

# Sustainability Impact Report

2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR  
OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

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I am excited to share with you our Sustainability Impact Report for the 2023-2024 academic year, which provides a snapshot of the **good work by many** being done across Creighton's campuses in caring for our common home and promoting a more sustainable Creighton.

While climate change is a complex, intractable global issue, at Creighton University, our Jesuit, Catholic tradition calls us to approach this challenge as an authentic source of hope, putting right-reasoning into action based on the best available science.

Since being named director of the Office of Sustainability Programs in November of 2022, I have come to appreciate more fully the passion and compassion our students, faculty and staff bring to issues of sustainability. I also am grateful to my colleagues in the Office of Sustainability Programs, our Sustainability Governance Committee and our campus and off-campus partners for their commitment, leadership and support.

Thanks to the **efforts of many**, we continue to make great progress on our Sustainable Creighton Initiative. Our goals in that report covered four broad categories for advancement: academics, operations, engagement and reporting. In this report, we provide a brief update on each of those areas as we work to fulfill a variety of commitments in anticipation of Creighton's 150th anniversary in 2028.

While there remains much opportunity, in the Jesuit spirit of *magis*, to do more, I am proud of the progress we have made **as a collective Creighton community**, and I look forward to continuing this important journey with hope and gratitude.

Sincerely,

**Andrew Baruth, PhD**

*Director, Office of Sustainability Programs*



**ANDREW BARUTH, PHD**  
*Director*  
*Office of Sustainability Programs*

# 9.54 tons

## of food waste collected and processed into compost

*through a partnership with Soil Dynamics/  
Hillside Solutions*

- > Creighton receives a monthly allotment of composted soil from Soil Dynamics, which is donated to a dozen nonprofits in the Omaha area.
- > Launched the **Green Box program**, a reusable green plastic to-go box used in Creighton's two dining facilities (Brandeis and Harper). Boxes are returned to be cleaned after use.

# 2,600

## green boxes were in circulation in the 2023–2024 academic year

*Available to the 2,415 students enrolled in a meal plan, as well as faculty/staff who bought into the program for \$5*

# 38,000+

## to-go containers diverted from the landfill

*With an average of 150 to-go meals out of Brandeis, and another 65 out of Harper daily*

- > Initiated a **low-waste event** for the President's Picnic during Welcome Week, resulting in 10 compost bins, six recycling bins and less than two landfill bins.

- > Installed more than **100kW of solar electric energy**, including on the rooftops of the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education and Graves Hall, the new freshman residence hall. An additional 70kW (237,000 BTU) of solar hot water heating technology was installed on Graves Hall.
  - Creighton is the first location in North America to leverage solar heating technology from ELM solar, Virtu<sup>HotHD</sup>.
- > Applied for, and was one of six universities nationwide to receive, a **pro bono climate consulting award** through Second Nature, a nongovernment organization focused on accelerating climate action in and through higher education. [Creighton receives climate consulting award.](#)
- > Signed the **President's Climate Leadership Carbon Commitment**, renewing our participation in Second Nature. "In recognition of our unrelenting dedication to sustainability, I am pleased to share that the University has renewed its participation in the [Second Nature Carbon Commitment](#), joining hundreds of other institutions in actionable efforts toward a brighter future." – Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
- > **Reduced annual carbon emissions by 22,000 tons**, as compared to the baseline year of 2010 (a 39% reduction).
  - *Reduced campus emissions from heating with steam by 25% over the previous year and 34% since 2010 – most notably by vacating the Bio-Informatics Center, the Boyne Building and Kiewit Residence Hall in 2023-2024.*
  - *The new Graves Hall, CL Werner Center for Health Sciences Education, and Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence are significantly more energy efficient.*



## Reporting

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- > Earned a silver **STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System) rating** from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. [Creighton earns silver rating for sustainability.](#)
- > Received the **TreeCampus Higher Education** designation from the Arbor Day Foundation for the 15th year. [Tree Campus Higher Education flag flies on campus once again \(creighton.edu\).](#)

# 130+

**new trees added to Creighton's Omaha campus in the past year**

*Includes 15 new species for a total of approximately 850 trees and over 60 unique species*

# 6

**tree education events hosted**

*Includes three tree plantings and three campus tree walks for students, faculty and staff*

## Academics

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# 1 in 7

**courses discuss sustainable development\***

*a 50% increase from 2018*

*(\*as defined by the United Nations)*

- > Magis Core 3.A.I.4 (The Christian Tradition): “Students will identify and/or discuss particular challenges facing Christianity (in general) and the Catholic Church (more specifically) in the contemporary world, including but not limited to the ecological crisis.”



## Engagement

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- > Collaborated on **Creighton's 2023 Mission Week**, which was themed "Caring for Our Common Home" and featured a keynote address titled "Do No Harm: Climate Change, Healthcare and Net Zero Emissions." This talk invited exploration of the mission-centered call to care for our common home through focused considerations of the healthcare industry's role in addressing the realities of climate change. [Mission Week kicks off academic year \(creighton.edu\)](#).
- > Launched the **Eco-Reps program**, which identifies students in the residence halls to assist with sustainability programming. In fiscal year 2023-2024, nine students were active. The year focused on the areas of recycling and fast fashion. The group hosted a screening of a film on fast fashion, *The True Cost*, and ran a clothing swap-shop in the spring.
- > Partnered with **Conservation Nebraska** for the first time to support two half-time AmeriCorps members for the Omaha campus. The AmeriCorps Common Ground Project funded these two Creighton students and allowed Creighton University to be their primary service site for the year, adding capacity for campus engagement, service projects and conservation education.

# 26

**event organizers requested compost bins to ensure proper waste disposal**

*Since February 2023*

- > Collaborated with various campus groups to increase the number of **eco-conscious events**. The Office of Sustainability Programs has loaned portable compost bins and coordinated large compost bins for outdoor events. With the help of Creighton Catering, operated by Sodexo, eco-conscious disposal practices have been simplified on campus by switching to compostable dinnerware and utensils when reusable options are unavailable.

- > Funded four **Creighton Student Sustainability Action Fund (CSSAF) projects** in fiscal year 2023-2024, for a total of 9 projects since its 2022 launch.
  - *Projects included a Sustainability Week for the Phoenix campus and a Second Chance mending event to practice fundamental sewing skills and discuss the impacts of fast fashion.*

# \$12,000+

**invested in student-led sustainability projects since 2022**

- > Launched the **Sustainable Creighton Office Certification**, with 24 offices completing 16 sustainable actions to receive certification in academic year 2023-2024. Action areas are engagement, printing, office area, waste reduction, electronics and energy efficiency, purchasing and transportation.
- > Produced the **Sustainability Update**, a weekly email newsletter sent to over 1,000 Creighton list serv members. The update's content is focused on sustainability and the environment, including campus and local events, opportunities for service and advocacy. It also highlights sustainability champions (individuals, groups) both on campus and off campus, current news and informational tips and tidbits.