

Sustainability Guidebook for Employees



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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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

#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.

Workplace Sustainability

GETTING TO CAMPUS



VIA BUS

LRTA

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



VIA TRAIN

MBTA Commuter Rail

- Regular service from Lowell's Gallagher Terminal to Boston's North Station and numerous points in-between.



VIA ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- Reduce your expenses and your fossil fuel consumption by switching to fuel efficient vehicles.
- [Map of EV charging stations](#) in/around Lowell.

GETTING AROUND 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.



TAKE A SHUTTLE

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



BIKE

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

Green Office Practices

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Energy Conservation

- Turn off computers when not using them
 - Set computers to sleep after 15 minutes of not using them
 - Turn off computers during lunch
- Shut down electronics/turn off power strip at the end of the day
- Turn off lights when they are not needed, and use natural light whenever possible
- Close windows when heating/cooling is taking place in buildings
- Mindful printing - proofread, preview, print double sided when possible
- Video calls instead of travel
 - When possible, opt for virtual meetings instead of traveling

Sustainable Purchasing

- Support ethical and eco-friendly brands
- Choose products made from natural ingredients
- Purchase recycled content
- Purchase items made in the USA
- Choose energy-efficient products (Energy Star-rated appliances)
- **BuyWays**
 - Online system for university employees to purchase goods
 - Ability to sort by recycled goods



DID YOU KNOW?

Leaving a computer on overnight consumes enough energy to print 800 pages!

Waste Management

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.

Limit the Use of Paper

Share files electronically via email or shared drives instead of printing.

Surplus Program

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



Enhancing Well-being through Sustainability

- Walk or cycle to meetings
- Try a new local restaurant or cafe
- Indoor plants for air purification and calming aesthetic
- Take breaks from screen time
- Explore campus green spaces, gardens, greenhouse, and pollinators



Water Conservation

Carry a Reusable Water Bottle

UMass Lowell has hydration stations in every building 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.

DID YOU KNOW?



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

Hosting Sustainable Events

Greener Giveaways

When planning a giveaway choose eco-friendly options

- ☒ Reusable items
- ☒ Digital alternatives
- ☒ Experiences
- ☒ Items made from sustainable materials

These choices reduce waste, support sustainability, and create lasting value without contributing to landfill waste.

Catering Requests

- Request materials like glassware, cloth napkins, and silverware
- Order plant-based food options
- Underestimate food quantities
- Make plans to share any leftovers



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.



UML 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:

➤ If buying food, choose 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
* VIETTHAI * 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

- Lowell-based company known for its locally sourced hot sauces
- Partners with Mill City Grows to grow their own plants and source their peppers from MA farms

- Partners with local businesses and restaurants, avoiding big retailers to support their local community
- Partners with the Rist Institute to grow peppers in UML's greenhouse and rooftop gardens
- Created a UML branded hot sauce - Mill City Red - available for purchase at the River Hawk Shop and in the dining halls



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

Sustainability in Education

Sustainability Research and Curriculum

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

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:
<https://www.uml.edu/office-sustainability/curriculum-research/programs.aspx>

If you develop courses or curriculum relevant to these academic programs, they could be included as electives in these programs!

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 **Promote the Sustainability Distinction** to students to not only enhance their academic journey but also contribute to meaningful environmental impact on campus and beyond.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY RELATED CLASSES

- These courses provide valuable knowledge and skills that prepare students to address environmental challenges and make a positive impact in their communities.
- UMass Lowell offers hundreds of sustainability-inclusive courses.

INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO CLASSES

- Implement sustainability topics and projects within courses, regardless of the subject.
- Create sustainability-related research assignments, projects, or case studies that address real world environmental challenges.

Get Involved with the Climate Change Initiative (CCI) and the Center for Energy Innovation (CEI)!

Why?

- **ELEVATE** the visibility of your work by featuring it in newsletters, social media posts, and news articles shared on the initiatives' websites.
- **COLLABORATE** with like-minded colleagues, allowing you to share ideas and learn from each other's research.
- **OPPORTUNITY** to share your own research, gain insights into others' work, and invite external collaborators to speak at seminars and events.
- **ACCESS** to internal grants, Certificates of Participation (COP) badges, and other resources that can support your research.
- **ABILITY** to develop critical skills in project management, communication, and environmental advocacy.



Interested in joining the CCI?

Contact Juliette_RooneyVarga@uml.edu



Interested in joining the CEI?

Contact Christopher_Niezrecki@uml.edu



Open Access Publishing Fund (OAPF)

The Office of Sustainability and University Library supports UML authors in publishing their research in open access journals, particularly focusing on sustainability topics, by **covering article-processing charges up to \$1,500 each academic year.**

Utilize the OAPF to promote accessible research sharing, as it enhances research visibility, connects scholarship to classroom learning, and encourages collaboration across departments.

Fellowship Program

The Rist Institute is seeking proposals from faculty members interested in pursuing sustainability related research, education, or engagement projects.

Funding is provided to encourage innovating projects that address environmental challenges.



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.

Motivate students to **get involved** in these clubs!



Mentorship Programs

Faculty can serve as mentors on student-led sustainability projects, providing **guidance on project development and execution.** This creates a supportive environment for students to explore innovative ideas.

Utilize Campus as a Living Laboratory

Use UML's sustainability initiatives – **energy conservation, biodiversity programs** – as case studies or field research opportunities for students.

Develop class projects that utilize campus as a laboratory, allowing students to address environmental challenges in **hands-on learning opportunities.**



DID YOU KNOW?



UMass Lowell offers 325+ sustainability related courses!

A SELECTION OF AVAILABLE STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

These clubs are all beginner friendly - encourage students to join regardless of knowledge or skill level!

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