WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Annual Sustainability Report





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SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that Wilfrid Laurier University and its campuses are located on the Haldimand tract, traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe (Anish-nah-bay) and Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-no-show-nee) peoples. This land is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples and symbolizes the agreement to share, protect our resources and not to engage in conflict.

From the Haldimand Treaty of October 25, 1784, this territory is described as: "6 miles deep from each side of the river (Grand River) beginning at Lake Erie and extending in the proportion to the Head of said river, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever." The treaty was signed by the British with their allies, the Six Nations, after the American Revolution. Despite being the largest reserve demographically in Canada, those nations now reside on less than five percent of this original territory after losing much of the territory to settlement of newcomers.

Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. Acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we live, learn and work. We recognize, honour, and respect these nations at the traditional stewards of the lands and water which Laurier is now present.



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Introduction



Sustainability remains an integral pillar of Laurier's operations, academics, and engagement. Since the inception of the Sustainability Office in 2014, the Laurier community has continuously reinforced its dedication to fostering a thriving culture of sustainability across all campuses. The Annual Sustainability Report offers insight into how the University's academic pursuits, operational endeavors, and engagement are contributing to the attainment of goals within the Action Plan.

This report serves as a tool for evaluating progress, identifying areas of enhancement, and addressing challenges encountered across all campuses. With a total of 12 goals outlined in the Action Plan, the University provides the Laurier community with detailed updates on progress on an annual basis.

The report encompasses all sustainability-related activities undertaken during the 2023-24 academic year across campuses. Additionally, consumption and emissions data presented in the report has been gathered and analyzed from the 2023 calendar year. The report is structured into distinct categories: Operations, Academics, Engagement, and Investment, with sustainability themes interwoven throughout.

In summary, the 2023-24 annual report includes notable achievements and highlights within Laurier's sustainability initiatives, underscoring the institution's commitment to cultivating a thriving culture of sustainability across all campuses.

The Sustainability Action Plan 2023-28 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Action Plan uses the United Nation's SDGs as a framework to ensure Laurier's sustainability goals contribute to the progress of human well-being and ecological integrity on a global scale. Throughout this report, you will see how the University works towards its sustainability goals and objectives, while contributing to the relevant SDGs identified.

Highlights



Triple E Award Finalist



Ricoh Printers and Telephony Collection Project, led by ICT and Sustainability Office



National Fairtrade Month: Laurier received **1**st **Place** for University & College Campus



The launch of the 2023-28 Sustainability Action Plan



Eric Meliton, elected new Ontario College & University Sustainability Professionals Co-Chair (OCUSP)



Charlotte Knight became the **first recipient** of the Julia Hendry Memorial Award, which is given to a student who demonstrates an interest in sustainability.



\$14,000 of funding allocated to Sustainable Hawk Fund recipients for the 2023-24 academic year.



The Freestore Brantford had a total of **1600 students** stop by, with 4,400 lbs of goods dispersed. The Waterloo Freestore diverted 3,600 lbs from the landfill.



Formalization of the Menstrual Equity Committee



Neuron and Region of Waterloo launched the **six-year pilot project**



Over **100 items** were collected for the Winter Wear Drive in partnership with the Faculty of Arts.



The Sustainability Office worked with **28+ external partners** across Canada and beyond.

Summary of Progress

(2023-28 Action Plan)

The progress on the Action Plan is detailed by using the defined terms below to signify various stages of advancement. Subsequently, an overview of the status of the 12 goals outlined in the Action Plan is provided, with each goal categorized by a corresponding status term indicating the extent of achievement by the University.

Each section includes a reference to actions identified in the Action Plan that have SMART opportunities set to be completed in the 2023-24 academic year. Additionally, some actions with SMART opportunities with completion dates beyond 2024 are included in the report if preliminary planning is underway. These updates encompass status assessments and noteworthy achievements, offering a comprehensive overview of the University's progress towards its sustainability goals.

Defining Action Plan Progress

NOT STARTED

No activities have been completed related to the goals or actions.

IN PROGRESS

Preliminary planning and stakeholder meetings have begun. The goal or action is on track based on timelines set out in the Sustainability Action Plan.

COMPLETE

Goal or action has been achieved.

Operations

GOAL 1 | Climate

Continue to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across Laurier campuses in Brantford and Waterloo, building a low carbon campus in Milton, and undertaking other projects as funding opportunities arise. (*SDG 13*)

IN PROGRESS

GOAL 2 | Energy & Water

Improve energy and water conservation across campus and contribute to deferred maintenance. (*SDG 7 and 13*)



Summary of Progress

(2023-28 Action Plan)

Operations (continued)

GOAL 3 | Transportation

Increase sustainable transportation uptake by students, faculty, and staff to reduce single occupancy vehicle use by 5 percent. (*SDG 9 and 13*)

GOAL 4 | Transportation

Improve the sustainability of the University's fleet of vehicles to improve efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. (*SDG 9 and 13*)

GOAL 5 | Waste

Reduce overall amount of waste produced on campus by five percent and increase the waste diversion rate by 10 percent. (*SDG 12*)

GOAL 6 | Food & Dining

Improve sustainable food systems in formal and informal campus services. (*SDG 2*)

GOAL 7 | Grounds

Achieve a system of sustainable open and natural spaces throughout campus, prioritizing pedestrians and a positive, thriving relationship between the built and natural environment. (*SDG 15*)

GOAL 8 | Coordination & Planning

Create and update standards and toolkits to embed sustainability in Planning, Design, and Construction (PDC), Facilities Operations and Human Resources onboarding activities. (*SDG 9*)

IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

NOT STARTED

Summary of Progress

(2023-28 Action Plan)

Academics

GOAL 9 | Curriculum

Improve sustainability knowledge and skills in Laurier students by providing sustainability resources and opportunities to Laurier's teaching community and to students directly. (*SDG 4*)

GOAL 10 | Research

Improve collaboration between the Sustainability Office and Laurier research programs that focus on the environment and sustainability. (*SDG 4*)

Engagement

GOAL 11 | Campus Engagement

Further the goals of the Strategic Academic Plan as they relate to sustainability. (*SDG 4 and 10*)

Investment & Finance

GOAL 12

Support meaningful action on climate change while meeting fiduciary duties to the Board of Governors. (*SDG 13*)











GOAL 1 | Climate

Continue to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across Laurier campuses in Brantford and Waterloo, building a low carbon campus in Milton, and undertaking other projects as funding opportunities arise.

Aligned with SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Action 1

Establish mechanism for regular communication of carbon emissions to business units to facilitate reduction efforts and behavioural changes.¹

Action 2

Establish a post COVID-19 pandemic baseline (2022-23) to update GHG emissions reduction strategy.¹

¹ Actions 1 and 2 are only included as these actions have SMART opportunities with a defined completion date in the 2023-24 academic year.





Climate

Laurier's Emissions Reduction Journey: Progress Towards Net Zero

Over the past 14 years, the University has consistently reported Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions to assess the impact of campus operations (see Figure 1.0). The 2023 calendar year marked the first full year of resumed on-campus activities, enabling a more accurate evaluation of emissions reduction progress. Over the past five years, Laurier has strategically invested in energy efficiency projects to reduce consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Since 2009, there has been a noteworthy 23.8% reduction in GHG emissions across the Brantford, Waterloo, and Kitchener campuses for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, collectively¹ (refer to Figure 2.0). Additionally, since 2019, there has been a 14% reduction in electricity consumption and 23% reduction in natural gas consumption on all campuses. Examples of projects that assisted in reducing Laurier's energy footprint in 2023 include:

- Demand control ventilation implementation (*Science Research*)
- Heat pump system replacement (*Northdale*)
- Heat pump system replacement (Post House)
- Boiler system replacement (*Dr. Alvin Woods Building*)
- Mechanical and electrical systems upgrades (One Market)



It is imperative to compare energy usage between 2023 and 2024 with pre-pandemic levels to affirm consistent emissions reduction and success of energy infrastructure projects. Overall, Laurier is on a path to establishing new emissions reduction targets that is crucial for achieving the University's net zero emissions goal by 2050².

- ¹ Scope 3 emissions have been removed from the overall emissions reductions progress analysis, due to an enhanced methodology for air travel emissions. This data will help to guide further actions and policies related to emissions reduction for scope 3 emissions.
- ² In 2024, the Sustainability Office will help identify new GHG emissions reductions targets to help the university on its path towards net zero.



Climate

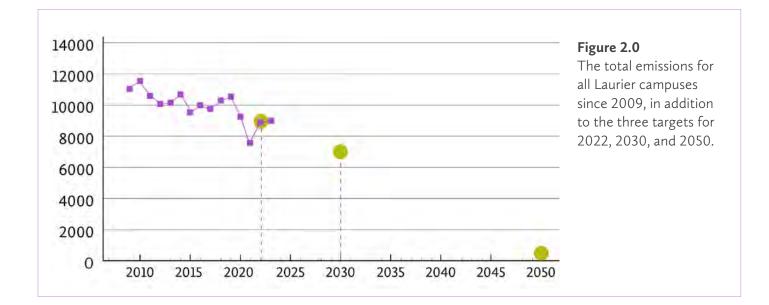
Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
Direct Emissions	Indirect Emissions	Indirect Emissions
These emissions are considered direct emissions of Laurier, controlled or owned by the University.	Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions that are outcomes from the purchase of electricity, steam, heat, or cooling not owned or controlled by the University.	Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions that are outcomes from Laurier's activities. These sources are emissions not covered in Scope 1 or Scope 2 that come from Laurier's value chain.

What is Calculated and Reported at Laurier?

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
✓ Natural Gas✓ Fleet	✓ Electricity	 ✓ Air Travel ✓ Water ✓ Landfill Waste

Figure 1.0

Breakdown and explanation of emissions and consumption analysis at Laurier





Climate

Laurier's New Sustainability Frontier: Unveiling The Environmental Impact of Business Travel

With the implementation of Chrome River as Laurier's expense management system, a new opportunity emerged to analyze emissions originating from staff and faculty travel. Scope 3 emissions, distinct from Laurier's direct operations, result from indirect activities such as business travel, employee commuting, operational waste, and leased assets. The Sustainability Office took on the task of refining the air travel emissions inventory. Utilizing the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator, air emissions from 1,853 flight routes were calculated by manually inputting departure and destination details. Consequently, Laurier's air travel emissions totaled 648.1 tonnes, constituting 7% of the University's overall emissions, which encompasses Scope 1, 2, and 3 sources³. Notably, these emissions from business travel equate to travelling the globe 236 times! This means that the previous air travel



emissions methodology did not adequately capture the emissions from staff and faculty business travel. Moving forward, the newly acquired dataset will inform the development of initiatives and guidelines aimed at mitigating emissions indirectly generated by Laurier employees during business travel.

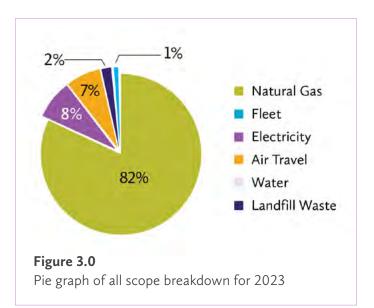
³ Notes to consider for the air travel emissions inventory: a) out-of-pocket expenses that are **not** reported on Chrome River, are not included in the inventory b) Flights that are covered by an external party for participation in an event, research, or conference (for example, a faculty member gets invited to a conference and has their flight paid for by the organizing group) are not included in the air travel emissions inventory.

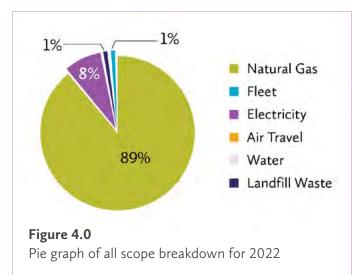


Climate

Changes to Scope 3 Emissions Inventory

Understanding Scope 3 emissions is integral to capturing the University's impact of campus operations, encompassing both direct and indirect factors. Following the update of the air emissions methodology, Scope 3 emissions now constitute 9% of the total emissions from Scope 1, 2 and 3 (see Figure 3.0). In comparison, Scope 3 emissions only accounted for 1.5% of total emissions in the 2022 calendar year, which was calculated using a less stringent methodology (see Figure 4.0). By accurately calculating air travel emissions associated with business and research travel, we gain insight into the influence of Scope 3 emissions on the University's operations. As a result, the Sustainability Office plans to analyze emissions linked to vehicle mileage reimbursements for staff and faculty, with a specific focus on the travel between the Brantford, Kitchener, Milton, and Waterloo campuses. Capturing indirect consumption sources, particularly business travel will enable us to enhance policies, programs, and procedures aimed at reducing vehicular and flight usage for business and research activities. The development of this process and methodology will commence in the 2024-25 fiscal year.







Climate



Laurier Library Participates in the Ontario Library Association's Climate Action Week

The Laurier Library represented the University during the Ontario Library Association's Climate Action Week, a province wide campaign held in November 2023. Together with the Sustainability Office and the WLUFA Climate Action Committee, the virtual event occurred on November 8, 2023, with 55 active participants. The panel discussion centered on the concerns regarding the future of the planet and highlighted climate action research and initiatives at Laurier. Moderated by Eric Meliton, Manager of the Sustainability Office, the panel featured Laurier community members sharing their expertise on climate action. The panel included:

- Danve Castroverde, Assistant Professor in Biology
- **Bryce Gunson**, *Project Manager for the Resilient Communities Research Collaborative*
- Robert McLeman, Professor in the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
- Denise Springett, Doctoral candidate in the Department of English and Film Studies



GOAL 2 | Energy & Water

Improve energy and water conservation across campus and contribute to deferred maintenance.

Aligned with SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all Aligned with SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Action 1

Regularly measure and verify energy and water usage based on established protocols.¹

Action 4

Realize energy savings through continued expansion of Building Automation System (BAS) technologies and retro-commissioning of existing building systems.¹

¹ Actions 1 and 4 are only included as these actions have SMART opportunities with a defined completion date in the 2023-24 academic year.





Energy & Water

Enhancing Energy Auditing and Data Collection Processes

During the 2023-24 academic year, the Facilities and Asset Management team collaborated with utility providers to enhance data collection processes and evaluate metering capabilities across all campuses. Various solutions for a data management dashboard and the integration of quarterly energy scans were evaluated. These scans will be conducted by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO)'s Strategic Energy Management program. In March 2024, the IESO, along with the Sustainability Office, conducted the inaugural energy scan of the Athletic Complex in Waterloo.

Update to Utility Dashboard for Energy and Emissions Tracking

In September 2023, the Energy Management Working Group (EMWG) explored options for implementing a utility dashboard to track energy consumption and emissions. This dashboard will serve as a tool for identifying cost and energy-saving opportunities at Laurier. In the Fall 2024 term, the Sustainability Office and EMWG will be looking to implement the full energy dashboard on RETScreen.





GOAL 3 | Transportation

Increase sustainable transportation uptake by students, faculty, and staff to reduce single occupancy vehicle use by 5 percent.

Aligned with SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation Aligned with SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Action 1

Incentivize sustainable transportation options to encourage uptake.¹

Action 3

Identification of sustainable transportation opportunities to reduce Scope 3 emissions from campus-to-campus commuting.¹

¹ Actions 1 and 3 are only included as these actions have SMART opportunities with a completion date of 2024-25, with preliminary planning underway.





GOAL 4 | Transportation

Improve the sustainability of the University's fleet of vehicles to improve efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Aligned with SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Aligned with SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

WinterWise 2024: Sustainable Transportation Workshop with the Region of Waterloo

On March 6, 2024, the Sustainability Office partnered with the Region of Waterloo ("the Region) to host a workshop focused on sustainable transportation as part of the "WinterWise 2024" campaign. This virtual event attracted over 30 staff and faculty members who participated to learn about the TravelWise program. This program offers corporate pass discounts, events, and a carpool matching software for employees at Laurier. The workshop featured a presentation by Ivan Balaban, Principal Planner for the Region, followed by an interactive Q&A session for participants.





Transportation



Enhancing Access to Low Cost, Zero Carbon Transportation With Neuron

The Region of Waterloo launched a six-year pilot program to bring Neuron Mobility e-scooters and e-bikes as convenient transportation alternatives for community members. Laurier signed a memo of understanding to join the pilot program in 2023. The University started with five designated stations on campus for e-scooter and e-bike pick-up and drop off. These stations are located at:

- Lazaridis Hall
- Dr Alvin Woods Building
- King Street Residence
- Science Building (Bricker side)
- Athletics Complex

Students, staff, faculty, and community members can access the e-scooters to commute to and from campus. With travel-related emissions constituting 47% of Waterloo Region's total emissions, the introduction of e-scooters represents a significant stride towards fostering sustainable commuting and transportation options within the community.



SPOTLIGHT

Parking & Transportation Resources' fleet goes electric

In May 2023, Parking & Transportation Resources made the shift to zero carbon emissions with their vehicle fleet! The office purchased a fully electric vehicle to assist the parking enforcement team. By switching over to fully electric, Parking & Transportation Resources continues to showcase their commitment to being sustainability leaders on campus.





GOAL 5 | Waste

Reduce overall amount of waste produced on campus by five percent and increase the waste diversion rate by 10 percent.

Aligned with SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Action 1

Improve awareness of waste reduction/diversion programs through incentives, events, and better advertising.¹

Action 3

Utilize data generated from self-auditing certification capacity established at both Brantford and Waterloo campus to assist with identifying process, service, and capital improvements.¹

¹ Actions 1 and 3 are only included as these actions have SMART opportunities with a completion date of 2024-25, with preliminary planning underway.





Waste



Capturing Waste Reduction Data Through Internal Waste Audits

In Ontario, the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (IC&I) sector is required to conduct annual waste audits. At Laurier, internal waste audits are performed by Facilities Operations and Sustainability Office staff. These audits occur three times annually, allowing for a comprehensive review of operational achievements and obstacles. Additionally, waste data, including total waste generated and total weight recycled, is compiled by Laurier's waste hauler and provided to operations staff. Notably, Laurier's total diversion rate improved from 23.1% in 2022 to 42.3% in 2023. The diversion rate is calculated by taking the weight of recycled materials and dividing it by the weight of waste generated. Notably, the improvement in waste diversion resulted from an increase in items

being recycled, opposed to being disposed of in the landfill. The qualitative data gathered from internal waste audits is compiled and discussed at quarterly Waste Management Working Group meetings. The objective is to increase the frequency of audits to ensure precise data collection and to identify areas for improvement in waste management programs and processes.

Handling E-Waste Responsibly with the Decommissioning of Non-Ricoh Printers

In recent years, the ICT department has been installing Ricoh printers across all campuses to support a centralized printing strategy. With printer usage declining on campus and the need to streamline maintenance resources, a concerted collaborative effort with FAM, ICT, and Printing Services was made to remove and responsibly decommission non-Ricoh printers from office spaces. In 2023, over 90% of non-Ricoh printers on the Waterloo campus and over 85% on the Brantford campus were collected for recycling, reuse, or e-waste disposal. Additionally, as part of the initiative, telephones were phased out and repurposed as e-waste to facilitate the transition to Microsoft Teams Phone services within the Laurier community. These cross-departmental initiatives exemplify opportunities for collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing sustainability and operational efficiencies across all campuses.



Waste

Move Out Program Diverted 3,900 Pounds Of Waste from the Landfill

To capture waste and divert reusable items from students moving out of residence, the Move Out Program was coordinated in April and May of 2023. Over 3,900 pounds of waste was diverted from the landfill. The Sustainability Office, along with its partners, invested over 100 hours in sorting and organizing collected goods from residence buildings. Most items were designated for distribution through the Freestore for student access. Textiles, e-waste, and unopened

non-perishable food items were directed to community partners for use including the Region of Waterloo's landfill and recycling centre, Diabetes Canada, Goodwill, and Distro were all recipients of items that were diverted. This collaborative effort between Residence, the Sustainability Office, FAM Operations, and community partners contributes to ongoing successes in our journey towards achieving zero waste campuses.





Waste

Zero Waste Week 2023 Highlights

In the 5th annual Zero Waste Week, the Sustainability Office hosted various events and initiatives to engage the Laurier community on zero waste. From October 24-27, the Laurier community participated in the following engagements:

- October 24 and 27: Grocery giveaway in partnership with the Student Wellness Centre (Brantford) and Enrollment Services, where 234 participants received fresh produce.
- October 25: Zero Waste Sorting Competition tested participants' knowledge on zero waste at Laurier.
- October 26: Bring Your Own Bottle was held in partnership with LSPIRG to provide household cleaning supplies to students who brought their own containers or bottles. A total of 44 students participated!

Martin Luther University and LSPIRG collaborated with the Sustainability Office to raise awareness and promote the adoption of zero waste practices both at home and on campus. Over 300 students participated in-person during the week, enhancing their awareness and application of zero waste practices at home and at school.

Waterloo & Brantford Freestore Update

As part of the growing need to divert and reduce waste at Laurier, both Waterloo and Brantford Freestores had a successful year providing household goods and items to students. At the Brantford campus, over 4400 lbs of goods were provided to students at no cost. In addition, both Freestores partnered with the "We Brought What you Forgot" initiative that was held in September 2023 and the "Winter Wear Drive," to collect winter items for students. Lastly, the Waterloo Freestore had two designated move-in days for international and exchange students to have priority access to items. Overall, 900lbs worth of items were picked up in September 2023 and over 600 lbs were taken in January 2024.







GOAL 6 | Food & Dining

Improve sustainable food systems in formal and informal campus services

Aligned with SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Action 2 Increase the number of ways students and staff can access and purchase local foods.¹

¹ Action 2 is only included as this action has SMART opportunities with a completion date of 2024-25, with preliminary planning underway.



Food & Dining



Low Carbon Meal Choices with Coolfood Meals

In September 2023, Laurier Food Services launched its collaboration with <u>Coolfood Meals</u> across the Waterloo campus. Every Low Carbon Certified Meal has emissions that are 38% lower than the average regional meal! This means with every certified meal you purchase; you help reduce the climate footprint of your food intake. Coolfood meals, identified with "Low Carbon Certified (CF)" labels, are available across Laurier food outlet, simplifying environmentally conscious food choices for students, staff, and faculty. This collaboration continues to solidify Food Services' commitment to offering low carbon, zero waste options to all Laurier community members.

Food & Dining

Laurier Wins First Prize in National Campus Fairtrade Month Challenge

During October 16-20, 2023, Fair Trade Campus Week (FTCW) was held for the sixth consecutive year, aimed at promoting awareness of Fairtrade products. Throughout the week, numerous opportunities were available for the Laurier community to engage with Fairtrade1 practices and programs. Laurier Food Services hosted daily booths at various locations on the Waterloo campus, offering complimentary coffee and chocolate samples. In addition, the Sustainability Office organized a Fairtrade giveaway on social media (all campuses), a "Go for Gold Scavenger Hunt" (all campuses), and the "Golden Hawk Ticket Challenge" (Waterloo campus). Between all these initiatives, 430+ participants were directly engaged, 600+ chocolate bars were given away, and over 1900+ accounts were reached through social media content. Laurier's most notable achievement. throughout the week was winning the first prize in the Campus Fairtrade Month Challenge, a nationwide competition! Overall, FTCW was a success, fostering both in-person and virtual engagement to raise awareness on Fairtrade at Laurier and beyond.



¹ "<u>Fairtrade</u>" refers to the label and engagement campaigns that originate from <u>Fairtrade Canada</u> and other Fairtrade-focused organizations. When referring to "Fair Trade Campus," this is the program that provides tools and resources to engage college and university campuses on Fairtrade products and labels.





GOAL 7 | Grounds

Achieve a system of sustainable open and natural spaces throughout campus, prioritizing pedestrians and a positive, thriving relationship between the built and natural environment.

Aligned with SDG 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Action 1 Prioritize planting and maintenance of pollinator friendly plants and habitat.¹

¹ Actions 1 is only included as this action has SMART opportunities with a defined completion date in the 2023-24 academic year.



Grounds

Brantford Apiary Update

The Laurier Apiary is thriving on the rooftop of the One Market Building on the Brantford campus. In 2023, two new hives were added to the apiary for a total of four urban hives and approximately 320,000 honeybees who made their home at Laurier. Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, the Laurier Apiary hosted two honey tasting events, where students and staff had the opportunity to sample a variety of local honeys and learn about the importance of pollinators. In the Fall 2023 semester, our own Golden Hawk Honey was harvested in limited quantities. While caring for honeybees provides a sweet reward, the apiary team remains committed to safeguarding the wild and native bee population. In partnership with the Sustainability Office, the Laurier Apiary is exploring ways to protect wild native pollinators on campus and beyond.

Northdale Community Plots

Annually, Laurier collaborates with local partners and internal stakeholders to provide access to green space for community gardening and naturalization programming. These spaces are overseen by Oliver Manidoka, a shared student staff member between the Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) and the Sustainability Office. One of the notable highlights from the past year included the clean-up of the garden plots and the pollinator garden by the Office of Research Services. Additionally, plots were allocated to the ISC for cultivating traditional medicines and culturally appropriate food, addressing food sovereignty concerns, and supporting the ISC pantry. Furthermore, garden plots were provided to staff from the Career Centre and Laurier International for personal food cultivation. The 2023 growing season witnessed both familiar faces and new programming, with plans for further enhancements in the upcoming 2024 season.





Grounds

Reviving RAC: Brantford's Living Wall Gets an Upgrade

The Research and Academic Centre (RAC) in Brantford received an update to its living wall! The Sustainability Office partnered with Brantford's Facilities and Asset Management (FAM) Operations team to initiate a maintenance plan to enhance the appearance of the RAC entrance. Objectives of this plan include preserving the wall's health, implementing proactive maintenance measures to minimize costs, and enhancing foliage density. As part of the maintenance plan, upgrades involved replacing grow lights and introducing over 200 new plants. These enhancements ensure a visually appealing and inviting entryway to the RAC building!







GOAL 8 | Coordination & Planning

Create and update standards and toolkits to embed sustainability in Planning, Design, and Construction (PDC), Facilities Operations and Human Resources onboarding activities.

Aligned with SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Action 1

Embed sustainability criteria in contracts and procedures for project managers and facilities operators to ensure that sustainability criteria are incorporated within projects and operations.¹

Action 2

Include sustainability-related information and ongoing training in existing standards, practices, and programs within the pre-existing staff sustainability certificate and new hire orientation.¹

¹ Actions 1 and 2 are only included as these actions have SMART opportunities with a defined completion date in the 2023-24 academic year.



Coordination & Planning

Sustainability-Themed Training Opportunities for Staff and Faculty

Laurier staff and faculty were provided opportunities to engage in sustainability focused training initiatives throughout the 2023-24 academic year. In November 2023, the Sustainability Office and Procurement Services staff participated in the "Circular Procurement Essentials" workshop, hosted by the Circular Innovation Council and Partners in Project Green. Additionally, training workshops facilitated by the IESO were attended by the Facilities and Asset Management staff. Lastly, staff and faculty benefitted from presentations led by the Sustainability Office, including sessions within the HR leadership presentation series and the WinterWise 2024: Sustainable Transportation workshop.

Bringing Together Sustainability Leaders from Ontario Post-Secondary Institutions

As a member of the Ontario College and University Sustainability Professionals (OCUSP) network, Laurier remains dedicated to advancing its leadership within the provincial higher education sector. In collaboration with the University of Waterloo and Conestoga College, Laurier co-hosted the OCUSP AGM from June 21st to 23rd, 2023. This AGM is more than a meeting – it is an opportunity to bring together diverse perspectives and experiences to help develop best practices and collaborative opportunities in sustainability programming. Themed "Engaging Campus Communities in Sustainability," the 2023 AGM covered topics such as procurement, Scope 3 emissions, waste management, sustainability rating systems, and designations. In total, 75 sustainability professionals and student staff from 32 higher education institutions attended from across Ontario. This year, the Sustainability Office looks forward to engaging with fellow OCUSP members at the 2024 AGM in Ottawa!







GOAL 9 | Curriculum

Improve sustainability knowledge and skills in Laurier students by providing sustainability resources and opportunities to Laurier's teaching community and to students directly.

Aligned with SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Action 2

Expand environment and sustainability-related academic programs offered at Laurier through focused programming.¹

¹ Action 2 is only included as this action has SMART opportunities with a completion date of 2026-27, with preliminary planning underway.



Curriculum

Academic Partnerships with Sustainability

Each academic year, faculty members reach out to the Sustainability Office to enhance the delivery of sustainability-related content in an engaging way. During the 2023-24 academic year, the Sustainability Office engaged with various course programming to task students with sustainability-related challenges. The following faculty worked with Sustainability Office staff to provide students with an enriched educational experience:

- GEOG 362: Food Security and Organics (*Alison Blay-Palmer*)
- CH 233: Environmental Atmospheric Chemistry (*Hind Al-Abadleh*)
- GS/SE City Lab and Social Enterprise (*Ehaab Abdou*)
- PS 383: Environment, Psychology and Action (*Livia Dittmer*)
- GG261: Geography of Energy (Edmund Okoree)





Hacking Freshwater Futures: Laurier Hosts 2023 IISD ELA Hackathon Launch

On October 23, 2023, the Sustainability Office hosted one of two launch events for the IISD's (International Institute for Sustainable Development) Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) hackathon in partnership with the IISD. This event aimed to kickstart the hackathon, targeting students and young professionals aged 18 to 30. Participants were tasked with creating a data product to address freshwater challenges presented by the Grand Council Treaty 3, Living Lakes Canada, and ACAP Saint John. During the launch event, attendees were introduced to mentors who would guide them through the solution building process. Networking opportunities were facilitated over dinner, and participants gained insights into the challenges they would tackle. A total of 20 individuals attended the launch event, with 30 others joining the virtual hackathon across Canada!



Curriculum

Food Systems Research with GESC362 and GE260

In Winter 2024, the Sustainability Office collaborated with Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems and UNESCO Chair, and professor for GESC362 and GE260 courses, to conduct food system research at Laurier. The research focused on five fundamental areas of food systems including:

- Fair Trade awareness and program expansion (GE260)
- Food Security programming available on campus (GESC362)
- Food Waste on campus (GESC362)
- Reusable Containers in dining locations (GESC362)
- Organics certification for the institution (GESC362)

Students conducted interviews with internal stakeholders to gather insights on food systems and programming at Laurier. After their research, the students provided recommendations to the Sustainability Office for enhancing food-related programs on campus.



SPOTLIGHT

Laurier's Faculty of Arts students collaborate on solutions related to municipal issues

Social Innovation in the City, offered through the Faculty of Arts, provides students with hands-on opportunities to research, design and test social and policy innovations to make a positive impact in the City of Waterloo. Two sustainability focused projects were presented to the City - related to reducing waste when students move out and embedding sustainability into events and festivals. As a result of this program, student Xuan Nguyen worked in a full-time internship investigating ways postsecondary students can embrace and incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into their lifestyles.





Curriculum



Bringing Students and Stakeholders Together in Brantford to Collaborate on Sustainability Challenges

Laurier's Faculty of Liberal Arts, in partnership with the Sustainability Office, hosted the Sustainability Retreat on October 28, 2023, in Brantford. The focus was on active transportation and food justice, with participants offering feedback to community stakeholders. A final report was compiled based on discussions, and the insights were shared with the City of Brantford to address challenges related to active transportation and food justice. The event attracted over 25 engaged students, fostering meaningful discussions, networking opportunities and enjoyable meals.

PS383 Campus Sustainability Problem Solving

In partnership with the Community and Workplace Partnership Office, Professor Livia Dittmer and the Environment, Psychology and Action class worked to solve environmental issues on campus by applying psychological concepts. Specifically, the class focused on enhancing uptake of the Friendlier reusable container program by developing promotions and marketing tools. The class identified potential barriers and obstacles that prevent students from using the program effectively and provided valuable feedback to the Sustainability Office for improving program accessibility and user-friendliness.

GG261: Powering Earth Course Partnership with Sustainability Office

For the past two years, the Sustainability Office has supported the capstone projects within the course GG261: Geography of Energy. In the 2023-24 academic year, the Sustainability Office partnered with Professor Edmund Okoree to present energyrelated challenges at Laurier. Alongside the Sustainability Office's participation, the following organizations contributed: Enova Power, Piller's, Unity Health, and VCT Group. Each organization offered one or two energy challenges for students to address through projects, research, or implementation initiatives. At the conclusion of Winter 2024 term, the students presented their solutions and project ideas to their assigned organizations.





GOAL 10 | Research

Improve collaboration between the Sustainability Office and Laurier research programs that focus on the environment and sustainability.

Aligned with SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Action 2

In collaboration with faculty, innovate academic initiatives and programs to use campus as 'Living Lab' opportunities.¹

¹ Action 2 is only included as this action has SMART opportunities with a completion date of 2026-27, with preliminary planning underway.



Academics

Research

SDG #16 Progress Highlighted Through Collaborative Project Among Laurier Faculty Members

Associate professors Timothy Donais (Global Studies) and Alistair Edgar (Political Science), along with co-editor Kirsten Van Houten, brought together perspectives and scholars to assess the advancement of SDG Goal 16: promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. Their book "SDG 16 and the Global Governance of Violence" addresses the pivotal question "at the halfway point in their implementation period, are the SDGs making a difference?" Considering shifting contexts due to COVID-19 and international conflicts, the group deemed it essential to examine progress towards SDG Goal 16. Collectively, the group worked with Laurier colleagues Darren Thomas, Terry Mitchell, and two PhD candidates, Seyed Ali Hosseini and Eric Tanguay. The book is available for purchase through online book outlets.

2.5-Million-Dollar Partnership Grant Awarded for Local Food Systems Research

In 2023, Alison Blay-Palmer Professor (Geography and Environmental Studies) was awarded a Partnership Grant of nearly \$2.5 million from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Leading the FLAGship (Food, Learning and Growing) partnership alongside 35 other partner organizations, she aims to support regional food systems' resiliency. The research will focus on mapping and monitoring practices that are driving sustainability on a regional level and amplifying them to influence meaningful, long-term policy decisions globally. The project, spanning over seven years, will create regional and global communities of practice involving researchers, community partners, and practitioners.





Academics

Research

Center for Cold Regions and Water Science Achieves Platinum Status for My Green Lab Certification Program

One of the 2023-24 Sustainable Hawk Fund (SHF) projects helped the Center for Cold Regions and Water Science (CCRWS) achieve platinum-level status through the My Green Lab program. In January 2024, this SHF project, led by Gena Braun, completed the requirements to meet the global standard for lab sustainability set out by the <u>My Green Lab</u> program. This program requires scientists to adopt best practices to reduce energy, water, waste, and minimize the use of hazardous and toxic chemicals. This means that the CCRWS has joined hundreds of certified green labs all over the globe! The CCRWS' achievement was made possible through active engagement and participation from Laurier students and staff. Staff, technicians, and faculty from the following labs: Leonard Lab, Wallschlager Lab, McGeer Lab, MacLatchy Lab, Gray, Al-Abadleh Lab, Scott Smith Lab, Baltzer Lab, Wilkie Lab, and Zou Lab, demonstrated commendable leadership in sustainability to attain this designation level!



STTPA Conference at University of Toronto Mississauga

From operations to academics, the Laurier community always finds a way to engage with sustainability topics and challenges. In October 2023, five professors and three students from Laurier participated and presented at the Sustainability Transdisciplinary, Theory, Practice, and Actions (STTPA) Conference. The conference aims to engage transdisciplinary and intersectoral dialogue on issues, solutions, and actions for sustainability. The Laurier presenters included:

- Kai Reimer-Watts (Student) presented on "Perceptions of climate justice signposts in Waterloo region: A mixed methods qualitative study."
- Jennifer Dobai (*Student*) presented on "Understanding and Addressing Eco-Anxiety Among Youth: Insights from a Scoping Review and Community Psychology Perspective."
- Manuel Riemer (Professor) and Kaitlyn Ashmore (Student) presented on "From Incremental to Transformative Change: Adapting Strategic Management Practices in Response to Complexity."





GOAL 11 | Campus Engagement

Further the goals of the Strategic Academic Plan as they relate to sustainability.

Aligned with SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all Aligned with SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Action 2 Align Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity Action Plan opportunities in existing and new sustainability programming and services offerings.¹

¹ Action 2 is only included as this action has SMART opportunities with a completion date of 2025-26, with preliminary planning underway.



Campus Engagement



Continuing Our Commitment to Leveraging Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation Through the Sustainable Hawk Fund

Annually, the Sustainable Hawk Fund offers the Laurier community the chance to transform their sustainability ideas into actionable projects. With an annual funding pool of up to \$30,000, these projects foster the development of sustainability ideas aimed at benefiting the Laurier community. The 2023-24 cycle supported four projects, collectively receiving \$14,000 in funding:

A Healing Global Citizen Journey

(Kassidy Morency)

The Healing Global Citizenship Journey podcast offers listeners an immersive experience into parks across the Waterloo Region, where they can engage with healing practices at the nexus of sustainability and mental health. The allocated funding will be utilized to procure supplies and equipment for participants during these interactive sessions.

Community Closet

(Hannah Castell)

Community Closet is a clothing rental service designed to assist university students in curating stylish outfits without the need to buy new clothing. Built on principles of the circular economy, Community Closet seeks to breathe new life into garments sitting idle in closets, providing students with a diverse range of affordable and sustainable clothing choices.

Thrifted Threads

(Maia Flinton)

Thrifted Threads is a venture aimed at reintroducing Laurier merchandise to the community through a sustainable approach. The project encompasses a feasibility study to evaluate the sale of used Laurier branded clothing on campus, along with periodic workshops designed to educate students about clothing waste reduction and the importance of reuse.

Mini Market Green Wall

(Ricky Jasson)

The Mini Market Green Wall initiative tackles the challenge of providing affordable fresh produce to students on campus. In collaboration with Just Vertical, a leading company specializing in innovative green walls, and with input from a Laurier alumni co-founder, this project aims to enhance access to fresh produce during the fall and winter seasons.

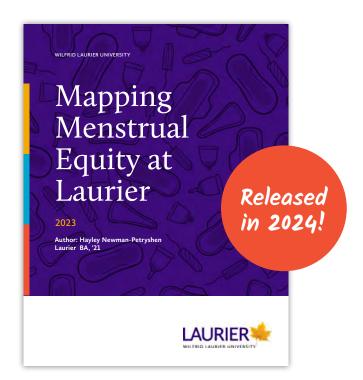


Campus Engagement

Highlights from the Menstrual Equity Program

Since 2018, the Laurier community has collaborated to enhance access to menstrual products and promote menstrual equity across all campuses. In 2023, the Menstrual Equity Committee was formalized with stakeholders from academics, facilities, departments, and student groups. With the terms of reference in place, the committee now has defined roles and mandate to further advance menstrual equity at Laurier. On November 21, 2023, the Sustainability Office hosted a lunch and learn event titled "Go with the Flow: Best Practices for Campus Menstrual Equity Programs," featuring guest speakers Claire Coder (Aunt Flow) and Krisa Plewes (Citron Hygiene). The event, attended by the Menstrual Equity Committee, students, and sustainability professionals from across Ontario, attracted 30 participants. This gathering led to the establishment of an Ontario-wide working group for menstrual equity programs on campuses in 2024. Additionally, the release of the "Mapping *Menstrual Equity Report*" in 2024, authored by Hayley Newman-Petryshen (BA, '21) highlights Laurier's menstrual equity program history and learnings, serving as a model for other post-secondary institutions and organizations.







Campus Engagement



New Mural Symbolizes Laurier's Institutional Commitment to Indigeneity

On August 15, 2023, the Laurier community, including the Sustainability Office, participated in a collaborative painting session for the Laurier Library Indigenous Mural Project. This project was a collaborative initiative between Wilfrid Laurier University, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and the Robert Langen Art Gallery, involved two painting sessions led by Ojibwe artist Mike Cywink at Nadjiwan Kaandossiwin Gamik and Laurier's Waterloo campus Indigenous Student Centre. The mural celebrates Indigenous art and culture, while reflecting Laurier's institutional commitment to indigeneity, was installed on the southwest wall of the Laurier Library on the Waterloo campus. The Indigenous mural was unveiled on September 28, 2023, two days before the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



SPOTLIGHT

Laurier's first Indigenous Strategic Plan launched

A new pathway has been created to develop an inclusive university community that incorporates Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and experiences within the university. The first Indigenous Strategic Plan was launched in 2023, aligning with various actions within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. For more information on the plan, please visit the Indigenous Strategic Plan page.





Campus Engagement

Collecting Winter Wear for Students to Stay Warm

Affordability is a major component in ensuring a sustainable, and equitable community. In partnership with the Faculty of Arts, Grad Students Association (GSA), and Laurier International, the Sustainability Office organized the "Waterloo Winter Wear Drive" from November 7 to 22, 2023. Participants donated gently used coats, jackets, gloves, hats, and scarves at the Freestore or Dr. Alvin Woods Building. Over 100 items were collected and made available for Laurier community members to use over the wintertime to stay warm!



Sustainability in Business Greenovation Challenge

The student group "Sustainability in Business Laurier (SIB)" partnered with the Sustainability Office to host the Greenovation Challenge on November 18, 2023. This challenge tasked student participants with providing solutions to on-campus sustainability issues at Laurier. An expert panel of judges, including Tobi Adesanmi (Intersect Power), Kathryn Cooper (University of Toronto), Elise Coffey (Western University), Carl Botha (Tim Hortons), Ritika Jain (Ryse Solutions Inc.), Andrew Macklin (WSP Canada), Simran Chattha (Canadian Water Network), and Eric Meliton (Wilfrid Laurier University), evaluated the projects to determine the winner.

The winning project was "Thrifted Threads," led by Sam Simner and Maia Flinton. The project proposal included collecting and upcycling used clothing and diverting clothing waste while promoting reusability with thrifted clothes. They also suggested educational initiatives to raise awareness about clothing waste and fast fashion among students. Congratulations to the winning team and all participants!



Investment



GOAL 12 | Investment

Support meaningful action on climate change while meeting fiduciary duties to the Board of Governors.

Aligned with SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Action 1

Work with responsible parties to enhance Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risk management strategies, such as revising relevant investment policies, procedures, and terms of reference to include ESG factors into decision-making.¹

¹ Action 1 is only included as this action has SMART opportunities with a defined completion date in the 2024-25 academic year that have already commenced.



Investment

Investment

Board Working Group on Climate Risk Management

The Working Group on Climate Risk Management (the "Group") is an ad hoc working group of the Board of Governors Audit, Risk and Compliance (ARC) Committee, comprised of members from various stakeholder groups, ensuring representation from specific Board Committees. The membership includes faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external board members. Experts within the community who are not members of the working group will be consulted as needed.

Through conducting appropriate research and consultation, the Group will provide recommendations in the development of strategies in climate risk management aligned with the University's focus on sustainability and planetary health. The Group will leverage the partnerships built with members of the Climate Change Charter group of universities and consultation with other internal and external stakeholders. Consideration for the rapidly evolving landscape of sustainable and climate action investing, as well as Laurier's on-campus sustainability efforts, will serve as key considerations in the next strategy.



Conclusion



From renewed partnerships to the launch of the new action plan, the 2023-24 academic year was an exciting year for building a culture of sustainability at Laurier. The commitment of leadership, staff, faculty, and students will help accelerate the attainment of goals and actions as described in the 2023-2028 Action Plan. The Sustainability Office reaffirms its commitment to work with the Laurier community to achieve its goals and maintain partnerships to ensure thriving, sustainable campuses.

Specifically, the Sustainability Office is looking forward to the following initiatives and actions for the 2024-25 academic year:

- The re-launch of the Green Office program for staff and faculty on all campuses
- A new "Staff Sustainability Certificate" program to provide staff with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and application of sustainability

- The development of a conceptual model for Laurier's campuses as living labs
- Expansion of Laurier community garden plot opportunities at the Northdale community garden
- Sustainability Summit with the Laurier Hub for Community Solutions to empower student sustainability leaders on all campuses, with a focus on SDG engagement
- The completion of an updated Carbon Reduction Roadmap
- Development and pilot program launch for a new "Student Mobilizers Program" for sustainability
- A new centralized utility and GHG emissions tracking dashboard
- Update to Scope 3 emissions inventory and calculation methodology
- Preliminary planning and stakeholder engagement for a Laurier Zero Waste Action Plan

Conclusion

Stakeholders & Partnerships

The Sustainability Office is proud to uphold relations with sustainability networks, membership groups, advisory groups, and vendors. Without the dedication of the office's partners, sustainability at Laurier would look quite different! In total, the Sustainability Office works with 28+ external partners in Canada and beyond.

Memberships & Designations

- Bee City Canada (designation)
- Circular Innovation Council (membership)
- Fair Trade Campuses (designation)
- Ontario College and University Sustainability Professionals (OCUSP) (*membership*)
- Partners in Project Green's Circular Economy Consortium (*membership*)
- Sustainable Waterloo Region Impact Network and TravelWise (*memberships*)
- The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) (membership)

Networks

- My Green Lab (certification program)
- Pollution Probe (stakeholder network)
- Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Canada (*stakeholder network*)
- Water Canada (stakeholder network)
- Waterloo Region Community Energy (stakeholder network)
- Waterloo Region District School Board (*stakeholder network*)

Partners & Advisory Groups

- City of Brantford (*Community Climate Action Plan / Active Transportation working group*)
- City of Kitchener (SDG Talk Support)
- City of Waterloo (Community Climate Action Plan / City Lab participant)
- Conestoga College (regional institutional partner)
- Enbridge (incentive provider)
- Enova Power (GG261 Course Partner)
- Grad Students Association internship co-hiring for Mini Market (*Summer 2023*)
- Independent Electricity System Operator (Energy Management Working Group partner)
- Indigenous Student Centre internship co-hiring for Indigenous Garden (*Summer 2023*)
- KW Urban Harvester (Northdale)
- Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group (LSPIRG) (*Distro and Menstrual Equity program partner*)
- Martin Luther College (*Distro and International partner*)
- Piller's (GG261 Course Partner)
- Region of Waterloo (Community Climate Action Plan advisory)
- Town of Milton (*MEVIC partner*)
- Unity Health (GG261 Course Partner)
- University of Waterloo (regional institutional partner)
- VCT Group (GG261 Course Partner)
- Water Rangers (salt management pilot program provider)
- Young City Growers (Northdale)

Vendors

- Aramark Solutions (vendor)
- EAB (vendor)
- Fill It Forward (vendor)
- Friendlier (vendor)
- Molok North America (vendor)
- Neuron (vendor)

Conclusion



Finally, the Sustainability Office would like to acknowledge the following on-campus partners for supporting a culture of sustainability on all of our campuses:

- Department of Residence
- Facilities and Asset Management: Business and Facilities Operations
- Facilities and Asset Management: Planning, Design, and Construction
- Facilities and Asset Management: Parking and Transportation Resources
- Student Affairs
- Martin Luther University College
- Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group (LSPIRG)
- Laurier Library
- Office of Research Services
- Office of Indigenous Initiatives
- Indigenous Student Centres
- Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU)
- Grad Students' Association (GSA)
- External Relations
- Government and Community Relations
- Human Resources
- Financial Resources
- WLUFA Climate Action Committee

We look forward to building up a stronger network of sustainability champions who will continue to make Laurier a leader in sustainability among post-secondary institutions.



Connect with us

LAURIER SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

Websites wlu.ca/sustainability students.wlu.ca/sustainability

Social Media Twitter & IG: @LaurierGreen Facebook: /LaurierSustainability

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