

# Syracuse and Sustainability Go Hand in Hand

Friday, April 24, 2015 By [Keith Kobland](#)



*Syracuse University installed 20 solar thermal panels on South Campus apartment buildings in 2013 to provide domestic hot water.*

When someone mentions the word "sustainable," what comes to mind? Is it the environment? Is it your family? Is it your finances? Sustainability can take on many different forms. At Syracuse University, sustainability means identifying and promoting sustainable practices that reduce the University's environmental impact in an economically responsible manner. That's the mission of the Sustainability Division.

Not an institution to stand still, Syracuse University recognized the need for, and potential impact of, a campus sustainability division. This recognition was due in part to Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor's decision in 2007 to sign the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), but it also continued a long tradition of energy management and conservation at Syracuse University, dating back to 1972. The following year was marked by long lines at gas stations, as the nation was on the cusp of an oil embargo that had many people thinking about better ways to conserve energy.



“The University has a rich history of energy conservation since the early 1970s,” says Steve Lloyd, associate director for sustainability. “Adding to these institutional concepts, sustainability is patterned along those lines.”

“Our first task was to complete the campus-wide greenhouse gas inventory,” according to Melissa Cadwell, the Sustainability Division's marketing manager. “We submitted our completed greenhouse gas inventory on Sept. 12, 2008. The task was accomplished with assistance from students in the CIE 475 class in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; SUNY ESF work-study student

Sarah Kelsen; and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.”

Cadwell says the Sustainability Division is currently administering the Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP sets the institution's short-term and long-term strategies, targets and goals for achieving carbon neutrality; in addition, it provides a blueprint for implementing carbon-neutral initiatives as part of University operations. (Faculty, students and staff are invited to submit greenhouse gas emission reduction projects and suggestions to the Sustainability Division at [sustain@syr.edu](mailto:sustain@syr.edu)).

Additionally, the Sustainability Division is partnering with other campus groups and departments to raise awareness and spread the word about sustainability principles and initiatives. The message emphasizes simple changes that individuals can make to help the University achieve its goal of carbon neutrality. These changes include new ways of working, traveling and saving energy. They also include traditional conservation approaches, like thinking globally and remembering to reduce, reuse and recycle.

“The campus’ sustainable programs, projects and collaborations have had a strong impact on campus by reducing natural resource consumption, improving waste management, implementing storm water diversion and by increasing campus awareness across a broad spectrum of disciplines,” says Lloyd. “As we move deeper into the Climate Action Plan, Syracuse University students and faculty will have a greater opportunity to use the campus as a living laboratory in partnership with the Business, Finance and Administrative Services operational divisions.”