BOARD OF REGENTS
STATE OF IOWA

AGENDA ITEM 8k
MAY 31 - JUNE 2, 2022

Contact: John Nash

FY 2023 CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the report.

Executive Summary: To evaluate and measure campus sustainability, the universities participate in an AASHE, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, program called "STARS." STARS stands for Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System.

In this report, the universities highlight at least one project from each of the following STARS categories:

1. Academics and Research
2. Campus Operations
3. Planning, Administration and Engagement

Iowa's public universities are committed to a sustainable future through academics and research, operations and economic development. Respect for the impact on the environment is part of decision-making at all levels. Regent institutions broadly apply campus sustainability in the general operations of each institution, in curriculum and in experiences of students and employees. Sustainability is also utilized effectively when partnering with industry leaders, joining with all levels of government and transferring technology within the institutions.

Board of Regents' Sustainability websites:
UI Office of Sustainability - http://sustainability.uiowa.edu/
ISU Office of Sustainability - http://www.livegreen.iastate.edu/
UNI Office of Sustainability - http://www.uni.edu/sustainability

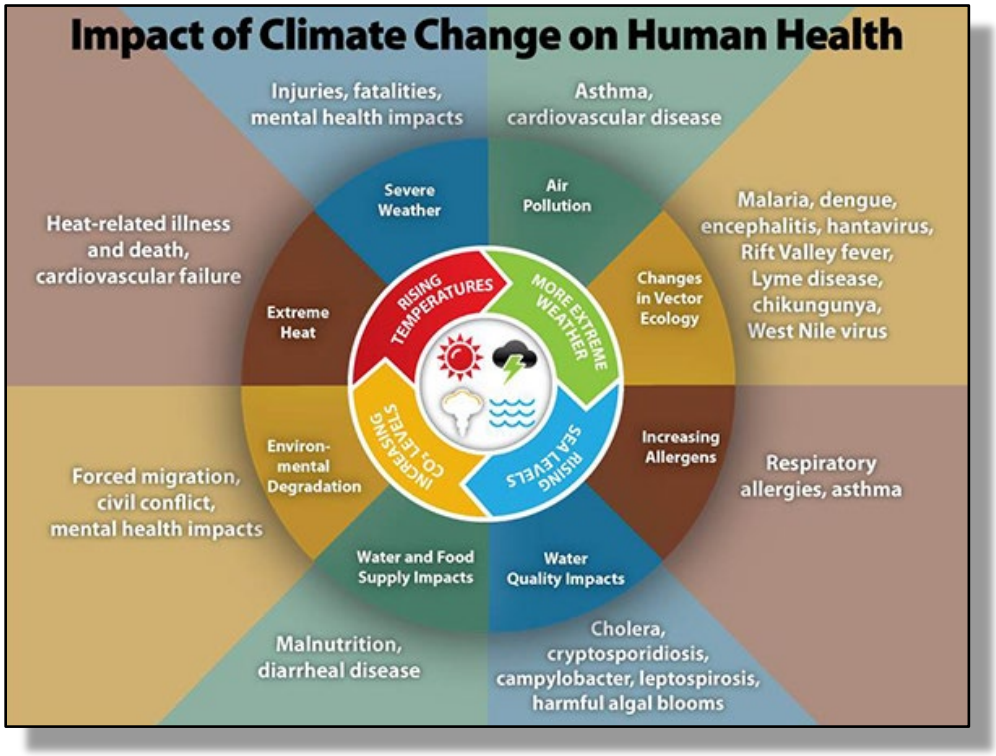
Part 1 of 3
ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

A primary function of colleges and universities is to educate students. By training and educating future leaders, scholars, workers and professionals, higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to prepare students to understand and address sustainability challenges. This STARS category recognizes institutions that have formal education programs and courses, as well as sustainability learning experiences outside the formal curriculum.

University of Iowa

Catalyzing Iowa Focused Sustainability and Climate Solutions Research

The Office of Sustainability has collaborated with the Office of the Vice President for Research over the past year to catalyze research in interdisciplinary Sustainability. This year, the collaboration has put forth both a Climate/Sustainability Ideas Lab, as well as a Climate-Health-Environment RFP that have both been introduced to faculty and professional research staff at the university of Iowa during the spring semester. The Ideas lab also included Iowa State's Office of Research and Iowa State's faculty.



OVPR Interdisciplinary Scholars RFP: Climate-Environment-Health Nexus

In February, the Office of the Vice President for Research announced the OVPR Interdisciplinary Scholars RFP that focuses on the climate-environment-health nexus. This RFP strategically focuses on large proposals to advance campus research in this area. We anticipate funding two proposals this year for $250k/year over two years ($500k total). Proposals are due June 1, 2022. See RFP here.

Important detail: To be eligible to submit proposals, a majority of the proposing team must have participated in the Climate Change/Sustainability Innovation Labs (see below).

UI-ISU Climate Change/Sustainability Innovation Labs

In February and early March, we co-hosted a series of Ideas Labs with Iowa State University's Research Office, facilitated by KnowInnovation. The objective of the Innovation Labs was to share ideas and begin to develop research teams built on important questions and collective strengths, all leading to successful grants in climate change and sustainability science.

More specifically, these events are intended to foster a uniquely Iowa response to the research challenges associated with climate change and long-term sustainability. A key question for participants in the Labs: *What are the interdisciplinary climate change and/or sustainability research challenges that Iowa researchers are particularly well positioned to explore in the next three to five years?*

The Innovation Labs had more than 60 faculty and research staff from across Iowa and ISU participate and there are plans to follow up on feedback and ideas emerging from the three sessions.

The dates of the Labs:

- Innovation Lab #1 - Network and ideate: Wednesday, February 23 @ 9:30am-11am
- Innovation Lab #2 - Network and refine ideas: Wednesday, March 2 @ 9:30am-11am
- Innovation Lab #3 - Network, refine ideas, and pitch ideas: Wednesday, March 9 @ 9:30am-11am

University of Northern Iowa

In Spring 2022, the University of Northern Iowa's (UNI) Faculty Sustainability Board and UNI Sustainability Office collaboratively hosted a workshop to engage a wide audience of faculty and staff. This effort included a partnership with the Association for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the College of Charleston (CofC) in Charleston, South Carolina.

AASHE sponsored a workshop open to any member school led by CofC faculty in early 2022, focusing on how faculty could integrate sustainability curriculum into their courses. After minimal promotion on the UNI campus, it became apparent that demand at UNI would overwhelm the workshop capacity. Because of this high interest level, AASHE proposed the idea of hosting a private workshop for UNI participants, to be facilitated by the same CofC faculty. This strategy allowed for additional customization and focus within the workshop on UNI-specific interests and concerns.

aashe
The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON
1770
CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This collaborative workshop was focused on equipping faculty with best practices for embedding sustainability across the curricula into their respective courses. Attendees were provided tips and suggestions to incorporate sustainability in an engaging and transformative way, while also supporting course learning objectives. The workshop was grounded in lessons learned

at the CofC, where faculty have engaged in a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges quality enhancement plan reaccreditation project, "Sustainability Literacy as a Bridge to Addressing 21st Century Problems." Their highlighted project was centered upon working with faculty to embed sustainability literacy into existing courses by providing ongoing trainings, workshops, and a year-long faculty cohort who work together on sharing best practices for teaching sustainability.

UNI faculty and staff were recruited from across campus to bring unique and diverse perspectives into the conversation. A total of 34 faculty and staff from a variety of colleges, disciplines, and centers participated in this workshop. These participants represented 22 different departments and all colleges on campus. Many of the participants were new to the idea of incorporating sustainability into their courses, including 28 participants that had not been involved in any of the recent Faculty Sustainability Board's efforts.

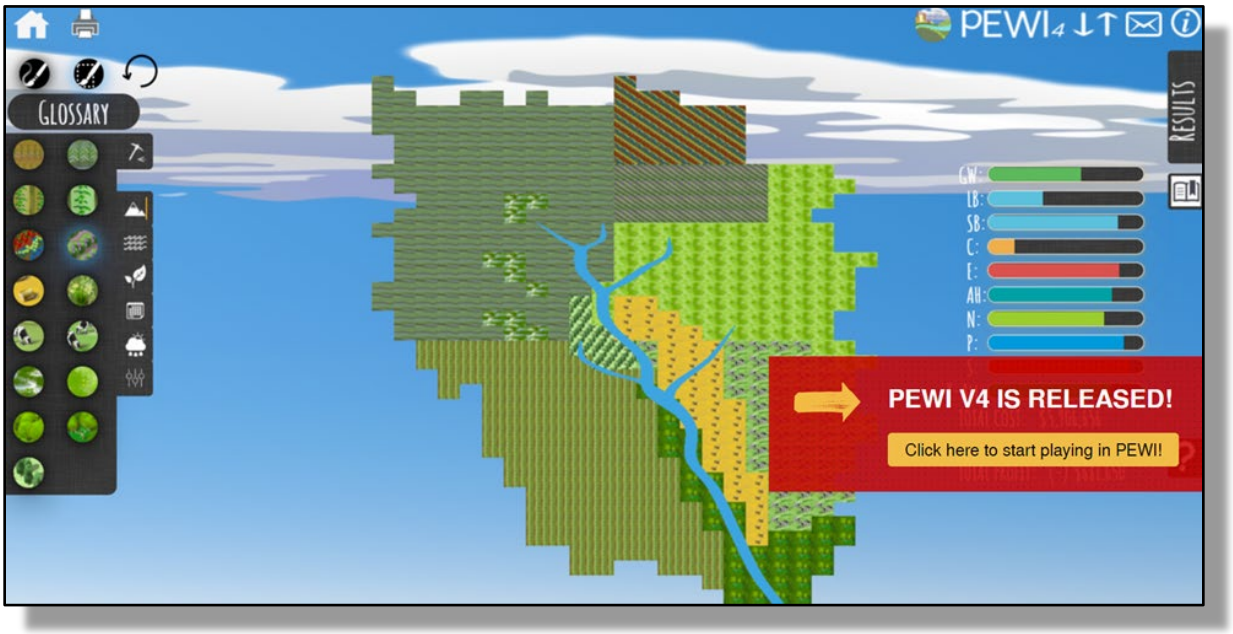
The facilitators from CofC presented an overview of their project, its learning goals and outcomes, and an overview of assessment data (both qualitative and quantitative) from their project. Presenters then worked with UNI faculty to:

- locate existing student learning objectives and help transition them to be sustainability focused
- dialogue about ways to present sustainability in an interdisciplinary way that also connects to a home discipline via effective teaching methods
- brainstorm capacity building opportunities to build faculty coalitions around embedding sustainability throughout the curricula.

In the end, UNI participants were asked to provide feedback on the workshop. These responses, presented in in the form of a word cloud for illustrative purposes only, were used to both improve future workshops and to provide guidance to UNI's Faculty Sustainability Board. The faculty board would use this information as the sustainability programs in Academic Affairs transform over time.

Iowa State University
Gaming Decision-Making for Strategic Land Use
Decisions related to land use balance considerations of environmental, economic and social sustainability. The opportunity to understand these issues through trial simulations can lead to the adoption of new practices

People in Ecosystems Watershed Integration (PEWI), the brainchild of MacArthur Fellow Lisa Schulte Moore, professor of natural resource ecology and management at Iowa State University, started out as a spreadsheet for a class exercise in understanding the impacts of agricultural and natural land uses. Since then, PEWI has developed into an interactive tool with the help of a creative, interdisciplinary team of students (25 and counting) and faculty providing expertise in education, ecology, economics, agriculture, engineering, graphic design, biological illustration and computer science.



PEWI is a science-based simulation packaged as a digital game-based learning tool. A tool developed through a number of iterations starting in 2014, PEWI 4.0 was released earlier this year. In its current version, PEWI helps users explore 15 land-use options, including conventional corn and soybeans, pasture, mixed vegetable crops, wetlands, forests and short-rotation woody bioenergy crops. These options, in turn, link to 19 ecosystem services, including crop yields, soil quality, carbon sequestration, erosion and water quality.

Users confront tradeoffs in ecosystem service outcomes and can track outcomes and economics across years and changing weather.

PEWI developers have always focused on prioritizing primary concepts, while also offering 'optional degrees of complexity' to create an environment rich with many decisions to explore for a diversity of users. An especially relevant component of ensuring a realistic and immersive experience is a robust and applicable platform. PEWI accomplishes this through a series of "What if" scenarios, placing the user within a 6,000-acre watershed, and showing the data in both visual and numeric formats, including a flyover (drone) mode.

Through generous support from a variety of public and private sources including the National Science Foundation, McKnight Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture and USDA McIntire-Stennis Program, PEWI is offered as a free, open-source application and also includes class curriculum components.

While primarily used in agriculture and science classes offered to high school and undergraduate students, including Iowa State's Science Bound Program, PEWI is also attracting interest from 4-H leaders and agricultural and conservation professionals, and being applied to curricula across the U.S. and the world – including the University of Vermont, Stanford University, McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and as far away as Portugal.

The PEWI story most certainly is not finished. As additional students bring new expertise, and collaborators contribute to new code, modeling would continue expanding to include new information and decision pathways to deliver ever-more robust and realistic land-use outcomes toward an informed, strategic and empowered sustainable future.

Part 2 of 3
CAMPUS OPERATIONS

This STARS category encompasses everything within the daily operation of a campus. It includes quantitative data reporting in the areas of Building Operations, Climate, Dining Services, Energy, Grounds, Purchasing, Transportation, Waste and Water Usage. This overarching category notes that institutions can design, build and maintain a campus in ways that provide a safe and healthy environment for the campus community. It recognizes the outstanding efforts to maintain a more sustainable campus environment.

University of Northern Iowa

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Student Green Fund was initiated in 2017 as a way for students to broaden their impact on campus sustainability efforts. When the fund was first envisioned, it was expected to be focused primarily on efforts related to events and small initiatives that would increase student engagement around sustainability on campus.

During the second year of fund implementation, the student committee overseeing the Green Fund was surprised to see a funding request submitted by a student that wanted to do a physical change to a building and convert lighting in Latham Hall from fluorescent to LED bulbs. The concept was envisioned by students within the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. These students worked jointly with UNI's Facilities Management to determine the scope of the project and calculate returns on investment.

This project engaged students by recruiting over 25 volunteers to remove old light bulbs and replace them with newer, high-efficiency LED bulbs. By engaging student volunteers, the effort completely upgraded all corridor lights in the building in under an hour. Through this change, the project had an estimated energy cost savings of $1,322 per year and estimated return on investment of 2.3 years.

While this project alone was small in scale, it allowed UNI Facilities Management to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of a technology that they had not employed before. At the time of install, this was the only project on campus that replaced fluorescent bulbs with LED conversion bulbs within the same fixtures, rather than converting the entire light fixture.

Since this initial partnership, the UNI Green Fund has continued to work with Facilities Management on small scale projects that allow the institution to test feasibility of different projects and technologies. For example, in 2020, students proposed a small-scale rainwater capture system. While the idea of rainwater capture was not new, there had never been a feasible plan put into place for how the water could be utilized in campus operations. This project allowed up to 250 gallons of water to be captured in each rainfall and be stored for use in the UNI Botanical Center.

Because of the success of the rainwater capture system, efforts are currently underway to double to capture volume during each rainfall event from 250 to 500 gallons. This added capacity would allow staff to water plants in the tropical house within the Botanical Center, greatly reducing the need for filtered water that is currently used in that area to water plants.

Two major projects implemented in 2021-22 expanded the scope of partnerships between the Green Fund and Facilities Management. Over the last several years, a significant portion of UNI's tree canopy had to be removed from campus due to impacts from the emerald ash borer. To accelerate the process of replenishing the tree canopy, the Green Fund was able to supplement funds and significantly expand the number and maturity of trees being replanted on campus. In addition, the Green Fund covered the costs associated with procuring and installing additional water bottle refill stations on campus. While refill stations are common at UNI, these additional units were installed in high traffic areas that were not served by existing stations.

Throughout these partnerships, UNI Facilities Management has been able to maintain and even expand their sustainability efforts, while also allowing students to have an impactful voice regarding some campus sustainability initiatives. While these small efforts would never replace the work of Facilities Management, they are able to help evaluate effectiveness and potential for broader implementation. With additional planned partnerships already in the works, this collaboration would continue to produce positive results moving forward.

Iowa State University
Partnering Toward a Carbon Neutral Future
Iowa State University will soon be home to a new solar farm through a partnership with Alliant Energy. The project would both further Alliant Energy's goals to eliminate all coal from its

generation fleet by 2040 and achieve net-zero carbon dioxide emissions from the electricity it generates by 2050, and support the university's strategic plan for sustainability in operations, which includes increasing the use of renewable energy.

The solar farm would produce up to 900-kilowatts at maximum output – the equivalent of powering 230 homes. The solar farm will be located on university land south of Ames that is part of animal science teaching and research farms managed by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and its Department of Animal Science.

The farms are devoted to beef, sheep, swine, poultry and dairy, and also include the Ag450 Farm, the only student-managed farm at the nation's land-grant schools. Alliant will design, construct, own, operate and maintain the solar farm. Iowa State will receive all renewable energy credits from the solar power, which will reduce the annual carbon emissions of the university's farms.

Beyond the production of renewable energy, Iowa State University and Alliant Energy are exploring future partnerships to take advantage of the solar farm for education, research, demonstration and training purposes – toward awareness and empowerment related to the broader integration of solar energy into rural communities in agriculture and beyond. The project is an example of a public-private partnership to achieve mutually shared renewable energy and sustainability goals.

University Sustainability Plan

The partnership augments a successful year of implementing the University's sustainability plan, toward goals of achieving a 50% reduction of carbon emissions by 2025 and eliminating coal from the campus power plant. In the year following the President's endorsement of the plan, all purchased electricity is now from renewable power – representing 48% of the university's total electricity consumption. Conversion of the campus' two remaining coal boilers to natural gas, resulting in a 35% reduction of carbon emissions, is scheduled to begin spring 2022 and be completed in 2023.

In addition, the university continues to construct new facilities adhering to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

This was showcased in 2021 by certification of ISU's 13th LEED Gold building out of 23 total LEED certified projects, the Student Innovation Center, which features daylight harvesting, daylight dimming and occupancy control, and a green roof.

ISU's Student Innovation Center Dedication, September 30, 2021

University of Iowa

University of Iowa Biomass Project Continues to Make Progress, Gains Recognition

First Year Seminar Students tour the University of Iowa Power Plant (photo from Adam Skibbe)

Green Energy EPA rating (Wendy Moorehead, FM U. of Iowa)

The University of Iowa, which recently became a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Green Power Partner, is recognized on several of the EPA's Top Green Power Partner Lists. Iowa is ranked No. 3 on the Top 30 College & University List of the largest green power users—the highest ranking among the six Big Ten universities on the list. To achieve this ranking, Iowa uses more than 251 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power annually, which represents 73 percent of its operations' total electricity needs.

Thanks to Iowa's innovative and robust biomass program, the university also is recognized on the EPA's Top 30 On-Site Generation List, ranked No. 4 among all colleges and universities, and

placing it among companies like Apple, General Motors, and Walmart. Iowa also ranked No. 60 on the Nation's Top 100 List.

"This is a huge honor for the University of Iowa and we are proud to be recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency," says Stratis Giannakouros, director of the Office of Sustainability and the Environment. "Using and generating green power is a sound business decision and reflects the university's commitment to further sustainability in all that we do."

Iowa's ranking on the EPA's Top Power Partner Lists recognizes the university's long history of innovation and achievement in developing and using alternative fuels to generate steam for heating and cooling campus buildings. This work has propelled Iowa toward meeting its Zero Coal by 2025 goal by exploring innovative biomass alternatives in its power plant like oat hulls, miscanthus grass, and energy pellets. The university's commitment to green power provides energy security and creates economic value for the state by locally sourcing alternative fuels when possible.

Iowa is working with its energy delivery partner, the University of Iowa Energy Collaborative, to continue making strides in generating green power. Since 2020, the University of Iowa Energy Collaborative has carried forward the important UI work of optimizing operations to enable the Power Plant boilers to utilize additional renewable fuels.

"This list of the largest users of green power across the nation is proof that good business practices can also benefit the environment," said James Critchfield, program manager of EPA's Green Power Partnership. "EPA applauds the leading organizations in the Green Power Partnership's Top Partner Rankings for their notable commitment to expanding their use of green power and protecting the environment."

The Green Power Partnership is a voluntary program that helps increase green power use among U.S. organizations to advance the American market for green power and development of those sources as a way to reduce air pollution and other environmental impacts associated with electricity use.

Part 3 of 3
PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This STARS category encompasses a wide variety of planning, engagement and outreach areas. It includes quantitative and qualitative data reporting in the areas of Coordination and Planning, Diversity and Affordability, Human Resources, Investment and Public Engagement. This overarching category notes that institutions of higher learning can make significant contributions to sustainability throughout society by sharing their experiences and expertise with others. Sharing best practices and lessons learned can help other institutions, communities and individuals realize efficiencies that they otherwise may not have considered.

Iowa State University

Sustaining Communities through 3D Affordable Housing

In response to an increasing need for affordable housing in Iowa, the College of Design at Iowa State University has embarked on a new project aimed at providing solutions through 3D concrete printed homes.

Although there has been shortage in the residential housing market since 2008, in recent years Iowa has seen a surge in pricing and demand for housing. The 3D Affordable Innovative Technologies (3D AIT) Housing Project, comes in response to this demand, fueled by ex-urban migration, growing acceptance of remote work, and rising costs of urban living. The result has been a lack of quality, affordable housing, especially in rural communities. This coupled with ongoing concerns of attracting, supporting and sustaining a workforce, culminates in an overarching statewide challenge of maintaining and growing communities.

Spearheaded by Pete Evans, assistant professor of industrial design; Julie Robison, program manager for the Institute for Design Research and Outreach and community and economic development specialist for ISU Extension and Outreach; and Kevin Kane, associate dean for research and outreach in the College of Design, the project involves multidisciplinary collaboration across Iowa State from students, faculty and staff representing the College of Design, School of Education and ISU Extension and Outreach.

Recently the project was awarded a $1.4 million Strategic Infrastructure Program (SIP) grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority. In its focus on 3D printed technology as a solution for quality, affordable housing in the state, the project fulfills SIP's focus of supporting projects that provide a competitive advantage for Iowa's industries and growing Iowa's economy.

The grant would fund equipment and materials necessary to complete a demonstration build, in partnership with Brunow Contracting, as part of a 40-unit development in Hamburg, Iowa, related to the community's recovery efforts from 2019 flooding. Housing technologies have not changed much in the last century, and building materials are not designed for disasters like the 2020 Iowa derecho or annual flooding. This demonstration would help the team to understand building design, affordability, zoning and codes, community engagement, and workforce training in applying the new technology.

Additional funding is being pursued to ensure a multi-faceted approach in addressing Iowa's housing needs. In partnership with Iowa Central Community College a program would be developed to train workers in advanced home construction. Research would be conducted in material development and testing, zoning and building codes, community engagement and project management. Construction companies would also be engaged across the state.

Using advanced technologies to 3D-print housing addresses environmental, economic and social sustainability through lowering construction risks, reducing material usage and waste, and providing affordable, resilient and sustainable housing.

University of Iowa

Ashton Prairie Living Laboratory Expansion

What began in 2019 as a student idea to promote pollinator habitats has now flourished into an 8+ acre living laboratory on the University of Iowa campus. What would become the Ashton Prairie Living Laboratory (APLL) was started by UI alumna Megan Lenss, who requested UI Undergraduate Student Government funding to turn one acre of the UI Athletic's Ashton Cross Country Course into native Iowa prairie. Since then, interest in the living lab has grown exponentially and so has the prairie. In the fall of 2021, seven new acres of prairie were seeded by students enrolled in UI's Prairie Restoration Course as well as students and staff from the Office of Sustainability and the Environment (OSE). Funding to support the expansion was provided by Dr. Craig Just's "EPA Farmer to Farmer Cooperative Agreements" grant aimed at improving water quality in the Clear Creek Watershed, to which the APLL is a contributor.

Now a valuable campus resource, APLL has become a hotbed of activity for students, faculty, and the general public. In addition to the prairie expansion, UI's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has invested in a variety research equipment to further enhance the living lab. The living lab now features supplies and materials for water and sediment field testing, fish and wildlife monitoring, as well as lab and groundwater supplies. These include items varying from colorimeters, flow sensors, soil probes, hoop nets, malaise traps, cameras, and more. Students from various classes across UI campus and colleges utilize the living lab at some point during their courses, providing affordable access to local field research for students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to engage in this type of experiential learning.

Outside of coursework, various student researchers are also utilizing the APLL for research credits and experience through individual projects with faculty as well as projects through the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU). In Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, student researchers have worked on topics including:

- acquired baseline data for the stream near Ashton Prairie called Cardinal Creek;
- evaluated the health of the stream to get a better idea of the stream's status;
- prepared for surveys of the critters and fish that live there;
- prepared for vegetation surveys scheduled to take place this summer;
- worked on finding solutions for erosion control;
- assessed and mapped groundwater leaching into the stream; as well as
- worked to better understand how the surrounding communities are impacting the APLL and the watershed.

The public is also engaged in learning at the APLL. In July, 2021, partners from across campus collaborated to host the First Annual BioBlitz at APLL. During that event, participants made 555 unique observations using the web platform iNaturalist to collect fungal, vegetation, insect, avian, and mammal data. They identified 195 species of plants, animals, insects, and other wildlife in a 3-hour timeframe. During the event, children and adults of all ages learned what it was like to do field research as they worked alongside UI faculty and students to find and identify wildlife using nets, traps, and lab microscopes. The data from that event would be used as a baseline to

evaluate the change in biodiversity at APLL as the prairie matures and expands. The Second Annual BioBlitz is scheduled to take place on Saturday, July 9th, 2022.

Given the genesis of this project was based on student involvement, the OSE has continued to update and support student engagement on and with the APPL. During APLL update meetings with students in the Spring 2021 semester, OSE learned that students were interested in obtaining Bee Campus certification for the work at APLL along with other various pollinator habitats on campus. The OSE began working to Bee Campus Certification at that time, using the APLL as an example of cross-campus coordination which embeds student success and faculty collaboration.

The Bee Campus designation is an initiative of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and has five main requirements which include forming a Bee Campus Committee, creating and enhancing pollinator habitat by increasing the abundance of native plants and providing nesting sites, reducing pesticide use, offering educational opportunities that incorporate pollinator conservation, and providing service-learning projects that enhance pollinator habitat. In September 2021, a Bee Campus Committee was formed, which includes faculty, staff, and student representatives from across the UI campus. Upon receiving a Letter of Support from President Wilson in Fall, 2021 for this endeavor, the Bee Campus Committee submitted the UI's application for Bee Campus Certification in early Spring, 2022. The UI was awarded the Bee Campus Certification on March 24, 2022. The Bee Campus Committee will continue to meet regularly for the next year to complete the requirements for maintaining our Bee Campus status, and will continue to center Bee Campus activities on the APLL and other campus pollinator habitats.

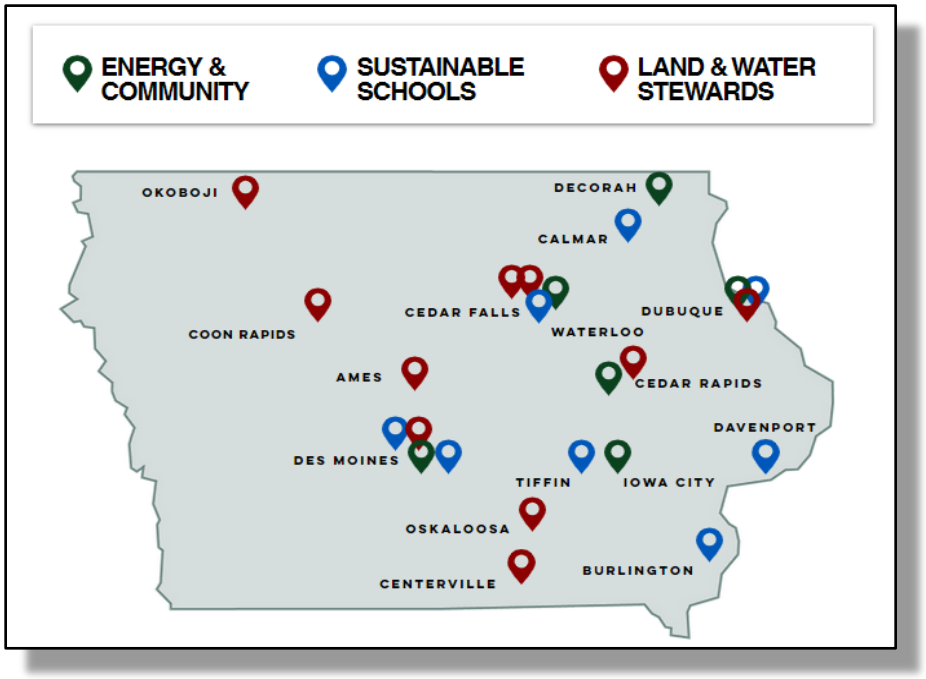
University of Northern Iowa

Green Iowa AmeriCorps (GIA) is the largest environmental stewardship AmeriCorps program in the state of Iowa, operating through the University of Northern Iowa's Center for Energy & Environmental Education and supported at the state level by Volunteer Iowa. The program has been active since 2009 with a mission to empower Iowa's communities and school districts to make more environmental, conservation-minded decisions by engaging AmeriCorps members in

direct service work, environmental education, professional development opportunities, and volunteer engagement.

The GIA program is funded by a combination of federal and state grants, state contracts, and program host match costs. It leverages over $1 million each year in federal AmeriCorps funds along with an additional $850,000 annually through state grants with Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Energy Center, contracts with MidAmerican Energy, Interstate Power & Light, and host sites of city governments, nonprofit organizations, school districts, and community colleges.

Throughout the program's history, it has been recognized as one of the top environmental stewardship programs in the country. It was named one of the most innovate AmeriCorps program in the country in 2010, and has received awards for Outstanding Member Experience and Outstanding Higher Education Collaboration in 2016 from the AmeriCorps Service Commission.



Over the past 12 years Green Iowa AmeriCorps has provided energy efficiency services to over 6,600 homes and educated over 85,000 people. The program has completed more than 4,500 service projects alongside more than 300 community organizations and 18,000+ volunteers. By the end of 2021, more than 740 members provided over 754,000 hours to Iowa communities. At the national rate of in-kind value of a volunteer per hour, the financial value is over $21.5 million of leveraged support for Iowa.

Currently the program partners with over 25 host organizations throughout the state. Partners include nonprofit organizations, municipalities, community colleges, and K-12 school districts which host over 115 full-time and summer members serving in one of three program branches: Energy & Community, Sustainable Schools, and Land & Water Stewards.

Each branch provides unique environmental services to Iowans and professional development opportunities to students, recent graduates, and community members.

Energy & Community provides residential energy efficiency services in the form of energy assessments and weatherization to underserved populations and communities throughout Iowa in partnership with city governments, Iowa Economic Development Authority, and the Iowa Energy Center. Energy assessments provide insight into how the program can improve the energy efficiency and where to reduce air infiltration in a home. Weatherization services include installing efficiency measures like LED lighting, low-flow water faucet aerators as well as air sealing measures around windows, doors, and in basements. The program also provides education to residents about energy saving behavior changes they can make to help save energy. The program has been the recommended partner for Iowa's investor-owned utilities by the Iowa Utilities Board in its last 5-year energy plan. Energy & Community members receive significant professional development training and certifications related to the energy workforce as part of their service.

Sustainable Schools places members in K-12 school districts to serve as sustainability coordinators to help districts reduce energy and waste costs, integrate environmental education and service learning as part classroom experiences and student organizations, and create service experiences for the high school students in districts that host the program. Members work with districts to complete greenhouse gas inventory, create climate action plans, school gardens, create outdoor classroom spaces, and other projects that help the district and students thrive.

Land & Water Stewards focus on preserving and protecting Iowa's natural resources through environmental education, the implementation of mitigation practices that improve water quality, and reduce the severity of climate related disasters. Members are hosted by organizations like Trees Forever, Practical Farmers of Iowa, county conservations, and other organizations with mission-aligned work focused on Iowa's natural resources. Members work to implement mitigation strategies through tree plantings, prairie planting, rain garden installation and others to reduce the impacts on water quality and quantity issues, and are available for disaster response efforts when climate related disasters strike.

The Green Iowa AmeriCorps program is not only addressing our state's most pressing environmental needs through a variety of direct services, education, and volunteer engagement, it is also providing an incredible opportunity for students and recent graduates to gain significant hands-on work experience, networking opportunities, and a deepened connection to their communities and environment.