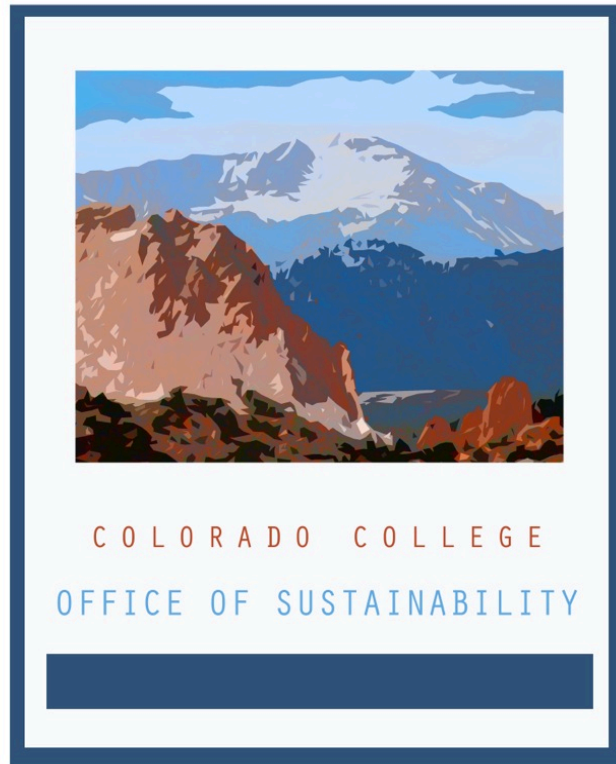


# COLORADO COLLEGE

## 2014 State of Sustainability

**An Annual Assessment Report Prepared by the Colorado  
College Office of Sustainability**



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Much of the background information contained in this document comes from the following contributors:

### **The Colorado College Office of Sustainability**

Ian Johnson, Sustainability Manager (co-author)  
Mike Stevens, Student Intern Manager  
Lily Biggar, STARS® Intern (co-author)  
Ben Feldman, Sustainability Intern  
Kyra Wolf, Sustainability Intern  
Katy Dupree, Sustainability Intern  
Charlotte Cadow, Greenhouse Gas Inventory Intern  
Sophie Javna, Local Food Intern  
Julian Kraus-Polk, Sense of Place Intern  
Angelica Florio-Roberts, Sustainability Communications Intern

### **Colorado College Campus Sustainability Council**

#### *Co-chairs*

|                  |                   |                         |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Bruce Coriell    | Howard Drossman   | George Eckhardt         |
| Laurel Sebastian | Ian Johnson       | Erik Laitos             |
| Jane Ard-Smith   | Kyra Wolf         | Katy Dupree             |
| Lily Biggar      | Chris Edmonds     | Angelica Florio-Roberts |
| Corina McKendry  | Marion Hourdequin | Matt Reuer              |
| Derek Hanson     | Don Davidson      | Mark Lee                |
| Barry Hunt       | Randy Kruse       | Mark Wilson             |
| Justin Weis      | Denise Sheridan   | Edward Priem            |
| Lenny Ortman     | Charlotte Cadow   | Julian Kraus-Polk       |
| Ben Feldman      | Cecelia Gonzales  | Emilie Gray             |
| Tess Powers      | Pam Butler        | John Lauer              |
| McKinley Sielaff | Leo Stout         | Ryan Hammes             |
| Mark Ferguson    | Barbara Whitten   | Sophie Javna            |
| Mike Stevens     |                   |                         |

## **Colorado College Administration, Faculty and Staff**

Jill Tiefenthaler, President

Jermyn Davis, Chief of Staff

Robert Moore, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Mike Edmonds, Vice President of Student Life/ Dean of Students

Sandra Wong, Dean of the College/Faculty

Mike Siddoway, Associate Dean of the Faculty

Tom Allen, General Manager, Sodexo

Lisa Brommer, Associate Director, Human Resources

Pam Butler, HR Manager

Bruce Coriell, Chaplain

Chris Coulter, Director of Facilities Services

Don Davidson, Interim Director of Purchasing

Stacy Lutz Davidson, Controller/Assistant Treasurer

Howard Drossman, Professor of Environmental Science

George Eckhardt, Campus Planner

Mark Ferguson, Campus Energy Manager

Cecelia Gonzales, Horticulturist

Randy Kruse, General Manager, Bon Appetit

Gina Lujan, Benefits Specialist

James McDowell, Mechanical Services Supervisor

Denise Sheridan, Environmental Health and Safety Coordinator

Roger Smith, Director of Parent and Family Relations

Bob Winkelblech, Transportation Supervisor

*The Colorado College Office of Sustainability Logo on the cover was designed by Breton Schwartzenbach.*

Portions of text in the category and sub-category descriptions of this document are used with permission from the [AASHE STARS® 2.0 Technical Manual](#)



## Executive Summary

The *2014 Colorado College State of Sustainability* report benchmarks our campus' performance across broad sustainability metrics and provides a road map for incremental improvement in the coming years.

More importantly, it recommends specific strategies for a holistic systems approach to successful integration of educational, engagement, operational, and planning outcomes.

This report utilizes the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System* (STARS®) outline and assessment methods developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) to address the integration of sustainability across campus and the community. A focus on the *Priority Actions* not only impacts sustainability across campus and makes us more applicable as an institution of higher education to the current generation, but it also maps ways to improve our overall STARS® score and standing as well as other ranking systems, such as the *Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges* and *Sierra Magazine's Coolest School* rankings.

To this end, the *2014 Colorado College State of Sustainability* report is fundamentally organized around the STARS® organizational outline. CC's 2014 benchmark report can be found at <https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/colorado-college-co/report/>



## Introduction

The *2014 Colorado College State of Sustainability* report benchmarks our campus' performance across broad sustainability metrics and provides a road map for incremental improvement in the coming years. In concert with *The Colorado College Plan: Building on the Block*, this benchmark effort and the coinciding recommendations seek to strengthen our core at Colorado College while enhancing our distinctive place in the world. The *Priority Actions* contained within this report work together to address a broad set of improvements for our campus, from environmental to economic to social. Further, they address each of the recommendations in our strategic plan at a holistic level.

This report utilizes the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System* (STARS<sup>®</sup>) outline and assessment methods developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) to address the integration of sustainability across campus and the community. A focus on the *Priority Actions* not only impacts sustainability across campus and makes us more applicable as an institution of higher education to the current generation, but it also maps ways to improve our overall STARS<sup>®</sup> score and standing as well as other ranking systems, such as the *Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges* and *Sierra Magazine's Coolest School* rankings.

The *Priority Actions* recommended in this report, whenever possible, should be accomplished by involving faculty and developing sustainability learning objectives for new and existing courses. Creating a campus where learning occurs in and out of class is the pinnacle of sustainability education – one where the lines between curricular and co-curricular become so blurred that sustainability and learning simply become a way of life. Working towards this goal automatically and simultaneously helps us achieve our mission to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country.

## **STARS® Framework**

The 2014 Colorado College State of Sustainability report is organized around the STARS® organizational model. The core narrative and body of content under each performance category is targeted specifically at the STARS® metric system. Sidebar narratives represent the constructive critiques, performance contexts not currently attached to STARS® credits, and historic reference points of CC's sustainability-based initiatives that have helped to shape this document and should be taken into account in future decisions.

CC's 2014 benchmark performance across sustainability indicators in the STARS® outline is as follows:

### **ACADEMICS**

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| Curriculum | 16.36/37.00 |
| Research   | 10.71/18.00 |

### **ENGAGEMENT**

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Campus Engagement | 14.00/20.00 |
| Public Engagement | 13.17/16.00 |

### **OPERATIONS**

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Air & Climate   | 6.12/11.00 |
| Buildings       | 2.12/8.00  |
| Dining Services | 2.3/7.00   |
| Energy          | 3.37/10.00 |
| Grounds         | 2.00/4.00  |
| Purchasing      | 2.37/6.00  |
| Transportation  | 3.37/7.00  |
| Waste           | 5.94/10.00 |
| Water           | 5.51/7.00  |

### **PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION**

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Coordination, Planning, and Governance | 6.83/8.00  |
| Diversity and Affordability            | 6.75/10.00 |
| Health, Wellbeing, and Work            | 4.94/7.00  |
| Investment                             | 1.33/7.00  |

## Academics

### Curriculum

Curriculum refers to formal education programs and courses that address sustainability. The primary function of Colorado College as an institution of higher education is to educate students. By training and educating future leaders, scholars, workers, and professionals, CC is uniquely positioned to prepare students to understand and address sustainability challenges. In offering courses that cover sustainability issues, Colorado College has helped to equip its students to lead society to a sustainable future.

#### *Best Practices:*

- CC has a working definition of sustainability that has been formed through several years' interaction with students, faculty, and staff. The definition appears on the Office of Sustainability landing page and is generally understood as the college's official stance on sustainability as we plan for and implement sustainability initiatives in support of *The Colorado College Plan: Building on the Block*. From the Office of Sustainability web page: The Colorado College mission commits us to providing the finest Liberal Arts education in the country by embodying our core values. Among our core values are to live with integrity; serve as stewards of the traditions and resources of Colorado College; nurture a sense of place and an ethic of environmental sustainability; encourage engagement and social responsibility at local, national and global levels; and seek excellence, constantly assessing our policies and programs. Sustainability isn't optional for the Colorado College community; it's who we are and how we have defined ourselves. We aspire to make Colorado College a model for campus and community sustainability - an academic village that instantiates a commitment at all levels to a sustainable and desirable future, not only for the human economy but for the larger ecosystem in which it is embedded.
- Using the definition of sustainability above, an inventory has been conducted of the course catalog to identify courses that would qualify as sustainability-focused or sustainability-related courses. As of the inventory in late 2013, there were 106 sustainability-focused courses and 24 sustainability-related courses offered of a total of 3,604 courses. 20 of 34 academic departments offered at least one sustainability-focused or -related course.
- The Colorado College Environmental Program prepares students to understand their connection to the environment, acquire the skills to explore scientific and human interrelationships in the global ecosystem, and pursue interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving. The program offers two integrated majors: Environmental Science and Environmental Policy, disciplinary track in in Environmental Chemistry and Environmental Physics, and a thematic Environmental Issues minor.



- Colorado College offers a carefully reviewed selection of sustainability-focused immersive programs, including semester and yearlong programs for off-campus study, both internationally and domestically. There is a variety of Colorado College semester programs, exchange programs, ACM programs, and third-party approved programs. Many of these focus on sustainability-related topics, such as conservation, biodiversity, resource management, globalization, development, social change, health and human rights.
- The Colorado College Office of Sustainability hosted the *Sustainability Across the Curriculum* workshop immediately following the 2013-14 academic year. Participants in the two-day workshop that focused on broad sustainability and systems thinking that can be used to incorporate sustainability learning objectives into all disciplines. *Faculty Sustainability Scholars*, as they are known, are re-designing courses over the course of a 12-month period and were awarded a \$500 stipend for their participation in the workshop. An additional \$500 is available within twelve months of the workshop upon approval of a course redesign.
- Colorado College utilizes its infrastructure and operations for multidisciplinary student learning, applied research and practical work that advances sustainability on campus across the spectrum of sustainability topics included in the STARS® system. Office of Sustainability Interns, Facilities Services, various courses (including Environmental Ethics, Contested Spaces, and Nature & Spirit – Science & Religion), Recyclemania Intern, and NSO training amongst other operations utilize the campus for these purposes in a multitude of ways.

*Priority Actions:*

- Broaden the number of sustainability-focused and –related courses available both in quantity and discipline/department.
- Develop sustainability learning outcomes that outline the specific sustainability knowledge and skills that a student is expected to have gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a major and implement methods to track the number of students who are graduating from those programs with such outcomes.
- Examine possibilities to offer more sustainability-focused degree programs for undergraduate students (i.e. – social equity and/or economic sustainability programs similar to the programs offered through the Environmental Program).
- Implement steps to conduct an assessment of the sustainability literacy of CC students that focuses on knowledge of sustainability topics and that also addresses values, behaviors, and/or beliefs.

### **Sustainability Across the Curriculum**

The Colorado College Office of Sustainability (OoS) is considering multiple ways to increase the number of sustainability courses offered. The OoS already offers the *Sustainability Across the Curriculum* workshop immediately after 8<sup>th</sup> block for faculty who want to add sustainability learning objectives into existing courses (see description of the workshop under *Best Practices* above). Other options that could be considered include:

- Add a sustainability learning requirement to the curriculum
- Highlight sustainability courses on student transcripts
- Add sustainability requirements to new course approvals
- Develop learning outcome guidelines for sustainability
- Develop new funding sources for sustainability research
- Administer a course survey instrument to determine existing courses that include elements of sustainability to be built upon
- Develop a pre/post sustainability literacy assessment
- Build connections between the OoS, the Collaborative for Community Engagement, the Office of Field Studies, Residence and Student Life, etc. to bridge curricular and co-curricular learning

## Research

The Research sub-category focuses on research, scholarly, and creative activities that are related to or focused on sustainability. CC is primarily a teaching institution, but a number of faculty are engaged in sustainability research. By researching sustainability issues and refining theories and concepts, Colorado College can continue to help the world understand sustainability challenges and develop new technologies, strategies, and approaches to address those challenges.

### *Best Practices:*

- Information gathered from faculty scholarship profiles provided by the Dean's Office indicates that 21 of 155 full-time faculty in 14 of 34 academic departments are engaged in sustainability research.
- The State of the Rockies Project, now in its eleventh year, offers students a valuable opportunity to work alongside faculty and staff to conduct state-of-the-art research in CC's backyard. Each summer, the project hires a group of CC students to gather data for, compose, and publish the project's annual report, which aims to encourage dialogue and collaborative action, inform stakeholders about regional issues, connect peer communities by sharing best practices, and stimulate CC student contributions and outreach in the Rockies.

### *Priority Actions:*

- Work to increase both the number of faculty and the number of academic departments with faculty actively involved in sustainability research, as gathered from faculty scholarship profiles provided by the Dean's Office.
- Implement an ongoing program to encourage faculty from multiple disciplines or academic programs to conduct research in sustainability topics similar to State of the Rockies.
- Formally adopt an open access policy that ensures that versions of all future scholarly articles by faculty and staff and all future theses and dissertations are deposited in a designated open access repository (i.e. – a sustainability LibRef).

# Engagement

## Campus Engagement

The Campus Engagement sub-category recognizes the importance of providing students with sustainability learning experiences outside the formal curriculum. Engaging in sustainability issues through co-curricular activities allows students to deepen and apply their understandings of sustainability principles. College sponsored co-curricular sustainability offerings help integrate sustainability into the campus culture and set a positive tone for Colorado College. In addition, this subcategory recognizes the importance of support for faculty and staff engagement, training, and development programs in sustainability. Faculty and staff members' daily decisions impact Colorado College's sustainability performance. Equipping faculty and staff with the tools, knowledge, and motivation to adopt behavior changes that promote sustainability is an essential activity of a sustainable campus.

### *Best Practices:*

- The Colorado College ECO-Rep program, supported by the Office of Sustainability, promotes peer-peer education to foster sustainable living practices on and off campus. All residential areas, including large residence halls, apartments, smaller campus houses and off-campus areas are served by one or more student ECO-Reps, covering the whole of the student body. ECO-Reps are trained by Office of Sustainability staff and are provided with a published guide for peer-peer education.
- New Student Orientation (NSO) includes Campus Sustainability Tours guided by Office of Sustainability staff. In 2014, a two-hour "Sense of Place" programming will be added to NSO. The aim of the program is to foster understanding of local systems and a greater sense of stewardship within the CC community.
- CC has multiple co-curricular sustainability programs and initiatives including:
  - EnAct
  - Student Divestment Committee
  - CC Farm Club
  - EcoFit Audit and Retrofit Team
  - The Good Food Club
  - CC Bike Co-op
  - Plant Strong
  - Fair Trade Committee
  - Food Coalition
  - Colorado Springs Food Rescue
  - Energy, Environment and Security Project (EESP)
  - The CC Farm
  - The CC Greenhouse
  - Synergy Garden

- Sacred Grounds
- The CC Green Fund
- Linneman Lecture Series
- Environmental Program
- State of the Rockies Project
- Earth Week events
- Colorado Sustainability Conference
- Colorado Outdoor Education Symposium
- Outdoor Recreation Club (ORC) (promotes leave LNT principles)
- Local Living/Learning Community
- Synergy House
- Office of Sustainability Interns
- ECO-Reps
- Colorado College has outreach materials and publications that foster sustainability learning and knowledge, including a sustainability website, sustainability listserv, social media pages for the Office of Sustainability, State of the Rockies Program, campus signage highlighting sustainable building features, grounds keeping and landscaping strategies, and dining service operations, a self-guided sustainability walking tour, a transportation alternatives guide, and a sustainability newsletter titled the Environmental Action Review.
- Colorado College engages in several sustainability-related outreach campaigns directed at both students and employees that yield measurable results. Campaigns that CC has held in previous years include Recyclemania, Campus Conservation Nationals, and the Clean Plate Club.

*Priority Actions:*

- Work to increase outreach materials including a more navigable website with increased access to sustainability-related publications and outreach and campus signage highlighting sustainable building features, grounds keeping, and landscaping strategies.
- Develop a faculty/staff peer-to-peer sustainability educators campaign with formal training sponsored by the college.
- Develop sustainability orientation and/or outreach and guidance materials provided to new employees that adequately address sustainability topics and the sustainability ethic that exists at Colorado College.
- Make training and/or professional development opportunities in sustainability available to all staff at least once per year.

## **Public Engagement**

The Public Engagement category recognizes efforts that give back to our community through community service, engagement, and partnerships. Volunteerism and the sense of compassion that community service helps develop are fundamental to achieving sustainability. From tutoring children to removing invasive species to volunteering at the CC Community Kitchen, students, faculty, and staff can make tangible contributions that address sustainability challenges through community service. Community engagement can help students develop leadership skills while deepening their understanding of practical, real-world problems. Colorado College can contribute to our campus community by harnessing our financial and academic resources to address community needs. In addition, we can contribute toward sustainability broadly through inter-campus collaboration, engagement with external networks and organizations, and public policy advocacy.

### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College, the Office of Sustainability, and the Collaborative for Community Engagement maintain supportive, collaborative, and transformative partnerships with multiple and ever-increasing community partners including but not limited to the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs Utilities, Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Planning Project, Southern Colorado Clean Cities Coalition, Green Cities Coalition, Pikes Peak Sustainable Business Network, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), and the American Colleges and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC).
- Colorado College collaborates with other colleges and universities to support and help build the campus sustainability community. Engagement includes presentations and sustainability staff coordination. Campuses regularly engaged with include, but are not limited to, University of Colorado – Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak Community College, Regis University, and University of Wisconsin - River Falls.
- Colorado College students are engaged in community service. 85 percent of our student body contributed to over 32,000 community service hours in the 2012-13 academic year.
- The college has frameworks for community stakeholder engagement in governance, strategy, and operations:
  - The college has a Campus Master Plan that is approved by the City Planning Department.
  - The Soup Kitchen operates every Sunday at Shove Chapel and serves free lunches to members of the surrounding community.

- The college regularly interfaces with the Old North End Neighborhood (ONEN) Historic District, which the campus abuts, regarding planning and development decisions.
- The Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs has presented the college with a number of awards over the years for historic preservation projects that the Alliance was involved in on campus.
- Colorado Springs Food Rescue, a student run organization, delivers excess food from campus dining services to Marion House soup kitchen by bicycle daily throughout the week.
- The college works in conjunction with local and state leaders to help advance sustainability issues that affect the college and our surrounding community.
  - Colorado College is working with the community, including local leaders, to create a traffic master plan that facilitates increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - The college has worked with Colorado Springs Utilities to increase the utilities' renewable energy portfolio, particularly through the use of solar panels.
  - Colorado College's sustainability manager sits on the Water Planning Advisory Group at Colorado Springs Utilities.

*Priority Actions:*

- Continue to increase the number of students, faculty, and staff engaged in community service as well as the number of service hours contributed.
- Provide incentives (i.e. – release time, etc.) for employees to participate in community service.
- Include community service achievements on student transcripts.
- Investigate the possibility of joining a monitoring and verification organization that ensures fair labor conditions for the production of Colorado College's trademark licensed apparel. Programs to consider include:
  - Worker Rights Consortium
  - Fair Labor Association
  - Designated Supplier's Program

# Operations

## Air & Climate

The Air & Climate subcategory pertains to CC's measurement of and action to reduce greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions. In 2009 Colorado College signed the American College & University President's Climate Commitment, outlining its goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2020. Since 2006, the College has recorded and published yearly inventories of green house gas emissions using the Clean Air-Cool Planet Campus Carbon Calculator™. The inventory covers scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College conducts an annual green house gas emissions inventory that includes Scopes 1, 2, and 3. The annual inventories are publicly available at <http://rs.acupcc.org/stats/complete-ghg/>.
- The college's Sustainability Manager, who maintains a Greenhouse Gas Inventory Quantifier certification through CSA GROUP, internally verifies Colorado College's greenhouse gas inventory.
- Colorado College has an aggressive goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2020.
- CC has been a signatory of the American Colleges and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment since 2009.

### **Carbon Neutrality at CC**

Our goal at CC is to be carbon neutral by 2020 as evidenced by our commitment to the American Colleges and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) and our strategic plan. As a leading institution of higher education, our community, the country, and the world looks to us to develop new and innovative practices to deal with issues like climate change and carbon regulation. If we are to remain relevant in our changing world, we must answer this charge by leading the way.

Some of the options to consider to help us lead the way could include:

- Implementing an internal carbon tax to help develop literacy and fund carbon offset projects
- Developing full-cost accounting, whereby the value of the carbon reduction of projects is figured into the payback on the project
- Working with community partners to develop carbon reduction and offset projects that can help offset emission sources that we can't directly replace with zero-emissions alternatives (i.e. – international travel, etc.).
- Emphasizing our unique place in the world by focusing more field studies locally and regionally when possible.



*Priority Actions:*

- Increase the rate of greenhouse gas emissions reduction to achieve carbon neutrality goals and become a net energy producer per our original ACUPCC goal. Methods to achieve reductions may include:
  - Increased renewable energy production on and off campus.
  - Combined heat/power production on campus.
  - Alternative fuels in campus fleet and maintenance implements.
  - Involvement in community projects that have a verifiable offset component.
  - Adopting a net-zero emissions policy for all new construction or major renovations.
  - Adoption of total-cost accounting for payback calculations.
  - Implementation of an internal carbon tax used to fund emissions reductions projects.
  - Increasing offsets purchased from outside entities.
- Implement policies or guidelines to improve outdoor air quality and minimize air pollutant emissions from mobile sources.

## **Buildings**

The buildings subcategory pertains to steps that Colorado College is taking to improve the sustainability performance of its buildings. Buildings are one of the largest users of energy and the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions on campus. They also use significant amounts of potable water. By designing, building, and maintaining buildings in ways that provide a safe and healthy indoor environment for inhabitants while simultaneously mitigating the building's impact on the outdoor environment, Colorado College can address the sustainability of its buildings.

### *Best Practices:*

- In accordance with state operating permits, Colorado College conducts annual inventories of significant air emissions from stationary sources on campus (i.e. – central heating plant).
- Colorado College uses the *Core Performance Guide* prescriptive program for energy savings in new buildings and major renovations. The college also has two LEED® certified buildings: The Russell T. Tutt Science Center (certified in 2003) and the Edith Kinney Gaylord Cornerstone Arts Center (certified LEED® Gold in 2009).
- 100 percent of the college's indoor space is managed for the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) program to maintain a safe indoor air quality environment for all employees and students and to identify and correct hazards and contamination. Compliance is monitored through various programs, sensor installations, and VOC guidelines for product installation.

### *Priority Actions:*

- Work towards certifying buildings and operations under a 4-tier system such as LEED® for *Existing Buildings*, a 3-tier system such as the Green Star Performance standard, DGNB System, Green Globes, or similar, and/or a formally adopted sustainable operations and maintenance guideline that covers all of the following:
  - Impacts on the surrounding site
  - Energy consumption
  - Building-level energy metering
  - Usage of environmentally preferable materials
  - Indoor environmental quality
  - Water consumption
  - Building-level water metering
- Investigate the potential to develop an alternative building certification system, such as an Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) certification in lieu of other cost-based certification systems such as LEED®.

## Dining Services

The Dining Services subcategory pertains to efforts at Colorado College to help build a sustainable food system. Modern industrial food production often has deleterious environmental impacts. Pesticides and fertilizers used in agriculture can contaminate ground and surface water, which has potentially dangerous impacts on wildlife and human health. Furthermore, the often long-distance transportation of food to CC produces greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution. Additionally, farm workers are often paid substandard wages, subjected to harsh working conditions, and exposed to dangerous pesticides. Colorado College can use its food purchases to support local economies; encourage safe, environmentally friendly farming methods; and help alleviate poverty for farmers.

Dining services can also play an important role in conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and purchasing environmentally preferable materials other than food. The STARS<sup>®</sup> metric and this plan measure these impacts across the institution instead of by department; therefore, the benefits of these actions are captured in the Energy, Water, Waste, and Purchasing subcategories, respectively.

### *Best Practices:*

- Our food management service Bon Appetit has been internationally recognized for its commitment to socially- and environmentally- responsible food products.
- Colorado College spent \$2,787,668 on food and beverage purchases for dining services in 2013. 27 percent of these expenditures were local, community-based, *and/or* third party verified.
- Colorado College offers diverse, complete-protein vegan dining options to all members of the campus community and provides signage that distinguishes between vegan, vegetarian, gluten free, local, and other low-impact and special diet options.
- Kitchen staff at Rastall dining hall frequently remove meat platters from self-serve lines and instead serve the meat to customers themselves using portion sizes suggested by FDA, helping to reduce high-impact meat consumption and food waste.

*Priority Actions:*

- Work with Bon Appetit to increase the percentage of local, community-based, *and/or* third party verified food and beverage expenditures.
- Work to include convenience stores and vending services in the categories listed above.
- Work towards campus certifications such as Fair Trade Campus, Green Seal Standards (GS-46), Marine Stewardship Council certification, and Real Food Campus Commitment.

## Energy

Colorado College has demonstrated a strong commitment to energy conservation management and activities. In 2012, the College hired a full-time Campus Energy Manager to promote energy conservation through measurement and effective communication while supporting campus sustainability goals, core values, and the College's ACUPCC commitment.

The College introduced its first on-campus renewable electricity project in spring of 2008. Its 22-kilowatt array was the largest solar electric system in the Colorado Springs Utilities service area at the time of permitting. In addition, the College has purchased 1079 RECs from wind from Colorado Springs Utilities and 462 RECs from SunShare Solar Garden annually.

### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College has reduced its total energy consumption and energy intensity (energy per square foot) since our 2008 baseline year. Total energy consumption is down 19 percent since 2008, despite our building space having increased slightly. The college has employed many tactics to achieve this reduction, including (but are not limited to):
  - Building space temperature standards and building automation
  - LED installations across campus
  - Occupancy and vacancy sensors coupled with the building automation system
  - Passive solar heating
  - Photovoltaic systems on several campus buildings
  - Building recommissioning and retrofit projects across campus
  - Adoption of Core Performance Guidelines for new construction and major renovations
  - Individual building metering and real-time monitoring for heat, electrical, and water usage
  - Managed Print Initiative
  - Net-Zero intentional living spaces
- CC generates purchases third-party certified Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) and the associated energy through a green power purchasing program offered through Colorado Springs Utilities. In 2012, a total of 5,257 MMBtu were purchased, comprising 3 percent of the college's total energy consumption.

*Priority Actions:*

- In support of the college's carbon neutrality commitment and to avoid creating further emissions that could keep us from this goal, strongly consider a policy to make any new building or major renovation net-zero energy and/or carbon-negative.
- Continue to increase the amount of clean and renewable energy generated on-site and/or catalyzed and owned off-site.
- Consider the implementation of co-generation to harness efficiencies of combined heat and power generation on campus.
- Account for the associated carbon emissions reductions when considering simple payback of energy reduction projects.

## Grounds

The Grounds subcategory recognizes and recommends areas where Colorado College plans and maintains its grounds with accordance to sustainability principles. Beautiful and welcoming campus grounds can be planned, planted, and maintained without the use of toxic chemicals and while protecting wildlife habitat, and conserving water and resources. Colorado College has excelled in sustainable landscaping by means of its centralized irrigation control system, use of non-potable water, and placement of several native plant gardens on campus.

### *Best Practices:*

- The College owns and manages land that includes or is adjacent to the South Crestone Creek Riparian Corridor, the Monument Creek wetlands, and Army Corps of Engineer managed wetlands that have:
  - Been assessed to identify endangered and vulnerable species
  - Been assessed to identify environmentally sensitive areas
  - Been assessed for fire mitigation including standing dead trees, protecting habitats, planting native seedlings, establishing and studying native plant plots, prescribed burns, and photo-monitoring

### *Priority Actions:*

- Develop and implement an Integrated Pest Management Plan, Sustainable Landscape Management Plan, and/or organic, certified, or protected areas that:
  - Uses a minimum of chemicals and default to the least toxic alternatives
  - Uses chemicals only in targeted locations and only for targeted species
  - Integrates plant stewardship
  - Integrates soil stewardship
  - Uses environmentally preferable materials
  - Integrates hydrology and water use
  - Manages materials and minimizes waste
  - Implements technologies or strategies to reduce the environmental impacts of snow and ice removal
  - Maintains land in accordance with organic land care standards
  - Certifies areas under the Forest Stewardship Council Management Standard
  - Certifies land under the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™)
  - Manages land specifically for carbon sequestration

## Purchasing

Colorado College can use its purchasing power to help build a sustainable economy. Each purchasing decision represents an opportunity for CC to choose environmentally and socially preferable products and services that support companies with strong commitments to sustainability.

### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College adopted its green cleaning program in 2007 and has a stated preference for Green Seal certified cleaners.
  - 82 percent of total expenditures on cleaning and janitorial products were Green Seal Certified.
  - All core products purchased for cleaning are Green Seal certified and bio-based.
  - The college trains all custodians on green cleaning techniques using hands-on training.
- CC's Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines establish intent to "eliminate virgin paper by purchasing only recycled content paper when possible."
- CC's Purchasing Policy supports small and disadvantaged businesses with a stated preference to "support 'locally produced' goods and services."
- The college's Design Guidelines specify "energy conservation must be given special consideration in the design of new or remodeled buildings. Colorado College requires a life cycle cost analysis, where appropriate, on major components of new facilities and renovation projects."
- The college's three largest contracts (Sodexo, Bon Appetit, and Nebraska Books) require that the companies provide a living wage (currently a minimum of \$11.04/hr.) for all employees who provide services under the contract.

### *Priority Actions:*

- Develop an institution-wide stated preference to purchase computers and/or other electronic products that are EPEAT registered in addition to the college's stated Energy Star preference.
- Track purchases of EPEAT computers and other electronics at each EPEAT level as compared to total expenditures on desktop and laptops, displays, thin clients, televisions, and imaging equipment.
- Implement measures to track expenditures on office paper with the following levels of post-consumer content:
  - 10-29 percent
  - 30-49 percent
  - 50-69 percent
  - 70-89 percent (or FSC Mix label)
  - 90-100 percent (or FSC Recycled label)



- Develop and implement stated purchasing preferences for women, minority, or veteran-owned businesses.
- Develop and implement measures to track expenditures on products and services from companies that include disadvantaged businesses, social enterprises, and/or local community-based businesses.
- Develop and implement minimum environmental standards and practice guidelines for major business partners.

## Transportation

Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that contribute to health problems such as heart and respiratory diseases and cancer. Due to disproportionate exposure, these health impacts are frequently more pronounced in low-income communities next to major transportation corridors. In addition, the extraction, production, and global distribution of fuels for transportation can damage environmentally and/or culturally significant ecosystems and may financially benefit hostile and/or oppressive governments.

Colorado College can reap benefits from modeling sustainable transportation systems. Bicycling and walking provide human health benefits and mitigate the need for large areas of paved surface, which can also help CC better manage storm water. There may be associated cost savings and benefit to local economies by reducing dependency on petroleum-based fuels for transportation.

### *Best Practices:*

- 22 percent of Colorado College's fleet are considered alternative-fuel vehicles. These vehicles include:
  - Gasoline-electric, non-plug-in hybrids
  - 100 percent electric vehicles
  - Vehicles fueled with B20 or higher biofuel for more than 4 months of the year
- 76 percent of CC students use more sustainable commuting options, such as walking, bicycling, or other non-motorized means.
- CC provides ample bicycle racks, as well as lockers and showers for bicycle commuters at the Adam F. Press Fitness Center. The Russell T. Tutt Science Center also provides showers for bicycle commuters. Bike storage sheds are located outside the college's two largest residence halls.
- Shared bicycle/pedestrian paths connect all buildings on or near campus.
- Mountain Metropolitan Transit operates a transportation node on the corner of Cascade and Cache la Poudre St.
- CC provides a free shuttle service (CCAT) for getting around the Colorado Springs downtown area. The service offers real-time GPS tracking and text message notification to provide riders with accurate wait time estimates at shuttle stops. The shuttle runs Wednesday through Saturday evenings from 9pm to 2am and on Saturday from 12:15pm to 5pm.
- CC offers shuttle services to DIA and the Colorado Springs Airports on major travel days for reduced prices.
- The college community has a Facebook page, CC Ride Share, which helps connect students seeking rides with those seeking traveling companions and/or gas money.

- The FreeRiders Union of Colorado College offers van service to Breckenridge Mountain on Saturdays during the ski season.
- Hertz on Demand, an hourly car-sharing program, maintains two hybrid vehicles on campus that are available to students, faculty, and staff. The program provides an alternative for students who do not wish to bring cars to campus.
- CC has a Level 1 & 2 ChargePoint public charging station for electric vehicles at the Slocum Residential Hall parking lot.
- The CC Bike Co-op offers free classes in bike repair and maintenance, and student volunteers keep a self-service bike shop stocked with tools, workbenches, and used parts. The aim is to empower people to maintain and repair their own bikes and to negate the necessity of cars for trips within five miles of campus.

*Priority Actions:*

- Increase the number of alternative-fuel vehicles in the college's fleet.
- Develop and conduct surveys to assess transportation modes of the college's employees for future reporting and to develop incentive programs for more sustainable modes of transportation.
- Work to become a Bicycle Friendly University by the League of American Bicyclists.
- Investigate the possibility of offering a condensed workweek options for employees as a matter of policy or standard practice to reduce the need to commute daily.

## Waste

The Waste category highlights management practices and areas where Colorado College can improve by moving toward zero waste by reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. These actions mitigate the need to extract virgin materials, such as trees and metals. It generally takes less energy and water to make a product with recycled materials than with virgin resources. Reducing waste generation also reduces the flow of waste to incinerators and landfills, which produce greenhouse gas emissions, can contaminate air and groundwater supplies, and tends to have disproportionate negative impacts on low-income communities. Waste reduction and diversion also save Colorado College costly landfill and hauling service fees. In addition, waste reduction campaigns can engage the entire campus and broader community in contributing to a tangible sustainability goal.

### *Best Practices:*

- In 2012, Colorado College diverted 48 percent of waste produced on campus through recycling and composting.
- The college has reduced the amount of waste sent to landfills by 58 percent since 2008. Weighted campus user waste generation decreased by a similar amount.
- CC audits its waste stream annually during the Recyclemania competition.
- The college prints a limited number of course catalogues for use by the Dean's Office; the bulk of users are directed to the online course catalog.
- CC employs GoPrint software in computer labs and the library to limit printing by students, ensuring that individuals who print materials are at the printer to receive them before they are printed.
- The Colorado College Student Government Association (CCSGA) holds an annual move-out collection drive at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> block to collect and donate unwanted goods during move-out.
- CC implemented trayless dining in 2008 in an effort to reduce food waste and offers reusable to-go containers that can be purchased with meal plan funds.
- CC uses reusable service ware at Rastall Dining Hall and compostable service ware at Benji's and the Preserve and at all catered events.
- Colorado College provides recycling bins in every campus building and with all trashcans.
- Paper towels from bathroom hand-dry use are composted.
- The college and the CC Student Chapter of the Food Recovery Network delivers leftover, unserved food by bicycle to local food pantries and soup kitchens.
- CC includes the following materials in its waste diversion efforts:
  - Paper, plastics, glass, metals, and other recyclable containers
  - Usable food
  - Compostable food

- Cooking oil
- Plant materials and yard wastes
- Batteries
- Light bulbs
- Toner/ink-jet cartridges
- White goods (i.e. – appliances)
- Furniture
- Move-in/out waste
- Scrap metals
- Pallets
- Motor Oil
- Porcelain
- Tires
- The college has strategies in place to safely dispose of all hazardous wastes, electronic waste (including e-waste generated by students), and other special wastes.

*Priority Actions:*

- Develop plans to work towards becoming a zero-waste institution and incrementally increase waste diversion.
- Colorado College has had excellent success with construction and demolition diversion rates when building LEED buildings (>75 percent diversion on certified buildings). However, general construction diversion rates are around 10 percent. Consider adopting LEED waste diversion standards for ALL construction projects, including projects under \$500,000.

## Water

This category applies to efforts and recommendations to protect water quality. Because pumping, delivering, and treating water are major energy users, Colorado College can help reduce energy consumption and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy generation by conserving water. Likewise, conservation and effective stormwater management are important in maintaining and protecting finite groundwater supplies. Water conservation and effective stormwater management also reduce the need for effluent discharge into local surface water supplies, which helps improve the health of local water ecosystems.

### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College has decreased total water usage by 33 percent since 2008 through methods such as xeriscaping, fixture retrofits, and equipment upgrades.
- More than 95 percent of vegetated space on campus is irrigated with non-potable, reclaimed water from Colorado Springs Utilities, making up 63 percent of the total water usage on campus.
- The Edith Gaylord Cornerstone Arts Center parking lot is designed with a porous concrete paving surface that returns rainwater and snowmelt that falls on it to the water table.
- Wastewater discharged from campus is treated with UV light by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) (rather than with gaseous chlorine) and exceeds permit requirements before its release to water bodies.

### *Priority Actions:*

- Continue water-reduction efforts. Performance measurement areas to focus on include:
  - Potable water use per weighted campus user
  - Potable water use per gross square foot of floor area
  - Total water use per acre of vegetated grounds
- Increase the amount of native, drought-tolerant, and xeric landscaping on campus
- Investigate the possibility of increasing artificial turf on athletic fields.
- Increase the use of edible landscape to retrieve utility from irrigated grounds.
- Investigate the legalities and augmentation possibilities to allow water reclamation for greywater and rainwater for non-potable uses such as irrigation and toilet flushing.
- Meter the amount of water capture from the bearing cooler recovered for flue gas economization in order to report data on recycled/reused water.
- Implement a Low Impact Development (LID) policy or standard practice to reduce rainwater/stormwater runoff volume and improve outgoing water quality for projects that increase impermeable surfaces on campus.
- Increase the use of permeable paving surfaces.

## Planning & Administration

### Coordination, Planning & Governance

This subcategory recognizes the institutionalizing of sustainability at Colorado College by dedicating resources to sustainability coordination, developing plans to move toward sustainability, and engaging students, staff and faculty in governance. Staff and other resources help CC organize, implement, and publicize sustainability initiatives. These resources provide the infrastructure that fosters sustainability within CC. Sustainability planning affords an institution the opportunity to clarify its vision of a sustainable future, establish priorities and help guide budgeting and decision making. Strategic planning and internal stakeholder engagement in governance are important steps in making sustainability a campus priority and may help advocates implement changes to achieve sustainability goals.

#### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College is among a small number of institutions to place its sustainability department in the academic and administrative realm.
- In addition to the Office of Sustainability, CC also employs an Energy Manager through Facilities Services to focus on building efficiency projects, energy and water consumption and efficiency, and other goals in concert with the Strategic Plan and the college's commitment to the ACUPCC.
- CC's Campus Sustainability Council (CSC) has been instrumental in driving sustainability initiatives on campus. Membership includes a diverse group of administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
- CC has developed formal plans with measurable objectives for advancing sustainability in the following areas:
  - Curriculum
  - Campus Engagement
  - Public Engagement
  - Air and Climate
  - Buildings
  - Energy
  - Grounds
  - Waste
  - Diversity and Affordability
- Building on the Block, the Strategic Plan for CC, includes pointed sustainability goals.
- Master Planning for CC includes pointed sustainability components, including building energy use, landscaping, signage, land use and traffic patterns, and more.
- All enrolled students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to participate in CC's governance bodies, including (but not limited to):

- Colorado College Student Government Association
- President's Council
- Staff Council
- Athletics Board
- Budget Committee
- Children's Center Advisory Committee
- Committee on Instruction
- Curriculum Committee
- Dean's Advisory Committee
- FYE Committee
- IT and Library Board
- Minority Concerns Committee
- Student Conduct Committee
- Women's Concerns Committee
- CC's Board of Trustees includes an elected student representative.

*Priority Actions:*

- Develop and implement plans with measurable objectives for advancing sustainability in the following areas:
  - Research
  - Dining Services
  - Purchasing
  - Transportation
  - Water
  - Health, Wellbeing and Work
  - Investment
- In concert with the goals set forth by CC's commitment to the ACUPCC, develop plans and policies that would make all new buildings or major renovations net-zero energy and net-zero emissions.
- Develop opportunities for non-supervisory staff to participate in peer-elected positions in governing bodies at the college.



## Diversity & Affordability

This category recognizes efforts at Colorado College to advance diversity and affordability on campus. In order to build a sustainable society, diverse groups will need to be able to come together and work collaboratively to address sustainability challenges. People of color and low-income communities tend to suffer disproportionate exposure to environmental problems. This environmental injustice happens as a result of unequal and segregated communities. To achieve environmental and social justice, society must work to address discrimination and promote equality. The historical legacy and persistence of discrimination based on racial, gender, religious, and other differences makes a proactive approach to promoting a culture of inclusiveness an important component of creating and equitable society. Higher education opens doors to opportunities that can help create a more equitable world, and those doors must be open through affordable programs accessible to all regardless of race, gender, religion, socio-economic status and other differences. In addition, a diverse student body, faculty, and staff provide rich resources for learning and collaboration.

### *Best Practices:*

- The Butler Center at Colorado College provides a variety of programs and advises various multicultural student organizations, promoting programming, interest, and offering training and activities in issues concerning sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, age, and ability.
- The President's Diversity Task Force seeks to increase the representation of diverse students, faculty, and staff on campus, creates an infrastructure of support networks that further recruitment and retention, and cultivates a campus ethos that values differences and fosters opportunities for mutual learning.
- In the fall of 2011, the Diversity Task Force conducted a campus climate survey to evaluate the quality of experience of all students, faculty, and staff. Results have informed the Strategic Plan, diversity programming, inclusive health coverage policies, and changes to human resource management classification options.
- The Butler Center offers mentoring, counseling, and peer support programs for a variety of underrepresented groups on campus, including (but not limited to):
  - Asian Student Union
  - Black Student Union
  - Disabilities Awareness Group
  - FemCo
  - First Generation Program
  - Korean-American Student Association
  - Hawaii Club
  - Minority Association for Pre-Health Students
  - Students for the Awareness of South Asia

- SOMOS
- Ubuntu
- Friends of the CC Host Family Program
- CC's Anti-Discrimination Policy provides discrimination response guidelines
- The college offers housing options to accommodate special needs of transgender and transitioning students.
- The Riley Scholars-in-Residence Program reflects the conviction that a strong minority presence on the faculty benefits the entire community.
- The talent acquisition manager ensures that the college does all it can to hire and retain a highly talented, diverse staff and faculty.
- Colorado College utilizes various types of financial aid to meet aid eligibility and minimize the cost of attendance for low-income students.
- CC's Bridge Program is designed to guide students in their transition from high school to college. Students from under-resourced high schools, members of a population that has been historically underrepresented at CC, and first generation college students are eligible and encouraged to apply for the program.
- The Crown-Goodman Presidential Scholarship provides assistance to students in their senior year at CC who demonstrate financial aid eligibility, have a significant amount of student-loan debt, and have demonstrated an impressive record of achievement and academic success.
- CC's Multicultural Open House Program is a targeted outreach program to recruit students from low-income and diverse backgrounds.
- Prospective students attending the Multicultural Open House are invited to bring their parents. In addition to travel funding given to students accepted to the program, CC offers an additional subsidy of up to \$500 for parents' travel expenses and provides complimentary accommodations at a nearby hotel.
- The college hosts an onsite childcare facility that supports non-traditional students as well as faculty and staff.

*Priority Actions:*

- Work to include assessments of diversity and equity in terms of governance and public engagement.
- While the college offers gender neutral bathrooms across campus and provides a link to gender neutral bathrooms in the Colorado Springs area, it does not provide a publicly accessible inventory of the gender neutral bathrooms on campus.
- Develop metrics to determine:
  - Percentage of entering students that are low-income
  - Graduation/success rates for low-income students
  - Percentage of student financial need met, on average
  - Percentage of students graduating with no interest-bearing student loan debt

## Health, Wellbeing & Work

This subcategory pertains to Colorado College's incorporation of sustainability into its human resources programs and policies. The College's people define its character and capacity to perform; and so, its achievements can only be as strong as its community. CC has bolstered the strength of its community by making fair and responsible investments in its human capital. Such investments include offering benefits, wages, and other assistance that serve to respectfully and ethically compensate workers and acting to protect and positively affect the health, safety and wellbeing of the campus community. Investment in human resources is integral to the achievement of a healthy and sustainable balance between human capital, natural capital, and financial capital.

### *Best Practices:*

- 99 percent of staff and faculty and 100 percent of contracted employees working on-site receive sustainable compensation as assessed against the 2011 El Paso County Self-Sufficiency Standard. The lowest paid employees receive \$11.06 per hour, well above the standard's minimum and considered to be a living wage.
- Colorado College offers socially responsible investment options through TIAA-CREF.
- Colorado College conducts a semi-annual campus climate survey available for all staff that solicits opinions related to the overall campus climate in:
  - Job Satisfaction/Support
  - Teaching Environment
  - Professional Development
  - Compensation/Benefits/Work-Life Balance
  - Facilities/Resources
  - Shared Governance
  - Communication
  - Respect and Appreciation
- The Wellness Resource Center coordinates and integrates efforts to promote health and prevent health problems, including education of campus constituents on a range of wellness-related topics such as healthy relationships, healthy sexual engagement, alcohol and other substance use and abuse, mental health and life balance.
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers assistance to employees, spouses, and dependent children dealing with marital and family problems, anxiety and depression, chemical dependency and co-dependency, grief and loss, job stress, co-worker conflict, child and elder care, financial and legal services, identity theft and fraud resources, and referral services.
- CC has resources to perform ergonomic evaluations throughout campus.
- The college offers biometric screening on-site twice a year as well as online health risk assessment surveys.

- CC offers wellness workshops (i.e. – Laughter Yoga, Being Fit at Your Desk, etc.) during working hours and at lunch to all employees.
- Colorado College has reduced its reportable workplace injuries and occupational disease cases from 1 in 21 employees in 2005 to 1 in 28 employees in 2013.
- The college's Office of Sustainability models health and wellbeing at work as a part of sustainability through an ergonomic workstation that includes a treadmill desk to reduce sedentary time.

*Priority Actions:*

- Continue to assess and implement methods to reduce reportable workplace injuries and occupational disease cases.

## **Investment**

Colorado College can support sustainability by investing in companies and funds that, in addition to providing a strong rate of return, are committed to social and environmental responsibility. Investing in these industries also supports the development of sustainable products and services. Finally, CC can engage with the businesses in which we are invested in order to promote sustainable practices.

### *Best Practices:*

- Colorado College makes 100 percent of its total investment pool holdings available for public viewing at <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/office/finance/endowment.dot> .

### *Priority Actions:*

- Establish a formal and active committee on investor responsibility that has multi-stakeholder representation that includes faculty, staff, and students and may include alumni, trustees, and/or other parties.
- Increase the value of holdings in the following categories (current value in all of the following categories amounts to .002 percent):
  - Sustainable industries (e.g. renewable energy or sustainable forestry)
  - Businesses selected for exemplary sustainability performance (e.g. using criteria specified in a sustainable investment policy)
  - Sustainability investment funds (e.g. a renewable energy or impact investment fund)
  - Community development financial institutions or the equivalent
  - Socially responsible mutual funds with positive screens (or the equivalent)
  - Green revolving loan funds that are funded from the endowment
- Develop a sustainable investment policy.
- File shareholder resolutions that address sustainability.
- Engage with corporations in the investment portfolio about sustainability issues.
- Engage in policy advocacy by participating in investor networks and/or engaging in inter-organizational collaborations to share best practices.

## Conclusion

Colorado College has made exemplary strides during our initial recognition of the importance of, and our continued address of sustainability in higher education. Indeed, sustainability is a prominent piece of our strategic plan and our master planning process and is evidenced by the placement of the Office of Sustainability in the college as well as the inclusion of a professional Energy Manager within facilities. Our STARS® Silver benchmark rating is evidence of the ethic and practices that permeate the administration, faculty, staff, and students at our college. By using this widely accepted and comprehensive metric, we now have a clear image of where we stand compared to other colleges and universities in North America and a road map to strengthen our position as the premier sustainability institution in the nation. Our past efforts offer a springboard towards this goal and should be maintained and improved upon.

This report has explicitly outlined our achievements and recommended priority actions. These recommendations are key pieces to improvement across broad sustainability indicators as Colorado College remains relevant and becomes a leader in a rapidly evolving world.

The *2014 Colorado College State of Sustainability* report provides the road map for strategically identified areas of focus for rapid transformation not only to a STARS® Gold or Platinum institution, but also to the reputation as a true national leader at the forefront of the sustainability effort.

THE COLORADO COLLEGE PLAN:  
**BUILDING** ON  
THE  
**BLOCK**