PURPOSE, METHOD, AND SCOPE

Purpose:
This document provides an overview of University at Albany’s sustainability and environmental actions.

Method:
By comparing the University against its peers and assessing current sustainability efforts, this baseline provides background context for University stakeholders to engage in sustainability and climate action planning.

Scope:
This baseline summarizes both the University’s current energy and sustainability reports/plans and the assessments provided by the Sustainability Office.

It also outlines the needed steps for the University to meets its requirements within:

▪ University at Albany’s long-term goal of carbon neutrality by 2050
▪ NYS mandates and regional sustainability efforts
BASELINE CONTENTS

- **Assess** what the University at Albany has accomplished to date

- **Identify** areas of strength and opportunities for improvements within each focus area

- **Outline** the requirements to meet NYS and SUNY environmental goals, improve UAlbany’s STARS rating, and move up to the “leader” level in the REV campus challenge

- **Advise** on the areas where the campus can align its commitments to UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and local/regional sustainability programs.
The baseline considers:

- New York State and SUNY executive orders and mandates
- Peer institutions identified by the university
- STARS assessment data
- UN Sustainable Development Goals

UAlbany’s Focus Areas:

- Curriculum and access
- Research and development
- Engagement and planning
- Operations
EXTERNAL MANDATES

SUMMARY AND IMPACTS OF NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND SUNY MANDATES.
Collectively, external mandates require the University at Albany to pivot from incremental improvements to transformational implementation.

**Example:** Annual emissions reductions need to double for the next ~12 years to meet 40% reduction goal *(EO 166)*:

**Expand detailed planning to achieve this could include:**
- Employee engagement
- Academics
- Purchasing, dining, and waste (interconnected areas)
- Transportation

**Meeting mandates will likely provide a path to STARS Platinum rating**
SUMMARY OF MANDATES AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Key State of New York mandates:
▶ EO 4: Waste Reduction (no formal goals but reporting required)
▶ EO 88: Energy Targets (reporting and goals)
▶ EO 24: Carbon Reduction Goals (no reporting)
▶ EO 166: Carbon Goals (with reporting)

SUNY directives:
▶ 100% of electricity derived from zero-carbon sources by 2020
▶ 40% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (1990 baseline)
▶ All new construction built to net zero standards
▶ Develop Clean Energy workforce
▶ Electrify fleet

“If we intend to last, we have to get a grip on our carbon emissions.”
Chancellor Kristina Johnson, State of the University System Address (January 2018)
REACHING CARBON NEUTRALITY

SUNY and NY mandates will help reach emissions milestones:

- 100% renewable electricity will cut an additional ~20% from baseline
- Electrifying fleet will cut ~2% more from baseline

Energy Master Plan:

A great first step with a 10-year roadmap to provide a 27% reduction in source energy use intensity with $48 million in total project costs. The report covers four strategic areas: Energy Efficiency, Resiliency, Renewable Energy, and Stewardship.

Additional measures are needed to reach Carbon Neutrality by 2050:

Several areas will need to be reconsidered or expanded beyond the current Energy Master Plan to set an appropriate trajectory for success, including the:

- Energy Infrastructure master plan’s current actions
- More aggressive energy reduction targets
- Carbon accounting on building projects and inclusion of the cost of carbon in decision making processes
PEER ASSESSMENT

COMPARING UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY TO ITS PEERS ON OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY AND WITHIN EACH FOCUS AREA
## PEER OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>STARS Rating</th>
<th>Climate Action Plan</th>
<th>Carbon Neutrality Date</th>
<th>Sustainability Staff</th>
<th>Peer type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University at Albany</td>
<td>Gold (2.0)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2070</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binghamton University</td>
<td>Silver (2.1)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Colorado at Boulder</td>
<td>Gold (2.1)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2099</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Connecticut</td>
<td>Gold (2.1)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Vermont</td>
<td>Gold (2.1)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University at California at Irvine</td>
<td>Platinum (2.1)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Aspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC at Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Gold (2.0)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2025</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Massachusetts - Amherst</td>
<td>Gold (2.1)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University at Buffalo</td>
<td>Gold (2.0) Expired</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Includes regional and aspirational peer institutions

All listed institutions use some form of committee to provide a formal governance structure for sustainability

All listed institutions are R1 research institutions

Includes regional and aspirational peer institutions

All listed institutions use some form of committee to provide a formal governance structure for sustainability

All listed institutions are R1 research institutions
PEER ASSESSMENT

UAlbany has in comparison to its peers:

- **Endowment**: the smallest endowment
- **Enrollment**: a mid-sized enrollment
- **Square feet**: less total building space

Considering sustainability programs, the University at Albany has:

- **Staff**: less sustainability staff compared to other R1 institutions
- **Carbon neutral commitments**: a later commitment date. Commitments range from 2022 and 2099, but most schools are by 2050.
- **Sustainability and Climate Action plan**: a similarly dated plan (10 years old).
UALBANY’S KEY STRENGTHS

Engineering & Planning:
- Has a designated office for sustainability and energy management
- High level of student involvement
- Good internal partnerships

Operations:
- Specializations in several operational areas and a higher than average STARS score in those areas

Access and curriculum:
- Diversity and affordability and programs dedicated to health, well-being, and work

Research and development:
- A large number of researchers engaged in sustainability related projects
UALBANY’S KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Engagement & planning:
- To engage more of the University at Albany community in contributing to sustainable solutions
- To create and implement a governance structure for sustainability on campus

Operations:
- Energy: To reduce energy use intensity (EUI) for buildings on campus and to address the need for renewable energy
- Food: To increase sustainable food sourcing and to consider GHG impacts of food production
- Waste reduction: To map out and implement several opportunities across campus linked to dining and procurement

Access and curriculum:
- Curriculum: To develop sustainability learning objectives and assessments and generic sustainability education requirements
- Access: To implement a diversity and inclusion strategic plan with UN SDG goals linked to the goals and strategies of the plan

Research and development:
- Development: To create a long-term engagement plan on sustainable practices with regards to investment and to engage donors around sustainability
- Research: To promote the development and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies, policy development and assistance to developing countries
OPERATIONS (OP)

CURRENT STATE AND OPPORTUNITIES
(OP) CONTEXT AND WORK TO DATE

Sub-areas:
- Energy (GHG, buildings, energy supply)
- Food and dining
- Grounds and landscape
- Purchasing and discarded materials management
- Transportation

Accomplishments:
- Energy Master Plan
- Climate Action Report
- High performance building guidelines
- STARS assessments
Key points:
► 10-year roadmap with 1-3 year goals and strategies.
► 27% reduction in source EUI
► $48 million total project cost

Four strategic areas of the EMP:
► **Energy Efficiency** – strategies recommended include common energy conservation measures such as lighting upgrades, controls optimization, HVAC modifications, and building envelope improvements.

► **Resiliency** – construction of a 4.6 megawatt cogeneration facility.

► **Renewable Energy** – installation of a 1.7 megawatt solar photovoltaic array.

► **Stewardship** – operational and policy-related changes including use of Energy Management Systems (EMS), high performance construction standards, space planning and staff training, etc.
The Plan lays out a concrete plan to reduce the source energy use intensity (EUI) of buildings on campus.

- **Manageable framework:** outlines intermediate goals and strategies around common energy conservation measures such as lighting upgrades, controls optimization, HVAC modifications, and building envelope improvements.

- **Multi-faceted approach:** combines energy reduction, infrastructure-level changes, renewable energy sources, and internal policy prioritizations

- **Data collection and efficiency first:** The plan include includes measures to better understand the campus energy system and manage the supply and demand, including operational and policy-related changes such as use of Energy Management Systems (EMS), high performance construction standards, space planning, and staff training.
Expand to an energy infrastructure master plan:
- Update the planning cycle for additional projects beyond the approved and funded ones listed.
- Consider moving away from 3rd generation heating system (HTHW) toward the 4th generation (low temperature hot water heating), or 5th generation district energy systems (heating, cooling and electrical energy).

Aggressive energy reduction targets:
- Aiming for a campus average of 64 EUI, or around 50% reduction from current state (128 kBTU/sf/yr.). This represents a high average building site usage and thus should be targeted for aggressive reduction.

Carbon accounting and cost of carbon:
- Make emissions reductions a primary goal and consider all relevant decisions through this lens.
- Develop various carbon accounting, carbon taxing and other financial policies and tools to prioritize this aspect of campus planning.
OP: Air & Climate

- Further emissions reductions will increase score in Greenhouse Gas Emissions credit (up to 4 incremental points available).
- Emissions will come from implementing measures to increase score in Buildings and Energy sub-categories.

OP: Buildings

- Certification of existing buildings under LEED O+M system could help to identify additional energy conservation measures

OP: Energy

- Procuring renewable energy sources will increase score in the Clean & Renewable Energy credit (about 4 incremental points available)
- Reducing kbtu/sq ft will increase score in Building Energy Consumption credit (about 2 incremental points available)
(OP) FOOD

Current state:
▶ Ranked highly in STARS for sustainable dining (OP8) but room for improvement in food and beverage purchasing (OP7)

Possible next steps:
▶ Establish ongoing method of tracking purchases
▶ Increase spending on third-party certified products

References:
▶ Sustainability Guiding Principles: Promote healthier eating opportunities on campus and greater purchasing of locally produced food
▶ Executive Order 39: Promotes sustainable local farms and protects agricultural lands
▶ SDG 2: Purchase a minimum of 25% of sustainably and/or locally sourced and produced food by 2030 through a long-term process of menu planning with seasonality of harvests considered
▶ SDG 2: Ensure that all recoverable food is donated or used to feed those that are food insecure (on campus and in the community)
▶ SDG 14: Procure fish for campus dining from certified sustainable fisheries
Current state:
▶ All 60 acres of managed grounds are managed conventionally (with some IPM practices)

Possible next steps:
▶ Develop formal IPM plan/policy and investigate possible areas that may be managed organically

References:
▶ SDG 14: Reduce (through Integrated Pest Management practices) or eliminate harmful chemicals, including sprays on landscaping and salt on paved surfaces used on campus grounds that runoff into water bodies
▶ SDG 11: Adopt ECO District six priorities:
  • Living Infrastructure: enabling flourishing ecosystems and restoring natural capital
▶ Executive Order 39: Promote sustainable local farms and protects agricultural lands
(OP) WASTE REDUCTION

Current state:
- Lack of comprehensive waste diversion infrastructure and practices
- University at Albany has a below average STARS 2.0 score on waste diversion

Possible next steps:
- Increase composting across all dining areas
- Implement zero waste programs in retail dining venues

References:
- SDG 12: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources across all campuses
  - By 2020, begin phasing out single use plastics. By 2025, completely eliminate the use of all single use plastics on SUNY campuses
  - By 2025, achieve the environmentally sound management and operational use of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, working to eliminate all chemical use on campus that adversely impacts human health and the environment and banning all those included on the Living Building Challenge Red List
  - By 2030, achieve zero waste through sustainable materials management including prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling
  - By 2030, halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains in our dining operations
Current state:
▶ Preference for MWBE or disabled veteran vendors

Possible next steps:
▶ Expand sustainability purchasing policy for items not covered under EO 4
▶ Investigate the feasibility of sourcing 100% recycled paper (campus-wide)
▶ Integrate waste reduction principles into purchasing practices (especially for office supply and dining contracts)

References:
▶ SDG 12: Promote procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with standards set by the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council
  ▪ Promote a culture of sustainability on campus that seeks to reduce consumption and advocate for sustainable purchasing practices
  ▪ Promote Shared Services program to procure and share goods and services from within and among the SUNY system to create a more closed loop cycle
▶ Executive Order 18: Restricts the use of bottled water at state facilities and promotes the use of tap water as a preferable alternative.
▶ Executive Order 134: Purchase environmentally preferred cleaning products.
**OP: Food**
- Increase spending on third-party verified products under the Food and Beverage Purchasing credit (about 5 incremental points available)
- Reduce spending on conventionally-produced animal products

**OP: Grounds**
- Implementation of organic or four-tiered IPM practices (2 incremental points available)

**OP: Waste**
- Increase diversion and reduce overall waste generation (about 5 incremental points available)

**OP: Purchasing**
- Implement EPEAT purchasing policies and address several other areas of purchasing (about 3 incremental points available)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Order 88</th>
<th>The order establishes a target of reducing average energy use intensity (EUI) in state-owned and managed buildings by 20% relative to a fiscal year 2010/2011 baseline by April 1, 2020.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Order 2</td>
<td>State Energy Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Order 4</td>
<td>State green procurement and agency sustainability program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Order 18</td>
<td>Restricts the use of bottled water at state facilities and promotes the use of tap water as a preferable alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Order 24</td>
<td>Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sources within the states by 80% below levels emitted in 1990 by 2050.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Order 39</td>
<td>Promote sustainable local farms and protects agricultural lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Order 134</td>
<td>Purchase environmentally preferred cleaning products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Order 166</td>
<td>A reduction of greenhouse gases by 40% BY 2030 and 80% by 2050.</td>
</tr>
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ENGAGEMENT AND PLANNING (E&P)

CURRENT STATE AND OPPORTUNITIES
E&P CURRENT STATE

Current state:

► High STARS scores on campus engagement and public engagement
► Several actions have been eliminated including Living, Learning Community, film series, art program, EOP sustainability experiential learning
► Gender representation on governing bodies now assessed

Possible next steps:

► More deeply integrate sustainability into employee orientation
► Replace eliminated activities and start tracking participation in sustainability related events
CURRICULUM AND ACCESS

CURRENT STATE AND OPPORTUNITIES
CURRENT STATE

Current state:
- Lower than average STARS score on curriculum
- Sustainability minor approved in 2013

Next Steps and STARS Opportunities:
- Develop sustainability learning objectives and assessments (about 6 incremental points available)
- Develop new sustainability courses (about 5 incremental points available)
- Implement a diversity and inclusion strategic plan with UN SDG goals linked to the goals and strategies of the plan (about 2 incremental points available)

References:
- SDG 1: Support under-represented groups to succeed in college by
  - Increasing and improving student based aid through the Tuition Assistance Program, Excelsior Scholarships, federal aid and campus based scholarship funds
  - Enhancing access programs such as the Educational Opportunity Center, Educational Opportunity Program, CSTEP, STEP and others Develop partnerships and resources to assist students dealing with housing insecurity Reduce student debt loads for lower income communities
- SDG 4: Strengthen curricular opportunities for community service-based and experiential learning projects
- SDG 8: Increase educational literacy rates of what sustainable economic growth looks like with students, staff and faculty
- SDG 10: Train students to be able to address the issues of inequality in their communities, states and nations
RESEARCH

**Current state:**
- Research: There are a large number of researchers engaged in sustainability related projects

**Possible next steps:**
- Support for sustainability research funding and awards
- Create an open access to research policy and provide grant money to support open-access publishing (2 incremental points available)

**References:**
- SDG 17: Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies, policy development and assistance to developing countries
DEVELOPMENT

Current state:
- No sustainable investment policies
- No specific engagement with donors around sustainability

Possible next steps:
- Develop sustainability programs or affinity group to formalize outreach to alumni
- Create a long-term plan for sustainable investment practices

References:
- Research has linked the opportunity to designate online gifts for sustainability to increased alumni participation rates (see presentation notes)
CONCLUSION

MAIN FINDINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING A CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
## MAIN FINDINGS

**MANDATES OVERLAY ON FOCUS AREAS AND STARS**

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<tr>
<td>Curriculum and Access</td>
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<td>Operations</td>
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<td>Research and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement and Planning</td>
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</table>
The NYS & SUNY mandates and directives will help but not lead the way to sustainability and increase STARS scores or alignment with the UNSDG.

- The mandates demand high levels of clean energy, efficiency, and emissions reductions.
- The directives provide a clear direction for the University to create SMART goals for its operations
- The directives do not focus on academics, engagement, or planning for the University to reach its internal goals of sustainability and carbon neutrality.
CONCLUSIONS: WORK TO DATE

- Committed to bold long term goals and specific operational achievements.

- Taken successful right steps

The institution has to follow specific operational mandates and have signed several comprehensive sustainability commitments.

University at Albany’s sustainability & energy offices have achieved regular incremental gains at a large state institution, and created successful energy and sustainability programs.
To meet the sustainability challenges laid out for the University at Albany, the institution will need to:

- Set specific goals and strategies for each area of sustainability
- Invest resources in campus physical plant and community engagement
- Create campus-wide buy-in for all stakeholders contribution

Needs to create a comprehensive plan to reach its long-term goals
APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS FOR UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING A CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Fous area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>We Are Still In Declaration</strong></td>
<td>E&amp;P</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Statement of institutional commitment to the Paris Accord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Presidents’ Climate Leadership Commitment</strong></td>
<td>E&amp;P</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Commitment by the University’s president that the school will achieve climate neutrality by 2050 (an update to the 2010 ACUPCC commitment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Campus Act on Climate Pledge</strong></td>
<td>OP</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>White House initiative to amplify the voice of the higher-ed community in support of a strong international climate agreement in the United Nations COP21 climate negotiations in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Sustainability Initiative</strong></td>
<td>C&amp;A, R&amp;D</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>UN commitment to teach sustainable development across all disciplines of study, to encourage research and dissemination of sustainable development knowledge, to green campuses and support local sustainability efforts, and to engage and share information with international networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talloires Declaration</strong></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>A ten-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)</strong></td>
<td>OP, P&amp;E</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Commitment by the University’s president that the school will achieve climate neutrality by 2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate Action Report</strong></td>
<td>OP</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Document outlining current state and next steps for sustainability and climate initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UAlbany Strategic Plan (The Power of SUNY)</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Notes need for investment in sustainable infrastructure and lists sustainability/energy as a “big, hairy, audacious goal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Focus area</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>University signs the Talloires Declaration</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Launched campus-wide behavioral change initiatives including the Energy Campaign and RecycleMania</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>President signed ACUPCC; Establishment of Office of Environmental Sustainability and Office of Energy Management; Development of Energy Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Sustainability-themed housing opened; G3 program; Student Sustainability Council and Sustainability Coordinators groups created</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>“The Power of SUNY” was unveiled; University Hall certified as carbon neutral; Awarded the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental excellence Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Installation of 49.2kW Photovoltaic system on roof of Social Science building; Rain Garden built at Alumni House;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>UAlbany bus fleet added 5 hybrid buses; Liberty Terrace opened (LEED Gold); UAlbany listed as one of Princeton Review’s Green Schools; UAlbany received STARS silver rating; UAlbany was listed as a Green College by the Princeton Review; UN Higher Education Sustainability Initiative</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Sustainability minor approved; Compost program at Indian Quad Dining Hall piloted; Inaugural Earth Day Food and Art Festival held at Liberty Terrace; UAlbany was listed as a Green College by the Princeton Review</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Installation of EV charging stations; Opening of new Business Building (LEED Gold); Heritage Garden built; Opening of Data Center (LEED Gold); University at Albany participated in the first annual New York Campus Crunch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Compost program expanded to all five dining halls and the campus center kitchens; 1st planting and harvest of the Heritage Garden; University at Albany named in the top 40 for organic waste recycling colleges and universities during the RecycleMania Competition; Signed the American Campuses Act on Climate Pledge; Hosted an EPA/White House webinar event in the fall</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Carbon Commitment; Resiliency Commitment; Participation in the Day of Climate Action; Opening of the Mohawk Tower living area (LEED Gold)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>We are still in pledge; EO 166; to continue our commitment to remain in the Paris Agreement</td>
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</table>
ADDITIONAL TOOLS

▶ STARS Benchmarking Tool: [https://benchmarks.aashe.org/#tool](https://benchmarks.aashe.org/#tool)
  - Available to anyone with an @Albany.edu email address
  - Quickly provides data points for any STARS credit
  - Can be filtered using several criteria