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SIERRA MAGAZINE'S 2010 "COOLEST SCHOOLS" QUESTIONNAIRE



2007



2008



2009

- EFFICIENCY
- ENERGY SUPPLY
- FOOD
- ACADEMICS
- PURCHASING
- TRANSPORTATION
- WASTE MANAGEMENT
- ADMINISTRATION
- FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS
- OTHER INITIATIVES

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Sierra, the award-winning magazine of the Sierra Club, is compiling information for our fourth annual “Coolest Schools” issue, which will rate American colleges and universities according to their environmental practices, green initiatives, and caliber of sustainability-oriented education.

Schools that score highly in these realms may be contacted for further discussion and will receive recognition in the magazine’s September/October issue. Please fill out this interactive PDF as thoroughly as possible, save it with your responses as “2010_coolschools_ your school’s name” and email it to cool.schools@sierraclub.org no later than **March 20, 2010**.

Note that this questionnaire will become a public document and that we will not be altering your responses before publishing them online. Please answer as thoroughly as possible. Questions left blank will receive no credit, and if a question requests a percentage, you must provide a percentage. The scoring key will be available online once the issue is published.

As the publication of the nation’s oldest and largest environmental nonprofit, *Sierra* has a readership of more than 1 million engaged and educated citizens.

Many thanks for your participation.

School name: Oberlin College

Contact name and title: Nathan Engstrom, Sustainability Coordinator

Contact phone: 440-775-6354

Contact email: nathan.engstrom@oberlin.edu

School’s city and state: Oberlin, OH

Number of students: 2839

HONOR PLEDGE: By completing and submitting this questionnaire, you are certifying that all statements in this document are true to the best of your knowledge.

INITIAL: nce

DATE: 3-22-10

Category 1: Energy Supply

1. Please break down the energy types that your campus uses for electricity by percentage. If the school purchases its electricity from a utility company, this information should be available from that company.

<u>51</u> % Coal	<u>1</u> % Wind	<u>0</u> % Biomass
<u>1</u> % Natural Gas	<u>1</u> % Solar	<u>0</u> % Geothermal
<u>6</u> % Nuclear	<u>30</u> % Hydro	<u>10</u> % Other <u>Landfill gas</u>

2. What type(s) of energy does your campus use for heating buildings (e.g., natural gas, biomass, coal)?

<u>80</u> % Coal	<u>0</u> % Biomass
<u>19</u> % Natural Gas	<u>1</u> % Geothermal
<u>0</u> % Electricity	<u>0</u> % Fuel Oil

If cogeneration, please explain.

Category 2: Efficiency

1. What percentage of campus buildings completed within the past three years have a LEED certification of at least silver?

100
_____ %

Note whether the certification is higher than silver.
All projects are pending LEED Gold certification

2. What percentage of water used for campus landscaping is from recovered, reclaimed, or untreated sources?

2.5
_____ %

3. What percentage of campus lighting fixtures are energy-efficient (e.g., compact fluorescent, LED, or equipped with motion sensors, automatic daylight shutoff, or other energy-saving features)?

97
_____ %

4. What percentage of campus appliances are Energy Star-rated?

85
_____ %

5. Does the institution have underway a program of energy-efficiency retrofitting projects, such as improving building insulation or sealing heating and cooling ducts?

Yes, a comprehensive steam line and trap repair and replacement program is underway, all renovation projects incorporate energy efficiency improvements, several extensive building-scale renovations have been completed in the last few years, energy projects are funded by a student fee supported revolving loan and grant program.

Category 3: Food

1. What percentage (in dollars) of food served at cafeterias is grown or raised within 100 miles of the campus?

45 %

2. What percentage (in dollars) of food served at campus cafeterias is USDA-certified organic?

2 %

3. Do campus cafeterias source seafood that is deemed sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program, or a similar program?

Yes, since 2004 all of our seafood is purchased in accordance with the Monterey Bay

4. What percentage of entrées served in campus dining locations include meat? If the meat is produced sustainably (for example, free-range or grass-fed), explain.

60 %

5. Are nutritionally complete vegetarian and/or vegan options available at every meal?

Yes, vegetarian and vegan options are available at every meal. Most of the items on the exhibition bars are vegetarian/vegan, at least one soup, two to three items at the deli (other than the cheese), each lunch we have one vegetarian/vegan entree; at dinner we have one entree of vegan and one of vegetarian; the grill always has vegan otwice a week we offer vegan cookies.

6. Is bottled water sold or distributed on campus?

Bottled water is currently being phased out of vending and to-go locations.

7. Does your school maintain a campus farm or garden? Does it use organic methods? Please describe the garden and methods used.

Yes, Oberlin owns and receives food from the George Jones Farm about a mile from campus that is operated by a private non-profit the New Agrarian Center. The farm is not USDA certified organic, but does practice organic and other low impact farming methods.

Category 4: Academics

1. Does your school offer any environmental- and/or sustainability-related majors, such as environmental studies, ecology, or sustainable agriculture? If so, please list them all.

Yes, Oberlin offers a major in Environmental Studies as well as a full range of natural science majors such as biology, physics and chemistry.

2. Does your school offer classes about clean technologies, including topics such as energy efficiency and solar-wind energy engineering? If so, please list them all.

Yes, Oberlin offeres courses in Ecological design, Energy Technology, Thermodynamics, Climate Modeling and Environmental Physics.

3. Does your school provide students with a list of environmental and/or sustainability classes to make such courses easy to identify? Please provide a link, if available.

No, not currently.

4. Please provide names of standout professors who work on environmental and/or sustainability issues and list their accomplishments, including awards, honors, and publications.

David Orr is the Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics and the Special Assistant to the President for Sustainability and the Environment. He is the author of several books, is best known for his pioneering work on environmental literacy in higher education and his recent work in ecological design, and has been the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. David Orr is the recipient of a Bioneers Award (2003), a National Conservation Achievement Award by the National Wildlife Federation, a Lyndhurst Prize awarded by the Lyndhurst Foundation "to recognize the educational, cultural, and charitable activities of particular individuals of exceptional talent, character, and moral vision."

5. Do you have environment- and/or sustainability-related centers, programs, or research institutions associated with your school? If so, please provide their names and a description.

No, not currently.

6. Is an environment-themed class a core curriculum requirement? If yes, please provide the name(s) of the course(s).

Oberlin has cultural diversity, writing proficiency and quantitative proficiency requirements for graduation.

7. What percentage of academic departments offer environment- or sustainability-related classes?

50
_____ %

Category 5: Purchasing

1. Does your school have a sustainable-purchasing policy? If yes, briefly explain.

Yes, Oberlin has a comprehensive policy on environmentally preferable purchasing that was approved in the spring of 2007. This document outlines the multiple factors that determine Oberlin's procurement decisions. These procurement decisions amend economic criteria with strong commitments towards environmental and social responsibility. In 1999, the Oberlin College Sweatshop-Free Apparel Code of Purchasing established Oberlin College's commitment to purchase socially responsible apparel. This Green Purchasing Policy expands our commitment to social responsibility beyond apparel to all products. People authorized to make purchases on behalf of the college are expected to support our commitment to environmental responsibility through the guidelines and procedures contained in this Green Purchasing Policy.

2. What percentage of paper used on campus is made from at least 30% postconsumer recycled content?

80
_____ %

Does your school purchase paper that is Forest Stewardship Council-certified?

Yes, FSC certified paper is used extensively for official college publications.

3. Does your school have a policy to purchase Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)-certified (or similar) electronics? If yes, please describe.

Yes, the Green Purchasing Policy specifically references the purchase of EPEAT-certified electronics and is implemented by our CIT department.

4. Do you have packaging agreements with suppliers that minimize waste? If yes, please describe.

Yes, a goal of the Green Purchasing Policy is to develop and maintain a consistent 'cradle-to-cradle' supply chain and purchasing process which considers economic, ethical, social and environmental impacts for all contracts and purchases; where all waste should first be eliminated or avoided and where any remaining waste be considered feedstock for new product development. To reuse, return or negotiate with suppliers the reduction or elimination of all packing materials.

5. Does your school specify in its purchasing contracts that products with energy-saving features be installed or delivered with these features enabled?

No, this is not specifically stated in purchasing contracts, but is standard practice of CIT to initialize these features prior to delivery or installation.

Category 6: Transportation

1. Does your school provide a free shuttle service around campus and town? If yes, briefly explain.

Yes, Oberlin operates Ride Line a student staffed operation that provides a stop-to-stop vehicle escort service to members of the College community from 9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. daily during each week of scheduled classes. It serves a route around the perimeter of the College campus, with limited off-campus stops.

2. What has your school done to promote bicycling as a transportation method?

Oberlin has a very active Bike-Co-op that offers semester long bike rentals and repair service as well as training and advocacy, the group 4000 More Bikes in Oberlin is working to create a community wide bike culture and recruits members to bike more and drive less, and bike racks are installed outside of every campus building.

3. Does your school encourage its students and employees to use public transit, carpool, or use some other form of alternative transportation? If yes, what are the incentives?

Due to recent budget cuts in the county, transit service is no longer offered in Oberlin. As a partial response, the college provides a subsidized airport shuttle service for students and the community. No formal incentives are offered in general, however.

4. Approximately what percentage of students drive to school in a car?

>1 %

5. Approximately what percentage of faculty and staff drive to work in a car?

40 %

Category 7: Waste Management

1. What is your campus's current waste-diversion rate (i.e., percentage of campus waste being diverted from landfills)?

40 %

2. Does your campus provide recycling receptacles wherever there are trash cans?

In general, yes.

3. Are recycling bins readily available at large events such as football games?

Yes, recycling and frequently composting containers are provided at all large planned events.

4. Does your school compost? If yes, are compost receptacles available at all or most on-campus dining locations?

Pre consumer food waste is composted from all major central dining halls. Co-op dining halls compost pre and post consumer waste.

5. Is your school committed to waste-reduction goals, such as zero waste? Please explain.

Oberlin's Strategic Plan and comprehensive Environmental Policy spell out a commitment to reduce resource consumption and the rate at which the college consumes resources. However, aside from water, paper and electricity these reduction goals are not quantified. For water, paper, and electricity we have a 15% reduction target.

6. Does your campus administer a donation program for clothing and other used goods when students are moving out of student housing? If so, are bins located in every dormitory?

Yes, the student-led Resource Conservation Team administers Big Swap events each semester as well as operating a Free Store throughout the school year.

Category 8: Administration

1. Is environmental sustainability part of your institution's mission statement, guiding principles, or similar document? If so, please provide the text or link.

Yes, environmental sustainability is one of the key directives in our Strategic Plan. "Oberlin is in a favorable position to be a national leader in promoting sustainability on and off campus. The College has already committed itself to pursuing the goal of sustainability as expressed in the environmental policy statement of Oberlin College, adopted by the Board of Trustees in March 2004. It should abide by this commitment by continuing to work toward developing an environmentally sustainable campus.

Justifications include unprecedented environmental challenges our students will face in the future; the great importance attached by current and prospective students to efforts to achieve sustainability; the learning experiences afforded to students as a result of these efforts; and the continuing example Oberlin can set for other institutions, academic and otherwise."

2. Does your school employ at least one person dedicated to overseeing campus environmental initiatives, such as a sustainability coordinator, or have a sustainability task force or committee? Is the coordinator position a part-time or full-time position?

Yes, Oberlin has had an Office of Environmental Sustainability and a full time Sustainability Coordinator since the summer of 2006.

3. Has your school made an official commitment to reducing its impact on climate change by setting goals of emission reductions by a certain date? If yes, does your school have a plan for achieving these reductions? If so, briefly explain the plan.

Yes, Oberlin was one of the charter signatories of the ACUPCC and have completed our Climate Action Plan with 2025 as a target date for carbon neutrality.

4. Has your school conducted a complete greenhouse-gas-emissions audit of its campus?

Yes, greenhouse gas inventories have been completed from 2001 through the end of fiscal year 2007.

5. Has your school achieved a reduction in total annual carbon emissions? If yes, please explain and provide the benchmark year and percentage.

Our net total annual carbon emissions have fluctuated year to year over that period from a high of 47,311 tons in 2003 to a low of 40,442 in 2007.

Category 9: Financial Investments

1. Is all information about your endowment fund publicly available? Briefly explain.

Yes, proxy voting records and endowment holdings information is available to the school community and to the public at the investment office.

2. Does your institution have an investment-responsibility committee that considers and acts on environmental issues?

Yes, Oberlin has a Student Socially Responsible Investment Committee that includes administrators, staff and faculty that advises on social and environmental responsibility as it affects Oberlin's endowment holdings.

3. Does your school make environmentally responsible investments? If so, briefly explain what they are and whether they're made on an ongoing basis.

Yes, Oberlin invests in renewable energy funds, community development financial institutions and loan funds, and on-campus energy and water savings projects. In addition Oberlin invests in one of the largest private equity investment managers in renewable energy. In addition, donors can direct gifts to a segregated fund that only invests in environmental/ sustainability factors.

Category 10: Other Initiatives

1. Have any of your school's students effected positive environmental change on a campus, state, or national level? If so, please describe. (To nominate a specific student for greater attention in our coverage, please email cool.schools@sierraclub.org with his or her name, accomplishments, and contact information.)

Yes, Oberlin students are very active locally, regionally and nationally on issues such as transportation, bike advocacy, mountaintop removal mining, local foods, renewable energy, green building and sustainable living among many other issues.

2. Have students participated in environmental challenges or events such as the Solar Decathlon, environmental design contests, or environmental debates? If so, which events and how did they do?
Students have been very active participants in PowerShift, hosted a local PowerShift Ohio event in Oberlin and have received multiple National Wildlife Federation Chill Out, Campus Climate Solutions Awards.

3. Has your school set aside part of its campus as natural habitat, stipulated limited campus development, or enacted programs preserving its land? If so, please explain.

Oberlin owns a nearly 80 acre farm property that is managed by a local non-profit that includes wetland restorations, preserved woodlands and other protected space as well as a nearly 60-acre arboretum and 13 acre town green.

4. Does your school adhere to an indoor air-quality policy (e.g., the mandated use of nontoxic cleaning supplies)? If yes, describe the policy.

Yes, Oberlin primarily uses non-toxic citrus and hydrogen peroxide based cleaning agents as well as a non-smoking policy adjacent to all buildings and entryways.

5. Does your school offer outdoor- or nature-based programs, classes, or extracurricular activities to students and/or faculty? If yes, please list and describe.

Oberlin has a very active student-led Outings Club as well as courses in our ExCo (Experimental College) curriculum that are outdoor and nature-based.

Category 10: Other Initiatives, continued

6. What specific actions has your school taken to improve its environmental sustainability since spring 2009? Please list all improvements.

Oberlin has signed an MOU with the City of Oberlin, the Clinton Foundation and the USGBC making Oberlin one of only 18 communities in the world participating in the Climate Positive Development Program, completed its Climate Action Plan, further developed plans for a Green Arts district and community-wide sustainability plan know as the Oberlin Plan, completed two projects pending LEED Gold certification and begun construction on two other LEED Gold projects, passed a student resolution banning the sale of bottled water on campus, funded a number of energy conservation projects through the student fee supported Green EDGE Fund, among many others.

7. Please use this space to address any other unique or interesting sustainability initiatives that have not been previously mentioned: