

Sustainability Communication and Reporting at UCI

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Introduction

The UC President's Carbon Neutrality Initiative Student Fellowship Program funds student-generated projects that support the UC system's goal to produce zero-net greenhouse gas emissions by 2025.

The CNI Climate Action Fellow works on projects related to helping UCI achieve climate neutrality, as outline in the UC Sustainable Practices Policy. This includes but is not limited to supporting annual sustainability reporting, conducting overall campus sustainability gap analysis, and updating sustainable operations pages of the UCI Sustainability website.

Project Goals

- Improve communication with the campus and stakeholders about UCI's Sustainability efforts and achievements.
- Document and improve GHG emissions reporting processes.

Materials and Methods

- The UCI Sustainability Website is one of the main forms of communication for all things sustainability happening on campus.
- The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. UCI's 2021 AASHE STARS report was used to perform a gap analysis and to promote UCI's achievements in sustainability.
- GHG Emissions Reporting
 - Reporting to UC Annual Sustainability Reporting, The Climate Registry, and Second Nature



UCI Sustainability

Outcomes

Highlights featured on UCI Sustainability Website.

UC IRVINE ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS 2020-2021

Two-time recipient of the **AASHE STARS Platinum rating** (2018 & 2021); UCI's 2021 sustainability report received the **highest score ever** obtained by an institution.

UCI is **No. 2** in Sierra magazine's 2021 'Cool Schools', 12 straight years being in the top 10.

- STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**: Certified as a Bee Campus USA, a student-led effort to educate the campus community on the environmental importance of bees.
- STAFF ENGAGEMENT**: Established the online Sustainability Fundamentals Training for Staff, providing an overview of sustainability and simple actions that can be integrated on campus, remotely, or hybrid.
- COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**: Developed the Health Equity Contact Tracing Workshop in partnership with the OC Health Care Agency and the OC Health Equity COVID-19 Community-Academic Partnership, providing education about the pandemic and contact tracing assistance.
- DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**: Over \$12 million was dedicated to offer grants to low and middle income students to minimize their cost of attendance, reduce the need for borrowing, and promote access and affordability.

Snapshot from AASHE STARS Highlight reel.

TWO-TIME RECIPIENT PLATINUM RATING

stars a program of aashe

2018 2021

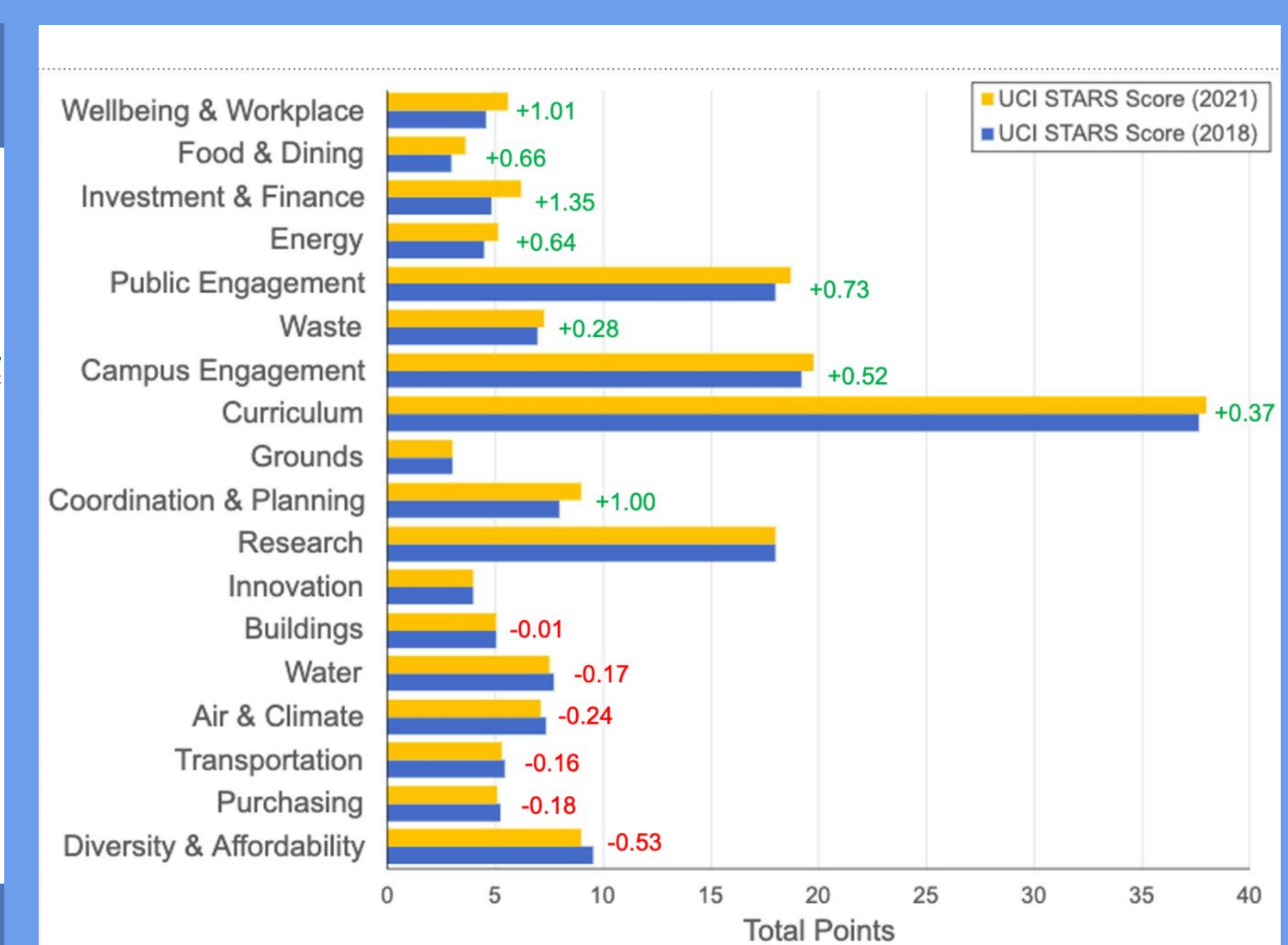
SUSTAINABLE DINING

How UCI staff can dine sustainably while working...

- ON CAMPUS**: When eating at one of the Zero Waste Dining Halls, check for the Anteater Water Footprints that indicate the water usage impact for each dish. Receive a discount when you use a reusable cup for fountain beverages and coffee in any dining location and help reduce waste. Use sustainable take-out containers. UCI Dining is proud to offer Styrofoam-free containers at all retail locations. In addition, Dining offers compostable paper containers at every location. Look for Fair Trade products to purchase at places such as Zot N Go, The Hill, and food courts.
- REMOTELY FROM HOME**: Purchase local, seasonal and responsibly raised, grown and sourced products whenever possible. Check out farmer's markets in OC. Use up what you already have! Try not to let food go to waste by getting creative with meals. Did You Know? The compost from each dining hall gets turned into mulch to be used at the Waste Management Facility.
- ON CAMPUS OR REMOTE**: Compost food waste. On campus, utilize the marked compost bins. At home, collect food scraps when cooking to compost. Plan meals ahead for the week to reduce food waste. Check out the UCI Sustainability Cookbook for recipes. Be a plant eater. Eating less meat and more plant-based meals can reduce one's carbon and water footprint. Use a reusable water bottle to avoid utilizing single-use plastic water bottles.

Sustainability Fundamentals for Staff UCI Sustainability

Infographic for UCI Staff Sustainability Training.



STARS point differences from 2018-21 for gap analysis.

In the Fall, the main deliverables were infographics for the UCI Sustainability website and UCI Staff Sustainability Training, as well as a highlight reel for UCI's 2021 Platinum Rating AASHE STARS Report. With the AASHE STARS Report, I helped perform a gap analysis to identify areas for improvement in UCI's sustainability efforts. The gap analysis is shared with campus stakeholders so that they can make improvements in their respective areas on campus.

In the Winter and Spring, the focus of the fellowship shifted to UCI's GHG emissions reporting process. As I assisted with the reporting, I began creating a GHG Emissions Reporting Manual that includes background on where and why UCI reports to as well as step by step instructions for the reporting process. The reporting process includes data collection and cleaning for electricity, natural gas and other emissions sources, as well how to report these emissions.

Conclusions

It is important to continue the communication of UCI's work in sustainability so that further improvements can be made in the future. The GHG Emissions Reporting Manual will be very helpful for those who will do the following years' reporting.

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