



# WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

In 2007, Western signed the President's Climate Commitment, setting in motion a district-wide effort to aggressively address our contribution to global warming. Since then, the concept of sustainability has become increasingly integral to Western's identity and woven into many of the college's strategic documents.

Western reaffirmed our commitment to sustainability in 2016 by renewing the Climate Commitment, publicly declaring our goal to pursue carbon neutrality by 2035 in addition leading efforts to assess, plan for, and enact climate resilience initiatives.

Sustainability is the act of **building**—through our daily practices and educational programming—a **thriving, resilient, and just community** now and in the future.

Western's ongoing sustainability work is guided by a three-year sustainability plan. The plan's goals focus on modeling sustainability practice, educating a green workforce, and growing existing and new partnerships. The plan aligns with the United Nations Development Programme Global Goals for Sustainable Development, a set of 17 interconnected goals which call for world-wide cooperation to address a wide-range of social, environmental, and governance challenges.

We are proud of what we have accomplished in the first ten years, but we have much more to do. We invite you to become part of Western's sustainability story. To learn more about our efforts and how you can help, visit [www.westerntc.edu/sustainability](http://www.westerntc.edu/sustainability).

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# Western Technical College

To learn more visit:  
[www.westerntc.edu/sustainability](http://www.westerntc.edu/sustainability)

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# MODELING SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY CENTER



TRUCK & HEAVY EQUIPMENT FACILITY



SPARTA PUBLIC TRAINING CENTER



COLEMAN CENTER



VIROQUA



CAMPUS SHOP



LUNDA CENTER



BLACK RIVER FALLS



UNION MARKET



- Nine buildings are certified LEED Silver or higher including our award-winning LEED Platinum Integrated Technology Center.
- Western's four photovoltaic systems and the Angelo hydropower station produce about 1.1 gigawatt hours of renewable energy each year, about the same amount of energy used to power 100 houses.
- Our Energy Conservation Management Program has successfully engaged students and employees in turning off computers, monitors, appliances, lights, closing doors and lowering window shades in all spaces of every building when not occupied.
- Western uses geothermal technology to heat and cool the Integrated Technology Center and our Sparta Training Facility.

Western's Living Wall Integrated Technology Center



- Western promotes alternative transportation for employees and students with bike commuter amenities, electric vehicle charging stations, and a bike share program. All staff and students can ride the local and regional public transportation bus systems for free.
- The Union Market uses reusable to-go containers, donates leftover food to local shelters at the end of the week, and uses a food waste dehydrator to turn pre-consumer food waste into a soil amendment which is used in Western's greenhouse to grow microgreens.
- Since 2013, users have refilled over 550,000 water bottles at refilling stations located throughout campus, keeping harmful disposable water bottles out of the waste stream.

## EDUCATING A GREEN WORKFORCE



- Curriculum is driven by a set of college-wide learning outcomes which include two competencies specifically involving sustainability and resilience.
- Annual campus events like bike-to-work-week, Horticochia, and the campus-wide Eco-Challenge bring sustainability to life for students, employees, and the public.
- Western's campus, including our certified passive house, is designed as a "living lab," where students in many programs learn about sustainability from the buildings and grounds.
- Our Building, Science and Energy Management, and Landscape Horticulture programs directly prepare students for work in the burgeoning green-collar economy.
- Courses in a wide range of programs, from culinary management to graphic design to IT support, incorporate elements of sustainability practice and thinking.



**Western's energy conservation efforts have helped the campus avoid over \$2.5million in energy costs since 2010!**

**21%  
REDUCTION**

**Western has achieved a 21% reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions since 2010!**

- Each year our rain gardens, green roof, native vegetation, and permeable pavers and asphalt filter over 5 million gallons of storm water and divert it from the sewer system. That's more than 7 ½ Olympic-sized swimming pools!
- Western has reduced water consumption by 28% since 2009 through conservation efforts like installing low-flow bathroom fixtures and using grey water systems for irrigation.



# GROWING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Coulee Region Sustainability in Education Project** – Western is a founding member of this consortium of local higher-education institutions. The partnership is designed to provide professional development to faculty wanting to embed sustainability within their curricula and a venue for cross-institutional dialogue among faculty.
- **Get Growing** – Housed in Western’s Horticulture Education Center, Get Growing is a partnership between Western, Hillview Urban Agriculture, and Mayo Clinic Health System with a mission of instilling healthy eating habits and fostering education about sustainable gardening practices. Each summer, Get Growing grows edible plants in planters placed throughout Western’s campus and Mayo’s grounds. The plants and vegetables may be harvested by anyone in the community.
- **Independence Solar Panels** – This partnership with Dairyland Power serves both organizations by adding more renewable power to Dairyland’s portfolio and provides a working solar array as a hands-on learning tool for Western students. The 10.4 kW array is located at our Independence regional campus.
- **The Sustainability Institute** – This 501c3 organization is housed at Western and provides leadership, coordination, and education to forward sustainability thinking and action within the 7 Rivers region. In addition to hosting a number of community events like the annual La Crosse Earth Fair, Rise and Shine Sustainability Speaker series, and the annual Community Resilience Symposium, the Sustainability Institute runs the MPower Business Champions program. As of 2018, the MPower program has inspired 16 different local businesses and organizations to implement sustainability initiatives at the workplace.

Independence Solar Panels



**Western**  
Technical College



Sustainability Institute MPower Business Champion program



Get Growing partnership housed in the Horticulture Education Building



Campus Courtyard