

2020 Central Sustainability Campus Survey Report



In the fall semester of 2020, Central Sustainability sent out a survey to all students in residential halls with the help of Residence Life in order to measure sustainability knowledge and the impact of current sustainability initiatives. These results will reflect the answers from the 572 survey respondents and provide insight as to which initiatives Central Sustainability should further develop and introduce.

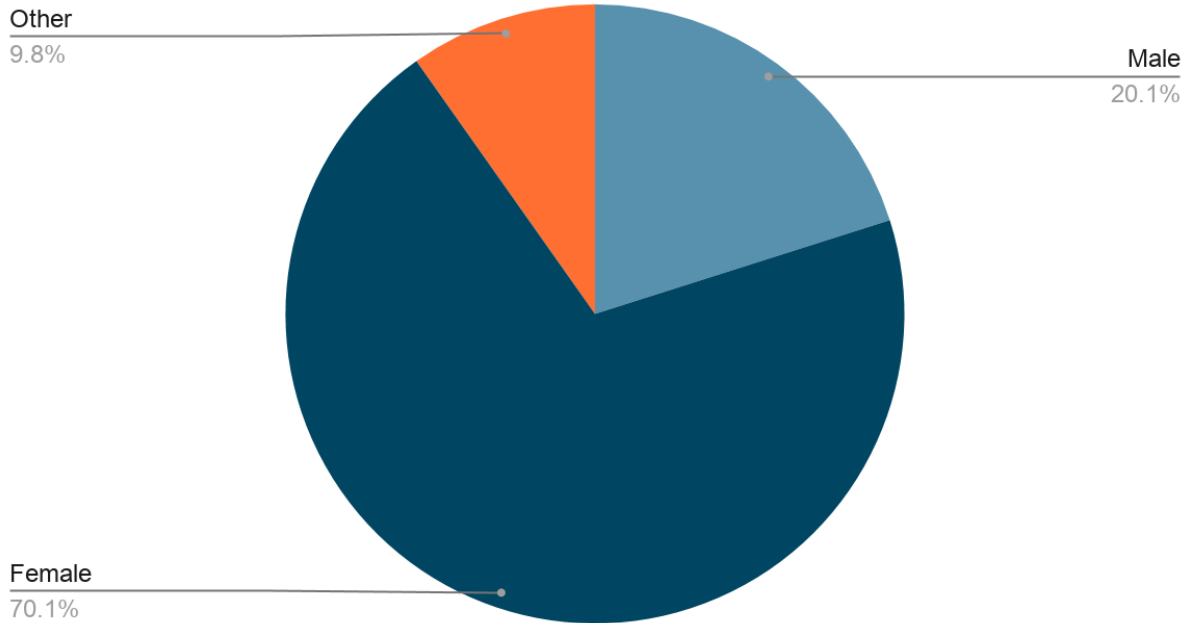
The survey consisted of 23 questions, which reflect demographic information, sustainability background knowledge, community awareness and involvement information, and growing sustainability topics such as climate change, environmental justice, and environmental racism. The following document will detail the anonymous responses and summarize our findings.

1. Name

Although this survey was anonymously conducted, there were 572 documented respondents.

2. Gender

Survey Respondents Gender



- 401 Females
- 115 Males
- 56 Other (Nonbinary, gender fluid, etc.)

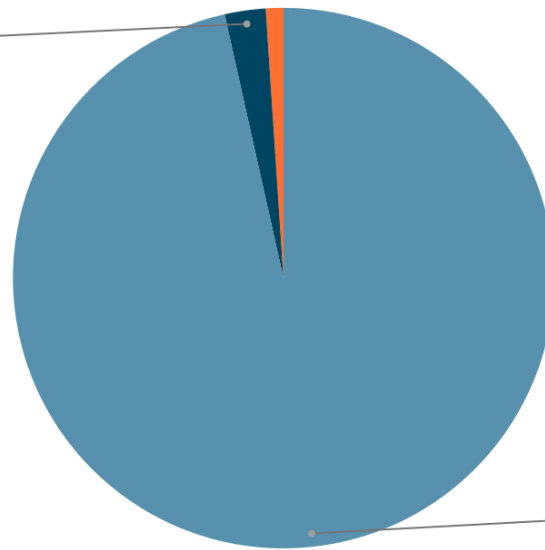
3. Race/Ethnicity

When creating this survey, this question was left as a fill-in-the-blank. This was done with the intentions of empowering individuals to input whatever race or ethnicity they identified with, without the constrictions of a label. Unfortunately, this enabled high variability in responses, so we could not correctly interpret data. In the future, this question will need to be reconfigured.

4. Title

Title/Position

CMU Staff or Faculty
2.4%



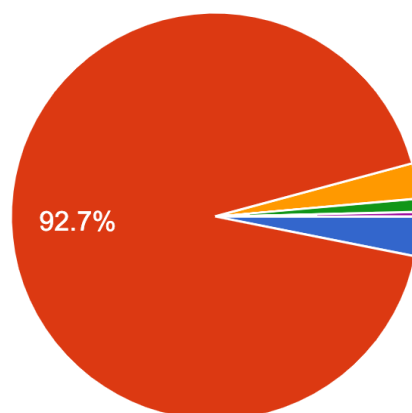
CMU Student
96.5%

- 552 CMU Students
- 14 CMU Staff or Faculty
- 6 CMU Graduate Students

5. Age

Age

572 responses

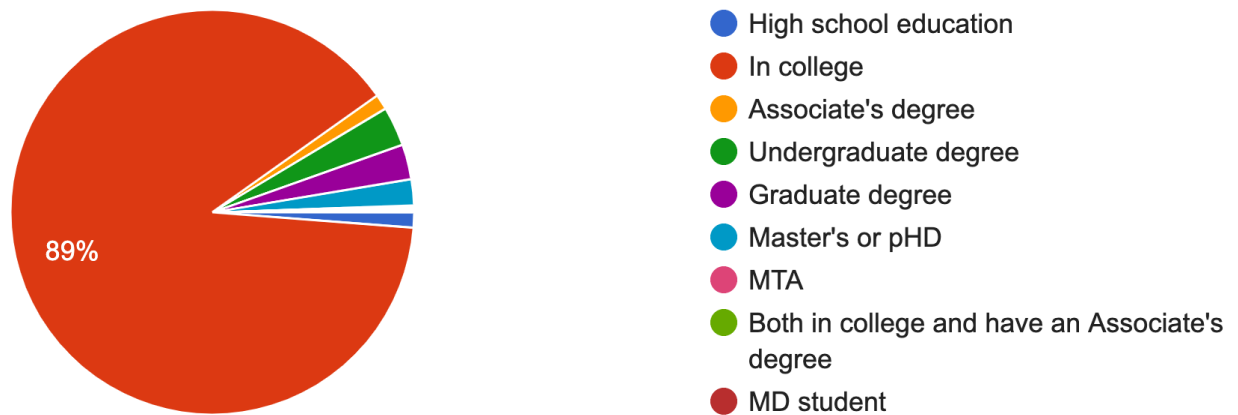


- Below 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-50
- 50-65
- 65+

6. Education

Education

572 responses



7. Major and Minor

Much like question 3, this question was left open ended as an opportunity for students to input their unique combination of majors, minors, and certificates. Consequently, this led to a large amount of varying responses. In the future, options will be made for this question based on which colleges the students major(s) and minor(s) belong to.

It is clear from viewing the results that students who responded were not strictly majoring in sciences. There is a fairly equal distribution of survey respondents among the various degrees and colleges at CMU.

8. Hometown

Similarly, this question could be revised through analyzing the percentage of respondents from urban, sub-urban, and rural backgrounds. This would provide a better understanding of which areas geographically may lead to a better connection to nature and understanding of sustainability.

9. Current Location

Nearly 100% of respondents lived on campus because the survey was sent to residential hall residents. Future surveys will aim for wider exposure.

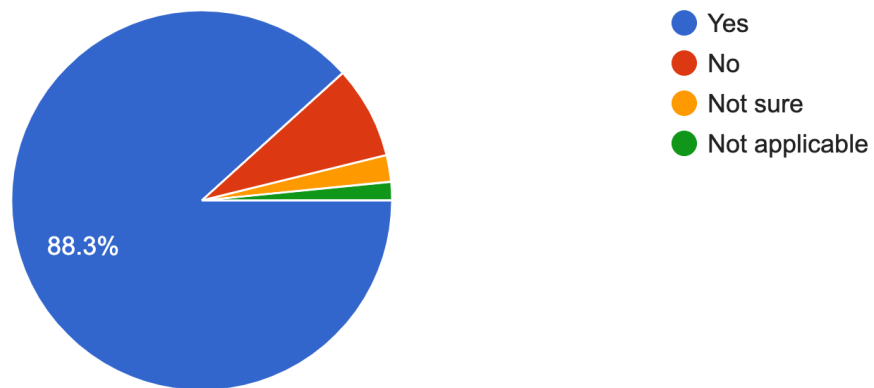
10. If on campus, which residential hall

This question will be revised in the future to ask which region of campus students belong to, rather than which hall. If the residential hall is asked in the future, then they will be made into options rather than fill in the blank. This question presented a similar issue to prior ones which enabled for variation in responses.

11. Are you registered to vote?

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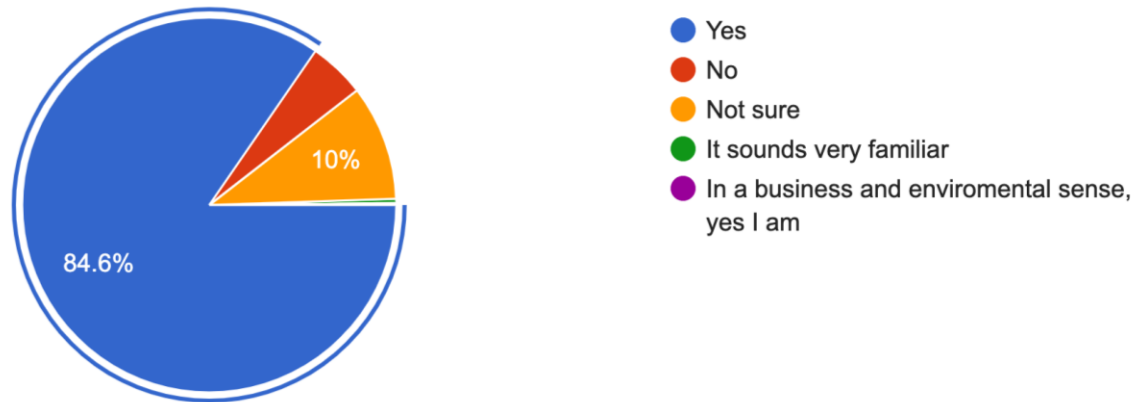
572 responses



12. Are you familiar with the term “sustainability?”

Are you familiar with the term "sustainability?"

572 responses



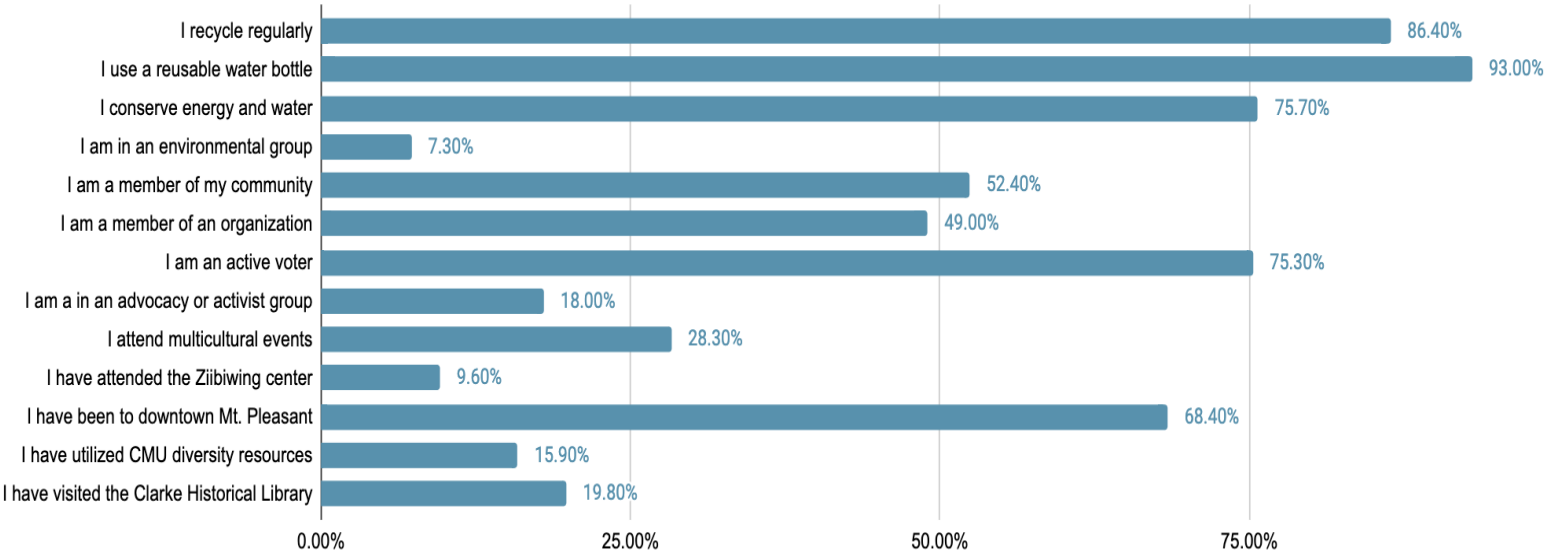
13. In one sentence, how would you describe what sustainability means?

Although like prior questions there was a vast array of responses, a majority of these involved environmental sustainability, and the conservation of resources. The following are a random sample of responses from this question:

- Being aware of our environment and doing all we can to conserve our resources
- Being mindful of ways we leave the earth either clean or dirty
- To attempt to limit waste and unnecessary usage of items/food.
- So the next generation can have what you had because u saved some for them
- The ability to live an eco-friendly lifestyle
- Sustainability is all about recycling and reusing resources to preserve the environment.
- I would say sustainability means to be able to last over time. This is applicable to policies and other things such as use of resources.
- Sustainability is the act of reducing your carbon footprint in the Earth.
- taking care of the world around us, environmentally and socially.
- Being a good human to our planet
- Actions/behavior that promote environmental wellness
- Keeping similar habits within a community to create change

14. Check all that apply (survey of sustainability engagement)

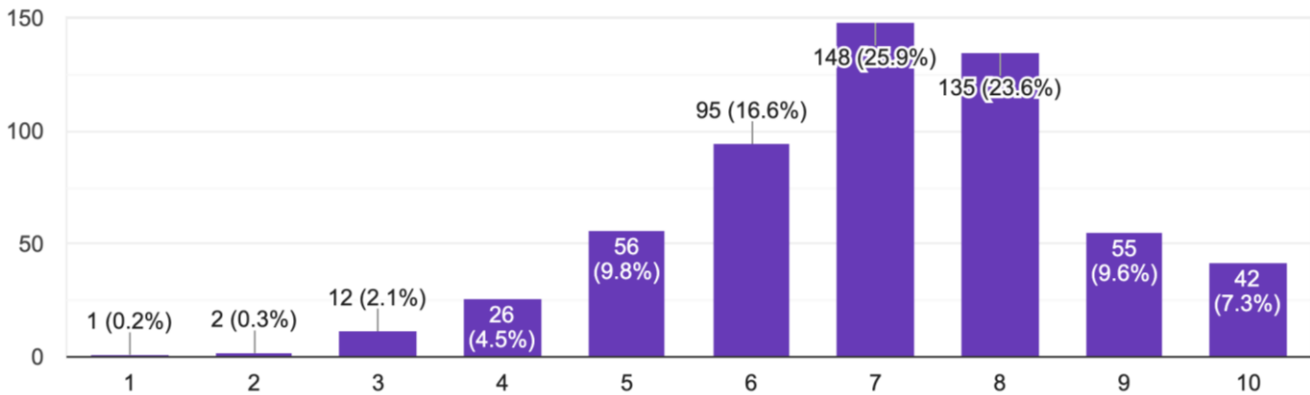
Sustainability Participation



15. How familiar would you generally say you are with environmental issues? (10 being the most, 1 being the least)

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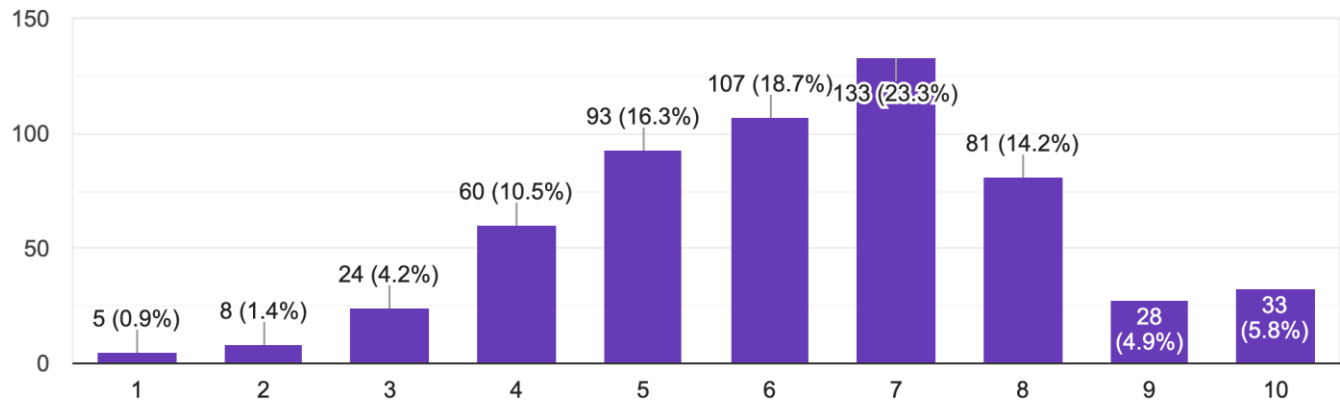
572 responses



16. How familiar would you generally say you are with SOLUTIONS to environmental issues? (10 being the most, 1 being the least)

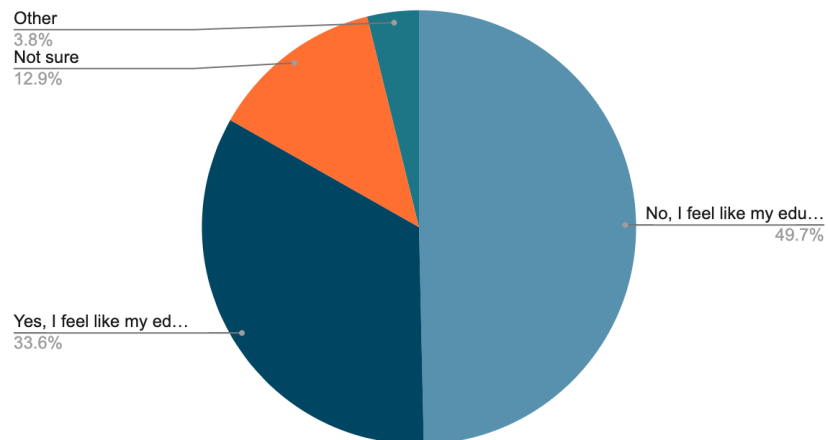
How familiar would you generally say you are with SOLUTIONS to environmental issues?

572 responses



17. Do you feel like your education has informed you enough on sustainability and environmental issues/solutions?

Sustainability Background



18. Where would you say your knowledge on sustainability and environmental issues/solutions comes from?

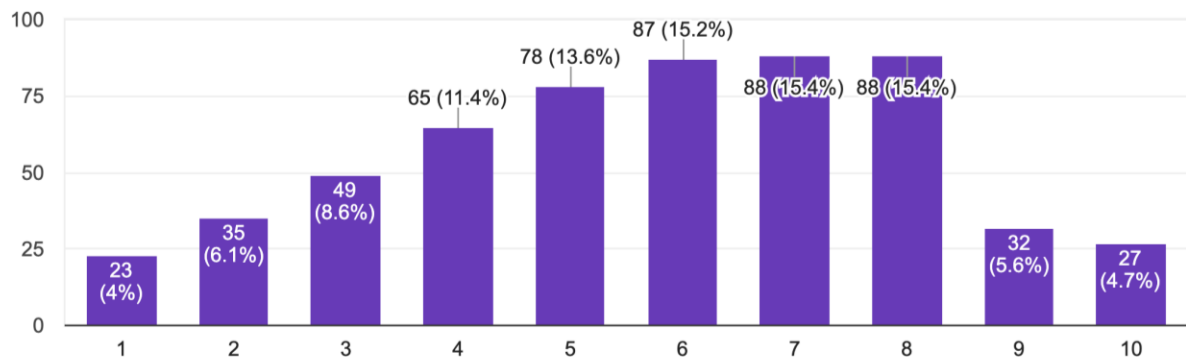
A majority of responses for this question indicated that any background in sustainability is from materials, videos, and publications seen on social media. While there are exceptions to this, question 18 indicates that Central Sustainability must aim to integrate our materials into

social media pages, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and more. This will serve as one of our priorities for 2021.

19. How involved would you say you are in your community? (10 being the most, 1 being the least)

How involved would you say you are in your community?

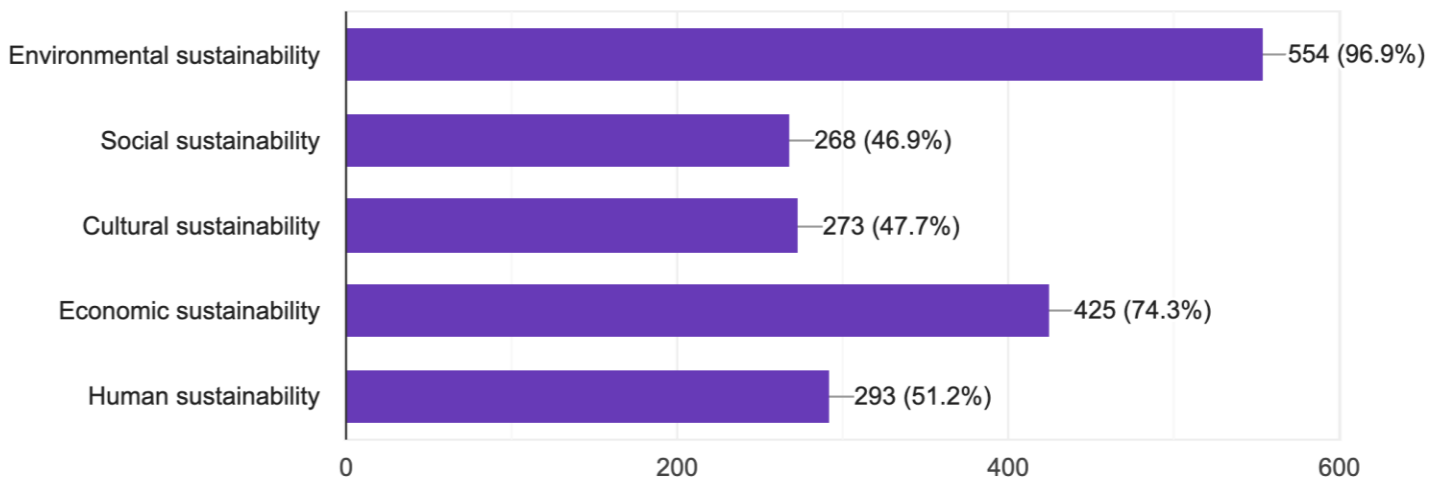
572 responses



20. Check the terms you have heard before (sustainability vocabulary)

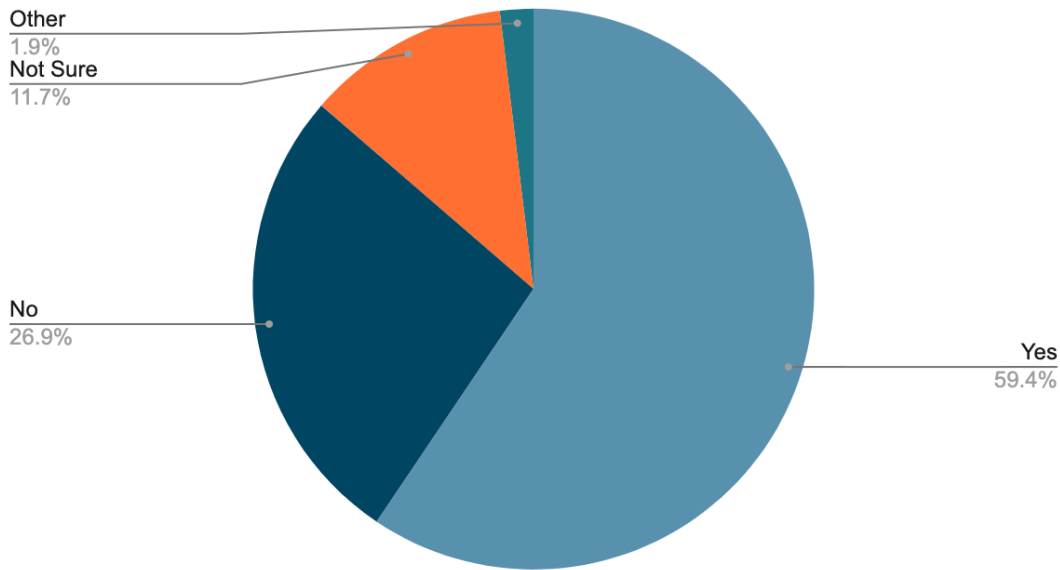
Check the terms you have heard before:

572 responses



21. Have you ever heard the term “environmental justice” or “environmental racism?”

Responses



22. Do you think climate change is a human-created issue that needs to be addressed?

Of the 572 respondents, 483 (84.4%) indicated that they do believe that climate change is a human created issue that needs to be addressed. While this is a promising response percent, the other 15.6% indicated that they believe in variations of this statement, or do not believe in climate change at all. This is the group of individuals which we aim to target, and introduce new educational materials to. It will be a goal of Central Sustainability to increase the percentage of individuals who agree with this statement through social media, sustainability walking tours, and introduction of sustainability signage in the residence halls.

23. Do you have any ideas for projects/policies related to sustainability at CMU?

One of our favorite questions in the survey included a list of potential projects for Central sustainability to pursue in the future. Below are a few of the proposed projects which we are looking forward to exploring in 2021!

- You guys could have recycling day and whichever hall per community turns in the most recyclable items gets a pizza party or something small like that

- I hope CMU has more events to talk about the issue going on with Climate Change
- Community compost bin
- There should be another recycling bin at NW Apartments on campus
- I would like to see more community councils take the sustainable direction when doing events most of them try to but making a requirement would be awesome
- Mandatory recycling and please please please a composting program outside of the dining halls.
- Water bottle garden
- Integrate biodegradable products to be sold at CMU stores.

Survey Analysis

In summary, the first campus sustainability survey was a monumental success. While we intended to only reach 200-300 survey respondents, 572 vastly outdid our expectations. Demographically speaking, a vast majority of respondents were students who live in the residence halls, and represented every college and department through their majors and minors.

As far as engagement is concerned, approximately 88% of students living on campus are registered to vote, while 85% of those registered to vote consider themselves “active voters.” Similarly, the average respondent considers themselves “moderately engaged” in their community, and participates in activities such as visiting the Ziibiwing Center, Downtown Mount Pleasant, and the Clarke Historical Library.

Environmentally, approximately 80% of respondents indicated that they actively pursue a lifestyle which encourages minimal usage of resources, through reusable water bottles, recycling, and conserving energy and water. Likewise, nearly 96% noted that they are familiar with the term “environmental sustainability.” The knowledge required to be aware of environmental issues has been predominantly acquired through social media, indicating that Central Sustainability must pursue social media outlets if we hope to spread our message. In the future, this will likely require the establishment of a formal Office of Sustainability, or a full-time staff/faculty member to implement sustainability programs and engage with outreach.

While most respondents are familiar with micro-environmental issues and solutions, approximately 60% are aware of the problems and solutions associated with macro-sustainability issues such as environmental justice and environmental racism. Furthermore, 84% of respondents believe climate change is a human-caused issue that must be addressed. This value serves as a starting point and will be vital in determining the impact of Central Sustainability for years to come.

The largest area for improvement at CMU lies in our ability to educate the public about the value of a community and the importance of pursuing initiatives associated with social and cultural sustainability (and their correlation to the environment). The strongest communities are those which integrate the environment within themselves through operations, architecture, lifestyles, and resources which are available to everyone. Through the institutionalization of sustainability at CMU and collaboration with organizations such as Take Back The Tap, the Student Environmental Alliance, the Mount Pleasant Citizens' Climate Lobby, and the Student Sustainability Coalition, we have the opportunity to ingrain sustainability into every facet of our University.

We would like to thank all respondents for taking the time to fill out our survey, and we look forward to pursuing the initiatives that will make the greatest difference in our community based on your responses. We would also like to thank the CMU Office for Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as well as CMU Facilities Management, Residence Life and various partners who support the movement to institutionalize sustainability efforts.

Suggestions for Survey Improvement:

_____ This was the first campus-wide sustainability survey and first survey conducted by Central Sustainability, so we were incredibly excited for the engagement and feedback we received. That being said, we have learned a great deal from this trial run on how to conduct our future surveys and what questions we need to include.

Our first self-assessing suggestion is changing more of the general demographic questions to multiple choice rather than fill-in-the-blank:

- Race/Ethnicity
- University Department (instead of major/minor)
- Rural, sub-urban, urban, or other (instead of hometown)
- Residence Hall (limited selection)
- Where would you say your knowledge on sustainability and environmental issues/solutions comes from?

Another suggestion we have for a future survey are more CMU-centered questions. This survey was more of general assessment of sustainability knowledge, with a few specific questions focused on sustainability at CMU:

- Have you participated in any of the following sustainability courses, extracurriculars, or events at CMU:

- Volunteer opportunities
- Central Sustainability programs such as the Sustainability Walking Tour
- Conference such as Climate Solutions Summit
- Events or speakers
- RSO focused on sustainability
- Sustainability events in residence halls
- CMU academic courses on sustainability
- How would you assess your appreciation for nature?

Finally, we need to find a way to assess the entire campus community, including residential halls, apartment residents, staff, and faculty.

Goals and Conclusion:

- Do you feel like your education has informed you on sustainability? 50% said no.
 - Expand Descriptive Sciences University Program, sustainability-focused learning objective should be added
 - Look into more sustainability-focused courses, courses that are sustainability-related should have a larger emphasis on sustainability
- Most survey participants said they learned about sustainability from social media.
 - Create university-supported social media outlets for CS
 - Work with sustainability advocates to distribute informational flyers
 - Offer more learning opportunities in event form
 - Added emphasis on sustainability in university coursework
- CMU does not have a full-time staff or faculty member to pursue sustainability in a formal position.
 - Create a formal and institutional Office of Sustainability. This could be done through working with the strategic plan builders, naming rights, or 5-year sustainability plan.
- 53% of survey participants were not familiar with cultural or social sustainability
 - Continuing our education campaign

- Blog post outreach
- Participating in campus and community sustainability events
- Emphasizing resources that focus on cultural and social sustainability
- Enhanced walking tour recruitment
- Conversations that Matter with the OIDEI
- Increase involvement in orientation, get involved with RHA
- Reach out and ask Campus Ambassadors to send training manual, which will include cultural and social sustainability

For more information, contact Teresa Homsí (homsit1m@cmich.edu) or Eric Urbaniak (urbanled@cmich.edu), and check out the Central Sustainability Website (<https://www.cmich.edu/diversity/Pages/Central-Sustainability.aspx>)