

Office of Sustainability
2017 year in Review
Western Kentucky University

This little house
on Regents is
bursting with
good things.



We are pleased to present the 2017 annual report, created with much contribution from the Office of Sustainability student staff. These pages describe the projects, programs, experiences, and accomplishments of the past year, made possible by the commitment, creativity, and talents of so many people that want to build a more sustainable WKU. The annual report is a celebration of these individuals and their hard work.

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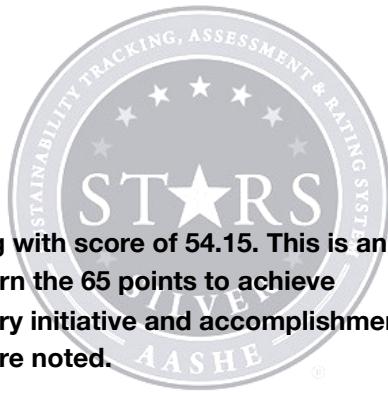
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AASHE STARS



WKU submitted our fourth STARS report in 2017, earning a Silver rating with score of 54.15. This is an improvement over our 2015 score of 51.83 in 2015, but the goal is to earn the 65 points to achieve Gold in our next submission. We are working toward that goal with every initiative and accomplishment. Throughout this report those efforts that will earn WKU STARS credit are noted.

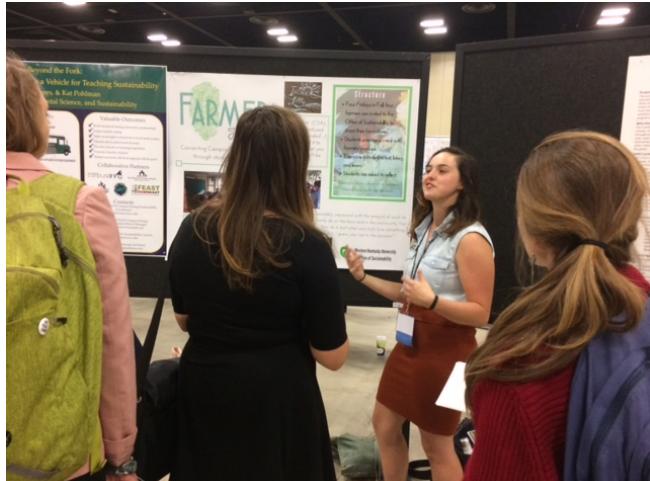
WKU was noted as exemplary in the following areas:

- EN-6: Assessing Sustainability Culture: *The survey is very thorough and comprehensive, and the development of the survey included a broad range of stakeholders. Great job also in including faculty and staff!*
- IN-24: Innovation A: *The Tree Viewer GIS project combines sustainability in grounds with technology and student learning. Great job!*
- IN-25: Innovation B: *The WFU Food Pantry program makes a measurable impact and engages students and community members in ways that other food pantries do not. Nice work.*

AASHE 2017 annual conference:

Hilltoppers had a presence at the 2017 AASHE annual conference, as three students and one staff were selected to present WKU initiatives. Sodexo provided registration scholarships for our students to attend the conference in San Antonio. Students Cara Walters, Alexis Corbin, and Courtney Martin presented on the creation of the Sustainability Values, Awareness, and Behaviors Survey, the Farmer Fridays initiative, and the Green Topics program. Beth Gafford presented on the Earn A Computer program.

For the full report, visit: <https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/western-kentucky-university-ky/report/2017-03-03/>



In 2017, publications such as the Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges and the Sierra Club Cool Schools began using AASHE STARS performance to determine which institutions to include in their annual recognitions. For this reason, accurate and comprehensive reporting through AASHE STARS has become even more important. In 2017, our STARS performance earned WKU a spot in both publications.

WKU was included in the Sierra Club list of Cool Schools for the first time in 2017! We are ranked #54 of 227 schools that submitted information. We are in a good spot in great company.

Here is a brief snapshot of our score in each area. Our ranking is based on our composite score (some areas weighted more heavily than others).

Co-curricular sustainability 86% - Efforts include all of the great work of the SGA Sustainability Committee and the various activities, events, and initiatives that engage students in sustainability efforts across campus.

Energy 52% - We've reduced our energy use per square foot by about 30% in the past 10 years, which is an incredible accomplishment. Our score could be improved with the addition of renewable energy applications.

Investments 21% - Our score could be improved with the creation of a committee for social and environmentally responsible investment.

Food – 63% - We are working hard to improve our score by increasing our percentage of local food sourcing.

Innovation 100% - Our score reflects programs like the WKU Arboretum Tree Viewer, the WKU Food Pantry, the Earn A Computer Program.

Academics – 44% - Our score could be improved with an increase in the number of courses that are sustainability focused or related (This is difficult to track, and requires sifting through hundreds of course descriptions. A self-reported "S" designation in digital measures could allow for more efficiency and accuracy in this metric.)

Planning 99% - We score well here, in part due to inclusion of sustainability in University strategic planning.

Purchasing – 70% - Our purchasing policy includes a commitment to socially responsible purchasing.

Transportation – 47% - Our score will be improved with an expanded bike-share program, in progress!

Waste – 71% - Performance in this area continues to improve under the direction of Resource Conservation in the Department of Facilities Management.

Water – 86% - Our score will be improved with building level metering, in progress!

Check out all the details here: <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/cool-schools-2017/cool-schools-2017-full-ranking>



Noelle LeGrand, Office of Sustainability Student Ambassador completed the Eco-Leaders National Wildlife Federation certification program in fall 2017. Noelle became a certified Campus Eco-Leader and certified one of her personal projects as an EcoLeader Project, as well as certifying the Project Grow Community Garden. Noelle has plans for EcoLeader Projects and programs to engage other students in 2018.



Green Squirrel of Approval

Transportation, and Dining Services, initiated the Green Squirrel of Approval program. WKU offices and departments can complete a survey to determine their Green Squirrel of Approval rating of 1-4 acorns. The survey is meant to raise awareness regarding sustainability opportunities and accomplishments and to encourage sustainable behaviors and habits that support our commitment.

Each department selects a Sustainability Champion who attends monthly lunch meetings that focus on sustainability education and awareness. Our champions become the experts, encouraging others to act sustainability and spreading the good green word.

Both the certification program and champion program are initiatives that will improve our AASHE STARS performance.



In 2017, the Office of Sustainability, in collaboration with Resource Conservation, Parking and

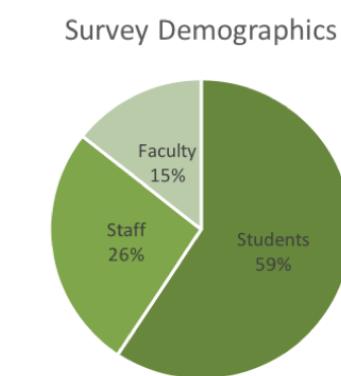
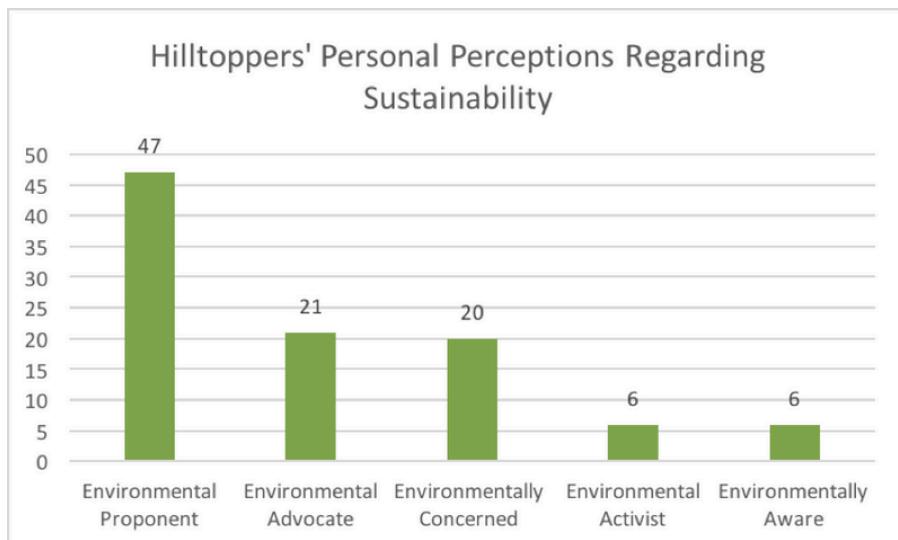
**TWENTY-FOUR OFFICES/
DEPARTMENTS HAVE EARNED
GREEN SQUIRREL OF APPROVALS
IN 2017:**

Student Government Association
President's Office
Office of Research Integrity
Architectural & Manufacturing Sciences School of Professional Studies
Mathematics Department and Computer Science
The WKU Store
Intramural Recreational Sports Health & Fitness Lab
Biology
Communication Sciences and Disorders
Theatre and Dance
Office of the Provost/Academic Affairs
Student Activities
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Housing and Residence Life
Management
Center for Human GeoEnvironmental Studies
University Libraries – Department of Technical Services
Photojournalism
AARC/Transfer Center
Department of Sociology
Student Publications
Big Red Bikes
Facilities Management

A Green Squirrel of Approval program is currently in development for residence halls. The program will be introduced in April 2018.

We conducted our first Sustainability Values, Behaviors, and Awareness Survey to WKU students, faculty and staff.

Environmental Ethics students, the SGA Sustainability Committee (EcoTops), and the Office of Sustainability collaborated to create the first annual survey in order to assess current values, awareness, and behaviors regarding sustainability among our campus community. Dr. Christian Ryan partnered with Dr. Amy Nemon, Instructor of Geography, to incorporate contributing to the survey into class curriculum. Demographics, Behaviors, Campus Climate, Campus Culture, and Opinions Awareness & Values were chosen as dominant themes and a draft survey was created. Following the end of the semester, those who wished to continue working on the survey formed a committee alongside Dr. Ryan, Professor Nemon, and Beth McGrew, Director of Resource Conservation. Students included Natalie Kincheloe, Courtney Martin, and Cara Walters. Our survey was distributed campus-wide on April 5, 2017 via Typeform. After meeting with Dr. Matthew Foraker, Research Coordinator, our committee developed a better understanding of formulating survey questions for qualitative studies.



WE FOUND THESE TO BE SOME OF OUR MOST FASCINATING RESULTS:

When asked "Which of the following best describes your identity in relation to the environment?"

47.3% respondents identified themselves as environmental proponents.

(Our committee defined an environmental proponent as one who considers conservation important and tries to make environmentally conscious decisions on a daily basis.)

When asked, "Do you feel it is easy to get involved in sustainable activities on campus?"

65.7% of respondents answered yes, it was easy to get involved in sustainable activities on campus.

**this survey will help us improve our AASHE STARS performance*



Service through learning.

Big Red Blitzers built our beloved herb spiral while learning about microclimate regions, and the needs of various edible and medicinal herbs

Students spent 311 hours volunteering at the Office of Sustainability in 2017. Our volunteers are invaluable, and help us get good things done. Volunteers helped to make bee boxes, maintain the hugel bed, create accessible planters throughout our garden, organize the Food Pantry, make signs and other awareness materials, and countless other projects.

Our volunteers are also able to learn practical everyday skills in addition to helping with OoS projects. For example, volunteers this year had the opportunity to learn about methods of preserving food such as canning or using the dehydrator, cooking healthy meals, public relations skills as we table at events, and to create recipes for the Food Pantry.

The OoS offered summer fellowships for the Project Grow Community Garden. The student fellows worked in the garden and greenhouse learning sustainable gardening practices and supporting summer programs.

Hosting the Camp Big Red Students for interactive demonstrations in the Project Grow Community Garden was one of our most exciting summer programs. Campers learned about and tasted fresh veggies and were introduced to the OoS bees by the Big Red Beekeepers who taught them about pollination and the important role that the bees play in maintaining our environmental systems.

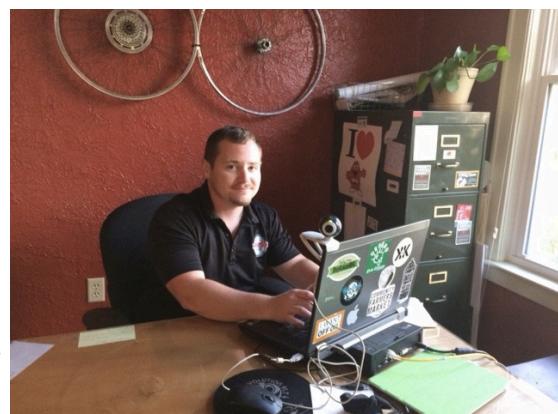


Project Grow Fellow Noelle LeGrand provided taste testing of vegetables, berries, greens, and fruits grown in the community garden.



Big Red Beekeepers' Advisor Holly Young teaches campers all about bees.

Nick Conrad served a summer internship at the OoS in fulfillment of his Recreation Administration program of study. Nick updated the website, managed social media, and helped to plan and coordinate our summer events.





Class visits often lead to collaborative projects. This year the OoS supported a variety of student projects such as this video project, completed by student Chelsea Fought to highlight the importance of a sustainable garden on campus. <https://youtu.be/Jm9Fh6KPO5E>



Environmental Science classes used the OoS garden for citizen scientist projects, learning to properly identify a wide range of plants, animals, and insects. The class, Our Vulnerable Planet, is instructed by Dr. Erin Greunke, who is unafraid of snakes.

Dr. Stinnett's Foodways class adopted the WKU Food Pantry and the Project Grow Community Garden for service learning. The partnership was beneficial and also fun. In celebration of Dia De Los Muertos, Foodways students prepared a traditional Mexican dish called calabaza en tacha, made with ingredients from the Project Grow Community Garden.

The community garden Adopt a Plot program was introduced in fall 2017.

Gardeners who adopted a plot during the fall semester were of all levels of experience. They enjoyed learning how to utilize compost to prepare their beds for planting, how to choose seeds that grow in KY in the fall, how to start seeds and sow directly into the ground, and how to use their produce in the kitchen.

In 2018, the OoS gardener will be working to get the word out about Project Grow on campus and in the broader community. Outreach activities, in addition to our Farmer Friday speaker series, and educational workshops, like how to save seeds, will bring in new faces and enrich the experience of returning Project Grow friends and volunteers. It is our goal to ensure that everyone knows what we are doing here, and that they are welcome to join us!



Eight garden plots were adopted by individuals or groups of students to grow produce for themselves or to donate to the Food Pantry. Seeds, soil, tools, and advice are available for all plot gardeners as part of adoption agreement. Plots are up for re-adoption each year.



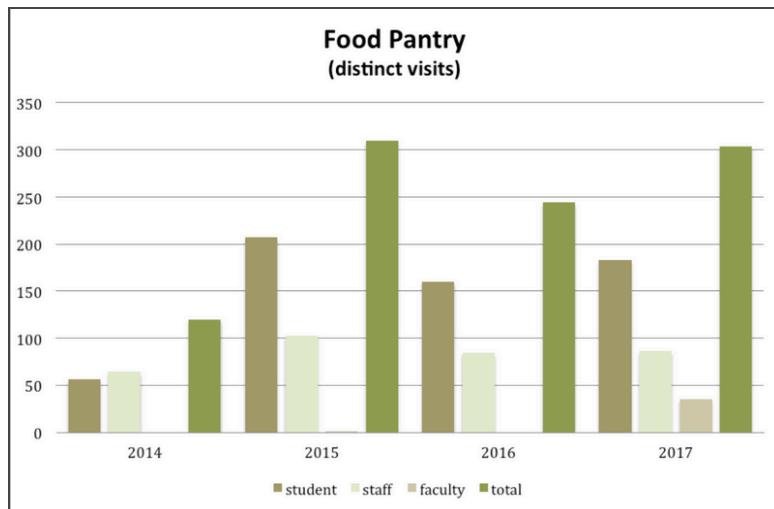
Project Grow
Gardener Alexa
Hatcher
and two plot
gardeners
working hard to
restore our roof
top garden.



The Big Red Beekeepers care for two hives in the Project Grow Community Garden. They conduct their meetings at the OoS and use the beehives for instructional demonstration. The club is open for students to join.

In 2017, General Motors granted the Office of Sustainability \$5000 for the Project Grow Community garden to fund community engagement projects.

The WKU Food Pantry has benefitted from increasing support from the community. 2017, collection drives were held by student organizations, such as HOLAS; WKU departments, such as the WKU Athletics; Greek life; WKU classes, like University Experience; Residence Halls, and many other groups and individuals. WKU Libraries' annual Food for Fines drive continues to be a success, and this year, WKU Parking and Transportation partnered with the Office of Sustainability and Student Government Association on a new initiative to accept food donations in lieu of late fees. As support continues to grow, food insecurity persists. The graph illustrates trends in visits to the Pantry over the four years it has been located at the Office of Sustainability.



South Campus satellite

To meet the needs of more students, a satellite Food Pantry was opened on the South Campus in early Fall 2017. The satellite Pantry is administered by staff on site, and supported by the main Pantry. This chart reflects visits to both locations.



To raise funds for the WKU Food Pantry, the Project Grow Community Gardener and volunteers created edible flower and herb bouquets to trade for donations at the Community Farmers Market. This fundraiser was successful and popular, so we look forward to repeating this in the upcoming year.

The Office of Sustainability Food Pantry opened during Thanksgiving break to share a vegan meal of soup, pumpkin cookies, and hot chocolate. All students, faculty and staff who were on campus were welcome, and were encouraged to take jars of soup back to have or to share with friends.

Big Red Bikes

In 2017, 83 bikes were rented to students during the spring, summer, and fall terms. Still, this was not enough to meet student demand, which is why we are exploring bike share programs that could better serve the campus and community. A team, comprised of campus and community stakeholders has been assembled to review potential programs, and in Fall 2017 Parking and Transportation services conducted a campus survey to determine the behaviors and needs of our campus population as related to bike use and potential bike use. Now that we have gathered the information, the next step is to create an RFP. The goal is to have a pilot program on campus by summer of 2018.



The Big Red Bike shop has become a popular tour destination, visited by several classes and President Caboni in 2017. The Big Red Bike mechanic, Colton Turley, is happy to show the shop, describe his work, and recruit volunteers. These opportunities provide a way for students to be able to learn to service their own bikes, as well as bikes for others.



Tabling at the Activity Fairs and Discover Fest to share our sustainability story with other students was already exciting enough, but a visit from Big Red was the cherry on top. These events provide opportunity to inform students about all of the ways they can be involved.



Reaching Out to build community

The M.A.S.T.E.R. Plan Green Squirrel Social was a fun way to introduce first year students to our sustainability program as a celebration of green living and to foster new friendships. The social featured live music, lawn games, and vegan/vegetarian tacos along with other treats for guests to enjoy.



The OoS Student Ambassadors spend so much time tabling, they gave the table a makeover, complete with locally made Green Squirrel signs and photos that help tell our story. Our table is complete with giveaway goodies for gardening. Homemade seed packets allow students to grow in their spaces, wherever they reside. The packets, folded from the pages of seed catalogs include seeds for greens, herbs, or flower mixes.

The OoS Student Ambassador Team visited Minton Hall to aid RA programing. We created trash art out of waste, students making windchimes, hats, and even flower pots. While our art was drying we played recycling games that teach students the proper ways to sort recycling. In this, we were able to create a better understanding for recycling and the importance of reusing before you recycle.

Green Tours...

...and more Green Tours **-14 in 2017**. Green Tours, conducted by the Sustainability Coordinator and OoS student staff, highlight initiatives across campus so that students are able to learn all of the things we are doing to be a more sustainable WKU. Green Tour features include: the Fresh Food Company composting equipment, the Central Heat Plant, lighting upgrades in buildings and parking lots, LEED buildings, and much more. These tours help students see the efforts that WKU is making to be greener, and learn about ways they can become involved.

Meeting students where they are, taking the Green Tour to the classroom.

When students can't take a tour, we take sustainability to them. In 2017, the Sustainability Coordinator was guest for the following classes:

- University Experience
- Critical Thinking in Ethics
- Public Problem Solving
- Environmental Science
- Honors Org, Management
- U.R.O.C.K
- Sports Management
- Global Sustainability



In the community

The Sustainability Coordinator is always pleased for the opportunity to share WKU's sustainability story with community members. In 2017, visits with the 20th Century Book Club and Bowling Green Garden Club resulted in new partnerships to support the Food Pantry and other OoS activities.

In the spotlight

The Spring 2017 Talisman Magazine (issue #2) focused on the concepts related to well-being, including those physical, spiritual, relational, psychological, occupational, and environmental. Gary Ransdell and Christian Ryan were among those individuals featured in the issue for personal and professional commitment to environmental sustainability.

<http://wkutalisman.com/magazine/issue-02/>

The Unity Podcast

In each episode of Unity Podcast, host Ambriehl Crutchfield engages community members from diverse backgrounds in thoughtful conversations, using the art of storytelling to build bridges within the WKU community. Sustainability was the subject of Ambriehl's March 22, 2017 podcast, featuring Sustainability Coordinator Christian Ryan.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/e4-improving-your-footprint/id1173338314?i=1000382980044&mt=2>



EMBRACING OUR ELEPHANTS
a campus conversation about climate change

November 16
4-6 pm
HCIC Multipurpose Room
RSVP required:
tinyurl.com/embracingourelephants17

Embracing Our Elephants is a series of deliberative dialogues on pressing social issues. Rather than avoiding these tough conversations, we invite you to engage in a dialogue seeking common ground and resulting in collective action.
To learn about upcoming discussions, visit
<https://www.wku.edu/ccs/programs/deliberative-dialogue.php>

Empowering WKU Biodiesel

In 2017 the Office of Sustainability teamed up with the Departments of Agriculture and Engineering to create a SpiritFunder campaign to raise support for project expansion. The goal is to create enough biodiesel to begin using the fuel in University shuttles.
<https://spiritfunder.wku.edu/projects/wku-biodiesel-project-empowering-students-changing-the-world/>

An Inconvenient Sequel

The Office of Sustainability, Center for Citizenship and Social Justice, and Department of Geography and Geology partnered to host a screening of *An Inconvenient Sequel* and live Q&A with Al Gore when it was released for educational premier this fall. The screening was intended to launch a campus conversation about climate change.

Embracing Our Elephants deliberative dialogue about climate change

In preparation for the **Embracing our Elephants** event, 30 students were trained as deliberative dialogue facilitators, enabling them to confidently moderate and encourage productive discussion about difficult topics. The event was attended by approximately 60 participants and was deemed a success. The deliberative dialogue on climate change was the first in what will be an **Embracing Our Elephants** series on a variety of topics.

WKU Earth Days

In April 2017, WKU hosted our **11th annual Earth Day Festival**, with lots of education and celebration. The festival is planned and coordinated through collaboration between the SGA Sustainability Committee, the Office of Sustainability, and many individuals, student organizations, and community partners. It is estimated that the festival is attended by more than 500 people each year.

committing to sustainability in DINING SERVICES

Improving sustainability in Dining services has been a continuous effort and the creation of a **Sustainability Coordinator position** by Aramark in 2017 will be a significant help in making progress. In late fall the position was granted to Madonna May, a WKU graduate who worked in the Office of Sustainability for 3 years as a student assistant. Her experience in sustainability and as a local farmer make her a good choice for the job and we are excited to work with her.

In 2017 the SGA Sustainability Committee and Office of Sustainability worked with Dining Services on two significant waste reduction initiatives. The **Green To Go reusable container program** was introduced in Fresh Food Company in spring and expanded to other locations in the fall. Subway began to make “no bag” the default, instead placing stickers on sandwiches and providing bags by request. The Subway initiative has proven a challenge to communicate to customers so our partners in Dining Services are working on a communication campaign to launch the first week of the spring 2018 semester.

Fair Trade University

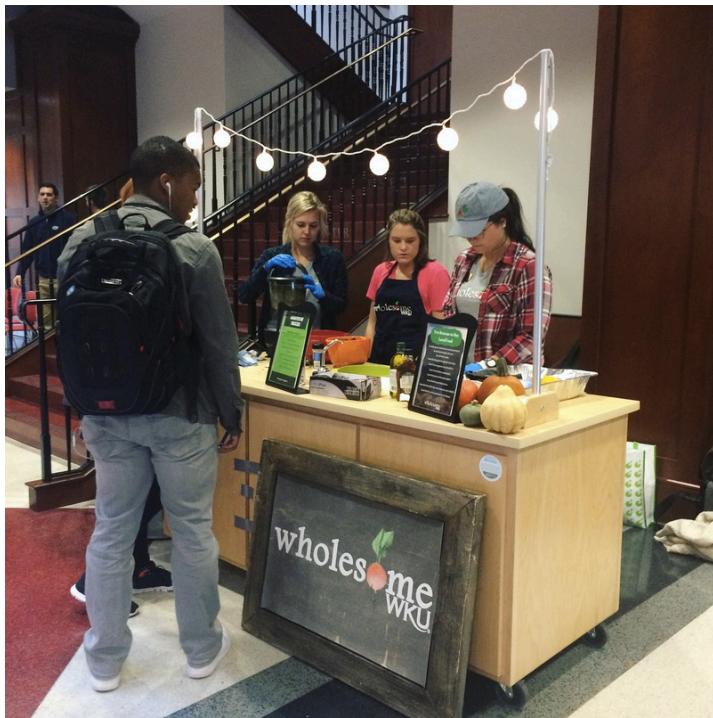
With renewed commitment to Fair Trade, Western Kentucky University formed a committee September 2017 aiming to increase the number of Fair Trade options available on campus. A goal was established to plan one event per semester to promote awareness. The Office of Sustainability sponsored a Fair Trade Hot Chocolate event hosted in the Downing Student Union on December 5, 2017. Students were engaged with cocoa and conversation about the importance of Fair Trade.

The Fair Trade committee is comprised of the following members:

Dr. Molly Kerby, Department of Diversity and Community Studies
Dr. Gayle Malingen, Department of Social Work
Madonna May, Aramark Sustainability Coordinator
Dr. Christian Ryan, Sustainability Coordinator
Sarah Sears, WKU Store Marketing Coordinator
Courtney Martin, Office of Resource Conservation Intern
Cara Walters, Office of Sustainability Student Ambassador



FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGNS



CSA Share Fair for wellness of people and planet

The OoS partnered with WKU Wellness and Wholesome @ WKU to host the first CSA Share Fair to educate students, faculty, and staff about one of the easiest ways to eat more fresh vegetables and fruits: Community Supported Agriculture programs. Many CSA options are available in the Bowling Green area, offered by a variety of farms. Farms including Need More Acres and Think Little were on hand to explain their CSA programs, Wholesome @ WKU sampled their veggies, and faculty and staff were able to earn Top Life credit for attending.



Local food was served in Fresh Food Company for **Campus Sustainability Day**, featuring Jackson's Orchard, Kenny's Country Cheese, ATP Greenhouses and more!

Maps near each product illustrated the exact distance the food traveled to make it to the plates at Fresh Food Company.

At the entrance of Fresh Food Company, students had the option to sign the "VegOut" pledge to eat more plant based foods.

OoS Ambassadors worked with the SGA Sustainability Committee on many projects in 2017, including recycled plastic bag bench project, annual Earth Day Festival, waste reduction initiatives in dining services, and other outreach programs, such as the Potter College Fall Festival where students were encouraged write why they cared about sustainability on a leaf and add it to our tree. All parts were made of reused materials and it is now on display in the SGA office.



Looking ahead

The Sustainability Living Learning Community creation is underway. We are in the early steps of the planning process and will be putting the LLC into place in 2018. The OoS is happy to sponsor an internship for Noelle LeGrand to be the student voice in the project. In this LLC, students will be able to live in this community that helps to build an understanding of sustainability in both an ecological and equitable way. While doing this, students will also engage in outdoor recreation activities together to help develop team building and connect with nature.

The Office of Sustainability will continue to work with Parking and Transportation and other stakeholders to bring **a bike share program** to WKU and the greater community. The goal is to have a provider selected and to initiate a pilot program in spring or summer of 2018, for full implementation in fall.

Green Squirrel of Approval for Residence Halls is our upcoming newest addition to the Green Squirrel of Approval program. The Green Squirrel of Approval for residence halls will be conducted similarly to the green office and department certification, however emphasis will be placed on knowledge of basic sustainability concepts, engagement in campus sustainability efforts, and lifestyle.

OoS Student Ambassadors will be partnering with **GreenToppers** in 2018 on a range of projects and group trips, including a river water clean up expedition.

And so, so much more!

Follow our progress and get engaged. Check out the WKU Office of Sustainability on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, or just stop by 503 Regents Ave.





Thank you for reading the Office of Sustainability 2017 annual report,
created by:
Christian Ryan, Noelle LeGrand, Alexa Hatcher, and Cara Walters.
Please contact sustainability@wku.edu with questions, comments, ideas, or
suggestions.