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2019 SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY:
STAFF RESPONSES

December 2019
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND: West Virginia University is committed to ensuring a more sustainable future for its students, faculty and staff, and for the citizens of West Virginia. The Office of Sustainability wants to promote the use of sound sustainable principles and practices through learning, teacher, research and facilities management from both an educational and operational perspective. However, to date, the office has not developed a clear strategic direction. In order to establish priorities for sustainability and help develop messaging that effectively conveys the priorities, they needed to measure the awareness level of their current efforts and understand what is important to students, faculty and staff. The results of this survey reflect employee responses.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: The objective of the survey is to help the office understand employees’ awareness of current sustainability efforts across the University and identify the aspects of sustainability that are most important to them.

METHODOLOGY: An online survey was included in eNews. Employees who completed the survey had the opportunity to win one of ten WVU-sustainability grab bags.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EMPLOYEES AND SUSTAINABILITY

• Employees, as well as students, believe it’s very important that WVU have a strong commitment to sustainability. Also similar to students, most define “sustainability” as meeting today’s needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Employees agree that sustainability appears to be a University-wide goal and that resources and opportunities are provided in support of this goal, but aside from recycling, most have been blind to the University’s use of efficient lighting, refillable water stations, public transportation or green spaces, etc. On the contrary, more than half have witnessed a serious misuse of resources during at least one University event. Employees themselves, however, acknowledged taking a variety of actions in support of the University’s focus on sustainability, chief among them recycling and reducing their personal energy consumption on campus.

AWARENESS AND INTEREST

• Regardless of their length of time employed at WVU, a significant number were unaware of the Office of Sustainability. That said, it is unsurprising that there is low level of awareness among employees regarding WVU’s eight current sustainability initiatives. However, once they learned of the initiatives through this survey, employees indicated these are areas that are important for WVU to focus on. Employees – also regardless of their years of employment at WVU – indicated that in the future the University’s use of renewable energy for campus power was most important. Other future sustainability areas they’d like the University to concentrate on are making buildings more eco-friendly and green and increasing and expanding local, healthy and sustainable food options on campus.

Most employees didn’t know how to get involved with sustainability efforts at WVU but, if given the opportunity, they want to learn how to can make conscious and sustainable choices in the office, as well become a more knowledgeable recycler. They also want to learn how to incorporate sustainability into event planning and printing and be recognized for their efforts.
DETAILED FINDINGS
SUSTAINABILITY DEFINED
Similar to the majority of students, most employees (85%) define sustainability as “ensuring the needs of today are met without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”
**GREATER PERSONAL CONCERN**

About an equal percentage of employees are most concerned about clean water and sanitation (22%), waste disposal/recycling (21%) or greenhouse gas emissions (21%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean water and sanitation</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse gas emissions</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger/food insecurity</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the oceans</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What is your biggest concern today regarding sustainability?
WVU AND SUSTAINABILITY

More employees (89%) than students (83%) believe that WVU’s commitment to sustainability is extremely or very important.

Q. How important is it to you that WVU has a strong commitment to sustainability? Q. Do you see things on campus that tell you that WVU is committed to sustainability?
Q. What do you see when you walk around campus that tells you that WVU is committed to sustainability?

• Recycling 98%
• Efficient lighting/signs to turn lights off 9%
• Public transit options 6%
• Landscaping/green space/cleanliness 6%
• Water filling stations 4%
• Building/ground improvements 3%
• Rain gardens 3%

Similar to students, some employees questioned whether recycling is actually being done.
Q. WVU has already implemented a variety of sustainability efforts on campus. Check the following initiatives you are aware of and which are important to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Dining</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service Learning: WVU provides students with academic and volunteer opportunities to help them understand the economic, environmental and social forces of change in relation to sustainability. It also offers degree programs with sustainable elements.

Transportation: Provides travel options that promote clean air quality and reduce traffic congestion, reliance on limited natural resources and utility costs for students and employees (PRT, Mountain Line buses, bicycling, Zipcar, etc.).

Recycling: Recycling efforts include systems to recover day-to-day waste from those living, working and learning on campus and also targets commercial items like metal, electronics and more.

Food and Dining: Initiatives include the use of trayless dining, which reduces food waste, sourcing local food when possible, recycling containers, eliminating single-serve packaging, etc.
Buildings & Grounds: WVU builds more energy efficient buildings, and uses green cleaning supplies, low or no-VOC paints, and interior furnishing selected to minimize impact on indoor air quality and provide recycling opportunities. Sustainability also factors into the care of the natural features of campus, such as trees and waterways.

Energy Conservation: WVU has utilized performance contracting to make energy upgrades to over 75 buildings and has upgraded exterior campus and PRT track lighting to LED.

Purchasing: Mountaineer Marketplace, an administrative-procurement tool, reduces paper usage and allows the University to purchase products made from recycled material. Efforts are also made to keep surplus goods out of landfills from sale or donation.

Water: WVU employs best practices put forth by the federal EPA to reduce stormwater runoff and filter out pollutants. WVU has also been installing various stormwater features to collect and filter stormwater during weather events and uses low-flow fixtures when applicable.

Q. WVU has already implemented a variety of sustainability efforts on campus. Check the following initiatives you are aware of and which are important to you.
Q. Were you ever involved in an event where you felt the University could have been more mindful of waste? ("Waste" includes promotional items that may be discarded, intemperate rooms, too many paper handouts, excess food, etc.)

WASTEFUL PRACTICES
Over half the employees (53%) have been involved in an event where they felt the University could have been more mindful of waste and pointed out the following “abuses” or places where waste occurred:

- Unnecessary handouts (paper promoting season passes)
- The use of Styrofoam
- Excess food at catered events
- “Junk” giveaways
- Lights/projectors left on in empty/closed classrooms
- HVAC issues
- Sporting events
WASTEFUL PRACTICES

“Working in the dining hall as a student, I noticed they threw away a huge and unfortunate amount of food that was good and most certainly could have been donated or used for a better purpose.”

“The fast food outlets on campus seem to use vast amounts of Styrofoam for their food. Is there no way to change this so they use recyclable products? Or minimize the use of single-use products?”

“Sending out colorful brochures by mail instead of sending the info via email - like sending out info on colon cancer or sports event season tickets.”

“A few years ago, I attended an even catered by WVU. Many of the attendees were students and wanted to take some of the uneaten food home but were told that the food had to be thrown away and couldn’t be taken. Also, SAS on the Evansdale Campus is steam-heated, but to keep the building temperate, the air conditioning is always on, which seems very wasteful to essentially always have the heat and air conditioning on at the same time. I have also had colleagues claim that they have seen the recycling bins being emptied into the garbage. The biggest concern for me is that WVU is partnered with so many big polluters such as the Friends of Coal who directly support major water polluters in the state PNC which funds mountaintop removal mining for companies that receive 25% of their funding from the practice, but still help to fund mountaintop removal.”

“It’s not even just events but all the time. When in grad school, the Graduate Education and Life folks gave away cheap plastic trinkets that certainly were destined to be broken and trashed, any time cotton t-shirts are given away, that’s a massive sustainability problem, takeaway food almost everywhere on campus is in STYROFOAM containers, some places have compostable cups, but there’s no place to compost them so it’s impact is much reduced, the bus lines are so ill-funded that most people won’t use them because they’re packed, late or otherwise unreliable basically forcing students to drive if you’re any distance from campus, and people don’t know how to recycle so there’s so much trash in the recycle bins they must be thrown out - we need an education program/posters/etc. around containers so people know what they can or cannot throw in there. One thing that wasn’t mentioned that I really do appreciate are the clothing and textile containers - thanks for having the one at the Rec. Also, offering classes that have something to do with sustainability that are in demand by students and programs hardly counts as a university sustainability effort.”
WASTEFUL PRACTICES

"I feel that sustainability programs at WVU are a joke! We do hardly anything to support real sustainable practices. None of our fleets use alternative fuels. We don’t use electric vehicles or natural gas buses. We still use two stroke leaf blowers, etc. It’s absolutely horrid. As an engineer in the field, it’s laughable that as an R1 institution we are not leaders in sustainability. In addition, we offer little to non-impact energy degrees or courses that really inform students as necessary to have improved energy literacy. Without an energy literate population - any sustainable focus will fail."

“I see so much driving! The campuses are all mostly close together--they are walkable really, but there is so little walking, driving, and using the PRT--like there is a stigma if you’re not a FY student. I walk from home, to work, and pretty much to all my meetings--I’m regarded as totally bizarre! I am lucky you live close, so I see that’s not feasible for everyone--but decreasing driving during the day is good for sustainability AND good for our health and our roads. I like the idea of incentivizing and recognizing alternative transportation. Walkers and bikers are treated like oddities and we are often in danger because of cars treating us as a non-viable way to commute.”

“I think that one of the biggest wastes is the food waste from events. When I order from catering, they always bring WAY more food than I need. But they only bring the exact amount of plates I need. So if I need 100 plates (b/c 100 people are coming to my event), there is easily enough food for 120+ people. I cannot order less, say for 80 people, b/c they only bring 80 plates. So then 20 people wouldn’t have a plate, but we’d have significantly less food waste. I’m not trying to cheat catering, but it’s so wasteful when I see them dumping the food in garbage cans.”

“When the sustainability committee printed flyers last year right before semester break asking people to power down their computers, they put them on every single office door all over the buildings. Most ended up in the trash. Waste of paper and very ironic, considering what the flyer was about. One flyer on each hallway would have been sufficient.”
**PERCEPTIONS**

Of the four sustainability-related statements presented, most (75%) employees agree that sustainability is a University-wide goal and opportunities and resources are being provided by WVU regarding these matters. Nearly as many (73%) agree that WVU provides opportunities to participate in sustainability efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agreement/Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WVU provides resources to learn about how sustainability efforts impact current and future generations through curriculum.</td>
<td>13% 34% 41% 9% 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that WVU is focusing its sustainability efforts in the areas that matter most.</td>
<td>20% 36% 33% 8% 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WVU provides opportunities to participate in sustainability efforts.</td>
<td>25% 48% 17% 9% 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability is a University-wide goal, and opportunities and resources are being provided by WVU in these matters.</td>
<td>30% 45% 17% 8% 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...
AWARENESS OF THE OFFICE

About one-quarter of employees (26%) were not aware there is an Office of Sustainability. Another 21% were aware that the office exists but didn’t know anything more about it. Another 48% are at least somewhat familiar with it, but are not knowledgeable about what they do.

Q. Please indicate your level of awareness of the WVU Office for Sustainability. (Check one)
AWARENESS OF THE OFFICE
Unsurprising, more new than long-time employees were not aware of the existence of the Office of Sustainability. On the other hand, it is surprising that one-fourth (25%) of those employed 20 or more years at the University were unaware of the office.

Q. Please indicate your level of awareness of the WVU Office for Sustainability. (Check one)

- Before taking this survey I was unaware that WVU had an Office for Sustainability.
- I don't know anything about the Office other than it exists.
- I have a vague understanding of the Office of Sustainability but could not explain it to others.
- I could give a basic explanation of the Office of Sustainability but could not go into detail about its initiatives.
- I have a deep understanding of the Office of Sustainability and could give a detailed explanation about some of its programs/initiatives.
Q. Do you know how you can support or get involved with sustainability efforts at WVU?

AWARENESS OF OPPORTUNITIES

Over six in ten employees (63%) don’t know how to support or get involved with sustainability efforts at WVU.

Students: Know How to Get Involved

- Yes, 28%
- No, 72%

Staff: Know How to Get Involved

- Yes, 37%
- No, 63%
PERSONAL EFFORTS
A significant percentage of employees support the University’s initiatives by recycling (94%), reducing their personal energy (87%) and trying not to waste food 68%), among other things.

**Ways Students/Employees Get Involved**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way</th>
<th>Students (%)</th>
<th>Staff (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use alternate transportation (e.g., bike, Mountain Line bus, etc.)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid wasting food and using disposables at on-campus dining facilities</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce personal energy use on campus (e.g., shut down my computer when it’s not in use, unplug chargers, etc.)</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take part in recycling/composting programs</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention to how much water I use</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for iServe initiatives</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate or volunteer with an environmental organization</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What efforts have you made to support or get involved with WVU’s sustainability initiatives? (Check all that apply)
EDUCATION

The majority of employees (64%) want to know how they can “green” their office, and half of employees would like to be able to learn how to improve their recycling efforts. About one-third are also interested in being able to plan more sustainable campus events, getting recognition and rewards for their personal sustainability efforts or learning how to do more sustainable printing on campus. One-fourth (25%) want to learn how the systems in their buildings work.

Q. Which other sustainability programs, if any, would you like to know more about during your time at WVU? (Check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Want to Know More About</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A &quot;green my office &quot; checklist</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to improve my recycling efforts</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide to planning more sustainable campus events</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and rewards for personal sustainability efforts</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide to more sustainable printing on campus</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from the maintenance staff in my building about how the systems work there</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. Which resources would be most beneficial for you to learn more about sustainability? (Check all that apply)

- Email
- eNews
- Sustainability events
- Social media
- Campus Conversations
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Other

WVU’s Commitment to Sustainability

- 30% Email
- 30% eNews
- 12% Sustainability events
- 10% Social media
- 10% Campus Conversations
- 7% Volunteer Opportunities
- 1% Other

EDUCATION RESOURCES
Employees would prefer to learn more about sustainability via email (30%) or eNews (30%).

- Have a link on home page or portal to click on links about it
- Tips about “greening my office” once per semester or so - don’t overkill
EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

Over six in ten (64%) indicated email would be the most beneficial resource for them to learn more about sustainability. About half (49%) would like to hear more about sustainability via social media. Slightly fewer (44%) prefer sustainability events and still fewer (41%) want to learn more through on-campus signage.

Q. Which resources would be most beneficial for you to learn more about sustainability? (Check all that apply)
FUTURE INITIATIVES

When asked to select the three initiatives they feel are most important for WVU to include in future sustainability efforts, employees chose the same three as did students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use renewable energy for campus power</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make buildings more eco-friendly and green</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase and expand local, healthy and sustainable food options on campus</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentivize alternative transportation for students and staff</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees to reduce pollution and release oxygen</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce paper and printing use</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sustainability a requirement in purchasing contracts</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a student-led community garden</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold sustainability-related events on campus</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of sustainability offerings in majors/minors/graduate degrees</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Eleven sustainability efforts are listed below. Drag and drop the three initiatives you feel are most important for WVU to include in future sustainability efforts.
FUTURE INITIATIVES
In looking at the breakdown by employment at the University, employees’ top pick of initiatives employees feel WVU should focus on in the future is the use of renewable energy for campus power. Making buildings more eco-friendly and green is another initiative they’d like to see executed as well. Increasing and expanding local, healthy and sustainable food options on campus is also important, as well as the use of incentives to encourage alternate transportation for students and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Less than one year</th>
<th>Between 1-5 years</th>
<th>Between 5-10 years</th>
<th>Between 10-20 years</th>
<th>20 or more years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use renewable energy for campus power</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make buildings more eco-friendly and green</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase and expand local, healthy and sustainable food options on campus</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentivize alternate transportation for students and staff</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees to reduce pollution and release oxygen</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Red text= top three choices
SUGGESTIONS

Employees suggestions regarding sustainability at the University include:

• Maintain the proper temperature in buildings
• Have catering decrease the amount they serve per person
• Install sensors to turn off lights/computers when buildings close
• Add more bike and walking paths
• Ensure on-campus eateries have compostable contains/utensils
• Invest in regenerative agriculture
• Create “green teams” on campus and recognize initiatives put into practice
• Ensure what happens is Morgantown can be replicated at other campuses
• Improve public transportation
• Move to renewable sources of energy
• Encourage instructors to offer exams online
• Implement more cost-effective purchasing practices
• Teach people how to recycle properly
• Teach students to be energy literate
• Consider using recycled materials to pave the roads
• Integrate sustainability directly into training of building managers/department heads rather than only implemented by a small sustainability office
• Inform the university community about any new building construction and renovation projects and include their feedback on how to contract to have the most sustainable and renewable energy sources and uses
• Compost food and landscaping waste
• Create living building standards
• Plant perennials vs. replace plants every season
DEMOGRAPHICS

Length of Employment

- Less than a year: 9%
- Between 1-5 years: 25%
- Between 5-10 years: 17%
- Between 10-20 years: 18%
- 20 or more years: 31%

Gender

- Male: 25%
- Female: 75%

Role

- Staff: 80%
- Faculty: 17%
- Other: 2%