

## **Sustainability Report Survey Results 2008**

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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.

The purpose of this study is to understand what is going on at institutions in the region regarding sustainability as a broad theme. 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.

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](http://www.suverymonkey.com) for completion. A total of fifty-two institutions completed the survey, approximately a 44.8% return rate (52/116). Approximately 60% of respondents were from public institutions (31/52, 59.61%) and the remaining 40% represented the private institutions (21/52, 40.39%).

One of the first areas we examined was educating RA/CA staffs about sustainability. 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. When asked about educating students, 35 (67.3%) out of the 52 respondents answered affirmatively that such opportunities are provided for the residents.

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%).

The most prominent area where most institutions agree was in the area of recycling. When asked about having some sort of recycling program in place 86.3% (44/51) reported yes. Seven institutions reported having no recycling program. 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. 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%).

Next, we examined departmental efforts aimed at professional 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 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%).

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.