

# Taking Responsibility for the Future - Solving for Sustainability

El Congreso Iberoamericano para la Sustentabilidad Universitaria, Santiago, Chile, November 7, 2018

Jack Byrne, Director, Office of Sustainability Integration, Middlebury College



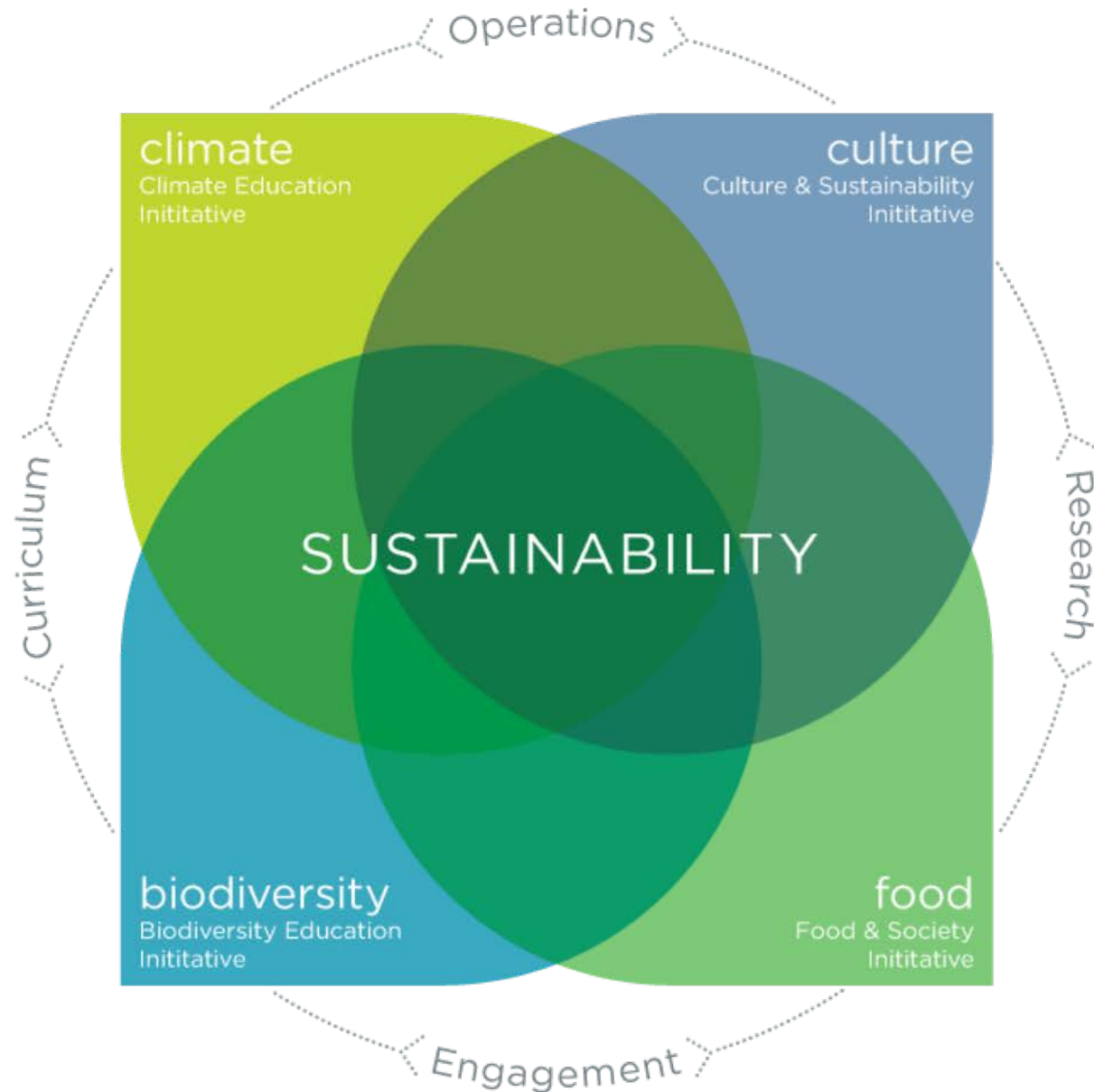
Middlebury



# Today's Topics

- The current state of sustainability in higher education in the US
- How Middlebury College is addressing sustainability today
- Engaging the community - Lessons learned from past efforts
- Optimism about the future

# Sustainability in US Higher Education



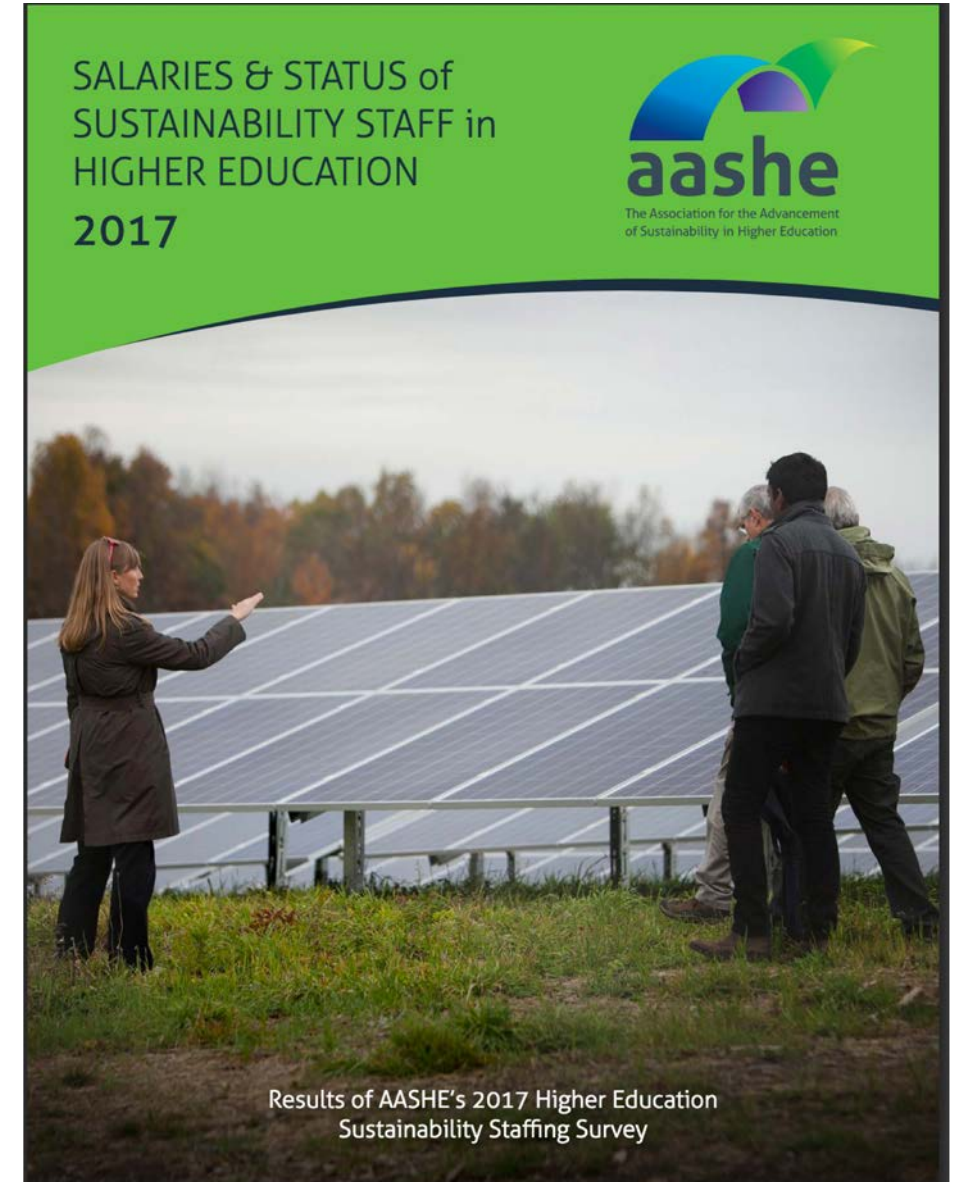


# Sustainability in US Higher Education Institutions Grows Stronger and Deeper

Full-Time Equivalent Sustainability Positions In US Higher Education:

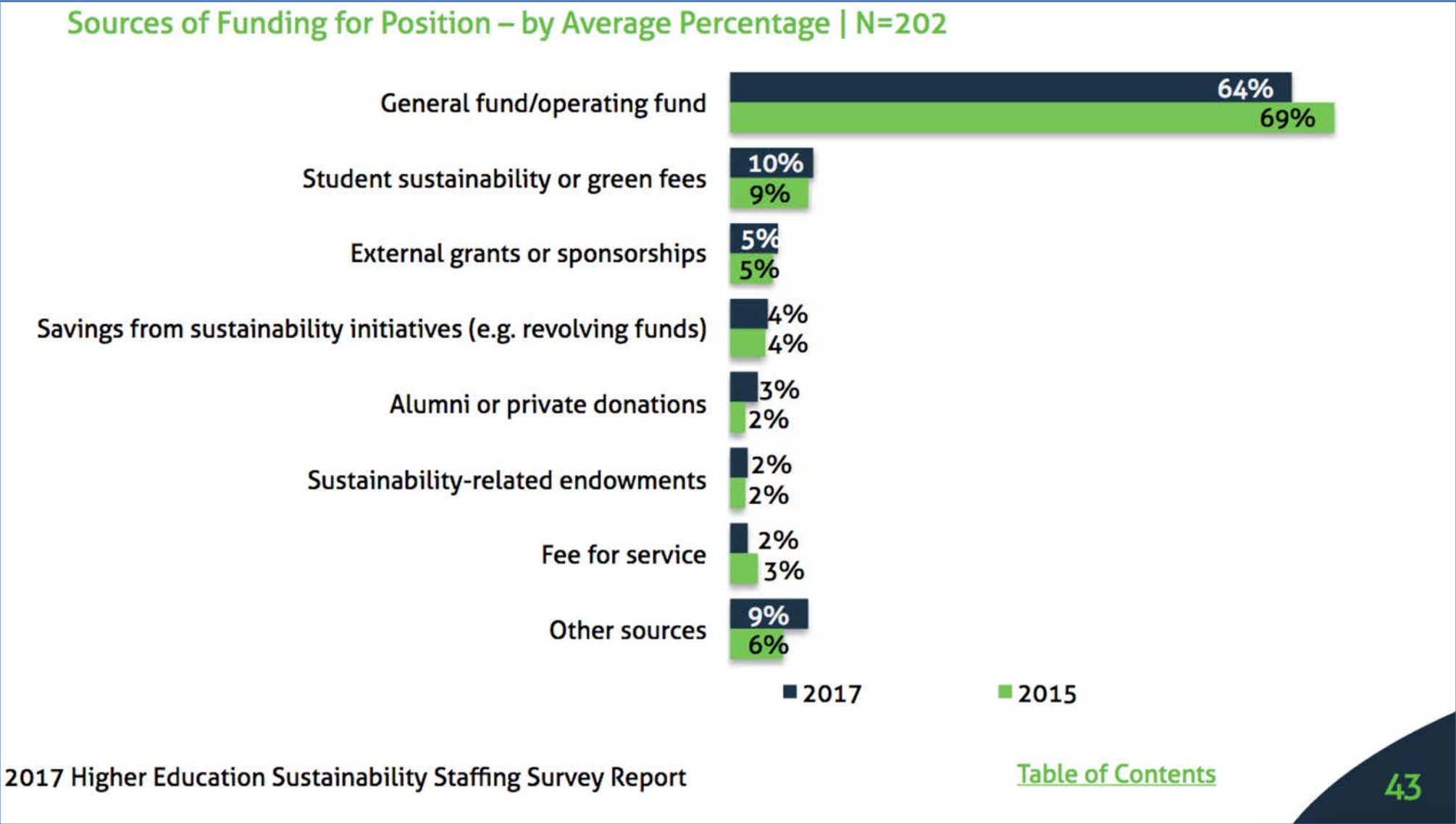
Year	Total
2010	80
2017	452

Attendance at Annual AASHE National Conference Typically Over 2,000

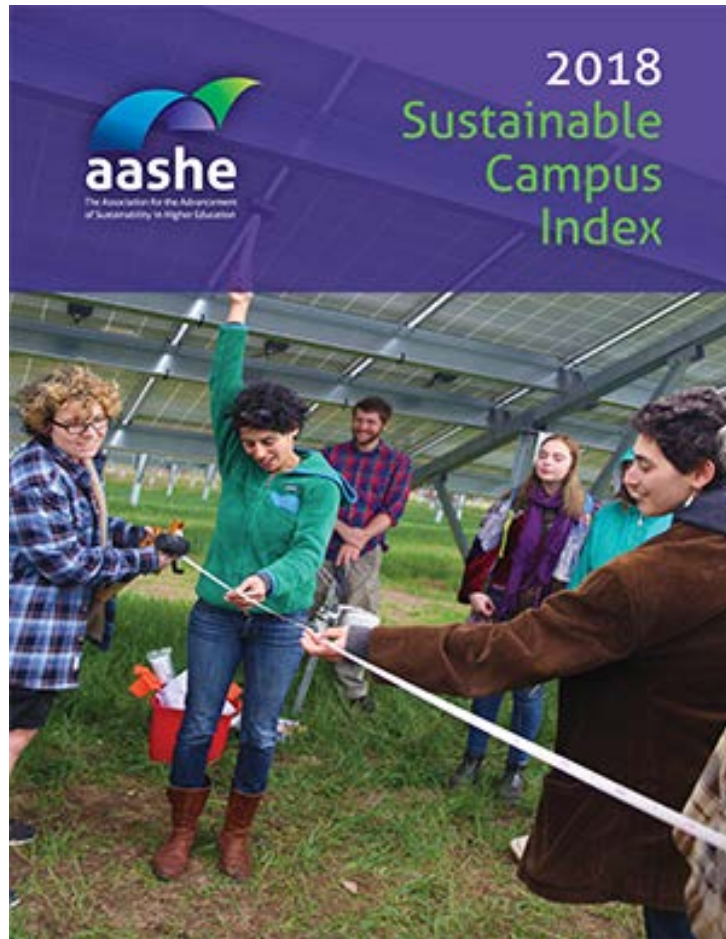


<http://www.aashe.org/sustainable-campus-index/>

# Funding for Sustainability Positions is Becoming Institutional



Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) has become a standard benchmarking tool for assessing progress and a learning source for the higher education community



<http://www.aashe.org/sustainable-campus-index>

## **73 criteria across 17 areas:**

### **Academics**

- Curriculum
- Research

### **Engagement**

- Campus Engagement
- Public Engagement

### **Operations**

- Air & Climate
- Buildings
- Energy
- Food & Dining
- Grounds
- Purchasing
- Transportation
- Waste
- Water

### **Planning & Administration**

- Coordination & Planning
- Diversity & Affordability
- Investment & Finance
- Wellbeing & Work



# 737 Higher Education Institutions Using STARS - Including UTEM and Universidad de Chile SA

## Current Ratings Summary

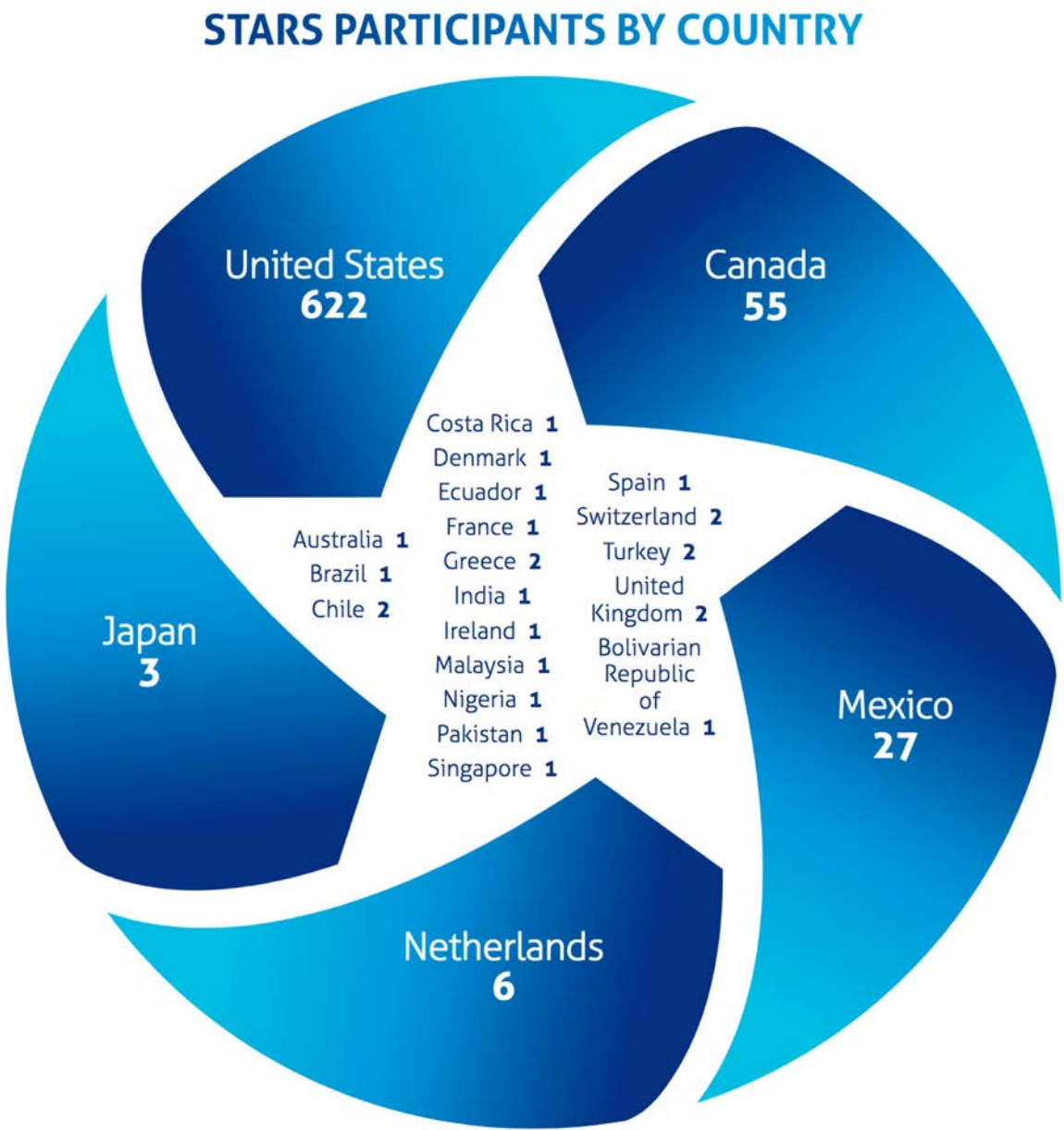
Platinum 5

Gold 111

Silver 156

Bronze. 42

Reporter 14





# Sustainability at Middlebury



Middlebury



# Campus Locations

Institute of  
International  
Studies,  
Monterey,  
California



# Location





## Middlebury Schools Abroad:

Argentina

Brazil

Cameroon

**Chile**

China

France

Germany

India

Italy

Japan

Jordan

Morocco

Russia

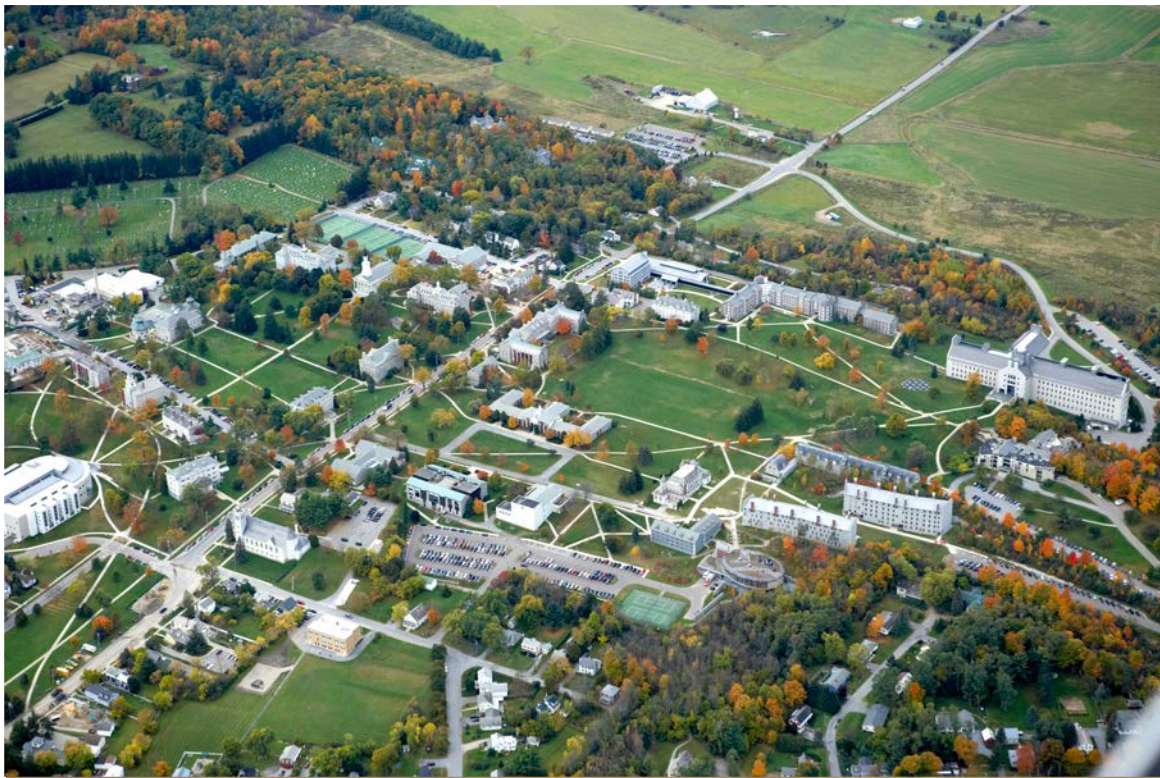
Spain

Uruguay

United Kingdom











Middlebury

Est. 1800

Top 10 US Liberal Arts College

2,500 Students at Main Campus

700 Students at Monterey Campus

First Undergraduate Environmental  
Studies Program in US - #2 or 3 major  
choice for students

Sustainability Program Started in 1994  
5 Full-Time, 2 Part-Time Staff

STARS Gold

Highly motivated and active students



# On-Campus Recycling and Composting Facilities

- 68% materials recycled 2018
- 100% of organics composted





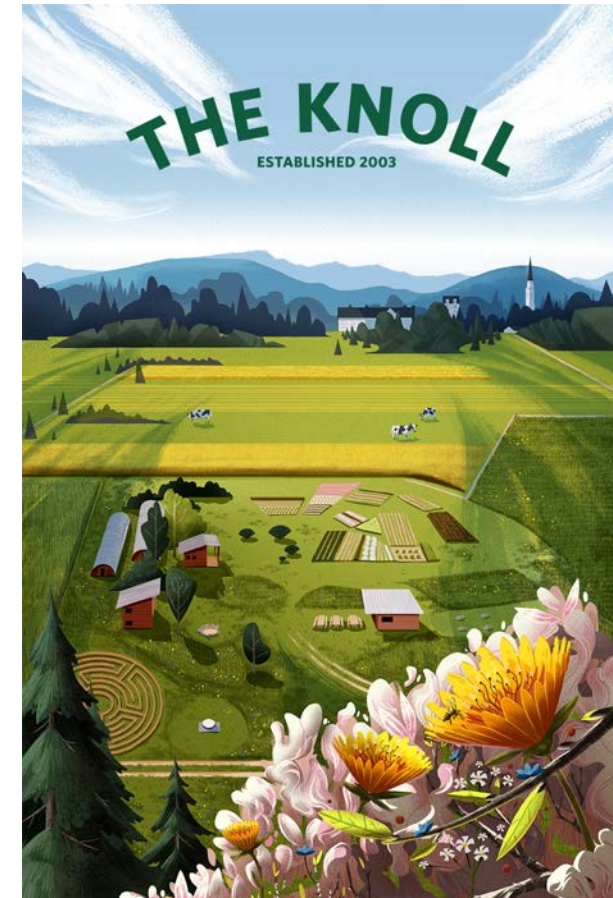
# Food and Farm Program

**FoodWorks** - a nine-week summer leadership program combining academic and experiential learning about food systems in Vermont



**Sustainable Dining** - reached our goal in 2016 of spending 30% of the annual Dining Services budget on food that is local, ecological, fair, or humane. New goal is 50% by 2020

**The Knoll** includes an Educational Garden, Outdoor Kitchen and Labyrinth and encourages students, staff, faculty, and community members to participate in and learn about sustainable agriculture.

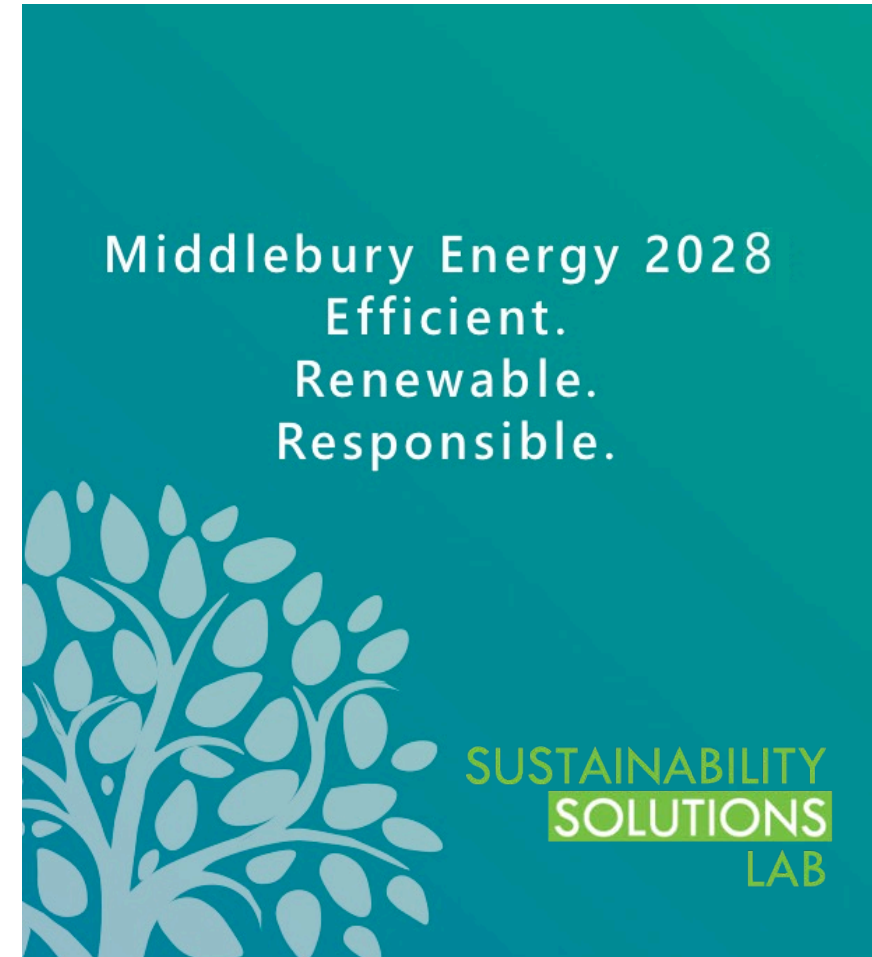


# Sustainability Solutions Lab

Provides students with resources, information and support to carry out sustainability-related projects on campus.

Employs student interns who do paid work during the regular Fall and Spring semesters or intensively over the Summer and Winter Term (for credit).

Created to help students navigate administrative paths to finding solutions.





# Global Partnerships for Sustainability

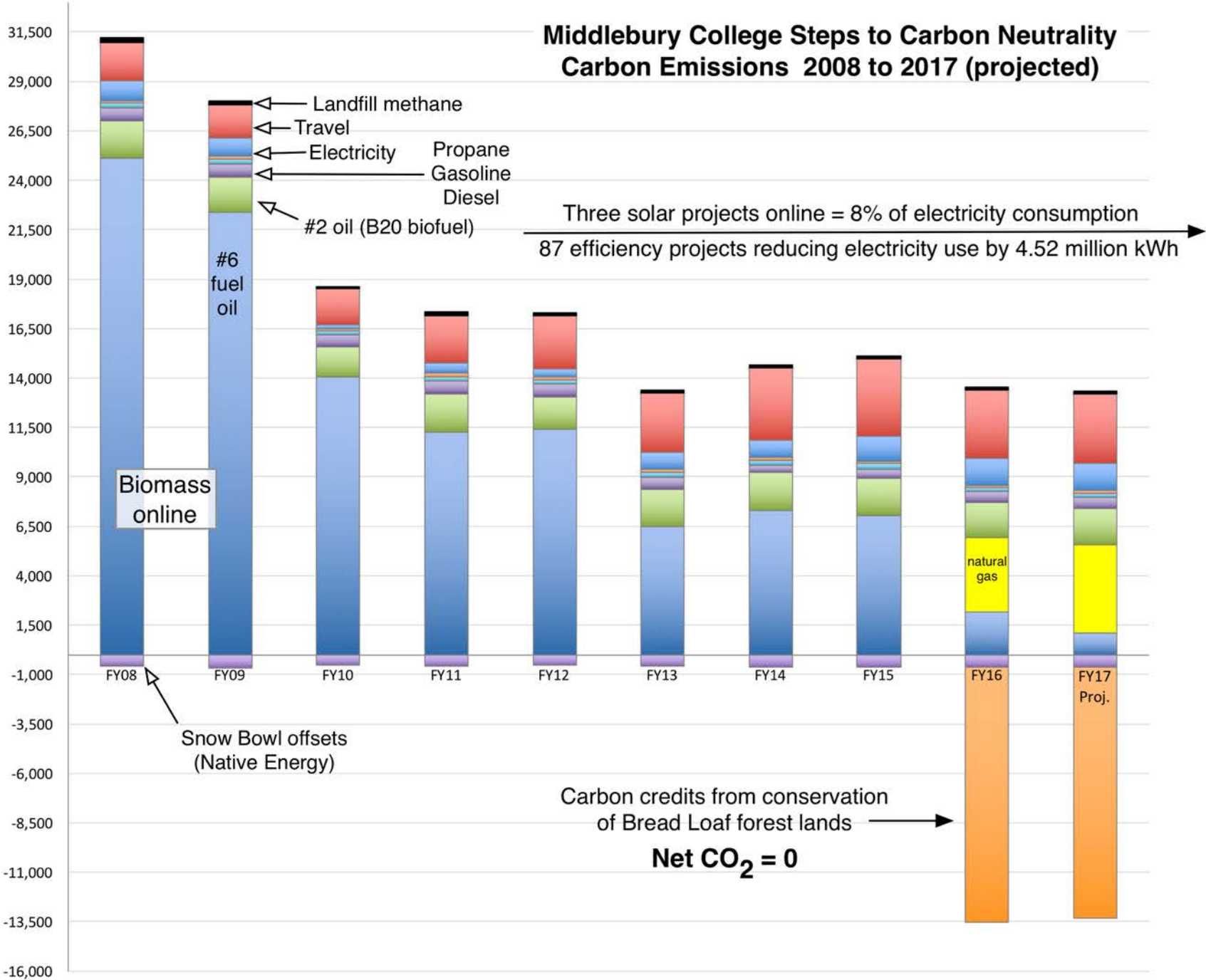
Creates long-term partnerships between Middlebury's schools abroad, their partner universities and in-country organizations working on sustainability-related issues. GPS provides for successive cohorts of Midd and in-country students to advance the work of partner organizations and their sustainability agendas.

In Chile, GPS works with the Wildlife Conservation Society of Chile to help develop and implement the management plan for Karukinka Natural Park in Tierra del Fuego

Other GPS programs at Midd Schools Abroad in: China, Japan, Russia, and 2 are under development in Uruguay and Germany



# Achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2016

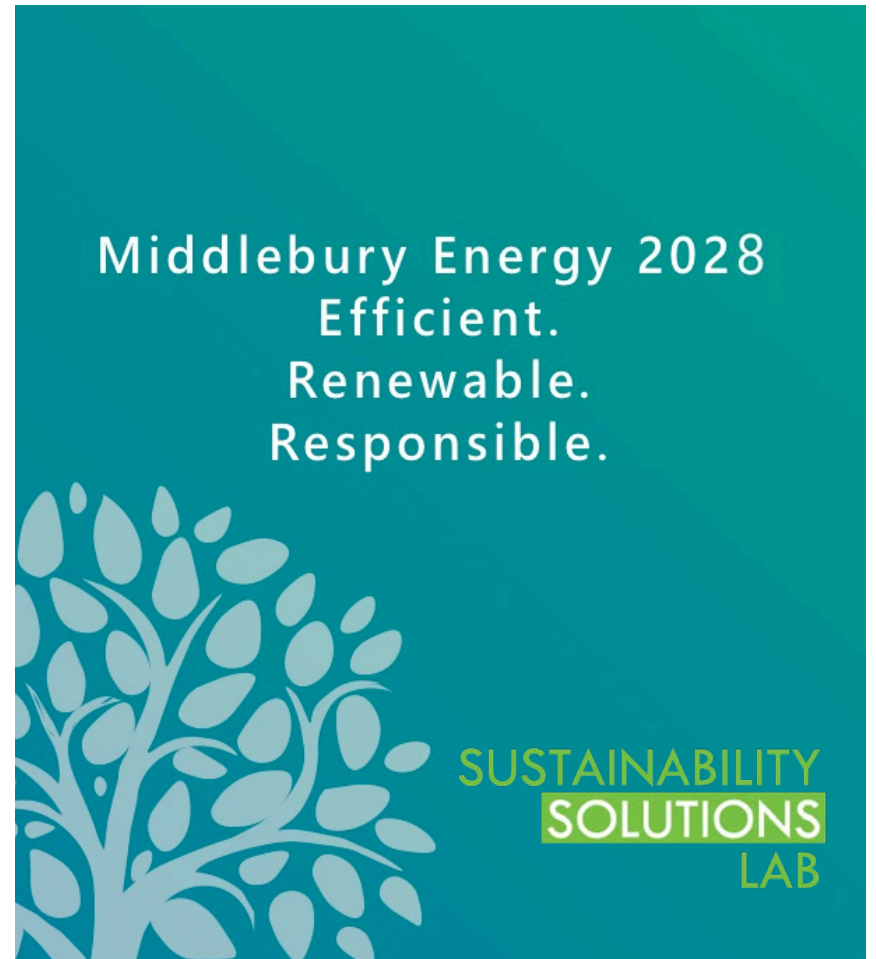




# Going Beyond Carbon Neutrality – Midd Energy 2028

Components of the Middlebury 2028 plan:

- Alignment with Envisioning Middlebury
- 100% renewable energy sources
- Reduce energy consumption by 25%
- Responsible energy choices
- Separate effort to plan for divestment from fossil fuels



# New Components of Renewable Energy Portfolio

Renewable natural gas for heating and electricity from cow manure and food waste



Restoration of hydro-electric power station on Otter Creek Falls with a direct line to campus



The economics of these projects are very favorable and low risk over the long term. They also provide opportunities for considerable economic gain with higher risk



# Responsibility Criteria

Carbon Neutral  
Transparent  
Resilient  
Equitable  
Educational



# Keeping the Community Inspired and Engaged – Key Lesson 1

Connect with other interests by making the definition of sustainability more specific  
Consider using the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





# Keeping the Community Inspired and Engaged – Key Lesson 2

Set ambitious, specific, quantifiable and public institutional goals  
Challenge the entire campus community to support achievement  
Report regularly on progress or lack of progress



# Keeping the Community Inspired and Engaged – Key Lesson 3

- Use the campus as a multi-disciplinary laboratory for defining and solving sustainability challenges.
- Empower your students to work with faculty and administration to address sustainability challenges





# A Case for Optimism

There is plenty to be pessimistic about, for example:

- a recent report from World Wildlife Fund about the loss of 60% of wildlife populations in 40 years, or
- a new International Panel on Climate Change report about rapidly increasing climate change

BUT we are doing well in helping people get out of poverty and getting educated and healthier. Most of those people will strive to create a better society and work together to do it.

AND committing to sustainability means taking responsibility for creating a better the future and acting on it. This includes acknowledgement that we have become as gods and must get better at creating conditions for humans and the rest of life on earth to flourish.

Optimism is an important attitude to cultivate and practice BECAUSE

“Unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so.”

– Noam Chomsky

# GRACIAS!



<http://www.middlebury.edu/sustainability>

Jack Byrne, Director, Sustainability Integration Office, Middlebury College  
Franklin Environmental Center, Middlebury, Vermont 05753 USA

tel: +1 802.443.5043

email: [jmbyrne@middlebury.edu](mailto:jmbyrne@middlebury.edu)