



SUSTAINABILITY UVA  
*From the Grounds Up*



## UVA SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE 2020

### ENGAGE

**Earth Week:** As with all spring events, UVA's celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day pivoted to a virtual format but maintained a focus on community partnerships and even expanded to include virtual events from higher education institutions across Virginia.

UVA's Earth Day Every Day celebration consisted of a month-long social media celebration in April, 15 virtual events, and distribution of 200 lawn signs to visually signal the local community's commitment to sustainable action. For a full recap of Earth Week and its impact, see the [Finding New Ways to Celebrate Earth Day Together](#) student blog post.



**Equity and Environment Initiatives:** To date, the EE fund has distributed \$85,000 to support 33 projects that have significantly increased visibility of the connection between diversity, inclusion, and sustainability on Grounds and in our community. Project highlights from this year include an Equity & Environment Communications Fellow for Cultivate Charlottesville, Close to Home: An Environmental Art Show, and Growing for Change - individual gardens for the residents of Westhaven.

**Community MLK Event:** In January nearly 200 people attended a 2020 MLK Community Celebration event hosted by the Committee on Sustainability, City Schoolyard Garden, and the Charlottesville Youth Climate Strike. Through hands-on activities geared towards youth, participants engaged with others around the topic of climate change and its disproportionate impacts on people of color and under-resourced communities. Three national climate change speakers, all under age 20, shared their experience and knowledge about environmental justice and the climate movement. Of attendees who responded to the post-event survey, all agreed that by attending the event, they gained a deeper understanding of the role black youth are playing in addressing the inequitable impacts of climate change.



**Sustainability Literacy and Culture Survey:** Working with UVA Institutional Research and Analytics, UVA Sustainability administered a 35-question survey to assess undergraduates' knowledge of basic sustainability concepts as well as their engagement and awareness of UVA's sustainability efforts. 95% of students noted that they think it is either somewhat (20.47%) or very important (74.35%) that UVA build sustainability and awareness and engagement both on-Grounds and beyond. 95% of students noted that they think it is either somewhat (18.82%) or very important (76.12%) that UVA reduce its impact on the environment by operating sustainably.

## STEWARD

**Greenhouse Gas Goal Achieved:** In 2011, UVA set its first greenhouse gas goal and committed to reducing emissions 25% below 2009 levels by 2025. In calendar year 2019, UVA achieved a 27% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, exceeding its 2011 goal six years early despite significant growth in buildings and number of students and employees on Grounds.

**Building Efficiency:** UVA Energy & Sustainability Engineers in Facilities Management have been assisting in the fight against COVID-19 by helping to convert over 50 additional negative pressure ICU rooms at the new hospital inpatient tower and working actively to identify opportunities to achieve financial savings through enhanced energy conservation across Grounds while buildings are closed to the public.

**Building Efficiency Award:** In May UVA's Delta Force program was recognized with a Virginia Energy Efficiency Leadership Award by the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council for innovation in reducing costs and energy consumption.

**LEED Certification:** Five projects have achieved LEED certification since January: Carr's Hill, Old Ivy Office Building (Gold), Ivy Stacks (Silver), McArthur Squash Addition, and Dean Family Golf Performance Center.

## DISCOVER

**New Courses:** This academic year, 801 students were enrolled in sustainability-related courses made possible by Committee on Sustainability Course Development Fellowships awarded over the past three years. The 21 courses offered this academic year were offered in seven different UVA schools.

**New Research:** To date, Committee on Sustainability Research Seed Grant funding for over 40 faculty members has resulted in 49 academic presentations, four publications completed or in press, eight under review, and many more in progress. Nine projects have received follow-on funding, and 90% of funded research projects involved UVA students.

**Student Internship Grants:** Despite many summer opportunities being reworked because of COVID-19, five sustainability internship grants were awarded to support students who have secured unpaid public service internships in sustainability fields.

**Sustainability Faculty Fellows:** A fifth faculty fellow was added and now four UVA schools are represented in this second year of the program. The capacity of all five core Global Environments + Sustainability courses taught by Fellows were increased and new initiatives were added, such as instructional paddle in Nottoway waters focused on climate impacts with Beth Roach, Nottoway and Chair of Governor's Environmental Justice Council. Together Fellows advised the 2020 GSVS majors on 36 sustainability-focused capstone research projects. The Fellows awarded \$30,908 in Peyton Fellowships for Climate Change Solutions. Seven projects and ten students were funded from Architecture, Engineering, Environmental Science, Public Policy, and Religious Studies.