



**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY®

# 2020 SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

**OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY**  
Division of Finance & Operations





# SUSTAINABILITY

Texas A&M University defines sustainability as the efficient, deliberate, and responsible preservation of environmental, social, and economic resources to protect our earth for future generations of Texas Aggies, the Texas A&M University community, and beyond.



SUSTAINABILITY  
RESPECT. PROTECT. PRESERVE.



# 2020 Sustainability Highlights



May 06, 2021

Texas A&M formalized our commitment to sustainability twelve years ago when the Office of Sustainability was founded. In Aggieland, 12 is an important number. Built on years of traditions, the 12th Man stands ready to serve in times of need. Right now, the world needs a sustainable future. Texas A&M is prepared to lead in Higher Education into that future through cutting edge research and education.

Our commitment to sustainability can be seen most clearly in the pages of our Sustainability Master Plan (SMP), updated in 2018. The SMP identifies nine themes, 16 evergreen goals, and 47 targets to continue Texas A&M's march toward a more sustainable future. We are pleased with the results of this highly collaborative process and continue to push forward by implementing the SMP's recommendations to further Texas A&M's overall sustainability performance.

Twelve years ago, Texas A&M demonstrated our loyalty to the future by formalizing our commitment to respect, protect, and preserve the financial, environmental, and people resources to ensure future generations of Aggies have a sustainable Aggieland to call home. Completing our seventh Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) submission has helped our campus recognize, celebrate, and advance our sustainability efforts.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John L. Junkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John L. Junkins  
Interim President, Texas A&M University

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

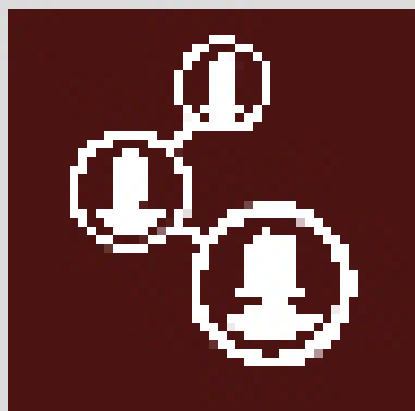
From its inception as a land-grant institution in 1876 to the addition of sea- and space-grant designations, Texas A&M University (TAMU) has been a leader in research and education of how we interact with — and impact — our world. In March 2008, the Office of Sustainability (OS) was founded and charged with creating a culture of sustainability in Aggieland to enhance these efforts.

Through OS coordination and with guidance from the President's Sustainability Advisory Council (SAC), TAMU monitors institutional sustainability performance using the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). STARS is a program managed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

The 2020 highlights in this report come primarily from the campus' most recent STARS submission, where Texas A&M University earned its fifth STARS Gold rating. STARS evaluates institutions based on performance in the following four categories, and this report provides highlights for each. To view the entire submission, visit [STARS AASHE 2020](#).



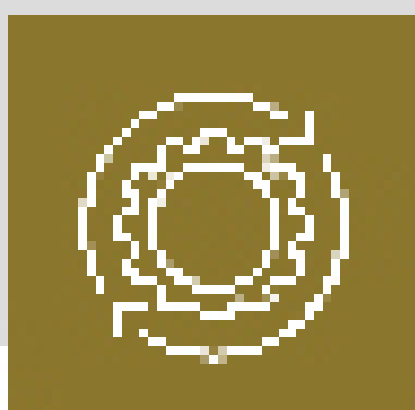
### ACADEMICS



### ENGAGEMENT



### OPERATIONS



### PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

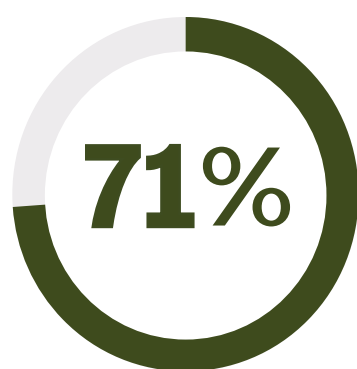


**UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES** maintains a voluntary open access policy that ensures all scholarly articles produced by faculty and staff are accessible. This policy helps address the barriers that undermine global access to products of TAMU's scholarly and creative work.

More than **36%** of sponsored researchers on campus are engaged in sustainability-related research.



**24%** of the university's offered courses focus on or relate to sustainability.



of academic departments (or equivalents) offer at least one course related to sustainability.

**22%** of continuing education courses offered by TAMU Extension agencies address sustainability.



TAMU offers **Geography 380** (Workshop in Environmental Studies) and the **Texas Target Communities Program (TCCP)** as immersive student sustainability opportunities.

More than **75%** of departments with sponsored research conduct sustainability-related research.



The university offers sustainability-oriented degrees, minors, and certificates. Examples include:

## UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

Ecological Restoration  
Environmental Design  
Environmental Studies  
Environmental Geosciences  
Renewable Natural Resources

## GRADUATE DEGREES

Natural Resource Development  
Water Management & Hydrological Science  
Ecosystem Science & Management

## MINORS & CERTIFICATES

Climate Change  
Earth Sciences  
Environmental Geosciences  
Sustainable Architecture & Planning  
Sustainable Urbanism (Graduate)  
Watershed Certificate





The goal of the **INTERNSHIP PROGRAM** coordinated by the **OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY** is to bring people from a variety of backgrounds and academic disciplines together to create a team that educates the campus community about sustainability issues. **192 INTERNSHIPS** have been provided over the past 10 years.

**Aggie Eco Reps** is an organization coordinated by **Residence Life** in which students educate their peers about how to live a sustainable lifestyle.



At least **50%** of staff members participated in sustainability-related training or professional development.



The **Innovative Learning Classroom Building (ILCB)** was designed to ensure an immersive learning experience and was built to **LEED Silver** standards. The building has many features students enjoy such as outdoor seating, decks, water features, hammock stands, an outdoor terrace, and state of the art technology.



The **Institute for Sustainable Communities** works closely with the **Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Service** to investigate issues related to pollution and environmental justice along Houston's Ship Channel.

With a grant from the Aggie Green Fund, **TAMU Urban Farm United** introduced aeroponic vertical farming through the use of tower gardens to demonstrate the efficacy of growing fresh food sustainably for campus. Once harvested, the food is provided to the **12th Can Student Organization** to assist in their mission to eliminate food insecurity on campus.

TAMU actively supports the **Texas Regional Alliance for Campus Sustainability (TRACS)**, a network for higher education institutions looking to enhance sustainability efforts. The **8th Annual TRACS Summit** will be hosted by Dallas College in 2021.

The Department of Residence Life hosts the "**U Challenge**", wherein teams of students (graduate & undergraduate) study utility and energy consumption for assigned residence hall communities as well as student engagement patterns. Their recommendations are reviewed by department leadership for implementation.



# OPERATIONS



**90%** of runoff from local and regional rainfall events is retained on-site using low-impact development practices and green infrastructure.

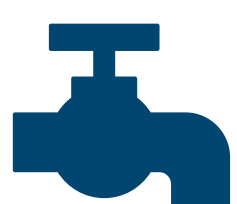
Today, TAMU uses **15%** less total energy than it did in 2000, even though campus has grown **70%** over the past 20 years.



The **Gardens** is a **27-acre** public teaching garden focused on expanding Texas A&M's research and outreach by building a living classroom for educational, inspirational, and recreational experiences. The **Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS)** recognized The Gardens as the PGMS Green Star Awards 2020 Grand Winner for implementing initiatives that sustain our environment.

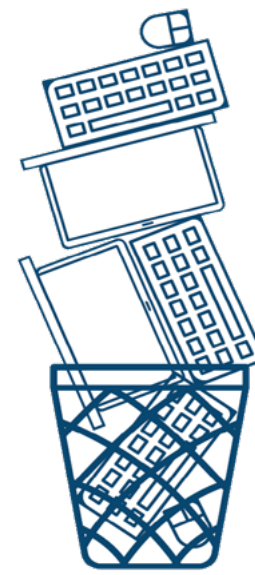


TAMU is 1 of only 5 universities in the nation to earn a **4 Star accreditation** from the PGMS.



Even though full-time equivalent students, faculty, and staff increased by almost **38%** and gross floor area of building space increased **131%**, TAMU has reduced total annual water use on campus by **57%** since 1991.

**100%** of waste from TAMU-owned electronics is disposed of through **Logistics Services' University Surplus Property Program**.



Electronics are either re-purposed or recycled sustainably through Responsible Recycling certified recyclers.

**12%** of the annual food and beverage purchases by Chartwells for TAMU are sustainably sourced. Moreover, **14%** of annual purchases are plant-based.



**100%** of janitorial paper products are eco-certified.



**91%** of all the construction and demolition waste produced by TAMU was diverted from the landfill.



**SSC Grounds** minimizes chemical application by using integrated pest management on **99%** of managed grounds.



# PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

Texas A&M University earned the 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.



TAMU strives to make being an Aggie accessible and affordable. 72% of students receive some form of financial aid.

The Aggie Green Fund empowers



students, faculty, and staff to take action and bring about creative sustainability initiatives to campus. Since 2011, more than \$2.1 million has been granted for projects making campus more sustainable.

The 2018 Sustainability Master Plan (SMP) identifies 9 themes, 16 evergreen goals, and 47 targets to move Texas A&M toward a more sustainable future. The four working groups which helped create the SMP were reconvened as the implementation teams.



TAMU has been a Fair Trade campus since 2017 and is the largest U.S. Fair Trade university.



The Diversity Matters Seed Grant program supports research projects designed to make a positive impact on TAMU's Diversity Plan goals of accountability, climate, and equity.

As the campus environment evolves to include additional public and civic spaces, the University committed to developing interior and exterior spaces to represent a broader cross section of the Aggie community.





# 2020 SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

The **Office of Sustainability** hosted the **Virtual Awards Ceremony** in **April 2020** to recognize members of the Aggie community who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to making TAMU more sustainable.

## CHAMPION AWARDS



**MS. YADIRA  
HERNANDEZ**

Chartwells

Received the  
***Student (Undergrad)  
Sustainability Champion***  
award for her campus engagement  
and community service efforts as  
Chartwells Sustainability Intern.



**MR. RISHABH  
SINGLA**

SKY at TAMU

Received the  
***Student (Graduate)  
Sustainability Champion***  
award for exemplifying selfless  
service by promoting a happier and  
inclusive environment on campus.



**DR. SARAH  
GATSON**

Dept. of Sociology

Received the  
***Faculty Sustainability  
Champion***  
award for her work creating a  
service-learning course that  
focuses on community food  
security in the Brazos Valley.



**MS. CHERYL  
CATO**

Division of Information Technology

Received the  
***Staff Sustainability Champion***  
award for supervising the design and  
construction of the West Campus Data  
Center, which has resulted in the overall  
reduction of both power consumption and  
carbon emissions.

## STARS AWARDS

### STARS Overall Top Performer

Office for Diversity; University Libraries; Residence Life

Earned the highest percentage of available points for stakeholders with multiple credits.

### STARS Most Improved

Utilities & Energy Services

Making the most progress in their assigned credits.

### AASHE Top Performer

Division of Research

For their efforts in creating the Residence Life Sustainability Master Plan that earned an Innovation credit.







## VISION STATEMENT

Every member of the Aggie family works together to champion environmental stewardship, encourage healthy living, and improve social and economic opportunities and outcomes locally.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Aggie Sustainability Alliance identifies ways for individuals to contribute to a more sustainable campus and world.

Visit the [individual checklist](#) to learn more about:

- Energy & Water
- Transportation
- Food & Purchasing
- Social Sustainability
- Waste Minimization

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