

Sustainability Report Survey Results 2008

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Introduction

At the 2008 UMR-ACUHO Winter Meeting, The Assessment and Information Management Committee discussed possible survey topics, conversed with other committees on topics of interest, and topics that were current at our institutions. The issues of sustainability, recycling, and environmental issues repeatedly came up as an emerging issue and trend that many institutions are currently assessing, setting goals, and acting upon.

As this topic was discussed the committee developed several potential directions for the survey to include. These ranged from repeating questions from previous facilities surveys, student led green movements, and educational initiatives within residence halls. The purpose of this study is to understand what is going on at institutions in the region regarding sustainability as a broad theme. This research seeks to understand the education that is occurring, both at the student level and at the professional level. Additionally, the survey examines what is being done from a stand point of facility renovations and construction, and recycling programs.

While previous UMR-ACUHO research has been conducted on facilities, this survey departed from repeating the same questions, both to meet the current needs of the research and to address sustainability in a comprehensive manner.

Method

The UMR-ACUHO Assessment and Information Management Committee distributed the survey electronically to member institutions. The survey was sent to the chief housing officer or primary UMR-ACUHO contact for completion or delegation to the staff member who could best report the status of sustainability at each institution. The survey was available online at www.suverymonkey.com for completion. At the UMR-ACUHO Summer Meeting, institutions with members present were prompted to have their institution complete the survey if the institution had not yet done so. A total of fifty-two institutions completed the survey, approximately a 44.8% return rate (52/116). The survey consisted on 40 questions, including demographic information of the institution. The questions were a blend of both qualitative and quantitative question types. The focus of the questions was to describe institutional efforts on student initiatives, recycling efforts, and departmental initiatives.

Descriptive Findings

The first section of the survey examined demographic information on the institution. The survey included questions on capacity and institution type. All of the respondents were four-year institutions (52/52, 100%). Approximately 60% of respondents were from public institutions (31/52, 59.61%) and the remaining 40% represented the private institutions (21/52, 40.39%). The total residential capacity of the institutions is listed below.

Table 1: Residential Capacity

Residential Capacity	Response Count	Response Percent
<500	2	3.7%
500-1,000	10	18.5%
1,001-2,000	17	31.5%
2,001-3,000	9	16.7%
3,001-5,000	10	18.5%
>5,000	6	11.1%

The percentages reported in each table of this report are based on the total number of respondents for each particular question, as compared to the total responses for the survey. This factor will deviate between questions as some institutions may not have had information to report in all areas that were examined by the survey or have had access to the data required to answer a given question.

Student Initiatives

One of the first areas we examined was educating students about sustainability. The first question asked was “Does your Housing Department provide educational opportunities (training, in-services, programs) surrounding the topic of environmental sustainable practices for your RA/CA student staff members?” Of the responses received 19 out of 52 (36.5%) are providing educational opportunities. Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported that no educational opportunities are provided. However, when asked “Does your Housing Department sponsor or provide educational opportunities in the residence halls for students surrounding the topic of environmental sustainable practices?” 35 (67.3%) out of the 52 respondents answered affirmatively that such opportunities are provided for the residents. Of the thirty-seven answering yes to the preceding question, the responses varied for what type of educational opportunities were occurring. These results are in table 2, with the details of the “other” response listed in table 3. The focus of the other educational opportunities appears to lie in recycling programs, and other various programs often in collaboration with other institutional resources.

Table 2: Types of Educational Opportunities on Sustainable Practices

	Response Count	Response Percent
Panel discussions	8	20.5%
Presenters	20	51.3%
Earth day celebrations	28	71.8%
Environmental movies or documentaries	9	23.1%
Bulletin boards	33	84.6%
Floor or building wide environmental challenges	29	74.4%
Other (please specify)(See Table 3)	8	20.5%

Table 3: Institutional Responses to Other Option of Educational Opportunities

We have a strong recycling program in the halls
Recycling efforts
recycling in all halls
Our campus has peer leaders called Sustainability Assistants that work with each of our buildings to help with efforts towards sustainability.
Trash sorts
Composting program in collaboration with food services and the environmental student group
Promotions through our dining partner, Sodexo
We are providing CFL light bulbs, one per resident, upon check-in for their personal lamps they bring from home.

To further educate residents approximately ten percent (5/52, 9.6%) of institutions include sustainability in their respective RA/CA programming models. Exactly half (26/52) of institutions responding to the survey report having a student group that focuses on sustainability in the residence halls. The majority of institutions that reported a student sustainability group, report that the group is externally funded (19/27, 70.4%). Table 4 shows the level of financial support. It is worth noting that one institution answered this question that did not report having a student group.

Table 4: Funding Sources of Student Sustainability Groups

	Response Count	Response Percent
None, financially supported by another source.	19	70.4%
Provide some financial support (49% or less)	6	22.2%
Provide more than half of their financial support (50%-99%)	1	3.7%
All, our department fully funds this student organization.	1	3.7%

The data indicates that collaboration is occurring within most institutions (34/52, 65.4%). Table 5 shows a broad range of partners that have collaborated with residence halls to educate residents.

Table 5: Collaboration Partners

Environmental studies program
First year experience dept. Ag science, Athletics, Physical plant
Dining, Physical Plant, faculty
KU has an Office for Sustainability and an Environmental Stewardship department that coordinates campus recycling. We collaborate on new initiatives, programming, and recycling.
SAC office - Recyclemania
We have an environmental sustainability coordinator on campus.
Facilities, biology

Worked with Wellness, Dining Services, and Facilities
We work with our custodian and facilities staff mostly.
"Campus Sustainability Committee" under direction of our academic dean, believe it or not.
With our Facilities Management and select faculty.
Academic Affairs
Academic department
Marketing for press releases about our efforts
Health Services
Center for Environmental and Energy Education
Physical plant
Life Sciences department and Biology Club
Facilities, advising, human resources, president's
Food Service
We have collaborated with the Dubuque Solid Waste Administration, and the Sustainability Committee
Academic Affairs--in collaboration with a class on the topic in the past, but the concept has not been carried out consistently over the years as the class was only offered one time and there has been much departmental turnover
Physical Plant, Sodexo (food services)
Facilities, Planning, and Operations
Student Affairs
Student University Union
Facility Management, campus Union.
Our student government had a sustainability focus after our University President made it one of his goals this year.
Environmental Studies Department
Facilities
Facility Services
We have a campus wide sustainability committee
facilities
Dinning partner, Sodexo
Facilities, ECO Club Student Organization

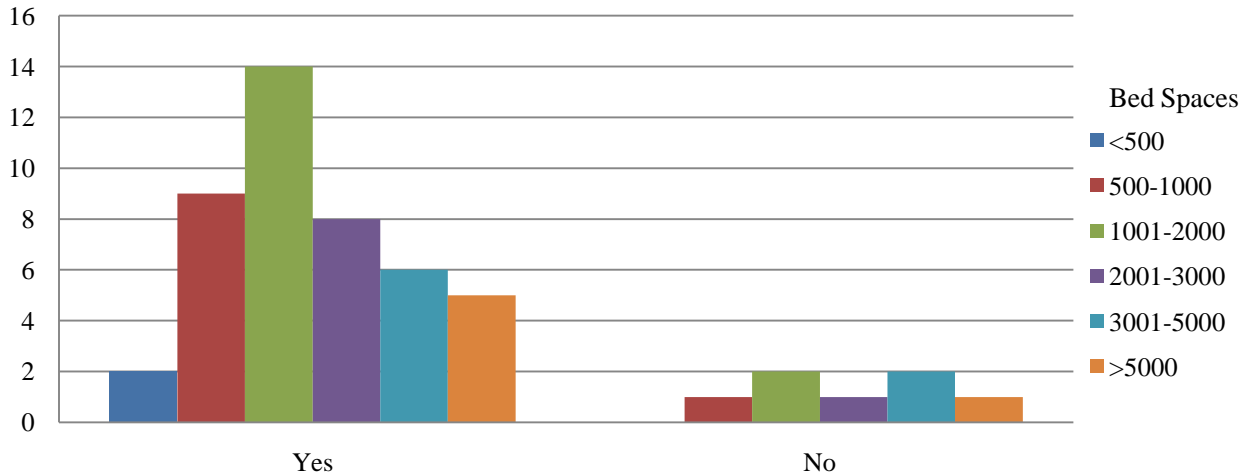
Recycling Program

The next questions focused on recycling efforts as a component of becoming sustainable. Recycling is the most widespread initiative that institutions have undertaken to become more sustainable. The recycling programs vary in cost and items collected, but the existence of recycling can have an educational impact on students.

The response to the question, "Do you currently have a recycling program within your residence halls?" was overwhelming that institutions have some sort of recycling program in place (44/51, 86.3%). 7 institutions reported no recycling program. One notable feature of this result is the

even distribution of the data regardless of the institution’s bed capacity. Figure 1 shows the existence of a recycling program by school size.

Figure 1: Recycling Programs by Housing Capacity



Institutions that reported having a recycling program in the residence halls were subsequently asked, “What materials do you recycle within the residence hall recycling program?” Figure 2 details the percentages of institutions that recycle paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum, and other. Table 6 provides the specific responses of institutions selecting other.

Figure 2: Recycled Products

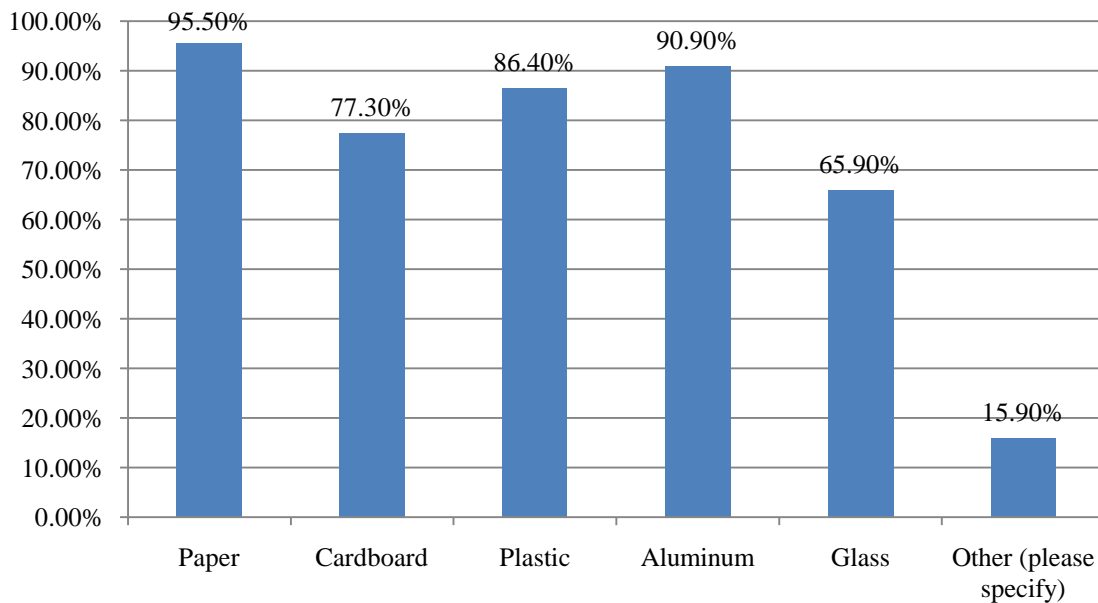


Table 6: Specific Responses to Other Selection

Batteries
We have a one-stream program where all recycling is done in one container.
newspaper
Hazardous waste (batteries, bulbs, small electronics)
computer ink cartridges
Newspapers
batteries

The next question about recycling programs was what office oversees each program. There is a wide range of responses with no one option being more frequent than others. University Housing, Facilities Office, or collaboration between the two offices were most often selected. Table 7 shows the distribution of the options.

Table 7: Recycling Program Oversight

	Response Count	Response Percent
University Housing or a department within University Housing	12	27.3%
University Facilities	13	29.5%
A collaboration of Housing and Facilities	11	25.0%
Other (please specify)	8	18.2%

In addition to the administration of the recycling program the last two questions on recycling programs were focused on the funding and finances of operating the program. 35 of the 41 institutions that responded to the question reported that the recycling program does not cost more than traditional garbage collection (35/41, 85.4%). 13 institutions, of the 35, responded to a follow up question about a funding sources to supplement the additional costs necessary to run their program. Table 8 shows the most common sources. 2 additional responses were entered as other, and specified the respondent was unsure of what funding mechanism was used.

Table 8: Sources for funding recycling programs

	Response Count	Response Percent
Additional student fee	0	0.0%
Student room and board	6	46.2%
University funding	5	38.5%
Fundraised funding	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)	2	15.4%

Departmental Initiatives

The section on departmental initiatives covered a broad scope of issues that departments may be undertaking, collaboration, or other factors that impact sustainability. This section also includes education of departmental staff on sustainability issues.

The first question asked to examine departmental efforts aimed at more professional efforts was, “Does your Housing Department provide educational opportunities (training, in-service, conferences) surrounding the topic of environmental sustainable practices for your professional live-in staff members?” Overwhelmingly institutions have not provided educational opportunities on sustainable practices (42/51, 82.4%). Additionally, only eight institutions reported having a sustainability committee within the department (8/51, 15.7%). Of the eight institutions with sustainability committees, 6 allow students to serve on the committee while the remaining two institutions do not allow students.

The next series of questions focused on initiatives within the residence halls. The first question in this series was, “What is impetus for implementing sustainability initiatives?” Table 9 shows the responses to this question. The question allowed respondents to select all responses that applied and thus there are more than 51 responses listed. Table 10 lists the responses submitted under the other response form. The most common response to the “other” response is that it is the right thing to do.

Table 9: Impetus for sustainable practices

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Student advocacy	32	62.7%
Professional staff requests	20	39.2%
University mandate or initiative	22	43.1%
Have not implemented initiatives	12	23.5%
Other (please specify)	13	25.5%

Table 10: Specific responses to other

We primarily do recycling because it is the right thing to do.
It's the right thing to do for the environment
Concern for environment, etc
It's the right thing to do.
A lot of KU's initiatives occur on a more global level.
Part of strategic planning process
State mandate
What we do comes more from our Facilities area - we have discussions, but are able to do very little at this point.
Staffing
University Faculty and Staff sustainability committee
faculty
Question is difficult to respond to.
Governor of Wisconsin chose River Falls to be "off the grid" by 2012

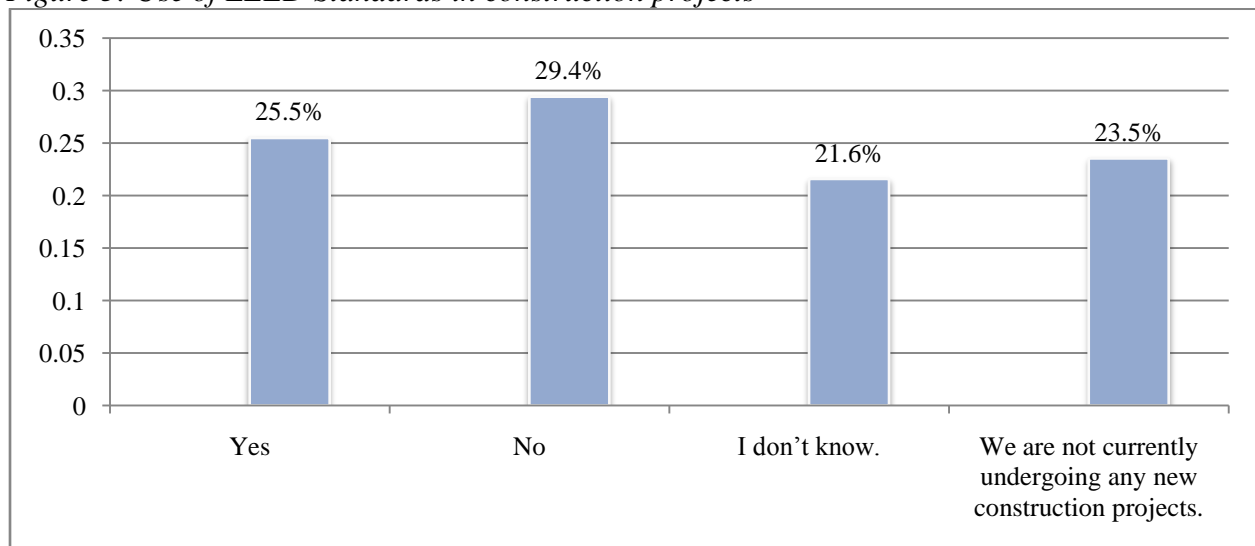
The next question was “Where is your funding coming from to support sustainability initiatives within the residence halls?” The responses were mixed and no response was more frequent than any other. No institutions that responded has a dedicated fee to implement any sustainability initiatives. Table 11 below shows the breakdown of the responses.

Table 11: Funding sources for initiatives

	Response Percent	Response Count
We currently don't have funding.	39.2%	20
University funding	15.7%	8
Student room and board costs	43.1%	22
Fundraising	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	9.8%	5

The next question that was asked of respondents was “Does your department ensure that all new construction projects are at least the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Silver standard?” The responses were mixed and are detailed in Figure 3.

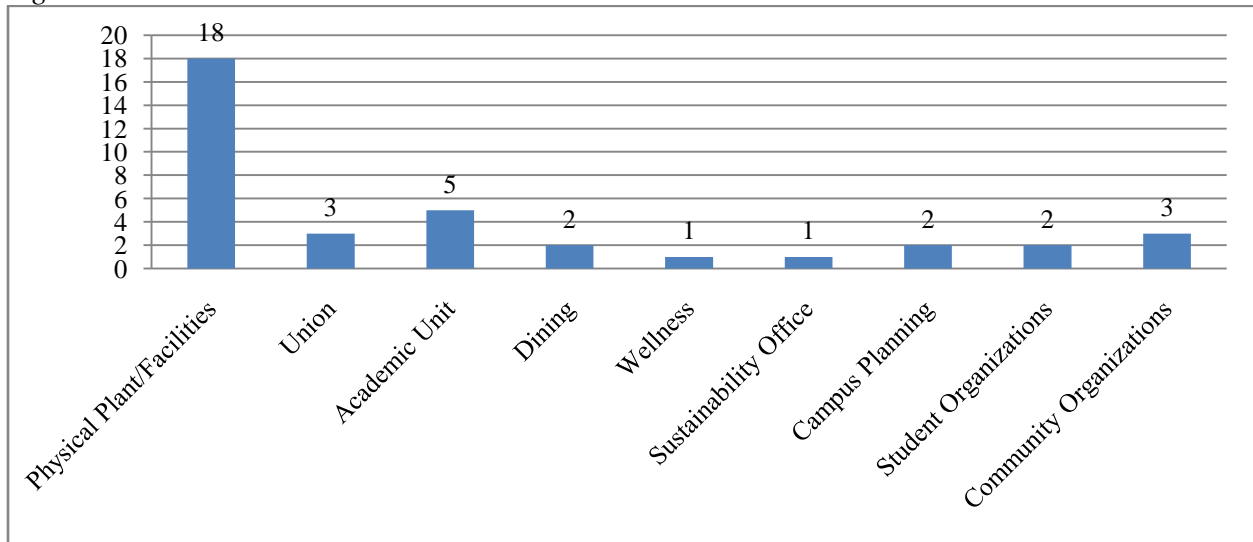
Figure 3: Use of LEED Standards in construction projects



The next question that was “Does your institution participate in the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment?” Fifty-one institutions responded to the question, 11 participate, 9 do not, and 31 do not know if their institution participates.

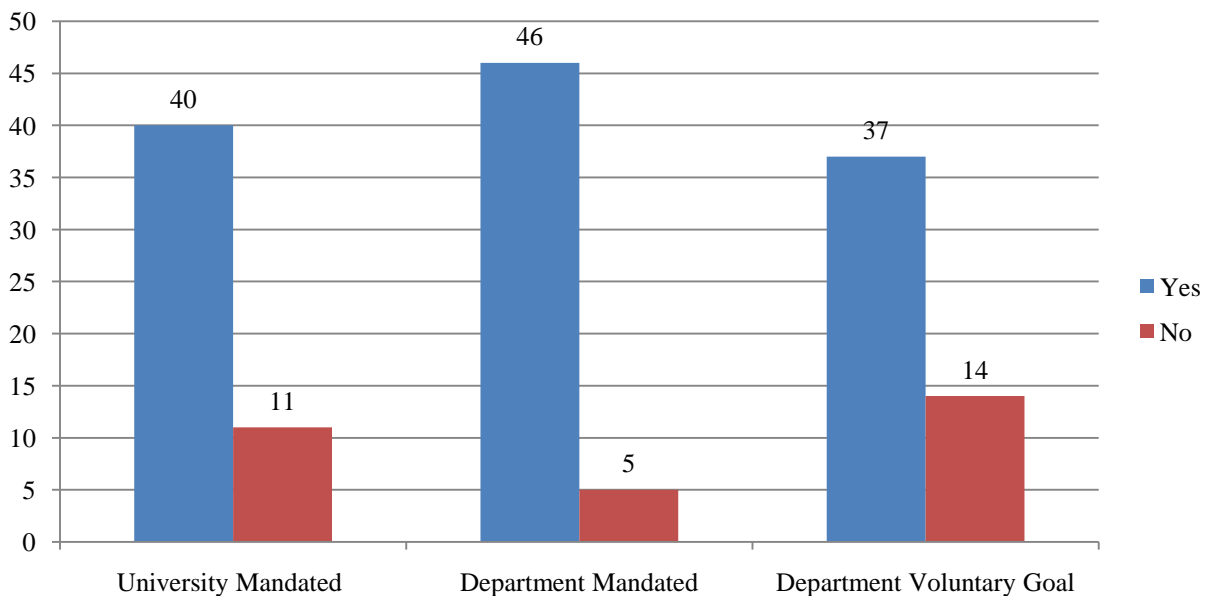
The next 2 questions dealt with collaboration with other departments. Two-thirds have collaborated with other departments to work on sustainability initiatives (34/51, 66.7%). The departments that are collaborators are in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Collaboration Partners



The next question that was asked was “Is your housing department behind, ahead, or going with the University’s sustainability path?” The majority (43.15) of responses were that the housing department was at the same pace with the sustainability on the university’s path. The next most prominent responses were that the university had no path (12/51, 23.5%) or that the housing department was ahead of the university (13/51, 25.5%). Nearly 80 percent of respondents reported that the university does not require a specific level of sustainability to be obtained by the housing department (40/51, 78.4%), while over ninety percent reported that the housing department itself does not require any level of sustainability to be followed (46/51, 90.2%). Despite the lack of formal goals, nearly three-quarters of respondents report that their departments voluntarily strive for sustainable practices (37/51, 72.5%). Figure 5 shows the differences in the presence of mandated and voluntary goals as reported above.

Figure 5: Sources of sustainable goals and requirements



The next question that was asked was if sustainable initiatives were in the department’s strategic plan. Table 12 shows that most of the responses were that the institution did not include sustainability initiatives in their strategic plans (47/51, 92.2%). Additionally only 2 institutions include sustainability in their mission statements (2/51, 3.9%).

Table 12: Sustainability in Strategic Plans

	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	16	31.4%
No	29	56.9%
There is not a departmental strategic plan.	6	11.8%

The next area the survey focused on was on facility changes that support sustainability. When asked, “Have you altered physical facilities or renovated existing structures to accommodate sustainability issues?” the response was split, with slightly less having made changes than not (29/51, 56.9%). However those reporting changes detailed numerous changes that are presented in Table 13. 17 institutions explained their changes out of the 22 that reported changes.

Table 13: Facilities changes for sustainability

We've renovated instead of rebuilding.
energy minimization
In the process of upgrading windows and HVAC systems
During renovations/construction, we give attention to sustainability and make changes that are affordable (such as light bulb, low flow toilets, etc).
Our newest res hall is considered green
Recycling areas, larger recycling areas, bags for each room with hooks this summer.
as we have cone renovations we have looked at more natural light, changed light fixtures, and looked at HVAC systems differently, using different types of carpet, furniture products, etc.
As lighting fixtures have been changed out -- attention has been paid to energy efficiency. We've purchased furniture and carpet made from sustainable products. All new construction projects incorporate design for recycling and trash collection areas.
New C-store is going to be LEED Certified
Everything we do is now done through this lens. Recycling old building materials like pipes, shower heads, etc.
HVAC systems to be more efficient
We have included more green models in some renovations, but we are not LEED certified. We have purchased recycling stations for each residence hall community. We have implemented a composting program in some residential areas.
Energy Management Project reducing gas, electric, and water consumption
We have converted to 1 common area bulletin board for all university sponsored events. We are no longer going to have posters and signs on each floor.
Kinds of toilet tissue and paper towels used. Provided recycle bins to every residence hall room and lobby. Automatic sensor to turn lights off when not in use in lobby and office areas.
When we renovate an existing facility, we try to do so with a sustainable approach.
New lighting and bathroom renovations have centered on sustainability

In addition to changes that have been made the survey looked forward to what will be done. The survey asked, “What sustainability practices has your department implemented or are in the process of implementing by December 2008?” Table 14 details the list of plans that institutions report they are working toward.

Table 14: Planned Sustainability Initiatives

Energy minimization, composting, chemical reduction, recycling.
staff training, energy minimization, marketing campaign
energy minimization
Energy minimizing.
staff training, and recycling
part of the orientation program for all new students, including what students can do on campus
"Green" theme housing for 6 student groups of 8; recycling bags for each student room on campus, expanded recycling areas; expecting students to take recycling to a recycling area per building.
Recycling Containers in each students room, partnering with the students of RHA on our campus, continued changes in light fixtures, changes in turning off computers, copying machines and other office equipment, etc
Educational information in residential spaces, working with Sustainability Assistants, pilot composting programs in residence halls
mostly facility....low flush toilets and showerheads, light bulbs, etc.
Education, waste minimization (Dining Services), energy minimization through educational campaigns and student competition, discussion of composting
Energy management
recycling containers in student rooms in one building, CFC lighting, composting food waste (pre-consumer), water saving front load washers, water conserving fixtures, waste oil sold as biodiesel, food purchases from local farms, use of Asoyia (soy based oil made in Iowa), eco-friendly chemical use in dining, purchase of hybrid vehicles, use of recycled toilet paper, recycle appliances through a vendor, reuse or recycle old furniture scrap metal and old mattresses, purchasing energy star rated appliances, paper recycling, use of LED exit signs, geothermal heat/cooling in one residence hall lounge
Education, Bikes for meeting travel, Cold water only laundry machines, Energy and Water use reduction, Recycling containers for all rooms
energy use
Don't know. I was told to complete this even though I have little to do with sustainability practices or policy.
waste minimization
Education of sustainability practices, staff training
Staff training, waste minimization, energy minimization, recycling, construction of new building will be more energy efficient
Staff Training, Waste Minimization
Waste and energy minimization; cafeteria equipment for composting and solid waste reduction, new renovation that conserves energy waste.
Composting efforts; ongoing recycling programs; freecycle program within hall at end of semester
Waste Management, energy usage.

We are currently in a transition state with Directors so this may change with a new Director
Hall programming and education on environmental impact/footprint.
waste and energy initiatives
Staff training, composting, waste minimization and an enhance recycling program.
We are in the design stage of a new residence hall and it will achieve the gold standard for the LEED certification.
Recycling, CFL Bulbs to students, Energy Minimization through Hall to hall comparison contest.

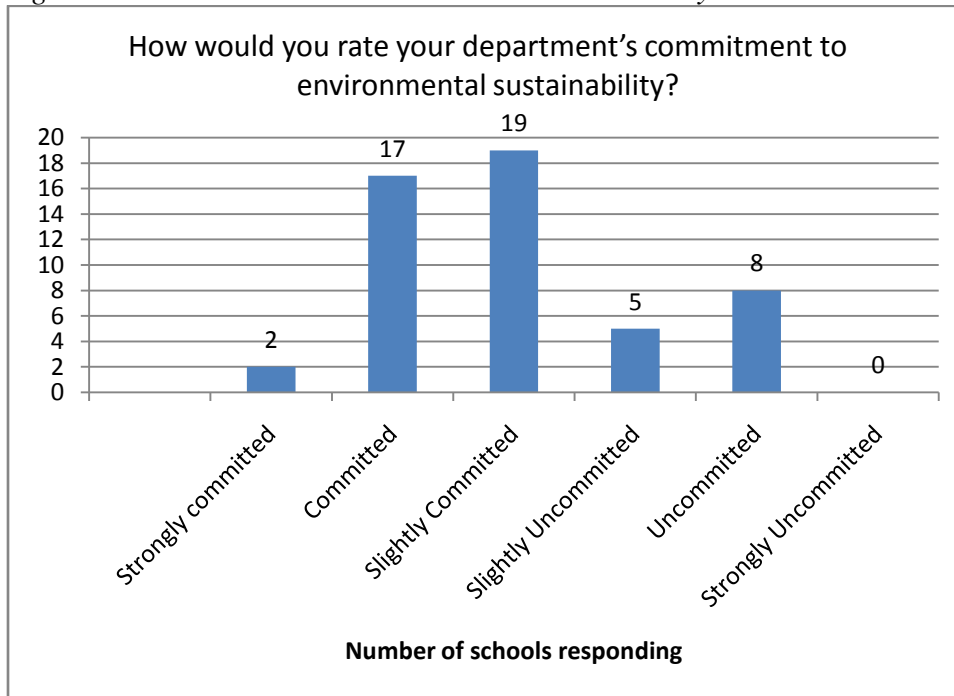
The next question was what changes the department would do if the resources were available to them. 21 institutions responded. Their comments are in Table 15.

Table 15: Sustainability changes if resources were available

More recycling.
alternative power generation (geothermal or wind) upgrade of building envelope for energy conservation
As many as possible. Heating, lighting, improve recycling...
Education of sustainability practices, staff training, waste minimization, and energy minimization,
Have custodians bring recycling from each floor; nice bins on each floor
Change out all electrical light fixtures to accommodate the more energy efficient type, solar and wind options for generating power for buildings,
I wouldn't know where to start
expanded recycling, build to LEED standards, composting post-consumer food waste
Infrastructure...lighting, water flow, etc.
recycling
energy minimization
Begin a recycling program, ensure that we are using more efficient lighting, water supply, etc. in our residence halls.
Whatever we could
Any and all.
Consistent recycling, building upgrades for more efficiency with mechanical functions, programming, reduced utility costs
More education
education about sustainability, communication within campus departments and Housing, decision making to promote sustainability initiatives, etc.
I think we should start small with light bulbs, electricity plans, closing windows, etc.
recycling measures in the halls, construction initiatives, existing infrastructure initiatives
continue to renovate existing buildings.
none at this time.

The final question of the survey was “Overall, how would you rate your department’s commitment to environmental sustainability?” Most of the respondents reported that their departments are committed to environment sustainability. Figure 6 shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 6: Commitment to Environmental Sustainability



Analysis and Discussion

This survey presents only a small glimpse into the sustainability efforts occurring on campuses throughout the region. The relatively small quantity of responses limits the degree to which trends can be discovered. Only minor differences occur in the results when examining subsets of the data. The data for many questions remains scattered. While the data was looked at for differences between large and small, and public and private institutions there were no significant differences in the data that was reported. Only slight differences were present in most questions, as the data was scattered amongst all institutions. As such there were no major trends that emerged from the survey. While many institutions are working towards sustainable initiatives, there is no conclusive practice, outside of recycling, in which institutions are engaged.

The most prominent area where most institutions agree was in the area of recycling. This appears to be the first step that institutions take to become more environmentally conscious. Most institutions in the region have a recycling program and most are recycling a wide array of products.

This survey shows that educational opportunities are being given to students and professional staff members at varying degrees of prominence depending on the institution. The education is an important step in creating students and professionals who are cognizant of the impact on the environment and actions to learn and live in a sustainable manner.

The 51 institutions that provided responses have set a baseline for the future surveys to be compared against. While this number may be low it will allow future research to build off these results and study trends in the region over time. The survey itself was limited by the lack of previous surveys on sustainability in housing. One major limitation of the survey may be that the survey neglects to collect specific information about university initiatives or directives which

may steer institutional resources toward sustainability. Without a base the survey was constructed off of practices observed on campuses, questions to facilities staff, and discussion within the Assessment and Information Management Committee.

Summary

Sustainability has become a buzz word on campuses across the country in the last few years. Colleges and universities have begun to examine their own impact on the earth and the costs associated with continuing forward without adjusting to become more environmentally friendly. This survey shows the state of sustainability in the UMR-ACUHO region.

This survey looks at several major areas of sustainability within housing. The first major area is student initiatives and education. Many institutions have taken some action to engage residents with some educational component including training, program model adjustment, or committees. The next area is recycling; nearly all institutions have some level of a recycling program. While the materials collected vary by campus, the presence of recycling on campus is widespread. The next area that the survey examined was departmental initiatives. These initiatives and projects varied by campus, most institutions have some level of commitment toward becoming more sustainable.

While this survey attempted to detail what is being done on member institutions, future research could focus on the changes in sustainable practices occurring within the region. Future surveys may work to better understand the practices of each institution to share the best practices with the region.