STARS Rating Improvement Areas

Academics

➢ **AC-1: Academic Courses**

This credit recognizes institutions that offer sustainability course content across the curriculum. Sustainability courses can provide a valuable grounding in the concepts and principles of sustainability, help build knowledge about a component of sustainability, or introduce students to sustainability concepts. Institutions that integrate sustainability concepts throughout the curriculum prepare students to apply sustainability principles in their professional fields. Having sustainability courses and content offered by numerous departments helps ensure that the institution's approach to sustainability education is comprehensive and includes diverse topics. This will help students develop a broad understanding of the field. Likewise, offering sustainability course content in numerous departments can increase student exposure to sustainability topics and themes.

The University scored 4.91 points of the available 14 possible points. The possible ways of gaining more points for the credit are by answering these questions.

- How can we implement the sustainability-focused courses and sustainability-inclusive courses at the graduate level?
- Is it possible to expand the academic departments with sustainability course offerings for both undergraduate and graduate students?

➢ **AC-4: Graduate Program**

This credit recognizes institutions that have formal, graduate academic degree programs focused on sustainability. Developing such programs signals an institution's commitment to sustainability. Formal academic programs focused on sustainability provide a path for students to study sustainability topics in-depth, thus better preparing them to address sustainability challenges. Formal academic programs also provide a home for sustainability scholars within the institution.

No points were earned for this credit of the possible 3 points.

- Is the university capable of offering any major, minor, degree, or equivalent programs for graduate students?

➢ **AC-6: Sustainability Literacy Assessment**

This credit recognizes institutions that are assessing the sustainability literacy of their students. Such an assessment helps institutions evaluate the success of their sustainability education initiatives and develop insight into how these initiatives could be improved.

We earned only 1-point from the possible 4 points through this credit. The hurdles we are facing in earning complete points in this credit involves the following questions:

- Can we conduct the assessment of Sustainability with the entire student body or, at minimum, to the university's predominant student body (e.g., all undergraduate students) rather than from a subset or sample of students (e.g., students enrolled in a sustainability program)?
- Can the assessment be administered as a standalone evaluation without a followup assessment instead of a pre- and post-assessment to the same cohort of students?

Research

➢ **AC-11: Open Access to Research**

This credit recognizes institutions that have repository programs and policies in place to facilitate open access to new peer-reviewed research and scholarship. Institutions that empower academics to distribute their scholarly writings freely help stimulate learning and innovation, and facilitate the translation of this knowledge into public benefits that advance sustainability.

The university scored 1.33 points out of 2.00. Full points can be scored further by addressing the question below.

- How can the institute have a published policy that requires its employees to publish scholarly works open access or archive final post-peer reviewed versions of scholarly works in an open access repository?
- Can the institute provide an open access article processing charge (APC) fund for employees that includes specified criteria and an application process?

Campus Engagement

➢ EN-1: Student Educators Program

This credit recognizes institutions with programs that engage students to serve as educators in peer-to-peer sustainability outreach. Such initiatives, sometimes known as Eco-Reps programs, help disseminate sustainability concepts and a sustainability ethic throughout the campus community. Also, serving as an educator is a valuable learning experience for students that can deepen their understanding of sustainability while developing their outreach and education skills.

Only 1.26 points are earned by the campus of the available 4.00 points. Though we have good student educators programs on campus,
- Can we broaden the scope by serving more students with the peer-to-peer sustainability outreach and education program?
- Can we hire more student educators who work at least one hour annually for each student served by the peer-to-peer educator's program?

➢ EN-2: Student Orientation

This credit recognizes institutions that include sustainability in orientation activities and programming. Including sustainability in student orientation demonstrates that sustainability is an institutional goal and encourages students to adopt sustainable habits in their new school environments. Orientation sets the tone for the campus experience.

The campus scored 1.70 points of the available 2.00 points. Entering graduate students should also be provided with an orientation, including sustainability, to increase our percentage to 100%. Though first-year and transfer students are provided with an orientation, no appropriate documentation or agenda exists explaining the sustainability activities. We need to improve and highlight this issue with the responsible person.

➢ EN-3: Student Life

This credit recognizes institutions that have co-curricular programs and initiatives that contribute to students learning about sustainability outside of the formal classroom. These programs and initiatives engage students by integrating sustainability into their lives, experiential learning experiences, and campus culture.

We scored full points for the credit, but two main sub-categories need to be identified and worked on by campus to bring more awareness on sustainability among students.
- **Sustainable investment and finance:** The institution doesn't have a sustainable investment fund, green revolving fund, or sustainable microfinance initiative through which students can develop socially, environmentally, and fiscally responsible investment and financial skills.
- **Graduation pledge:** SSU doesn't have a graduation pledge through which students pledge to consider social and environmental responsibility in future jobs and other decisions.

➢ EN-4: Outreach Materials and Publications

This credit recognizes institutions that produce outreach materials and publications that enhance student learning about sustainability outside of the formal classroom.

The university scored 1.60 points of the possible 2.00 points. The remaining points can be achieved by having a sustainability walking map or tour for students that fosters sustainability learning and knowledge. Although the recreation center has signages highlighting the sustainability features within the building, we need to make progress in highlighting the features all over the campus.

➢ EN-7: Employee Educators Program

This credit recognizes institutions that coordinate programs in which employees educate and mobilize their peers around sustainability initiatives and programs. Engaging employees in peer educator roles can help disseminate sustainability messages more widely and encourage broader participation in sustainability initiatives.

The University scored 2.06 points out of 3.00.
- How can we increase the total number of employees served by a peer-to-peer sustainability outreach and education program?

> ➤ **EN-8: Employee Orientation**

This credit recognizes institutions that address sustainability issues during new employee orientation. Including sustainability in new employee orientation, helps establish sustainability as an institutional priority and part of the campus culture. Providing information and tools about the institution's sustainability programs and options at the time when an employee is getting acquainted with his or her new employer and developing new work routines and habits can help encourage the adoption of environmentally and socially preferable habits, routines, and choices.

The university attained full points for this credit, but there is no proper documentation of presentation to prove that we communicate the sustainability goals and initiations on campus to the new employees.

> ➤ **EN-9: Staff Professional Development and Training**

This credit recognizes institutions that ensure that staff members have the opportunity to participate in professional development and training opportunities in sustainability. By offering and supporting professional development and training opportunities in sustainability to all staff members, an institution helps equip its staff to implement sustainable practices and systems and to model sustainable behavior for students and the rest of the campus community.

The university scored 1.25 points of the possible 2.00 points. For now, this credit only involves the training that is offered to the sustainability team but has to involve all non-academic staff.
- How can we develop such training programs that involve all the non-academic staff?

Public Engagement

> ➤ **EN-11: Inter-Campus Collaboration**

This credit recognizes institutions that collaborate with other colleges or universities to help build campus sustainability broadly. Institutions can make significant contributions to sustainability by sharing their experiences and expertise with other colleges and universities. Sharing best practices and lessons learned can help other institutions realize efficiencies that accelerate the movement to sustainability.

University scored 2.50 out of the 3.00 possible points. Two potential scoring areas are:
- Submitting a case study to an external higher education sustainability resource center or award program and,
- Serving as peer reviewers of another institution's sustainability data or STARS submission. **Working with other fellow CSU campuses on this. We are open to peer review their STARS report whenever they are ready to upload the new version.**

> ➤ **EN-12: Continuing Education**

This credit recognizes institutions that provide continuing education courses and programs in sustainability to the community. Such courses train community members in sustainability topics and help build knowledge about the subject. They can also provide the training people need to obtain and perform green jobs. Certificate programs offer professional recognition for sustainability training and are important tools in helping students obtain, perform, and advance their position in green jobs.

The possible points for this credit are 5.00, and the university hasn't scored any points.
- How can the university implement continuing education courses or sustainability-focused certificate programs on campus?

> ➤ **EN-13: Community Service**

This credit recognizes institutions that engage their students and employees in community service. Volunteerism and the sense of compassion that community services help develop are fundamental to achieving sustainability. From tutoring children to removing invasive species to volunteering at a food bank, students and employees can make tangible contributions that address sustainability challenges through community service. In addition, community engagement can help students develop leadership skills while deepening their understandings of practical, real-world problems.

The university has achieved 2.78 of the possible 5.00 points.
- How can we encourage more students and faculty to engage in community service to achieve full points and also track their service hours?

➤ **EN-14: Participation in Public Policy**

This credit recognizes institutions that promote sustainability through public policy advocacy. There are myriad public policies for which institutions can advocate that address sustainability, including policies specific to higher education. Given the prominence and importance of colleges and universities in their communities, institutions can be powerful voices in advancing sustainability through legislation and policy.

We scored 1.33 out of the possible 2.00 points.
- Is the university aware of or have connections with any organizations which advocate public policies that support campus sustainability at national and international levels?

➤ **EN-15: Trademark Licensing**

This credit recognizes institutions that join a monitoring and verification organization to help ensure that apparel bearing the institution's name is produced under fair conditions. By ensuring that apparel bearing the institution's logo is made under fair working conditions, institutions promote health, safety, and secure livelihoods for domestic and global workers.

Though the university scored full points for this credit, it is not a member of the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC).
- Can the university register and qualify to be a member of the Worker Rights Consortium?

Operations

➤ **OP-2: Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

This credit recognizes institutions that have reduced their adjusted net Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The university only scored 3.88 points of the possible 8 points.
- How can we increase the percentage reductions in adjusted net Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions per weighted campus user?

➤ **OP-3: Building Design and Construction**

This credit recognizes institutions that have incorporated environmental features into their design and construction projects. Decisions made during the design phase, such as where to locate the building and how it is oriented, can yield significant energy savings and reduce impacts on the site. By designing and building for enhanced indoor environmental quality, institutions can ensure their buildings provide safe, healthy, and productive spaces for the campus community. While other credits also capture many of the impacts of green buildings (e.g., on-campus energy consumption and water use), this credit recognizes institutions that have comprehensive green construction and renovation programs and that pursue third-party certification for new campus buildings.

The university scored only 1.25 points of the possible 3.00. As per the California State University system, newly constructed and renovated buildings on campus are designed and built in accordance with multi-attribute green building code, policy, guideline, or rating system, i.e., LEED Silver equivalent but not certified.
- How can the university concentrate on certifying/verifying the academic buildings under a green building rating system?

➤ **OP-4: Building Operations and Maintenance**

This credit recognizes institutions that operate and maintain their buildings in ways that protect the health of building occupants and the environment. An institution's existing building stock is typically the largest source of campus energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. By adopting and following a sustainable operations and maintenance framework, institutions can conserve energy and water, minimize impacts on the surrounding site, reduce waste and water consumption, promote indoor environmental quality, and support markets for environmentally preferable materials while providing healthy and productive work, learning, and living spaces. While other credits also capture many of the impacts of green buildings (e.g., on-campus energy consumption and water use), this credit specifically recognizes institutions that have comprehensive sustainable operations and maintenance programs and that pursue third-party certification for those programs.

The possible points for this credit are "5," and the university hasn't scored any points.
- How can the university initiate the existing academic building spaces to be operated and maintained in accordance with a sustainable management policy/program?

➢ OP-5: Building Energy Efficiency

This credit recognizes institutions that are improving the energy efficiency of their buildings.

The university scored only 2.39 of the possible 6.00 points.
- How can we reduce the total site energy consumption per unit of EUI-adjusted floor area per degree day?
- How can we increase the percentage of reduction in total source energy consumption per unit of floor area?

Site Energy: Site energy is the energy which is consumed at the final destination of the power generation cycle, and to simplify, is the amount of energy shown on a utility bill. The site energy for a building is all of the energy used in the building - plug loads, lighting loads, all equipment power (gas, electric, etc.) - as calculated by meters on site.

Source Energy: Source energy includes the site energy plus all of the energy used to provide and distribute the site energy. As stated before, it includes the entire chain of energy, so it is often called Total Energy.
Source energy is subdivided into two major components: primary energy and secondary energy. **Primary energy** is the raw material that is consumed to create the power that is then distributed to consumers. The power that enters the distribution system is known as **secondary energy** – it is the energy that results from the transformation of the primary energy. Examples of primary energy are coal, natural gas, and wood, while examples of secondary energy are electricity and steam.

➢ OP-6: Clean and Renewable Energy

This credit recognizes institutions that support the development and use of energy from clean and renewable sources.

The university scored only 0.48 of the possible 4 points. The criteria to earn full points should be concentrated on the below questions:
- How can we shift to 100% on-site renewables and green power?
- How can we shift to clean and renewable fuels/sources to generate or import thermal energy?
- Can the institute afford to purchase Renewable Energy Credits (REC)s/Guarantees of Origin (GO)s/I-RECs?

The university buys its energy from Shell, where only 33% of it is generated from clean and renewable sources, and the on-site renewable energy production is also less. We need to increase our source of energy generation from renewables rather than from fossil fuels.

➢ OP-7: Food and Beverage Purchasing

This credit recognizes institutions that are supporting sustainable food systems through their food and beverage purchases. Institutions can do this by prioritizing the purchase of plant-based and sustainably or ethically produced food and beverage items. These actions reduce the social and environmental impacts of food production and help foster food security, improved conditions for farmworkers, healthier soils and waterways, and secure livelihoods for farmers.

The university scored only 0.65 points of the possible 6.00 credits. To score the maximum possible points, the university should target the below questions.
- How can we increase the percentage of total annual food and beverage expenditures on products that are sustainably or ethically produced?
- How can the institute increase the percentage of total annual food and beverage expenditures on plant-based foods?

➢ OP-8: Sustainable Dining

This credit recognizes institutions that are supporting sustainable food systems and minimizing the impacts of their dining service operations. An institution can operate its dining services sustainably by preventing food waste and diverting food materials from the waste stream by making low impact dining options available and by engaging service providers, customers, and the broader community around sustainability issues.

The University scored 1.60 out of possible 2.00 points. The remaining possible points can be achieved by focusing on the below questions.
- How can we include local community engagement?
- Can we have sustainability-themed outlets?
- Can we incorporate low-impact dining options?

➢ OP-9: Landscape Management

This credit recognizes institutions that manage their grounds sustainably. Sustainable landscape management integrates economic, social, and ecological considerations to meet human needs and maintain healthy ecosystems.

University scored only 0.02 of the possible 2.00 points for this credit.
- How can shift the campus ground area management from using conventional, chemical-based landscape management practices and in accordance to an IPM program?

➢ OP-12: Electronics Purchasing

This credit recognizes institutions that are supporting markets for environmentally preferable computers and other electronic products.

The maximum possible points for the credit are "1," and the university did not score any as we don't have any electronic purchasing records. In order to earn points for this credit,
- Can the institute purchase and start tracking the electronic products that are EPEAT registered (or) third-party certified under a multi-attribute sustainability standard (or) labeled under a single-attribute standard for electrical equipment (e.g., ENERGY STAR, EU Energy A or higher, or local equivalent)?

➢ OP-13: Cleaning and Janitorial Purchasing

The university scored 0.79 out of 1.00 possible points.
- How can we increase the annual expenditures on certified green cleaning products rather than inorganic cleaning products?

➢ OP-14: Office Paper Purchasing

This credit recognizes institutions that purchase recycled-content and third-party certified office paper. By supporting markets for environmentally preferable paper, institutions contribute to the conservation of water, energy, and virgin forest.

The University earned only 0.18 out of 1.00 points.
- Can the university afford to purchase greater quantities of office paper that contains 90-100 percent post-consumer recycled and agricultural residue content or is FSC Recycled or FSC 100% labeled rather than the lower percent post-consumer recycled paper?

➢ OP-16: Commute Modal Split

This credit recognizes institutions where students and employees use alternatives to conventional single-occupancy vehicles to travel to and from the institution. Commute modal split is a common measure used to evaluate the sustainability performance of a transportation system. Using more sustainable modes of transport helps reduce local air pollution, traffic congestion, and GHG emissions, as well as helping to facilitate more sustainable land use patterns. Walking and cycling offer health benefits, as well.

The university scored 1.67 of the possible 5.00 points.
- How can we increase the percentage of student/employee use of more sustainable commuting options as their primary mode of transportation?

➢ OP-17: Support for Sustainable Transportation

This credit recognizes institutions that support active transportation and more sustainable commuting options for its students and employees in ways that may not be reflected in its commute modal split. Encouraging more sustainable modes of transportation, and offering programs to reduce commuting helps decrease local air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The university scored only 0.40 of the possible 1.00 point. The focus should be given on the below-mentioned questions to increase the credit score for sustainable transportation.
- Does the institution have a bicycle-sharing program or participate in a local bicycle-sharing program?
- Does the university offer preferential parking or other incentives for fuel-efficient vehicles?
- Does the institution have any incentives or programs to encourage employees to live close to campus?

➢ OP-18: Waste Minimization and Diversion

This credit recognizes institutions that are minimizing their production of waste, diverting materials from landfills and incinerators, and conserving resources by recycling and composting.

The university scored 3.56 out of the possible 8.00 points. To earn the remaining possible points, focus should be given to the below questions.

- What strategies can be implemented on campus to reduce the total waste generation by more than 50 percent?
- Can we divert 100 percent of waste from landfill or incinerator through recycling, composting, donating or reselling or atleast divert 90 percent of waste from the landfill or incinerator and disposing of the remaining residual materials through post-recycling conversion?

➢ OP-21: Water Use

This credit recognizes institutions that have reduced water use. By reducing campus water withdrawal, institutions can reduce pressures on local aquifers, streams, rivers, lakes, and aquatic wildlife.

The university scored only 0.38 out of the possible 4.00 points. To earn the remaining possible points, focus should be given to the below questions.

- How can we reduce the campus annual potable water use per weighted campus user?
- How can we reduce the total annual water use (potable + non-potable) per hectare or acre of vegetated grounds?

Planning & Administration

➢ PA-2: Sustainability Planning

This credit recognizes institutions that have developed comprehensive plans to move toward sustainability. Sustainability planning affords an institution the opportunity to clarify its vision of a sustainable future and provides a roadmap to help guide decision-making. Establishing measurable goals and objectives allows an institution to track its future progress, identify and document its successes, and manage the levels of resources devoted to (and required for) the attainment of its sustainability goals. Including sustainability at a high level in the institution's strategic plan and other guiding documents also signals an institution's commitment to sustainability and may help infuse an ethic of environmental, fiscal and social responsibility throughout the campus community.

The university scored 3.50 out of 4.00 possible points.

- Can the institution's Administration department develop and publish a plan or plans that include measurable sustainability objectives that address diversity, equity, and inclusion; sustainable investment/finance; or wellbeing?

➢ PA-3: Inclusive and Participatory Governance

This credit recognizes institutions that engage campus and community stakeholders in the ongoing governance of the college or university. Governance includes a variety of organizational functions and decision-making processes, from financial oversight and personnel management to goal-setting and strategic planning. Sustainability requires inclusive and participatory processes and structures that empower stakeholder groups to come together and work collaboratively to address sustainability challenges through access to and involvement in institutional governance. Without transformed governance structures, many sustainability gains cannot be realized.

University earned 2.00 points of the possible 3.00.

- Can we include the students representing their peers as official members of the institution's highest governing body?
- How can the institution host or support one or more formal bodies through which external stakeholders have a regular voice in institutional decisions that affect them?

➢ PA-5: Diversity and Equity Coordination

This credit recognizes institutions with active committees, offices, or officers charged by the administration or governing body to coordinate diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights work on campus. Diversity and equity coordination increases the ability of an institution to more effectively address these issues.

The university scored 1.56 out of 2.00 possible points.

- How can we involve all the students, academic staff, and non-academic staff to participate in cultural competence, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and/or social inclusion training and activities?

➢ PA-8: Affordability and Access

This credit recognizes institutions that are affordable to low-income students. Achieving a post-secondary degree is a valuable tool in addressing inequity, but for higher education to help society move toward greater equity, schools must be accessible to low-income populations.

The university scored 2.48 out of the possible 4.00 points. For the university to move forward with this credit, the below crucial questions must be answered:
- Can we increase the percentage of need met, who was awarded the need-based aid?
- How can we increase the percentage of students graduating without student loan debts?
- How can we encourage the students with low-income to enroll for higher studies?
- How can we increase the success rate of graduation for these low-income students?

➢ PA-9: Committee on Investor Responsibility

This credit recognizes institutions with an established and active committee on investor responsibility(CIR) with multi-stakeholder representation. Establishing a CIR provides a structure for fostering dialogue on investment decisions, and can help campuses make responsible investment decisions that promote sustainability. Drawing CIR membership from multiple sectors of the campus community provides educational experiences for involved students, employees, and alumni. In addition, a multi-stakeholder CIR is consistent with the sustainability principle of shared governance.

The university did not score any of the possible 2.00 points.
- Is the institution willing to formally establish an active committee on investor responsibility (CIR) or equivalent body?
- Does the institution what to include academic staff, non-academic staff, and student representatives in the committee?

➢ PA-10: Sustainable Investment

This credit recognizes institutions that use their investment power to promote sustainability. There are a variety of approaches an institution can take toward sustainable investment, including making positive investments that promote sustainability and engaging with companies in which they already hold investments. Positive investing supports socially and environmentally responsible practices and the development of sustainable products and services. Active investor engagement can help align an institution's investments with its values, protect the institution from the financial consequences of fines, lawsuits, customer boycotts and damages to a company's reputation that may result from unsustainable corporate behavior, and improve the sustainability performance of the businesses it invests in.

The university has not scored any of the possible 3 points for this credit. By incorporating and initiating the below-mentioned questions, we can take steps in promoting sustainability in the investment department.
- Can the institution invest in sustainable industries, community development financial institutions, or sustainability investment funds?
- How can the institution have a publicly available sustainable investment policy?
- How can the institute engage in proxy voting, either by its CIR or other committees, or through the use of guidelines to promote sustainability?
- How can the institute engage with corporations to address their sustainability issues that hold the investments?
- Can the institute participate in a public divestment effort and have a publicly available investment policy with negative screens?

➢ PA-15: Workplace Health and Safety

This credit recognizes institutions that help ensure the health and safety of their employees. Institutions that work to minimize workplace injuries and occupational disease cases help ensure that all employees enjoy a safe working environment and a socially responsible workplace.

The university scored only 0.26 points of the possible 2 points. The questions to consider to achieve more for this credit are:
- How can the institution use a nationally or internationally recognized OHSMS standards and guidelines?
- How can the institution reduce work-related injury or ill health per 100 full-time equivalent employees?