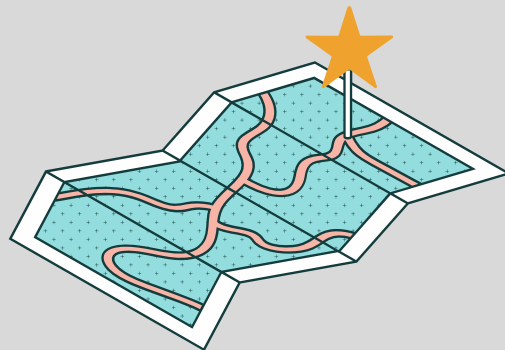




STARS 2024 Roadmap

Focus Areas for a Gold Rating



Prepared by:
Eva Rocke and Sam Gilbertson
Office of Sustainability
University of Montana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	<u>Page 3</u>
UM PRIORITIES FOR ACTION	<u>Page 4</u>
STARS CATEGORIES	
ACADEMICS (AC)	<u>Page 5</u>
ENGAGEMENT (EN)	<u>Page 6</u>
OPERATIONS (OP)	<u>Page 7</u>
PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION (PA)	<u>Page 11</u>
CONCLUSION	<u>Page 13</u>
APPENDIX A	<u>Page 14</u>

Introduction

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education. In the University of Montana's 2017 submission, the school received 42.13 points, a Bronze rating. In our most recent submission, completed in June 2021, the university received 60.89 points, a 44% increase and a Silver rating. Our STARS submission is [publicly available](#). In order to improve its score in the STARS framework and receive a Gold rating, the University must earn at least 65 points on its 2024 submission, only a 4 point increase. We believe this is an attainable goal and have identified specific strategies that will earn UM those additional points.

By prioritizing the necessary work to earn a Gold rating, the university shows a commitment to sustainability that is marketable to prospective students, staff, and faculty. Second, by focusing on key metrics that improve the university's score, we can make small changes that have very real impacts on the university's footprint.

Beyond its utility as a marketing tool, the STARS process is most valuable when used as a vehicle for stakeholder engagement. On October 8th, 2021, the Office of Sustainability brought together university staff from three different areas: Campus Dining, Facilities Services, and representatives from across campus who are currently working to address diversity & inclusion more fully. After an initial discussion of the importance of STARS and our scores, we broke into discussion groups based on sustainability topic. With a facilitator, each team was tasked with reviewing the STARS credits applicable to their group and identifying next steps that will earn UM additional points within the STARS credits related to their areas of expertise. See [Appendix A](#) for a list of those in attendance.

STARS credits are organized into 4 umbrella categories: Academics/Research, Engagement, Operations, and Planning and Administration. This report identifies some of the areas the university should focus on over the next three years to improve its score and, more importantly, take further steps toward becoming a more environmentally and socially responsible state institution. These recommendations include actions discussed at the October 8th stakeholder engagement event. We recommend a similar event be held again in the Summer to review goals for next year. Additionally, this report identifies how these STARS credits align with the University of Montana [Priorities for Action](#).

UM Priorities For Action

PRIORITY 1:

Place student success at the center of all we do

PRIORITY 2:

Drive excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research

PRIORITY 3:

Embody the principle of "Mission First, People Always"

PRIORITY 4:

Partner with place

PRIORITY 5:

Proudly tell the UM story

STARS CREDITS

- AC-1: Academic Courses 1 2
- EN-6: Assessing Sustainability Culture 1 2 3
- OP-2: Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2 4
- OP-7: Food and Beverage Purchasing 3 4
- OP-11: Sustainable Procurement 3 4
- OP-19: C & D Waste Diversion 3 4
- PA-6: Assessing Diversity and Equity 1 3 5
- PA-9: Committee on Investor Responsibility 3 5

Academics (AC)

Curriculum

Credit Focus:

AC-1: Academic Courses

Credit Description: This credit recognizes institutions that offer sustainability course content across the curriculum. Points are earned based on the percentage of academic courses offered that are sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive.

2021 SCORE:
6.7 / 14

2024 GOAL:
8.5 / 14

Recommendation: The university should continue to increase and formally track the number of sustainability-focused course options on campus. In addition, steps should be taken to make it easier to identify sustainability related course offerings in the course catalog or in Cyberbear, the university's registration system.

Explanation: UM has done well increasing its sustainability course offerings. In fact, a new undergraduate major on campus, Environmental Science and Sustainability, is the fastest-growing major at UM. Additionally, the Sustainability Campus Committee (SCC) and Experiential Learning and Career Success (ELCS) are committed to increasing the sustainability focus in classrooms. We expect our next STARS report will reflect these efforts and show an increased proportion of sustainability offerings.

Still, even with these increased offerings, it does not help us in our reporting process if these courses are difficult to identify and subsequently document. In our 2021 submission, the process of identifying sustainability-focused course offerings was very time-consuming. If professors and course administrators commit to including *sustainability* as a keyword in the course descriptions or title, it will make it easier for future STARS reporters to identify the proportion of sustainability offerings.

Engagement (EN)

Campus Engagement

Credit Focus:

EN-6: Assessing Sustainability Culture

Credit Description: This credit recognizes institutions that are assessing the sustainability culture of the campus community. An institution earns the maximum of 1 point available for this credit by administering a longitudinal assessment to the entire campus community or a representative sample.

2021 SCORE:
.25 / 1.0

2024 GOAL:
1.0 / 1.0

Recommendation: UM Sustainability, with assistance from Diversity Advisory Council and Environmental Studies students, should conduct another sustainability culture assessment, in Spring of 2022 and again in Spring of 2023. An analysis of these results should be made publicly available on the UM website.

Explanation: While UM conducted a sustainability culture survey in 2018, our university lost points in STARS for not conducting a survey that measured change over time. STARS specifically asks for surveys with one or more follow-up assessments administered to the same cohort or representative samples of the same population. We also lost points for not having the summary of this survey publicly available online. Receiving full point value for this credit is an attainable goal. This sustainability culture assessment would also serve to provide interesting information for university faculty and students.

Operations (OP)

Air & Climate

Credit Focus:

OP-2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Credit Description: This credit recognizes institutions that have reduced their adjusted net Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Points are awarded for demonstrated reductions comparing a baseline year to a performance year.

2021 SCORE:
3.2 / 8.0

2024 GOAL:
5.0 / 8.0

Recommendation: The Office of Sustainability should encourage staff to engage in more frequent and, where possible, automated data collection related to travel and energy costs to be implemented in the next GHG inventory process.

Explanation: With Combined Heat and Power (CHP) coming online in early 2023, we will see a 30% reduction in scopes 1 and 2 emissions from our 2018 baseline levels. This should lead to a higher score as the performance year in our next submission will have lower overall emissions than the baseline year. Still, as has been emphasized elsewhere in this report, that change will only be documented with consistent and accurate data collection.

Specifically, collecting accurate energy use data for Missoula's satellite properties (Bandy Ranch, Lubrecht) was difficult and not standardized. Additionally, collecting bus miles traveled by athletic teams was not possible as this information is not currently collected.

To address travel, UM Sustainability should recommend all athletic travel purchases include the mileage traveled for each trip, which is reported already by the bus company. To standardize energy use data collection, UM Sustainability could develop a set of energy expense data templates, and ask that they be filled and submitted annually. By increasing the frequency of data collection and simplifying where possible, the next GHG inventory will be a smoother process, leading to more accurate results. As a result, our next inventory will more fully demonstrate energy conservation efforts made by the University.

Operations (OP)

Food & Dining

Credit Focus:

OP-7 Food and Beverage Purchasing

Credit Description: 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.

2021 SCORE:
1.6 / 6.0

2024 GOAL:
3.0 / 6.0

Recommendation: The UM Dining team should enlist the help of a student intern in conducting a company-by-company vendor analysis to identify opportunities to purchase more organic and locally-sourced food.

Explanation: The process of contacting each vendor and asking questions about their process and ingredients can have multiple impacts. First, just by having these conversations and asking tough questions, the Dining team encourages these vendors to think about the sustainability of their products and operations. Second, this research could produce valuable information that would inform future purchasing. Third, this vendor surveying offers a project or internship opportunity for an interested student, thus fulfilling another opportunity for stakeholder engagement.

The university has no shortage of skilled students who are interested in sustainable food systems. In evaluating purchasing, focusing on a few items that could be purchased locally in bulk (oats, eggs, legumes) could also make a big difference.

Operations (OP)

Purchasing

Credit Focus:

OP-11 Sustainable Procurement

Credit Description: This credit recognizes institutions that apply sustainability criteria when making procurement decisions. Institutions should have written policies, guidelines, or directives that seek to support sustainable purchasing across multiple commodity categories, institution wide.

2021 SCORE:
1.25 / 3.0

2024 GOAL:
2.0 / 3.0

Recommendation: The Purchasing team, with assistance from UM Sustainability, should research and develop specific purchasing guidelines to encourage the purchase of post-consumer recycled or bio-based content, carbon neutral products, or to otherwise minimize the negative environmental impacts of products and services. The university should also explore employing Life Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA) when evaluating energy- and water-using products and systems.

Explanation: By adopting actionable purchasing guidelines to evaluate vendors and products, the university could score STARS points while making more environmentally friendly purchases. In its current Code of Conduct for Vendors, UM encourages purchases from businesses engaged in sustainable practices. It is commendable that the university has written language addressing environmental awareness into the Code of Conduct. Still, there is an opportunity here to be more specific in purchasing guidelines. There is no language addressing LCCA, a powerful tool for evaluating the sustainability of purchases.

Examples from other universities can serve as guidelines. Examples of these specific actions include asking vendors to direct UM staff to their more sustainable products lines. Most vendors offer products with environmentally and socially responsible attributes, but we haven't historically asked for those items to be included amongst our options. Our choices have been driven more by cost, color, and durability. We can write and implement design guidelines that speak to this priority as well.

Operations (OP)

Waste

Credit Focus:

OP-19 Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion

Credit Description: This credit recognizes institutions that have diverted construction and demolition (C&D) wastes. An institution earns the maximum of 1 point available for this credit by diverting all its non-hazardous construction and demolition waste from the landfill or incinerator in a one-year period. Incremental points are awarded based on the percentage of waste that is recovered.

2021 SCORE:
.63 / 1.0

2024 GOAL:
1.0 / 1.0

Recommendation: Facilities employees should begin asking contractors to track and report their landfilled waste for all projects. While we may only make a marginal improvement in terms of STARS points, this action represents a considerable step towards accurate waste tracking. Once this step becomes normalized, we could then begin to ask that more waste is diverted from the landfill.

Explanation: With future projects, employees should start asking contractors to track and report their landfilled waste for all projects. This would apply to all construction projects, not just those seeking LEED certification. This is something contractors already receive tickets for at the landfill. Pacific Steel and Axmen, two UM general contractors, both weigh items that are delivered to their facilities, but not Home Resource, a local business that receives donated materials from our contractors. Home Resource does not currently quantify that donated amount, so this is a challenge in tracking that total amount of diverted waste.

If we are able to get consistent weights for construction and demo landfilled waste in our first year of addressing this credit, that would be a big step forward. This would include working with Home Resource to determine the weight of our waste. The next step would be to include language in our contracts that requests contractors sort and divert as much waste as possible so that we can begin to track those numbers as well.

Planning and Administration (PA)

Diversity & Affordability

Credit Focus

PA-6 Assessing Diversity and Equity

Credit Description: This credit recognizes institutions that systematically assess diversity and equity on campus. Reporting universities must demonstrate over the previous 3 years that the campus has engaged in an assessment process to improve diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

2021 SCORE:
0 / 1.0

2024 GOAL:
1.0 / 1.0

Recommendation: The Diversity Advisory Council should conduct a campus-wide diversity and equity assessment in 2022. Subsequently, they should make an analysis of the results publicly available.

Explanation: An assessment of diversity and equity on campus can provide information on opportunities for enriching the lives of our students, particularly those from underrepresented populations. The university did not have an applicable survey conducted in time for the June 2021 submission, so we did not pursue this credit.

As of December 2021, several campus diversity assessments are currently being distributed by the Diversity Advisory Council. Those assessments include graduation rates, retention and enrollment at programmatic level as well as well as university level. DAC is advocating for these results to be published on Diversity website. UM Sustainability should follow up with DAC in early 2022 to see if there are opportunities to assist them in this effort.

Planning and Administration (PA)

Investment & Finance

Credit Focus

PA-9 Committee on Investor Responsibility

Credit Description: PA-9 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.

2021 SCORE:
0 / 2.0

2024 GOAL:
2.0 / 2.0

Recommendation: The UM Foundation should develop a Committee on Investor Responsibility (CIR), engaging stakeholders in the investment decision making process. While partial divestment should be a long-term goal, this is an intermediate step the Foundation could take that would have an impact on investment transparency while raising our overall score. These points are also not contingent upon the UMF changing its investment strategy in any way.

Explanation: Sustainable finance is a growing category of interest for stakeholders and an increasingly relevant lever for addressing climate change. Universities across the US, including Harvard, the University of Minnesota, Colorado State University, and others have begun to divest from fossil fuels.

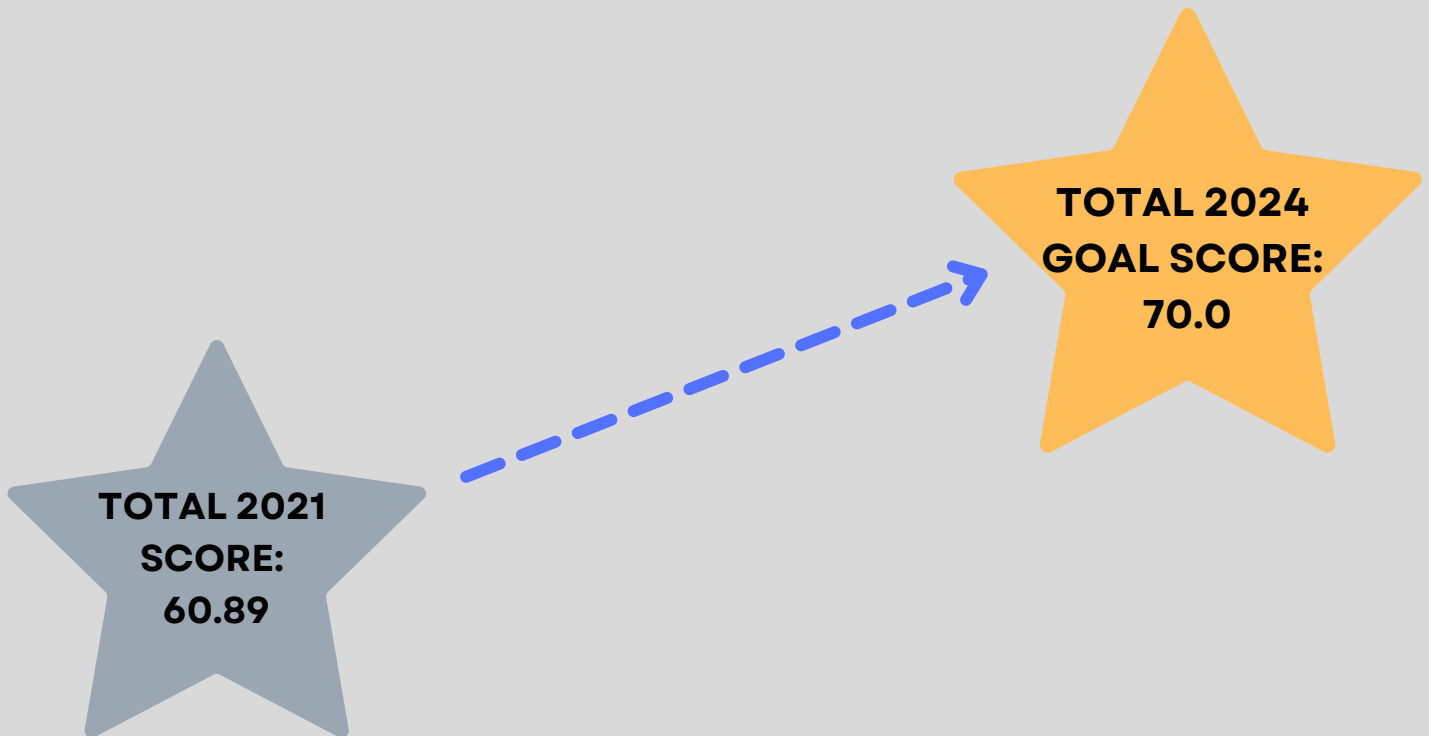
A CIR would demonstrate to students, faculty, and other stakeholders that the UM Foundation recognizes the power of their funding dollars and their ability to effect change. Second, by building a multi-stakeholder CIR that includes academic faculty, the Committee would take advantage of the faculty's collective experience in investment and market strategy. The CIR could also include students interested in finance who would gain a valuable educational experience while contributing to the Foundation's socially and environmentally responsible portfolio.

To receive full STARS points, the Committee must have environmental and social issues at the core of its agenda. The timing is right for the Foundation to build a CIR that places these issues at the forefront of its investing strategy. Environmental, Social Governance (ESG) and impact investing is growing rapidly, driven not just by activists but by shareholder demand. By establishing this Committee, the University of Montana could take a substantial step towards sustainable investing and be in step with its peers in higher education.

Conclusion

If the recommended steps are taken and UM maintains the points earned in its 2021 submission, we estimate our STARS score will increase by approximately 10 points in 2024, putting our overall score at 70 points. A score of 70 points would qualify us for a STARS Gold Rating. This rating would be a well-deserved and marketable metric for prospective students, staff and faculty which demonstrates to them our continued commitment to sustainability.

The suggested focus areas in this report not only help us to earn a higher STARS score, but more importantly align us with our university priorities. By increasing our sustainability course offerings, taking a critical eye to our investment practices, and evaluating our built footprint, we are also working to better fulfill our strategic mission. It is our view that a renewed focus on sustainability is not a side project but is instead critical to solidifying our place as a leader in the higher education community. This goal of Gold in 2024 reaffirms our commitment to becoming a more environmentally responsible institution.



Appendix A

STARS Stakeholder Engagement Event

List of Attendees, October 8, 2021

Name	Department	Title	Table/Topic
Bob Smith	Facilities Services	Director of Facilities Services	Building Operations
Paul Trumbley	Facilities Services	Associate Director of Engineering & Utilities	Building Operations
Jameel Chaudhry	Facilities Services	Associate Director of Planning, Design & Construction	Building Operations
Kim Nielsen	Facilities Services	CADD Technician	Building Operations
Connor Stahly	Facilities Services	Project Manager	Building Operations
Eva Rocke	Office of Sustainability	Sustainability Director	Building Operations
Rich Huffman	Campus Dining	Director	Sustainable Purchasing
Ray Merseal	Campus Dining	Manager	Sustainable Purchasing
Colton Buford	Campus Dining	Manager, UM Catering	Sustainable Purchasing
Anastasia Orkwiszewski	Campus Dining	Garden Manager	Sustainable Purchasing
Laura Grandlund	Campus Dining	Registered Dietitian	Sustainable Purchasing
Brian Heddeleston	Campus Dining	Executive Chef	Sustainable Purchasing
Dan Spencer	Environmental Studies	Professor	Sustainable Purchasing
Sam Gilbertson	Office of Sustainability	Sustainability Intern	Sustainable Purchasing
Kelly Webster	President's Office	Chief of Staff	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Salena Beaumont Hill	Vice Provost Student Success Admn.	Director of Inclusive Excellence	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Brian Reed	Vice Provost Student Success Admn.	Associate Vice President, Student Success	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Wilena Old Person	College of Health	Program Coordinator	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Devin Carpenter	Vice Provost Student Success Admn.	Director of New Student Success	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Madeline Jones	Office of Sustainability	ASUM Sustainability Coordinator	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion