise that however comprehensive we wish our engagement on these issues to be, changes must be made. Not because UCR has a significant environmental impact, but because we are educating the leaders of the future, and it is crucial that we provide them with the opportunities they need, as well as set the right example. We cannot expect students to act, when we fail to provide them with the tools necessary to do so.
Through rigorous debate and research, we can create a sustainable future that best fits the UCR context and the Liberal Arts and Sciences tradition. Setting aside for a moment the practical actions to be take, we must strive to design an environment in which students are encouraged to consider and address some of the most pressing issues of our time. In order to provide these opportunities, we must look beyond practical issues such as renewable energy and work to create an academic environment that fosters sustainable innovation.

When considering what goals we want to set for ourselves, it can be helpful to look toward other universities that have been addressing the same issues for longer. Examples include Utrecht University (UU), Universiteit Gent (UGent), Wageningen University & Research (WUR), University of Exeter, and many more.

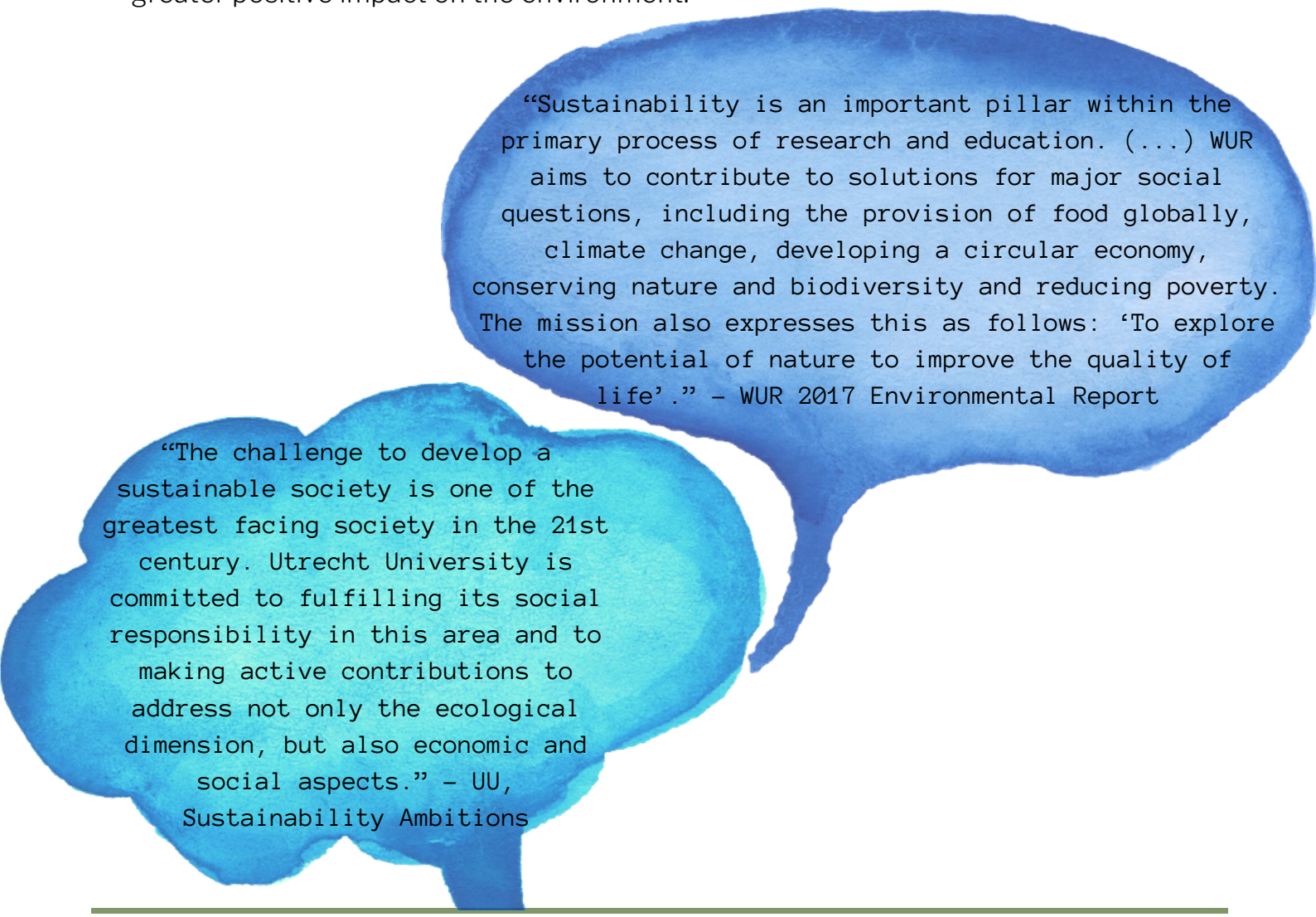
"We lead by example, transforming our own institution to be both flourishing and sustainable, and to produce new generations of graduates and staff that are agents of positive social and environmental change." – University of Exeter, Sustainability Policy

"Our Vision is for UCL to become a leader in the field of sustainability through performing at the highest levels of excellence in multidisciplinary academic teaching and research; creating a culture of inspiration, innovation, action and trust, through engagement with its schools, faculties, departments and other stakeholders; and through the sustainable development and use of the estate." – UCL Sustainability Strategy

Another helpful set of ideals to consider when shaping this university's goals are the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Both individually and as an organisation, we possess the capacity to contribute to the UN SDGs. By addressing environmental sustainability within this report, and through the actions it will hopefully inspire, we would be addressing goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and goal 13 (climate action) most directly. In this way, this institution can contribute directly to a greener future.

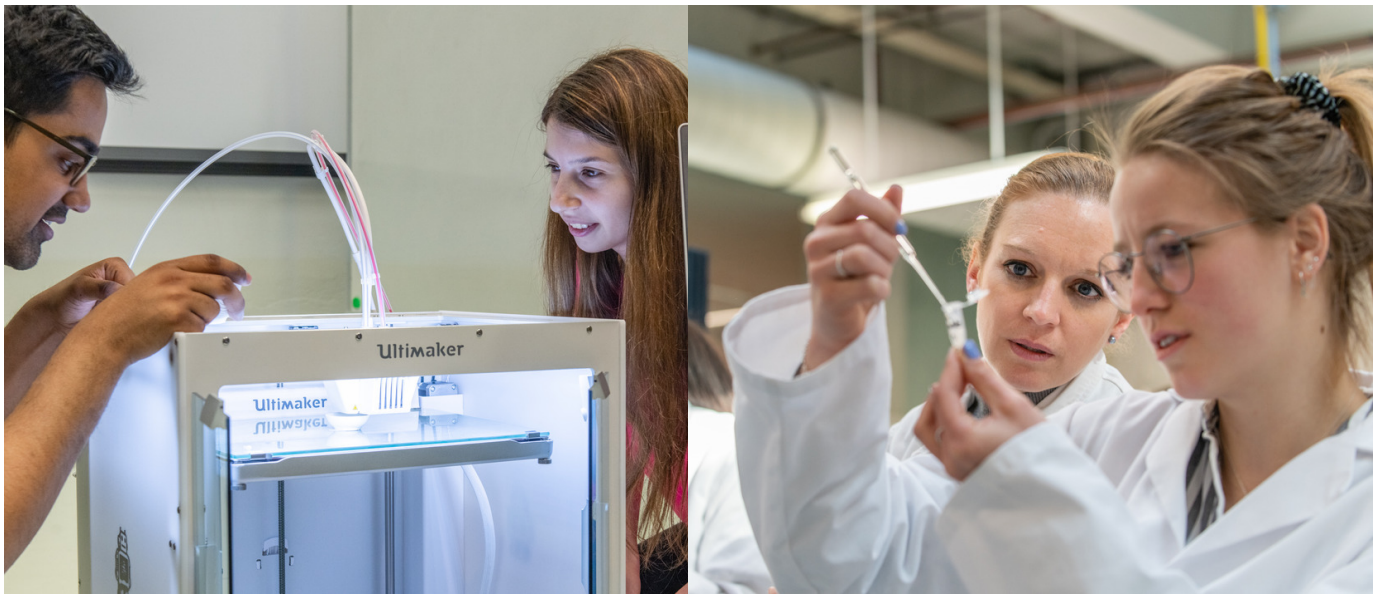
In the past year, the Sustainability Committee (SusCo), a student committee under the Roosevelt All Student Association (RASA), has formulated three pillars of sustainability that could serve as guiding principles when considering the issues we face.[1]

Our responsibility. Scientists have warned us all that critical action must be taken if we want to have any chance at mitigating climate change. We must all strive to do better on this front. As an institution that takes pride in providing a LAS education that attends to each student's academic passions, we must be coherent in our actions. The current generation of students has been said to be the last one to be able to stop climate change, and fortunately it is said to be the most environmentally-conscious generation to date, as can be seen by how present sustainability is in our community already. However, individual actions are no longer sufficient. We are in need of a stronger basis on which to operate with sustainability in mind, allowing us to support and encourage all manner of environmentally conscious actions by students and staff. Together we can make a greater positive impact on the environment.



[1] The following is taken from an early version of the Green Office proposal.

Academic Integration. We believe in the significance and vitality of the topic of environmentalism and its involvement in the academic sphere at University College Roosevelt (UCR). Although sustainability is briefly discussed within the curricula, these topics are reserved for the sciences predominantly. In the spirit of the multidisciplinary approach that makes UCR a unique place to study, we believe that it is possible to approach environmentalism from the various disciplines- as well as important to do so. The topic can be discussed in rhetoric, economics, sociology, arts and design as well as politics, to name just a few. This is highly relevant with regards to the introduction of a new Engineering department dedicated to sustainability, as it could open up more possibilities of interdepartmental collaboration. In addition, due to the increasing number of senior projects and capstones focused on sustainability, having a more coherent and dependable body of reference, such as a Green Office, could offer aid in support of these projects. We believe that environmentalism should be discussed in full depth so as to achieve a higher and more well-rounded understanding.



Community Integration. Despite UCR being a University College with a campus and learning facilities concentrated in the city centre of Middelburg, or precisely because of it, UCR's community is influenced by and influences the Zeeuwse community. To tackle sustainability goals and create effective change, cooperation with parties outside of UCR but also outside of University settings is required. The Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen (KZGW) in particular has demonstrated a clear interest, for example by organising the Young Energy Society Challenge, aimed to motivate students and entrepreneurs to present innovative solutions for a smoother energy transition. The Vereniging Zeewse Milieudefensie (ZMf) organises events and meetings with interested parties in order to discuss topics of environmental protection. The integration into the surrounding community starts with relying on the green electricity provided by the local windmill farm. By cooperating with local farms for SusCo's weekly Veggie Bags and volunteering, and managing a crop, at the Speelhof Hoogerzael community garden, SusCo has worked to be part of a bigger conversation. The creation of a Green Office would further this initiative and create collaboration opportunities within UCR and with the community at large that are currently beyond our capacity.

Christmas market, 2018

ACADEMICS

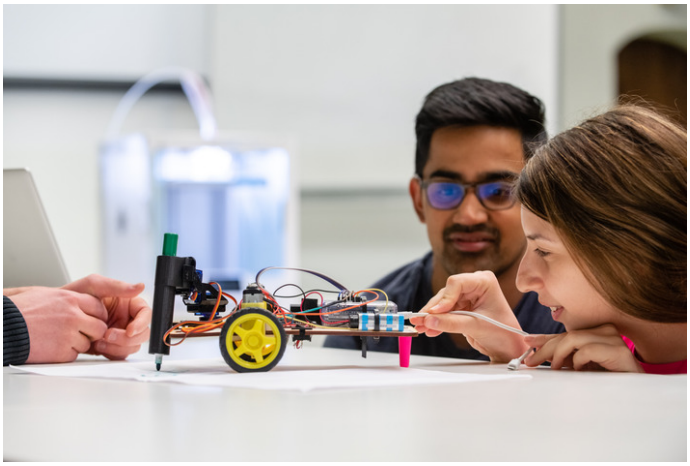
According to the statement by the University Colleges Deans Network (UCDN), one of the key characteristics of learning outcomes at University Colleges include “attitudes and skills for active participation as citizens in society, including international and intercultural understanding, social skills and a will to contribute to solving societal issues”. What better way to showcase this than by getting staff and students involved in issues of sustainability?

Courses

Currently, there are only two courses being taught that relate directly to sustainability. Both are in the Human Geography track, and both are only taught once a year. There is an environmental sciences track, but this is mostly biology, and only touches on issues of sustainability if the instructor deems it important. Similarly, there are professors that dedicate time to sustainability within their courses while it is not the main focus. While students are free to research a environment-related topic for their other courses, the topic of sustainability is not an established part of the curriculum.

Senior Projects

The Senior Projects (SPs), which have only recently been introduced, are more proactive in this aspect. Currently there are 7 SPs that relate directly to topics of sustainability. There is also room for students to make environment-related themes the focus of their research within other SPs. This discrepancy between the regular courses and the SPs suggests that the lack of courses dedicated to sustainability is not necessarily due to a lack of interest, but rather because the curriculum has seen little renewal. There is potential for change, but this initiative has not yet been taken.



Engineering Department

In fall of 2019, the new Engineering Department will run its first pilot courses. Originally, it was said that the department would focus on issues of sustainability. However, it has since grown to be a more generic Engineering Department, although with attention given to topics of sustainability. The first Engineering project, as part of the Young Energy Society Challenge (YESC), will focus on the energy transition, and will be open for all students. The amount of sign-ups is currently still low, but this is to be expected for a new course in an entirely new department.

YESC

The Young Energy Society Challenge was initiated by the KZGW as a celebration of its 250 year anniversary. The challenge is aimed at youth from primary through higher education, and encourages them to come up with ideas to advance the energy transition in Zeeland. As part of this initiative, lessen plans are being drawn up for primary and secondary education to raise awareness on topics of climate change and sustainability. While this does not include HEIs, several faculty members at UCR have taken an active approach and have been working to incorporate topics of YESC into the curriculum. Thirteen professors have submitted ideas on how they will go about this.

Possibilities

Experiment with course co-creation with driven students, on topics of sustainability and climate change

- As part of a Senior Project
- In collaboration with the Green Office

Support of Green Office research projects and collaboration with the Green Office to improve academic integration of sustainability

Work with professors through the Harvard Center for Teaching and Learning to equip them with the tools necessary to incorporate sustainability into their courses in a manner that engages students

Cooperation with UGent, where considerable research has already been done on the topic of academic integration of sustainability


Franklin, ground floor

GREEN CAMPUS

Present in all academic buildings

Materials

There is no particular environmental standard in place regarding the acquisition of materials. Whether we use ethically and/or sustainably produced products depends on who places the order. One of our housemasters does care a great deal about sustainability, and will try to contribute to this where he can, but here he is dependent on budget. UCR itself does not actively promote the buying of sustainably or ethically produced materials.

Climate Control

Climate control is one of the core issues that UCR faces regarding sustainability. The academic buildings are a mixture of old buildings and historical monuments. This means that insulation and heating systems are outdated and in most cases lacking, and there are strict rules preventing change, such as installed double-paned windows. Most windows in Eleanor, Elliott, Franklin, and Theodore do not have double glass. The heating systems are outdated, and those in the academic buildings do not have smart meters or individual thermometers. This means that every room is heated to the same temperature, whether this is necessary or not. While it is possible to turn the heating off, there seems to be little awareness of this. During the winter, it is not uncommon to see several offices have their windows thrown open to ward off the heat, while people in other offices are cold. This inefficient system leads to unnecessary energy consumption. The age of the buildings, as well as a lack of funding, also translate to poor ventilation.

Campus locations score a little better on these issues, but there is still much room for improvement. Roggeveen has the best climate control out of all campus locations, but it is still sub-par when comparing it to newer or newly renovated buildings. The campuses have many of the same issues that the academic buildings do, such as single glass in the windows, metal frames, and inefficient heating. Woongoed, the owner of these buildings, has made sustainability part of its mission statement, meaning that improvement could be discussed. However, it is not their priority, and they are also limited by their budget. Similarly, based on previous actions and meetings, Villex – the company that acts as landlord – does not seem to prioritize these issues.

Green Spaces

IIn 2015, the SusCo board installed a small UCR garden in the Eleanor parking lot. This project did not last, and UCR no longer has any green spaces. There are a few spaces that could be utilized as such, but this would require active participation from the student and staff community in order to make sure it lasts. Aside from a lack dedicated green spaces, there are also very little plants throughout the buildings, which is unfortunate considering air quality in many parts of the buildings is quite low. The main issue seems to be caretaking. The housemasters already have considerable responsibilities, and UCR has long holiday periods. Therefore to maintain green areas and plants, there would need to be a person or persons dedicated to this task.


Terras behind De Burg


Franklin window


Couch in Elliott

Possibilities

Setting sustainability standards for materials

Examples include:

- Fair trade coffee
- Recyclable and/or recycled office supplies. This will simultaneously reduce our waste output

Improving building insulation

Examples include:

- A second layer behind/in front of the windows
- Ceiling insulation

Creating a shared green space where students and staff can go to relax and/or work with plants

- Behind the Burg
- In the Eleanor parking space

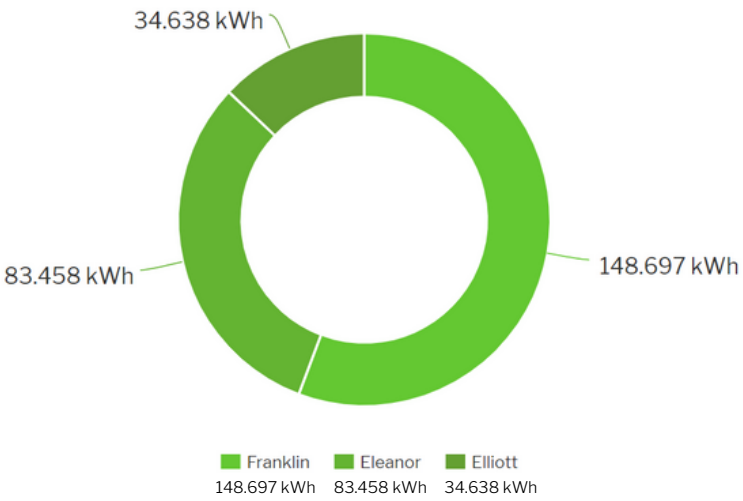
Taking a closer look at our finances to find out where our money is being invested


Attic ceiling

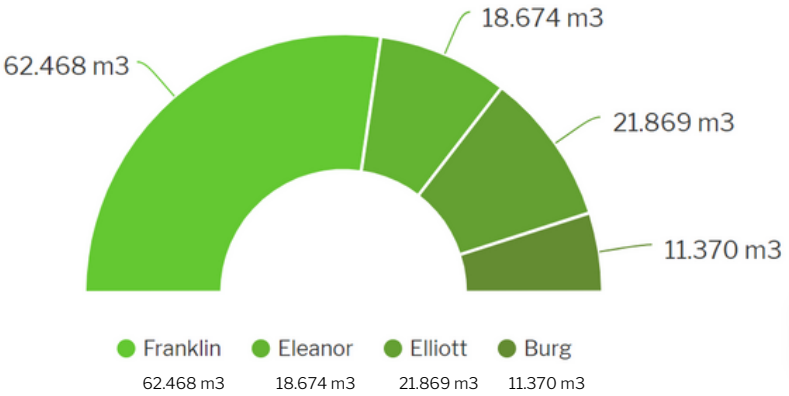

Burgerzaal shutters

ENERGY

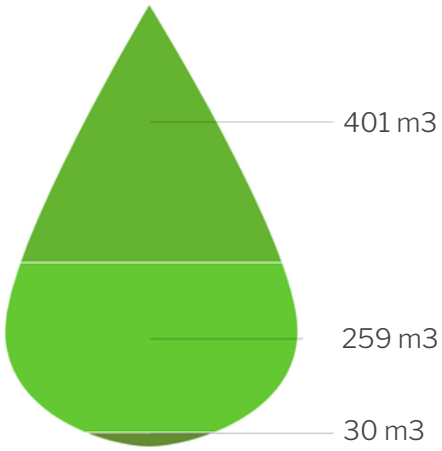
Electricity 2018



Gas 2018



Water



Franklin 259 m3

Eleanor 401 m3

Burg 30 m3

Due to a number of factors, including outdated meters and different managing companies, it was difficult to obtain electricity, gas, and water data over the same interval. While all intervals are a year in length, gas and electricity is measured from 1 January until 31 December, while water is measured from 1 May until 1 May the following year. Not all measurements are available. Efforts are underway to centralize this data, and hopefully it will be easily accessible by the publishing of the second report.
Campus location data was even more difficult to obtain, and most of it remains missing, due to different ownership.
The data available shows that in 2018, Roggeveen use 185.268 kWh in electricity, while Koestraat used 177.628 kWh. Koestraat also used 64.859 m3 in gas between 01/03/2018 and 04/03/2019. Further data is unavailable.

Possibilities

Reduction in energy consumption

- Improved insulation
- Careful monitoring of consumption, using updated systems
- Centralization of data, both for academic buildings and campus locations
- More energy efficient lighting, lending more urgency to the replacement of old fixtures with new LED lighting
- More use of natural light

Generation of renewable energy from several sources

Conducting research into the overall emissions of UCR, including:

- Heating
- Electricity
- Home-work transport
- Work-related travel
- Waste
- Materials


Earth Hour, 2018


Eleanor roof

WASTE

Academic Buildings

Currently, UCR separates paper waste, while all other materials are collected in general waste bins. Unfortunately, most classrooms do not have a paper waste basket, and so much paper still ends up with the general waste. The containers for paper and general waste each have a content capacity of roughly 2000 liters. On average, one general waste container is filled every week, while the paper container is usually about half full. This does not account for instances of large shipments of new materials, in which case the amount of paper waste increases and sometimes exceeds the limit. Food waste does not occur at a high enough rate to warrant separate collection. Whether plastic separation is beneficial in this case is not yet clear, and requires research. Printer toners, generally labelled chemical waste, are also thrown in with the general waste. There are also a number of old computers in the attic that serve no purpose. Some are so old they cannot be sold anymore, making an e-waste recycling station the only logical destination.

Elliott

Currently, Elliott has possibilities for separating glass, paper and general waste. However, waste separation is not actively encouraged, meaning that whether or not it happens depends on the volunteers on duty at any given time. In the student area there is no possibility for separation. Overall, the degree of food waste is low, as Elliott does its best not to order more than is consumed, and food is prepared to order rather than in batches beforehand.

Receptionist, making notes on used paper

'Breadlady' donation, bakery leftovers

Campus Locations

Bagijnhof

Much of the waste separation in Bagijnhof is dependent on individual houses. During the 2019 spring semester, Villex replaced all bins inside the kitchen with one fire-proof bin, meaning that residents were no longer able to separate waste unless they were to do so in their own rooms. The new campus elder has since ordered extra bins for each house so that they can separate material such as plastic again. However, there is no central collection point for this on campus, and houses that choose to separate plastic have to bring their waste to the parking lot behind Franklin. The glass container is closer by, located on the other side of the Bagijnhof field, and there are general collection points for paper and general waste located on campus. The 2019 spring semester also saw the start of a student-initiated composting project which ran successfully for almost three months in six houses. The students responsible, as well as the new campus elder, are working to continue this project on a campus-wide scale.

Roggeveenhof

Directly in front of the building, Roggeveen has containers for paper, plastic, general, and organic waste. There is also a container to the side for glass. It is still very much up to the students whether or not they separate their waste, but the facilities to do so have been provided and are easily accessible.

Bachtensteene

Bachtensteene has a communal kitchen in which plastic and general waste are separated. There used to be a bin for organic waste there as well, but this is no longer the case. The new campus elder is looking into getting this bin back. There are containers outside the building for paper, glass, and organic waste. However, the location of the organic waste container seems to be unknown to many residents.

Koestraat

Plastic, general, and organic waste can be disposed of in separate containers in front of the building. The paper bin is located in the bike shed. There is a glass container in the city center meant for Koestraat residents as well. Separation of course remains a personal choice, but all necessary facilities have been provided.

Furniture Fund, summer 2019

Moving out

Every year, roughly 150 students graduate and move out of their campus housing. Most of this happens over the summer. Many students end up leaving behind their furniture, and getting rid of a number of other items as well. At the end of each semester, a skip is placed outside every campus location in which students can deposit the waste generated by moving. However, a lot of the material that ends up in these skips is still perfectly serviceable, and could be donated to a second hand shop. This mostly seems to be an attitude issue, rather than a lack of opportunities. Aside from donating to second hand shops, there are options closer to home as well. There is a UCR Furniture Bazaar Facebook page, on which students can sell their furniture and anything else they might be getting rid of. This is a fairly effective tool, and ensures a decent level of circularity on campus. At the end of spring semesters, the Housing Affairs Council (HAC) also collects furniture and other items, which they then sell to new students the week before orientation week. This is especially helpful for new students that are just moving in around this time. The Furniture Fund is well-visited, and several items there have been sold and resold to UCR students for several semesters.


Clothing exchnage, fall 2018

Furniture Fund, summer 2019

Another issue during moving out season is clothing, although this is an issue throughout the semester as well. Many students leave clothing that they no longer want behind in laundry rooms rather than donating it. The Sustainability Committee (SusCo) has addressed this in the past few years by organizing clothing exchanges once or twice throughout the semester. Here students can donate their clothes directly and pick out new items, and items are collected from laundry rooms as well. There is also a UCR Clothing Bazaar Facebook page, but this is used less frequently than the Furniture Bazaar. The density of clothing is especially high during summer, after graduation, and particularly in Roggeveen. However, it cannot be stored until the next clothing exchange, as Villex does not allow this. For the past two years, SusCo has addressed this by getting into contact with the Clothing Bank Zeeland and asking them to collect these large batches. The clothing bank also collects rags, which they can hand in for recycling to receive money per kilo. This helps address the issue of non-usable items.

Clothing bank doantion Roggeveenhof, summer 2018

A third page, UCR Book Bazaar, mainly deals with academic textbooks, although there are occasionally regular books listed as swell. This page ensures that students can get their books at an affordable price, and other students can get some money for their old books. This of course only works as long as the same books are used for courses. As most course reading stays the same for several years, and older versions are allowed, this is not a major issue. There is still much room for improvement when it comes to circularity at UCR, but the student community has done what it can to promote it.

	Academic Buildings	Bachtensteene	Bagijnhof	Roggeveenhof	Koestraat
Chemical	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
General	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glass	○	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organic	✗	○	○	✓	✓
Paper	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plastic	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓

Possibilities

Minimizing waste

- Phase out disposable cups
  - at open days
  - at coffee machine
- Paper reduction
  - Encouraging use of digital platforms
  - Ensuring that professors can no longer make printing of assignments mandatory
  - Addressing the current paper-based archiving system and considering digital options
  - Collect paper that has only been used on one side, and use this to make notes or print again. A collection point needs to be set up for this.
- Encouraging student organizations such as RASA, Elliott, HAC & AAC to make use of reusable materials such as cups at their events
- Awareness campaigns, aimed at both students and staff, focusing on issues such as single-use items, donation possibilities, etc.
- Providing all new students with UCR doppers/Keep Cups

FOOD

Open Day catering

Events Catering

The catering at UCR is done by Mirjam de Hond from MirLove4Food. She is given considerable freedom in what she chooses to provide, and this works out in our favour. Mirjam is very conscious of the need for sustainable food, and tries to work on this as much as budget allows. More and more of Mirjam's catering is vegetarian or even vegan. She estimates that on average, about ¾ of the food she supplies is vegetarian. Soups are always vegetarian and often vegan, unless a specific request is made. Mirjam and her team try to buy local and seasonal food where possible, and also actively try to minimise the amount of leftovers from events they cater. This is done by distributing leftover dishes to whoever is around and hungry, and using leftover supplies for other catering jobs. Mirjam and her team go so far as to bring sandwich bags to UCR events so that students can take a larger amount of leftovers with them. In general, the team brings in reusable cups, glassware, plates, etc. However, because prices at larger events such as the Open Day are kept low and the amount of guests is considerable, single-use cups are used instead of reusable glassware or other cups. Visitors often use several of these cups throughout their visit. This makes the waste output for these events high. The main challenge the catering team faces is serving enough versus serving economically in order to avoid waste. Attendance is a key issue here. If Mirjam is hired to cater for 80 people but only 50 show up, a lot of food is left over. It is difficult to estimate these things in advance.

Elliott

Currently there are three non-vegetarian, three vegetarian, and one vegan sandwich options available. On average, Elliott goes through five kilos of chicken breast every week, while the numbers for salmon and bacon consumption are more varied. The food team plans to introduce a new vegan sandwich to compliment the hummus and falafel sandwiches and increase the offers for vegans. The sandwich will use tempeh as its main protein source. They also hope to continue efforts to introduce an equal number of vegan and non-vegan Sandwich of the Week (SOTW) offers.

Aside from the sandwiches, there is a fairly balanced choice in snacks between vegetarian and non-vegetarian, but there are only a few vegan options available. While sandwiches are the responsibility of the Food Team, the rest falls under the Mensa team, and the new manager has several ideas for a more sustainable Mensa. Like the Food Team, they want to introduce more vegetarian and vegan options to the menu. The Mensa also still uses non-recyclable to-go cups as well as plastic stirrers, which the new manager wants to get rid of. The team hopes to save up money to invest in more energy efficient appliances.

Possibilities

Creation of a meat-free campus, significantly reducing GHG output

- Stipulating that if someone wants meat on the menu, they will have to specifically request this
- Increasing the amount of vegetarian and vegan options at Elliott

Replacing the disposable cups currently used at large events

- Using biodegradable/compostable cups instead, or
- Ordering recycled reusable plastic cups with the UCR design on them

Students at the local market


Elliott team preparing sandwiches for orientation week

MOBILITY

15% of global GHG emissions are attributed to the transport sector

The emissions caused by air travel are highly variable. One of the best tools currently available to calculate the impact of a flight is atmosfair. They not only calculate the direct CO2 emissions of a flight, but also calculate the climate impact of other emitted pollutants and convert this to CO2.

As UCR is an international university, we travel a lot. For example, several students come to this university from Vietnam. According to atmosfair, a one-way trip causes 5.727 kg of CO2. With around 70 countries represented, as well as conference visits, this makes flight-related emssions for UCR quite high

95% of transport energy comes from petroleum-based fuels

Daily transport

Because living on campus is mandatory for UCR students, they go to school either on foot or by bicycle. Some students go to visit their parents over the weekend, but this happens by train and bus. On a daily basis, therefore, the travel-related carbon footprint of students is relatively low.

Many staff members also live nearby and go on foot or by bicycle. However, living in the area is not mandatory for staff, and there are several that live more than an hour drive away. This makes the average daily emissions of staff considerably higher, although numbers vary considerably between persons.

Possibilities

Encouragement of a reduction in air travel related to work and/or study at UCR, by:

- Publishing a report on current mileage by plane, after which a publication will be made concerning the rate of pollution this amounts to,
- Encouraging use of public transport rather than air travel or car use,
- Requiring train travel to conferences within a certain radius
- Working toward a reduction in non-essential international flights, replaced instead by elements such as conference calls. This will require the set-up of a space where conference calls can be made without interference,
- Requiring that if a professor wants to fly to a distant conference, they must explain why it is necessary they attend, and why options such as video conferencing will not work,
- Funding of initiatives such as tree planting projects, proportional to current mileage
    - Making Ecosia the default search engine [2]

Encouraging more sustainable forms of daily (work-related) transport

- Publishing a report on current mileage by car, after which a publication will be made concerning the rate of pollution this amounts to,
- Providing information and raising awareness about sustainable alternatives
- Encouraging initiatives such as car sharing among staff and faculty,


next to Theordore


behind Eleanor


behind Eleanor

[2] Over 80% of Ecosia's revenue goes toward global tree planting projects, that simultaneously provide locals with jobs.

GREEN OFFICE

In its new capacity as primary agent regarding matters of sustainability at UCR, the Eleanor Green Office hopes to address many of the issues raised in this report. This will be done not just in the form of practical changes or community engagement, but also through continued research that can be woven into the curriculum of the students that are part of the GO. In order for this to be successful, the Green Office must be provided with the necessary resources and support. More about the plans of the Eleanor GO can be found in the business proposal, presented in front of the Board of Directors and big student boards on 17 May 2019. In the Green Office business proposal, a comprehensive strategy is outlined as to how to tackle issues of sustainability at UCR. Should UCR choose to improve its state of sustainability, there is still a long way to go, but the GO can play an instrumental role in this. This report is simply the first step.

Transparency

In order to make the effort to better the state of sustainability at UCR accessible to all students, staff, and faculty, all attempts and measures must be made transparent. This includes transparency of:

- Individual efforts, such as student projects and initiatives
- All decisions made regarding the issue

Decisions, measures, and other progress must be included in an annual report published on the UCR website. For this publication, and other related publications and news items, a sustainability tab must be established on the UCR website, creating a central portal.

Measures

A more specific action plan must be made, spanning between one and five years. This plan must include:

- A concrete list of measures to be implemented over a set period of time
- A timeline of implementation
- The costs of planned measures
- An overview of the goals and expectations following implementation, as well as a clarification of how these measures contribute to the sustainability goals that UCR has set for itself

This set of measures must be agreed upon by the Board of Directors and management, who will consult the Eleanor Green Office regarding these decisions. Alternatively, should the Board decide to pass authority on these issues over to the Green Office, the GO will compose a list of measures in consult with management, which will then be approved or disapproved by the Board.

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