In January 2017, GW celebrated the university’s first full year of receiving roughly half our electricity from three solar farms in North Carolina. The solar project, a key part of meeting our commitment to reduce campus greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40 percent by 2025, was conceived, financed and built through an innovative partnership formed by GW. This project has become a model for other institutions seeking to leverage their buying power and expand their renewable energy options.

In our close urban quarters, GW lacks the space to make a meaningful dent in electricity consumption using on-site solar, so we had to look elsewhere. Together with the George Washington University Hospital and American University — collectively the Capital Partners Solar Project (CPSP) — we purchase 100 percent of the output from a 53.5-megawatt solar photovoltaic system, cutting our collective carbon footprints by the equivalent of 18,000 cars. In 2017, when CPSP became fully operational, GW reduced its building-related energy emissions by 49 percent compared with 2008. This reduction is primarily attributed to CPSP and Eco-Building measures.

GW is committed to enhancing and promoting sustainability research, academics and programs. Interdisciplinary problem solving is the key to finding solutions for challenges such as climate change, clean energy, biodiversity loss and sustainable agriculture. At GW, students have the opportunity to choose from 781 courses with sustainability-related content and a number of degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The university also established a sustainability minor — GW’s first interdisciplinary degree program, which attracts hundreds of students each year. Team-taught by faculty from five different schools within the university, the minor introduces students to the concepts, principles and issues that inform the sustainability paradigm. It integrates classroom and community-based learning and research to prepare students to make meaningful contributions as they enter the professional world.

In 2007, GW pledged that all new buildings would meet a high standard of sustainability — specifically, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). Ten years later, we have made good on the commitment. There are 12 LEED-certified buildings and three LEED-certified interiors on GW’s campuses, representing a total of 1.2 million square feet of green space. In some cases, improving the efficiency of existing buildings is more cost-effective than designing efficiency from the start. Yet the vast majority of GW’s energy and water use occurs in existing buildings, where the core challenge is to engage part-time student tenants. GW has focused on solving this challenge and established a fund to finance sustainability improvements in existing buildings, which worked on the 20th Street Building Program. After six years, the program has invested $25 million to address 62 buildings, representing 1.2 million square feet of space. GW has now begun investing in the implementation of lights out nights, reducing energy use by an estimated 240,000 kilowatt hours per year, or enough energy to power more than 2,100 homes.

Many students come to GW wanting to change the world for the better. Through the Eco-Equity Challenge, GW encourages undergraduate and graduate students to put their passions to work by finding solutions to environmental and social justice issues. The program provides funding and other support helping student entrepreneurs to launch projects in their home communities and beyond. The program links students to the broader community, helping build relationships between student-led projects and others who have an interest in sustainability. The program also links to the broader community, helping build relationships between student-led projects and others who have an interest in sustainability.

For more information on GW’s sustainability efforts, visit: sustainability.gwu.edu

To read the full sustainability report, visit: go.gwu.edu/SustainabilityProgress
GW’s Progress Toward Sustainability

The George Washington University Sustainability Vision and Mission

The university envisions a future with healthy and thriving natural ecosystems on and off campus, the nation’s capital and the world at large. GW is building a greener campus, providing research and intellectual discourse on policies and technologies for sustainable systems and equipping students with the skills and knowledge to contribute to a sustainable future.

**GOALS AND PERFORMANCE**

In 2012, GW established seven overarching goals through the GOALS AND PERFORMANCE framework—envisioning a future with healthy and thriving natural ecosystems on and off campus, the nation’s capital and the world at large. GW is building a greener campus, providing research and intellectual discourse on policies and technologies for sustainable systems and equipping students with the skills and knowledge to contribute to a sustainable future.

**GOAL 1 | NATURAL SPACE**

**STRENGTHEN HABITAT AND OPTIMIZE NATURAL SPACE**

GW works to increase access to green spaces and create a more engaging and enjoyable experience with natural ecosystems on and off campus. The university envisions a future with healthy and thriving natural ecosystems on and off campus, the nation’s capital and the world at large.

While these trends pose risks to institutions, countries and the planet, they also offer an opportunity for new and innovative solutions. The university will continue to update its strategy, looking ahead, to develop more impactful and holistic approaches to sustainability challenges. By setting ambitious goals and targets, GW is working to meet these challenges and ensure a sustainable future for energy, land and farming policy in a host-corporate and global responsibility.

**GW’s Successes**

GW has made significant progress toward its sustainability goals. As an institution of higher education, GW is committed to leading the way in environmental sustainability. GW has made significant progress toward its sustainability goals. It is estimated that GW has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 22% since 2006.

GW has adopted a zero waste approach—reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill by 23.5%. GW has also increased its renewable energy, sourcing 43% of its electricity from renewable sources. GW has also increased its recycling rate, reaching a 50% diversion rate.

**GOAL 2 | AIR AND CLIMATE**

**PROHYTE AIR AND CLIMATE**

GW is building a greener campus, providing research and intellectual discourse on policies and technologies for sustainable systems and equipping students with the skills and knowledge to contribute to a sustainable future.

**GW’s Successes**

GW has significantly reduced its greenhouse gas emissions, setting ambitious goals and targets, and seeking to extend our influence on and off campus.

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**GOAL 3 | FRESH WATER**

**Foster Clean and Abundant Fresh Water**

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GW has also increased its recycling rate, reaching a 50% diversion rate. GW has also increased its recycling rate, reaching a 50% diversion rate. GW has also increased its recycling rate, reaching a 50% diversion rate. GW has also increased its recycling rate, reaching a 50% diversion rate. GW has also increased its recycling rate, reaching a 50% diversion rate.

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**GOAL 4 | FOOD**

**Support Sustainable Food Production Systems**

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**GOAL 5 | WASTE**

**Optimize Waste Decomposition and Treatment**

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**GOAL 6 | URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Encourage a Natural Urban Environment That Enhances Physical, Mental and Social Well-being**

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**GOAL 7 | INVESTMENT**

**Develop Sustainable Investment Strategies**

GW is committed to developing a framework that will help create long-term value for stakeholders while delivering financial returns. GW will continue to update its strategy, looking ahead, to develop more impactful and holistic approaches to sustainability challenges. By setting ambitious goals and targets, GW is working to meet these challenges and ensure a sustainable future for energy, land and farming policy in a host-corporate and global responsibility.

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