

Sustainability Guidebook for Students



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[Rist Institute for Sustainability
& Energy at UMass Lowell](https://www.facebook.com/RistInstituteforSustainabilityEnergy)

Visit Our Website:

uml.edu/sustainability

Find out more details about the
programs and offerings found
in the guide!

Contact us:

sustainability@uml.edu

Understanding Sustainability at UMass Lowell

WHAT is Sustainability?

Meeting today's needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet theirs, while balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and social well-being



WHY Be Sustainable?

Sustainability improves the quality of our lives, protects our environment, and preserves resources for future generations

ACHEIVEMENTS

#1 among Massachusetts colleges and universities for sustainability (AASHE)



Rated **2025 Green College** by the Princeton Review



Named **2024 Mass Save Climate Leader** for reducing carbon emissions

GOALS

- **Climate neutrality** by 2050
- Increase **student and faculty engagement** in sustainability efforts
- **Revolutionize** urban sustainability



RIST INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY

Our mission is to conduct research, innovate, inform decision-makers, and build the workforce needed for a climate-resilient and sustainable future. We see science-based climate action as a force for positive societal change. These three organizations work together to make that change on our campus, in our community, and in the world through replicable, scalable models for sustainability.



Office of Sustainability

Serves as a hub for promoting and supporting sustainability initiatives across campus, encouraging collaboration and engagement to achieve its goals.



Climate Change Initiative

Brings people together from across the University to catalyze evidence-based climate action through our research, education and community engagement.



Center for Energy Innovation

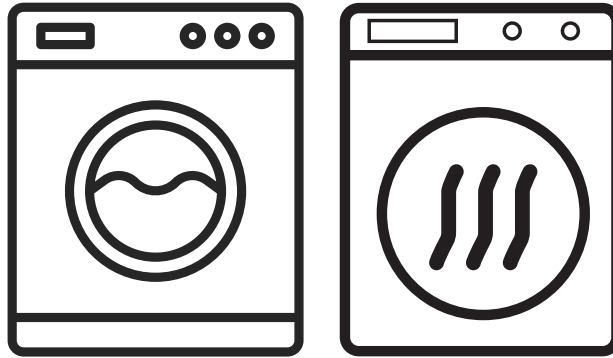
Unites students and faculty in clean energy research—wind, solar, and storage—partnering with industry to tackle real-world challenges and advance sustainable technologies.

Sustainability in Residence Halls

Laundry

Wash with cold water - heating accounts for most of the energy used in laundry.

Run full loads rather than small ones.



Always clean the lint tray.

Use biodegradable or plant-based detergents.

Water Conservation

Reusable Water Bottles

UMass Lowell has hydration stations in every residence hall on campus. These stations are designed to encourage people to avoid single-use plastic water bottles.

Report All Leaks

To report water leaks or roof leaks call the Facilities Management Service Center at **978-934-2601**.

Sink & Shower

Make sure to turn off the sink when brushing your teeth or shaving.

Take shorter showers to reduce water consumption. Consider setting a shower timer so you know when to get out.

DID YOU KNOW?



A leaky faucet can waste 100 gallons of water per day!

What You Can Do

Energy Conservation

- Unplug devices when you are not using them
- Keep windows closed when your building's AC or heating is on
- Plug your devices into a power strip and turn it off when leaving
 - Turning off the power strip will stop all devices plugged into it from using electricity
- Rely on natural light during the day instead of turning the lights on
- Close your blinds to retain heat if it is cool, or block out heat if it is warm
- Always turn off your lights when leaving your room
- If you use a mini fridge make sure to share one with your roommate

Waste Management

- Reusable dishes
 - Not only does using these reduce waste, but they are cost-effective in the long term
- Get a water filter
 - Prevent the use of plastic water bottles by filtering your water from your residence hall's sink
- Clean your room with cloth towels
 - Eliminate the waste of paper towels and wipes by using washable cloth

Choose linen bedding products with natural and organic fibers!

Use indoor plants in your room to improve air quality!

Sustainable Practices for Students

TRANSPORTATION



VIA BUS

LRTA

- Free for students by scanning UCard
- Public bus system that will bring you to locations off campus



WALK

- Well-lit sidewalks connect East, North, and South campus.
- Keep an eye out for the solar-powered streetlights along the Northern Canal Overlook near University Crossing.



BIKE

- [Bike racks](#) all around campus
- [Bike share program](#) provides free daily bicycles for students mid-March through mid – December



TAKE A SHUTTLE

- Shuttles travel between all 3 campuses
- Monday – Friday 7 A.M. - Midnight
- Saturday: 9 A.M. - Midnight

Carpool Program

- Provides discounted parking and access to premium carpool spaces for faculty, staff, and off-campus students.
- Carpoolers share one permit, with the cost split among participants.
- Reserved carpool spaces are available in select North and South Campus lots.
- Participants must commute together most of the time but receive 16 one-day passes per semester for solo driving.
- On non-carpool days, the car without the hangtag must obtain a one-day parking pass online.

**CUT YOUR DRIVING
EMISSIONS IN HALF
BY CARPOOLING!**



RECYCLING

UML's Recycling Initiatives

Zero Sort Recycling Program

UMass Lowell's initiative to reduce the amount of waste generated by the university.

- Put recyclables in the blue container
- Put trash in the black containers

Recycle Batteries and Small Electronics

Battery and small, personal electronics recycling is available free of charge for all University members. Drop off locations are available across campus. You can find the drop off locations on our website.

Surplus Program

UML's Surplus Program prioritizes repurposing and redistributing unwanted equipment to minimize landfill waste.



DO RECYCLE

- Paper
- Cardboard
- Glass
- Metal
- Most plastics



DON'T RECYCLE

- Styrofoam
- Greasy pizza boxes
- Broken glass
- Electronics + batteries
- Food waste



DID YOU KNOW?

Recycling 1 ton of paper saves 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, and 7,000 gallons of water!

SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING

» BUY SECONDHAND

- Get clothes, furniture, and textbooks from thrift stores, online marketplaces, or campus exchange programs

» OPT FOR DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Use e-books, digital notes, and PDFs instead of printing or buying new textbooks

» SHOP LOCAL

- Support local businesses and farmers' markets for food and supplies

» PRIORITIZE QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

- Buy durable items that last longer, reducing waste and long-term costs



The Student Society for Sustainability (SSS) held "Thrift Day", and donated clothes became free to the public.



The River Hawk Shop - UMass Lowell's bookstore - allows students to rent textbooks or purchase digital versions.

» CHECK FOR ECO-FRIENDLY MATERIALS

- Look for products made from recycled, organic, or sustainably sourced materials

» USE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- Choose refillable pens, notebooks made from recycled paper, and non-toxic highlighters

» PURCHASE ENERGY-EFFICIENT ELECTRONICS

- Look for ENERGY STAR-rated devices to reduce energy consumption

» RENT OR BORROW WHEN POSSIBLE

- Use the libraries, textbook rental services, and clothing rental programs instead of buying new

Go Digital

- Take digital notes
 - Bring a laptop to class instead of using notebooks
- Use cloud storage tools
- Use e-books and online articles



PAPER WASTE

Mindful Printing

- Print double-sided whenever possible to cut paper use in half
- Use print preview to avoid unnecessary pages or errors.
- Print using UPrint
 - Implemented with the goal of eliminating unwanted and excess printing

Reuse

- Share documents electronically instead of making multiple paper copies.
- Use reusable notebooks or whiteboards for brainstorming and notes.
- Encourage a paperless office culture by setting reduction goals and reminders.



Student Engagement

Sustainability in Education

UMass Lowell offers several undergraduate academic programs that connect students to sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY RELATED MAJORS

- B.A. Climate Change and Sustainability
- B.A. Political Science
 - Sustainability and Environmental Politics Concentration
- B.L.A. Liberal Arts
 - Environment and Society Concentration
- B.S. Biology
 - Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology Option
- B.S. Chemistry: Sustainability
- B.S. Environmental Science
 - Environmental Science Option
 - Geoscience Option
- B.S. Meteorology and Atmospheric Science
- B.S. Plastics Engineering

Consider adding a sustainability related minor to broaden career opportunities, strengthen skills, and enhance your knowledge.

SUSTAINABILITY RELATED MINORS

- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Energy Engineering
- Environment and Society
- Peace and Conflict Studies
- Race and Ethnic Studies
- Sociology

There are also a variety of graduate programs offered:
uml.edu/office-sustainability/curriculum-research/programs.aspx

Sustainability Related Clubs & Organizations

Various clubs at UML are sustainability-related, allowing students to engage in hands-on projects and collaborate with staff and other students on environmental initiatives.

Get involved in these clubs!

SUSTAINABILITY RELATED CLASSES

- UMass Lowell offers hundreds of sustainability-inclusive courses.
- If you are not in a sustainability related major or minor, consider taking a sustainability class as an elective to enhance your knowledge.

River Hawk Experience Distinction Program (RHED)

1

Allows students to connect their personal interests with academics through **experiential learning, earning recognition on their transcript and a certificate** in one of five focus areas.

2

Sustainability is one of the five distinctions, offering students the chance to **engage deeply with environmental issues, develop solutions, and gain skills that prepare them for careers** in green industries.

3

Take on the Sustainability Distinction to not only enhance your academic journey but also contribute to meaningful environmental impact on campus and beyond.



A SELECTION OF AVAILABLE STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| • American Meteorological Society | • Society of Women Engineers |
| • American Nuclear Society | • Student Government Association |
| • Analytical and Environmental Seminar Club | • Student Society for Sustainability |
| • Engineers for a Sustainable World | • Student Volunteers for Sustainability |
| • MassPIRG | • Wind Energy Innovation Club |
| • Navigators | • Graduate Society of Women Engineers |
| • Society of Environmental Scientists | • Graduate Student Association |
| • Society of Physics Students | • Graduate Renewable Energy Club |
| • Society of Plastics Engineers | |

These clubs are all
beginner friendly - you're
able to join regardless of
knowledge or skill level!

Visit umasslowellclubs.campuslabs.com/engage to learn more!

Sustainability in Action on Campus

Explore Our Campus Green Spaces



POLLINATOR GARDENS

There are several of these across campus that feature **native flowers** that provide food and refuge for various pollinators.



LEED CERTIFIED BUILDINGS

UML has achieved LEED certification for eight campus buildings. LEED Certified buildings help **save money, boost efficiency, and reduce carbon emissions**.



ARBORETUM

The UML Arboretum **removes pollutants, sequesters carbon, and manages stormwater** while offering a scenic, educational environment.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are 1,700+ trees on campus!



SUSTAINABILITY TRAILS

Trails on each campus offer a scenic way to explore the **sustainability projects** undertaken by UMass Lowell student, faculty and staff.



ROOFTOP GARDENS

UML has 2 rooftop gardens that utilize food waste compost to **grow herbs and vegetables**, while supporting local businesses and promoting student research on eco-friendly fertilizer systems.



RIST URBAN AGRICULTURAL GREENHOUSE AND FARM

Located on East Campus, this site produces over 30,000 pounds of produce annually for the community while serving as a research center for students, faculty, and local partners to develop **innovative agricultural practices**.

Sustainable Dining Initiatives

What UML is doing:

UML offers a wide variety of sustainably sourced and locally produced food for students and staff to enjoy.

- **Craic Sauce, Hood Milk, and Ken's Dressing** are all locally sourced and available in dining halls
- **Mill City Grows, Horne Family Farm, and the Boston Food Hub** provide UML with produce from local farmers in the Greater Lowell area
- Herbs are grown on UML's rooftop gardens and used directly in the **dining hall and with catering**

Coolfood Meal-Low Carbon Certified Options

UML dining Services offers "Coolfood Meal-Low Carbon Certified" options, which are plant-based and certified by the World Resources Institute to have a **low impact on the climate**.



Green Restaurant Certification

Restaurants that promote sustainable practices including energy and water efficiency, waste management, recycling, composting, and more can receive **Green Restaurant Certification**.



UML's **McGauvran Dining Hall** and **Crossroads Cafe** are "Green Restaurant Certified" due to implementing over 45 environmental steps, utilizing robust recycling systems, and eliminating the use of Styrofoam.

What You Can Do:

➤ Try a plant-based or locally sourced meal

- Lowell offers food from a wide variety of cultures including Cambodian, Greek, Indian, and Latin American restaurants that are just a walk away from campus

➤ Taste Don't Waste

- Try a sample dish before taking a whole portion if you are unsure
- UML composts all food waste produced in the front and back of house

Partnering with our Community



Horne Family Farms

Londonderry, NH

Chris Horne, a UMass Lowell alum runs this family-owned farm based in Londonderry, NH, that provides UML's dining halls with fresh, locally grown produce.



Mass Wildlife

Lowell, MA

A pair of endangered Peregrine Falcons nest on Fox Hall, and you can volunteer with Mass Wildlife to help protect them and other species during breeding season.

Mill City Grows (MCG)

Lowell, MA

Lowell-based urban agriculture organization dedicated to **enhancing food access and promoting sustainable practices** in the Lowell community through urban farming initiatives and educational programs. MCG manages multiple urban farms and community gardens.



MARKETS

MCG hosts outdoor mobile farmers markets in Lowell, where community members can **purchase fresh, locally grown produce**, providing a wide selection of healthy and sustainable food options.



Every winter MCG and UML host an indoor farmer's market making it easy to **shop local, meet new businesses**, and discover what Lowell has to offer.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Mill City Grows engages UML students through **hands-on learning experiences** related to urban agriculture and sustainability, helping them gain skills and knowledge about food systems.



MCG offers volunteer opportunities where students can assist with maintaining gardens, and supporting community food access.

They **utilize campus spaces such as rooftop gardens and greenhouses** for growing crops and providing fresh produce for UML's dining halls.

Taste The Acre

Lowell, MA

This program highlights and supports the culturally diverse food businesses in Lowell's Acre neighborhood, an area known for rich immigrant history.

All of the food businesses involved in this program are located within walking distance of each other and UMass Lowell's campus - offering a convenient way for you to explore the area's vibrant food scene.



Tour the Participating Restaurants:
acrepartnership.com

GOAL

The goal of this program is to **attract new customers and collaborate with local business owners** to help them grow and expand their businesses, improving the local economy.

SUPPORT

This program is supported by the Office of Sustainability through **food tasting events on campus**, helping introduce students and staff to the Acre's local food choices.

TRY A PARTICIPATING RESTAURANT!

PANELA * NIBBANA * WORTHEN * COTE'S MARKETPLACE * MOCHINUT * TASTY DUMPLINGS * SIZZLING KITCHEN * LAOS THAI KITCHEN * SOPHIA'S GREEK PANTRY * VIET THAI * GOLDEN TEA * LOS MONSTROS * RANCHO TIPICO * OCEAN GARDEN * SALEM STREET VARIETY

Clark Farm

Carlisle, MA

Clark farm provides high-quality organic vegetables and berries for its CSA community, farm stand, and local farm-to-table restaurants through sustainable agricultural practices.

THE FARM SHARE PROGRAM

In partnership with Clark Farm, the UMass Lowell Farm Share Program provides UMass Lowell students, faculty, and staff with weekly pre-boxed shares of fresh, organic produce from Clark Farm.

WHEN DOES THE PROGRAM TAKE PLACE?

The program features 12-week summer and fall shares, and a 24-week share running from June to November, with add-ons from local partners like Mill City Grows.

WHAT DO I GET?

Members receive seasonal crops, herbs from campus gardens, and other local items, along with access to Clark Farm, exclusive events, and educational opportunities. Participation is limited, and interested individuals must apply during the designated period.



Craic Sauce

Craic Sauce emphasizes sustainability and local agriculture by sourcing 100% of its peppers and produce from Massachusetts farms, including urban farms in Lowell. The company partners with organizations like UTEC, Mill City Grows, and UMass Lowell's Office of Sustainability to deepen its community roots and support local food production.

- Partners with Lowell-based nonprofit Mill City Grows and local farms like Clark Farm, Hutchins Farm, and Farmer Dave's to support sustainable agriculture and reduce carbon footprint.
- Actively participates in urban farming projects with the Rist Institute, contributing to the campus's green spaces and local food production.
- Crafted in small batches at a community kitchen in Lowell.
- Collaborates with UML Dining, local businesses and restaurants, keeping the economic benefits within the community.



Purchase a bottle of Mill City Red to support local businesses and promote sustainable agricultural practices!

Helpful Resources

Follow Our Social Media:



@sustainableuml



@SustainableUML



Rist Institute for
Sustainability & Energy



Rist Institute for Sustainability
& Energy at UMass Lowell



Visit Our Website:

uml.edu/sustainability

Contact us:

sustainability@uml.edu

Learn More About the Rist Institute of Sustainability & Energy

Office of Sustainability

uml.edu/office-sustainability

Climate Change Initiative

uml.edu/research/climate-change

Center for Energy Innovation

uml.edu/research/energy



Sustainable Transportation

LRTA Schedule

lta.com/routes

Bike Rack Locations

uml.edu/maps/categories/bikestations

Bike Share Program

uml.edu/campusrecreation/programs/bike/bikeshare

Shuttle Schedule

uml.edu/student-services/transportation-services/day-shuttle

Carpool Program

uml.edu/office-sustainability/practices/transportation/carpooling.aspx



Learn More About Our Community Partners

Horne Family Farms

hornefamilyfarms.com

Mass Wildlife

mass.gov/orgs/division-of-fisheries-and-wildlife

Mill City Grows

millcitygrows.org

Taste the Acre

acrepartnership.com/about-3-1

Clark Farm

clarkfarmcarlisle.com

Craic Sauce

craicsauce.com

