

# **Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) for Colleges and Universities**

## **University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Annual Report 2009**

Prepared by University of Illinois at Chicago  
Office of Sustainability  
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## Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) for Colleges and Universities University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)- Annual Report 2009

### Executive Summary

UIC participated as a pilot institution for an evaluation tool developed by Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) called the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). This tool is a voluntary, self-reporting framework for recognizing and gauging relative progress toward sustainability by colleges and universities. It is designed to provide a guide for advancing sustainability in all aspects of higher education, enable meaningful comparisons over time and across institutions, create incentives for continual improvement, facilitate collaboration and information sharing, and recognize sustainability achievements. The Office of Sustainability and the Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy are working to bring together campus programs and initiatives that will position UIC to plan for and realize decreases in greenhouse gas emissions, a commitment demonstrated by Chancellor Sylvia Manning signing the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment on September 14, 2007, Interim Chancellor Eric A. Gislason signing the Illinois Sustainability Universities Compact on February 7, 2008 and Chancellor Allen-Mearns (pictured right) signing the Talloires Declaration on April 22, 2009. (Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin)



The results of the STARS evaluation indicate that the University of Illinois at Chicago is a richly diverse community of students, faculty, and staff, and many resources are devoted to supporting that diversity now and in the future. UIC is expanding its recycling program and plans to enable more detailed monitoring of energy usage. The Campus Master Planning process and UIC's Climate Action Plan are further guiding campus decision makers toward sustainability in its thinking, operations and community.

There are many opportunities for UIC to fine-tune the flow of resources through the campus - material, human, and natural - and UIC is well on its way to identifying its future course. This report provides detail on current UIC sustainability initiatives, as well as suggestions for further study and expanded data collection.

## Background

Colleges and universities are no longer evaluated by potential students and others merely in terms of academic reputation. Today, many students want to know how a university conducts its business, and whether or not their environmentally-aware lifestyles will fit with campus life on a daily basis. Likewise, funders and alumni look for information on how well a university is positioned to face the future in terms of its utilization of resources- human, energy, and material. In other words, people want to know, “How *sustainable* is this institution?”

UIC participated as a pilot institution for an evaluation tool developed by Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) called the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). This tool is a voluntary, self-reporting framework for recognizing and gauging relative progress toward sustainability by colleges and universities. It is designed to provide a guide for advancing sustainability in all aspects of higher education, enable meaningful comparisons over time and across institutions, create incentives for continual improvement, facilitate collaboration and information sharing, and recognize sustainability achievements.

This is the first report on sustainability prepared by the Office of Sustainability and it derives its metrics from the STARS data collected during the pilot study. It is intended as a frank assessment of UIC’s strengths in the area of sustainability, and identifies areas that need more attention and action. While the report can be used to compare UIC to other campuses, the primary purpose is to inform campus planning decisions whenever possible.

## Categories and Process

The STARS rating system is comprised of performance credits, which are based on quantitative measures and strategy credits, which focus on approaches or processes. Both approaches and processes are considered because there are many aspects of sustainability for which there are no measurable indicators, and information on approaches can tell a richer story. This report does not quantify UIC’s scores, but highlights areas in which progress has already been made.

The pilot version of STARS tool was used this evaluation, and UIC is one of 70 colleges and universities that submitted data. After AASHE evaluates the results of this pilot study, STARS will be available to all member institutions for evaluating their own progress towards sustainability. As such, this report also includes supplemental information not specifically requested by STARS, but which adds background and context for UIC sustainability efforts.

## Key Sustainability Indicators

UIC has made great strides in planning, building programs and identifying its inherent strengths during the past year, thanks to the hard work of many people in several departments who work with the Office of Sustainability. Brief summaries of these strengths (or key indicators) follow.

## Education and Research Credits

Educating students and conducting research are the primary functions of higher education, and schools can make the largest contributions to sustainability through these activities.

**Co-Curricular Education** credits encompass learning experiences outside the formal curriculum. These experiences (involvement in student groups, events, and media) provide students and the broader campus community an opportunity to deepen their understanding of sustainability issues. Institutional sponsorship sets the tone for integration of sustainability into campus culture.

There are nine student groups with environmental sustainability in their mission or purpose. The list with descriptions is posted on the Office of Sustainability's [Student Organization](#) webpage. These groups have worked both with the Office of Sustainability on activities and on their own, and represent members from different faiths, college disciplines, and interests. All student groups are invited to explore with the Office of Sustainability how to expand or coordinate their programs with sustainability initiatives.



*EcoCampus* has taken an important leadership role in organizing many environmental events on campus. Paula VanHagey (pictured below), former president, explains, “Ecocampus's main goal is to show students that it doesn't take a lot to be environmentally conscious and to make a difference. We try to show students the fun side of being an environmentalist. We do small projects around campus and around the Chicago community so we can educate people about what they can do for the environment. We also tag along with other projects done around Chicago by providing help/volunteers whenever they need it.”



**Curriculum** credits recognize formal education programs and courses that address sustainability. By training and educating the future workforce and scholars, higher education institutions are well positioned to prepare students to understand and address sustainability challenges. The Landscape

Ecological and Anthropogenic Processes (LEAP) multi-disciplinary graduate program is funded through the National Science Foundation's Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT.) This program focuses on understanding ecological processes in human-altered landscapes. The goal of the program is to combine applied research with basic theory, integrate community and species level approaches, network with stewardship professionals and other stakeholders, and be involved in outreach activities to better prepare graduates to effectively protect and enhance biodiversity. It provides 5-year fellowships to 25 Ph.D. students, and supports new curriculum and internship training for students.

A survey of sustainability-related and sustainability-focused research and courses was conducted in spring 2009. The course listings are anticipated to be posted on the web by fall 2010. This is viewed as a continuous process to identify and evaluate the course offerings and research being conducted at UIC that can be defined as sustainability-related or focused.

**Faculty and Staff Development and Training** credits measure how sustainability is incorporated into training and development programs. Equipping faculty and staff with the tools, knowledge, and motivation to adopt behavior changes that promote sustainability is an essential activity of a sustainable campus. The online orientation for UIC's new employees now suggests that employees review the [Green Guides](#) on the OS website to familiarize them with basic information on sustainability initiatives on campus, such as recycling.

UIC has also created an [EcoReps](#) program to help facilitate communication and implementation at the unit level. This program is adapted from the student peer-to-peer awareness initiative to create a faculty and staff awareness program on campus. Each department at UIC is asked to designate a staff member to serve as a liaison – an EcoRep – to the Office of Sustainability. EcoReps work within their unit or department to disseminate information on how to participate in recycling, energy conservation and other sustainability programs, communicate issues that arise in implementing these programs, and assist with outreach efforts for the Office of Sustainability. Although the program officially began in October 2008, some EcoReps have already developed comprehensive programs for their unit. For example the Office of the [Vice Chancellor for Research](#) has posted a page with standards, preferred supplies, events and interesting tips. Their "listserve" is used for discussion and posting events.

**Research** credits look at research conducted related to or focused on sustainability and interdisciplinary research. By conducting sustainability research, higher education institutions increase the understanding of sustainability challenges and develop new technologies and strategies to address those challenges. In 2008, the Institute for Environmental Science and Policy sponsored three roundtable discussions to address the current status of interdisciplinary environmental research at UIC. While many institutional obstacles exist, some progress has been made. For example, interdisciplinary research is addressed in the [promotion and tenure guidelines](#) by allowing faculty to voluntarily submit information in their promotion tenure papers about their interdisciplinary work with colleague appraisals.

## Operations Credits

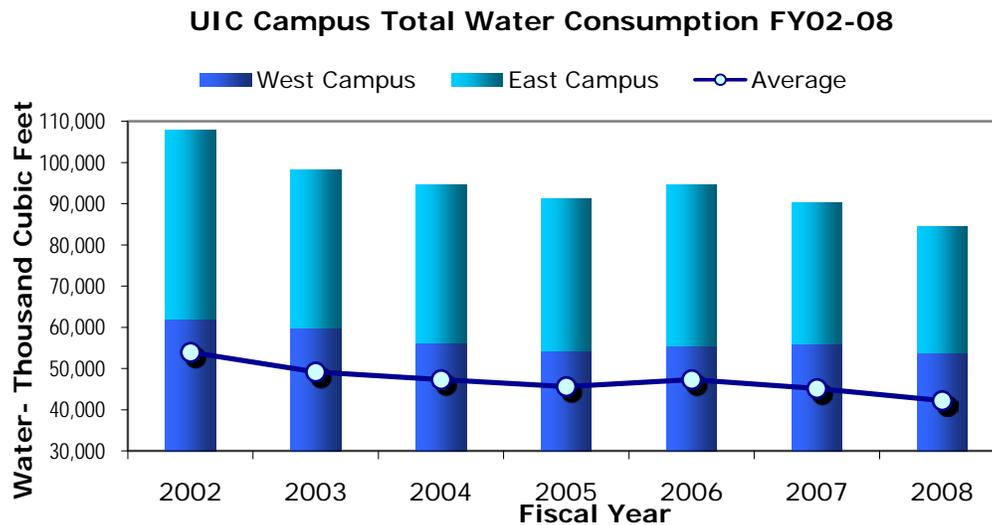
Operations credits cover many broad areas including buildings, recycling, dining services, energy, grounds, waste minimization, purchasing and transportation.

**Recycling** programs are a pre-requisite for membership in AASHE. UIC recycling consists of two programs—[UICycle](#), which collects bottles, cans, paper, and cardboard in approximately 80% of buildings managed by the University or auxiliary units, and Green Totes, which collects paper and cardboard only. UIC has recently reinvigorated its recycling program, by adding more clearly labeled receptacles, colorful signage, as well as joining the national “RecycleMania” contest for the first time. UICycle involves participation of personnel to empty/sort their personal waste receptacles at bin stations (“bottles and cans,” “paper,” and “trash”) usually located in hallways. The recyclables are collected by building services workers and stored centrally in bags, then collected by outside recycling services. The overall recycling rate for UIC in 2008 was 21%, which included 1,628 tons of recycled paper (848 tons of which was “MedShred”) and 17 tons of bottles and cans.

The Office of Sustainability supports Facilities Management with a graduate assistant recycling coordinator, responsible for data reporting, receptacle placement, and supervision of Facilities Management undergraduate assistants. During the past year, UIC was awarded two grants from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, totaling \$70,000 to expand the UICycle program into three large academic office buildings and the hospital to increase the overall campus recycling rates. (PENDING PRESS RELEASE)

**Buildings** credits recognize steps taken to improve the sustainability performance of campus buildings, which generally consume the most energy and produce the most greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings also use significant amounts of potable water. By designing, maintaining and retrofitting buildings in ways that provide a safe and healthy indoor environment, buildings’ impact on the outdoor environment can be simultaneously mitigated.

The University has made many strides forward in enhancing the performance of campus buildings even with severe maintenance fund constraints. University of Illinois President B. Joseph White had declared in the [2009 Annual Report](#) that all construction and renovation projects exceeding \$5 million will be LEED® Silver Certified and all smaller projects will be LEED® Silver equivalent to the extent possible. Since 2001, UIC’s potable water consumption has decreased nearly 10% despite an increase in campus gross square footage primarily due to installation of water conserving toilets and urinals, flush sensors in new construction, and retrofits on residence halls and east campus buildings.



In 2009, green building standards will be integrated into the standards that are used for contractor bids at UIC. Finally, Facilities Management is transitioning to “Green Seal” certified cleaning products as old supplies are depleted. Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization that develops science-based certification criteria to reduce toxic pollution, minimize environmental impacts from cleaning products and services, decrease health risks from exposure, and improve indoor air quality.



*RecycleMania at UIC-* RecycleMania is a nationwide recycling competition among colleges and universities. For ten weeks each year, hundreds of schools work to boost their recycling rates to claim victory in a handful of categories such as the "Per Capita Classic," "Waste Minimization," or "Gorilla Prize." UIC participated in the benchmark category (for first time participants), and the experience gained this year will be used to motivate and position the campus for next year's competition. Although data are not yet compiled, feedback from our vendors shows increased recycling volumes during the competition timeframe.

The **Dining Services** section awards points for campuses that are helping build a sustainable food system by supporting local, organic, and Fair Trade certified products. Food production that uses pesticides and fertilizers has deleterious environmental impacts such as contaminated ground and surface water, and health implications for farm workers. The Fair Trade Certified™ Label guarantees that strict economic,

social and environmental criteria were met in the production and trade of an agricultural product. Long-distance transportation of food to institutions produces more greenhouse gas emissions than locally sourced foods (here defined as 150 miles.) Dining Services criteria also look for complete-protein vegan and vegetarian options and omission of trans-fats in dining operations.

While UIC's food service provider, Sodexo, purchasing and expenditure data are proprietary, Sodexo does order organic foods upon special request, has instituted trayless dining service (to save on water use and reduce food waste), uses mostly Fair Trade coffee, and posts its vegan and vegetarian options online and in the cafes.

**Energy and Climate** credits recognize institutions that are reducing their energy consumption through conservation and efficiency, and switching to cleaner, renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, geothermal, and low-impact hydropower. For most institutions, energy consumption is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, the cause of climate change. STARS normalizes energy use by looking at the trend in energy intensity per square foot of total conditioned space. This allows campuses with energy intensive uses (such as laboratories and medical facilities) to evaluate progress by comparing usage year-over-year, not in relation to other campuses. Credits are given for big-picture improvements such as overall green house gas reductions and use/production of renewable energy, and also for finer-grain actions such as timers, motion detectors, and elimination of incandescent lights.

UIC has completed a Greenhouse Gas Inventory for FY2004-2008 and is developing a [Climate Action Plan](#) to be submitted to the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment by September 14, 2009.

Recently over 40,000 older fluorescent lamps (T12) were replaced with newer, more efficient lamps (T8) with the assistance of a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. In University Hall alone, the cost saved in 2007 was \$172,000. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has also contributed to lighting upgrade projects on campus. Facilities Management now uses only efficient light bulbs.

Installation of a geothermal field was completed in 2008 with assistance from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. This system utilizes the constant temperature underground to efficiently heat and cool buildings. The field is designed for use with Grant, Lincoln and Douglas lecture halls.

Cogeneration (or combined heat and power) is the use of a power station to simultaneously generate both electricity and useful heat. It is a thermodynamically efficient use of fuel because "waste heat" is used for steam/hot water production (heating) and moderate temperature water for absorption chillers. At UIC, there are two cogeneration plants that are fueled by natural gas that provide district heating and cooling for both campuses, as well as a portion of the electricity used across the campus. The plants have real-time energy monitoring and feedback systems so overall energy use can be tracked.

UIC's facilities management group and utilities director are working on an important project to evaluate existing metering and install meters in our largest, energy-consuming buildings on campus. This will include metering of electricity, steam or high-temperature hot water, and chilled water. The buildings where the meters are being installed comprise 70% of the square footage of our campus buildings and approximately 80% of the energy consumption. Once all the meters are installed or updated, they will feed into a computer system that will allow our building engineers and utilities personnel to monitor the energy consumption and detect unusual trends that could indicate problems with building systems. This will also allow them to prioritize projects and locate "hot spots" for energy consumption. Additionally, by having this data, a baseline will be created for evaluating energy projects. A test version of the system is operational and more data and features are currently being added and tested.

**Grounds** credits recognize institutions that plan and maintain their grounds to be beautiful and welcoming while using water wisely, discontinuing use of harmful chemicals, and diverting landscape wastes from landfills. Sustainable grounds management incorporates the use of non-potable water for irrigation. Institutions that substitute reclaimed water and captured rainwater to supply their irrigation needs reduce the energy (and costs) required to treat storm/sewer water. Since climate change is expected to increase strains on water supplies, it is prudent to explore water management options.

UIC now landscapes with native plant species to reduce water requirements, including new construction projects such as Student Recreation Center East and Grant Hall. A small prairie garden was temporarily installed on the west side south of the University of Illinois Medical Center. UIC's [campus map](#) shows the green spaces on campus, including tree locations. Strategies for increasing green space (which reduces storm water runoff as well as providing places to relax outside) and native plantings are expected to be incorporated in the new [Master Plan](#). UIC landscape wastes are composted offsite by a service contractor.

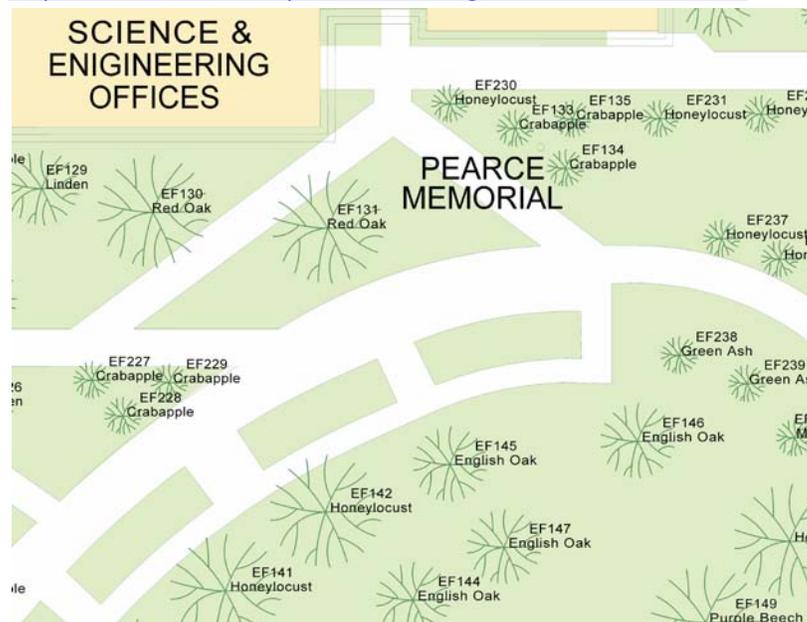
*Mapping Campus Trees* - Jim Cook, draftsman in the Office for Capital Programs, is working to map the trees on campus, some of which were planted when the campus was built. Pictured here is a section of a tree map of the Chicago Circle Memorial Garden. This garden, designed in 1968 by Walter Netsch, includes an elliptical asphalt path and low granite benches. "Originally enclosed by brick walls, Chicago Circle



Memorial Grove is now surrounded by a wrought iron fence. The striking scissor staircase of Science and Engineering Offices is visible from the garden. In the lawn near SEO is a small octagonal plaque dating from 1973. It commemorates a member of the Physical Plant staff: Harry W. Pearce, Associate Director Emeritus, Physical Plant, Coordinator of Phase 1 Construction at Chicago Circle Memorial

Grove." (from [Historic Netsch Campus at UIC, Virtual Tour of Campus Designed by Walter Netsch, 1963-1968](#)).

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/walkingtour/18memorial.html>



(section of tree map of area now known as Chicago Circle Memorial Garden)

**Materials Recycling and Waste Minimization** looks for downward trends in waste generated per capita. Total waste generation is measured by weight, and includes all materials recycled, composted, and disposed of as trash except construction, demolition, hazardous, universal and non-regulated chemical waste. These credits acknowledge the merits of using less and reducing the total amount of materials. Here again, year over year trends using normalized data show performance improvements.

The UICycle program at UIC aims to minimize the waste generated at the UIC. Waste reduction initiatives consist of programs, policies and outreach efforts. For example, the Environmental Health and Safety Office manages a program for chemical take-back and re-distribution, which not only minimizes waste, but also cut costs for purchasing (for the individual) and disposal costs (for the university). UIC bookstores collect printer cartridges, batteries, and cellular phones for recycling. Unwanted furniture is stored at a warehouse where departments may select items instead of purchasing new. Recently UIC course catalogs were published electronically, as well as instituting online registration, student billing and grade reporting.

Campus policies include default double-sided printing at UIC computer labs, and limits on the quantity of pages per student. Departments, students, and staff are encouraged to program all printers and copy machines for double-sided copying and printing. Electronic communications and submissions are encouraged, such as emails, teleconferences, and webinars. The campus utilizes an electronic

communication platform (Blackboard) that is available for all instructors to use as a course aid. This reduces the need to print handouts and reading materials for the students. Computers and telephones are recycled at all University of Illinois campuses, and all unneeded electronic equipment with memory must be disposed of according to State and University policies.

Outreach efforts include information and education for building occupants, building service workers, students and sponsoring of campus-wide events. During Sustainability Week (September 2008), one day was devoted to recycling, which all UIC recycling efforts were highlighted and communicated to the UIC community through presentations and information tables. OS developed colorful fact posters that are displayed near recycling receptacles to increase awareness about the importance of recycling.

**Purchasing** refers to using universities' purchasing power to help build a sustainable economy. Collectively, universities spend billions of dollars on goods and services annually. Each purchasing decision represents an opportunity for institutions to choose environmentally and socially preferable products and services and support companies with strong commitments to sustainability. While UIC has only just begun to address barriers to adopting preferred purchasing guidelines, it does participate in the [Minority and Female Business Enterprise Program](#).

Other initiatives include reducing bags at campus bookstores, reusing donated bags at the libraries, and sales of sustainable mugs at bookstores, entitling customers to a discount on beverages purchased in campus cafeterias and convenience stores. One option under consideration is joining a purchasing consortium, such as the [Great Lakes Purchasing Consortium](#), which would allow UIC to participate in the regional advancement of the green office products market.

**Transportation** credits acknowledge movement toward sustainable transportation systems and instituting incentives that encourage commuting via mass transit and other alternatives. Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that contribute to health problems. Due to disproportionate exposure, these health impacts are frequently more pronounced in low-income communities proximate to major transportation corridors. For the University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago, which serves many low-income patients, these issues are especially important. Bicycling and walking provide human health and environmental benefits.

UIC participates in [Illinois' Clean Fuel Fleet](#) program which has led to emission reductions by using natural gas buses, 10% biodiesel, E-95 and recently purchased 9 hybrid vehicles.

In late 2008, the Office of Sustainability completed a Campus Commuter Survey to gather information on the campus community's primary method of transportation. UIC's location is "transit rich," and over 60% commute via some form of public transit, and over 24% of respondents commute to work alone in a car. Actions are underway to develop a carpool matching service which incorporating a carpool match program. UIC has a pre-tax transit subsidy deducted from employees' paychecks, and full-time students receive a U-PASS, entitling them to free transportation on the Chicago Transit Authority system during semesters in which they are enrolled. The [Sustainable Transportation and Grounds in UIC Report](#)

prepared by the Transportation and Grounds Subcommittee of the Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy provides more programmatic details and recommendations.

## Administration and Finance

This section addresses a broad range of sustainability issues that evaluate UIC's interactions with its surrounding community, and gauges the depth of its institutional commitment. Credits cover governance and finance, social responsibility and community engagement, institutional-level sustainability infrastructure and planning, inter-campus collaborations, community relations, student participation in community service, public policy engagement, diversity and non-discrimination policies, affordability and access programs.

The standing Sustainability Committee, a STARS prerequisite, ensures that schools have a body in place to advise and/or implement policies and programs and signals an institution's commitment. It can distribute the workload and develop innovative solutions. UIC's committee, the [Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy](#), is comprised of students, staff, and faculty who meet semi-annually. Subcommittees meet more frequently depending on their scope of activity.

**Investment transparency** and democratic investment processes promote accountability and community engagement. The University of Illinois makes a list of endowment holdings and its shareholder voting record available to the public as per open records law. Information is sent to individuals upon request, but is not available online.

**Planning/Strategic Plan** credits recognize institutions that have developed plans to move towards sustainability, and an institution and its physical environment, establish an institution's priorities and influence budgeting and decision-making for the institution. UIC's Strategic Plan and the 2010 Strategic Thinking document set an environmentally sustainable campus and accessible education to diverse student community as a priority. The current Campus Master Planning process includes sustainability as a guiding element.

Adopting a Climate Plan, a formal strategy to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, indicates the institution's commitment to reducing its global warming impact. A climate action plan is a major component of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. UIC's [Climate Action Plan](#) was presented to the Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy in April 2009, and comments are welcome on the Office of Sustainability website until June 30. The final plan will be approved by the Chancellor and posted in September.

**Sustainability Infrastructure** refers to dedicated staff and other resources to sustainability that help an institution organize, implement, and publicize sustainability initiatives. Inter-campus collaborations support and help build the campus sustainability community. The Office of Sustainability is staffed with full-time associate chancellor and director of outreach programs along with .25 FTE program coordinator, and 2.25 FTE graduate assistants. UIC hosted the Illinois Sustainable University Symposium

in July 2008, featuring two sessions on UIC's green design and the geothermal field. UIC is a member of Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and a signatory to the Illinois Sustainable Universities Compact. The Office of Sustainability is present at quarterly meetings with other Illinois campuses and is working with National Wildlife Federation and others to form a metro-Chicago area group.

*Cynthia Klein-Banai, Associate Chancellor for Sustainability-* Prior to her current position, Cindy was Assistant Director for Chemical Safety in the Environmental Health and Safety Office at UIC for seven years. There she oversaw environmental compliance, hazardous waste management, the laboratory safety program, and chemical safety training. She is also a Doctoral Candidate in Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at UIC, and is also proud to have been a 2008 National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Fellow.



**Community Relations and Partnerships** show how the university gives back to the community through community service, engagement, and partnerships. UIC partners with Jane Addams Hull-House Museum to increase sustainability awareness and education and engagement opportunities for the campus and surrounding communities. Hull-House started a small community garden project this past year and the produce will be used for its community programming. Engineers without Borders and the Urban Planning Student Association partnered with the Office of Sustainability on a facilitated discussion on LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) at UIC. U.S. Green Building Council co-sponsored a panel discussion about innovative LEED projects in the region. Many of UIC's events and cultural activities are open to the public.

UIC values community service by training professionals in a wide range of public service disciplines, and recognizes students with outstanding contributions to UIC with the Chancellor's Student Service Award. The Office of Continuing Education program offers courses and programs to the community and other colleges offer professional development and tutoring.

**Diversity, Access, and Affordability** recognizes institutions that are working to advance diversity, access, and affordability both on campus and in society at large. To achieve environmental justice, efforts must be made to address discrimination and promote equality. In addition, an ethnically-varied student body, faculty, and staff provide a rich resource for learning and collaboration. There are six Chancellor-sponsored committees focused on diversity. The Associate Chancellor in the Office of Access and Equity oversees programs that increase access to employment and provide an environment free from discrimination. The Special Assistant to the Provost for Diversity provides leadership in promoting diversity among faculty and student ranks, and is leading the campus effort to develop a Diversity

Strategic Plan, slated for release late in 2009. UIC has one of the most diverse student populations in the country, and has a number of programs and support groups to serve under-represented groups on campus. UIC has a faculty mentoring program with a special concentration for under-represented faculty members.

**Human Resources** credits ensure that wages and benefits policies to the lowest-paid employees are sufficient to enable these employees to meet their basic needs. Benefits are extended to part-time employees, graduate student assistants, and same-sex domestic partners. UIC adheres to the Family and Medical Leave Act and offers Employee Assistance Service free of charge. There are two licensed day care facilities on campus.

## Opportunities and Recommendations Data Collection

Even though much has been accomplished in a short time, there is room for improvement for UIC's sustainability efforts. Summarized below are recommendations for expanding our success in improving administrative processes and data collection that could guide future decision making.

Recommendations for increasing campus sustainability, with program recommendations, are included in the Climate Action Plan and [Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy Annual Report](#).

- 1) *New student sustainability literacy assessment*- By evaluating students' familiarity with sustainable practices and lifestyle choices at the beginning and end of their studies, program effectiveness can be more accurately assessed.
- 2) *Construction and demolition waste diversion*- Presently there are no convenient mechanisms in place to track the amount of construction debris produced and recycled. However, since all major construction projects going forward must make best efforts to achieve LEED Silver level equivalence, recycling of construction debris will automatically be placed as a high priority.
- 3) *Track Air travel* - UIC does not have a mechanism to track air travel which could be used for a baseline and tracking thereafter. Emissions could be significantly reduced by increased use of video and teleconferencing. There are plans to implement an online air travel expense system in FY2011.
- 4) *Investment transparency*- Making endowment investment information more prominent on UIC's website would increase investment transparency.
- 5) *Tracking of sustainability courses and research*- Currently there is no formal system to capture sustainability-related research except through self-reporting. A survey is currently underway to compile a list of courses that are focused on or related to sustainability.

## Conclusion

The STARS evaluation has revealed that the University of Illinois at Chicago can celebrate its visibly rich diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. At the same time, UIC faces challenges in quantifying resource flows that can facilitate the quantification necessary for measuring gains. For example, UIC's recycling program is expanding and plans for the visualization of energy usage. The Campus Master Planning process and UIC's Climate Action Plan will further guide campus decision makers toward sustainability in its thinking, operations and community.

This report, together with UIC's Climate Action Plan and Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy Annual Report, provide assessment and suggestions for process and programmatic changes aimed at making UIC a healthier and more efficient institution for everyone.



Saturday, May 9, 2009 *Who rules at UIC?* (from the [OS Blog](#)) Rosie, the peregrine falcon, has returned to roost on the 28th floor of University Hall near the offices of the highest campus leadership. Which brings us to the question, "Is it humankind or nature who rules?" Maybe Rosie is here to remind us that we are not the owners of this planet - let's remember that Earth belongs to all of nature and we must share its resources with all living creatures.