

2023-24

# ANNUAL REPORT



STUDENT LIFE  
**SUSTAINABILITY**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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## Team

**Alex Bryan**  
Director

**Clara Gamalski**  
Assistant Director

**Brendan Gallagher**  
Sustainability Leadership and Learning Manager

**Heather King**  
Campus-as-Lab and Student Engagement Manager

**Phelicia Jozwiak**  
Sustainability Engagement Specialist

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## SUSTAINABILITY

is a mindset and framework for ensuring that current and future generations have equitable access to the resources for a full and vibrant life without the exploitation of people, society or the environment

# STUDENT LIFE SUSTAINABILITY

## VISION

Connecting students with opportunities to practice sustainable leadership, partner with staff, and reduce U-M's carbon footprint across its buildings and operations

## CORE VALUES

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice as integral to sustainability
- A student-centered approach
- Transformational behavior and culture change
- Collective impact
- Narrative and data-driven storytelling
- Personal and community well-being and resilience

As a collaborative unit within Student Life, Student Life Sustainability (SL Sustainability) is key in significantly advancing sustainability at U-M. Student Life occupies one-fifth of the Ann Arbor campus, so even small environmental changes can have a significant impact. Since nearly all students engage with at least one of Student Life's services or support organizations, we are uniquely placed to collaborate with these services and organizations using a campus-as-lab approach to foster a culture of sustainability. Additionally, our unit-specific programs, like the Excellence in Sustainability Honors Cord or our interdisciplinary year-long paid sustainability leadership cohorts, enable students, staff, and faculty to gain hands-on experience in the intersection of sustainability and social justice.

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



**ALEX  
BRYAN**  
Director

Welcome to our first, of what will hopefully be many, annual reports for Student Life Sustainability. While the unit is new (January 2023), the work is not. We are privileged to collaborate with numerous students, colleagues, and community members who share our dedication to improving U-M. This unit has been incubated by many, including Michigan Dining and Student Life Facilities, and much of what is shared throughout this report is work that we've been doing with students for many years. As our team has grown this past year, we finally have the capacity to document, articulate, and share. I'll admit it feels good to be able to engage more people.

Interest in sustainability and carbon neutrality continues to grow among our students and the greater U-M community. We regularly receive ten times the applications for leadership positions than we have spots available.

This echoes the priority for U-M's institutional goals, whether through [Campus Plan 2050](#) or [Vision 2034](#), or our recent high-level hires and position changes for Vice Provost of Sustainability and Climate Action, Shalanda Baker, Associate Vice President for Campus Sustainability, Shana Weber, or Chief Environmental Social and Governance Officer at U-M Health, Tony Denton.

With the new, however, comes a period of uncertainty and change. U-M has new leadership, aggressive carbon neutrality goals, and a need to drastically reshape our campus infrastructure while inspiring a paradigm shift in our culture to embrace sustainability...well, it will be a fun and ambitious next few years.

Honestly, I think the SL Sustainability team is looking forward to it. We get to better understand and establish our role on campus as a unit and a division. The ability to self-define and live into our values is in lockstep with our focus on developing leadership for social change. Embracing our uncertain future is critical to navigating the climate crisis and inspiring a new set of partnerships with folks working on Well-being, DEI, Art, or Democracy and Civic Engagement. The joy and challenge of our work is that it takes all of us.

All good things,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Bryan'.

Alex Bryan  
Director

# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



**1,800+**

Instances of Student-to-Student In-Person Learning

**22**

Campus-as-Lab Projects

**2,311**

Tons of Waste Recycled or Composted  
From Student Life Buildings

**14**

Building Assessments  
& Tune-ups

**27**

Grants Awarded by  
SSC & UMSFP

**\$124,262**

of Grant Funding Allocated Out of the  
Over \$250,000 Requested



**282**

Excellence in Sustainability Honors Cord Recipients

**55**

Student Interns

# STUDENT LEADERSHIP, APPLIED & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



— “

[In SL Sustainability], there is space allowed for people who are experienced or passionate about a certain topic to take charge. I feel like this is what leadership in sustainability is about: people finding what needs to be done, what they can do, and what sustains them”.

-Nick McNutt

**Student Life Sustainability offers students four unique year-long paid leadership and learning opportunities: Planet Blue Student Leaders, the U-M Sustainable Food Program, the Student Sustainability Coalition, and the Sustainability Cultural Organizers. In addition to these programs, Student Life Sustainability provides project-based internships and research opportunities.**



### **Leadership Staff**

Clara Gamalski continues her role as assistant director, focusing on student-facing initiatives. This year, she continues managing the development and assessment of our unit curriculum, co-leading Noon at Night, and advising the Sustainable Food Program (UMSFP). Additionally, she oversaw the hiring of two new staff members this year.

In the summer of 2023, we hired Brendan Gallagher as the Sustainability Leadership and Learning Manager. With Gallagher’s addition, Student Life Sustainability has transitioned from co-advising to solely advising the Student Sustainability Coalition (SSC). Gallagher also advises the Planet Blue Student

**55 Student Interns**

**Program Interns: 50**

**Program Support Interns: 1**

**Special Project Interns: 4**

Leaders (PBSL), who continue to see an uptick in engagement and impact.

Phelicia Jozwiak joined the winter semester as the Sustainability Engagement Specialist. Her new position has given our unit and students enhanced support and guidance in communication and marketing efforts through effective and innovative campaigns and increased engagement with students, staff, and faculty.

# SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS



## PLANET BLUE STUDENT LEADERS

- Hosted a Winter Bike Prep Event
- Partnered with Common Cycle for **two bike light giveaways**, handing out 150 pairs of lights
- Produced **six podcast episodes** on topics such as sustainable careers and how to vote sustainably
- Their Instagram following **increased by over 200 followers** partly due to their three @UMichStudent takeovers and a weekly **#SustainabilitySunday** post on Student Life's Instagram account
- Partnered with other university units, including Michigan Housing, the Sustainable Living Experience, Eco-Threads, and more.

**Astrid Code, Grace Tai, Param Nayar, Katelyn Jasmin, Juliett Knight, Beatrice Kaskie, Harrison Rhoades, Hannah Kueffner, Amiah Blackwell**

## STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY COALITION

- **Awarded \$119,000 to 18 projects** through the Planet Blue Student Innovation Fund and Social and Environmental Sustainability grants.
- Held the fourth **Student Sustainability Summit**.
- Continued hosting regular **Student Carbon Neutrality Network (SCANN)** meetings and Coffee chats, both opportunities for students from all three campuses to meet and discuss sustainability efforts.
- Convened **regular meetings between students and U-M leadership**
- Acted as **advisors for the Campus Plan 2050 and Vision 2034 teams**, ensuring integration of student-centered sustainability outcomes.
- Provided feedback on the final round of candidates for the Vice Provost for Sustainability and Climate Action.



**Mia Flynn, Natalie Dwartz, Andrew van Baal, Brendan Ireland, Trevor Wallace, Adam Soloman, Elizabeth Tolrud, Gabriella Mosey, Margaret Cooney, Nora Bundy, Natalia Pearson-Saenz, Jonah Hurley**



## U-M SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROGRAM



- Over **1200** attended their annual **Harvest Fest** at the campus farm
- Awarded more than **\$5,000 in Student Food Empowerment Funding** to nine unique projects
- Released **two editions of *The Underground***, a semesterly zine, one created in partnership with students in the Detroit Food Academy (DFA)
- Held the fourth annual **Rooting for Change: Student Food Summit**
- Hosted **8 Cooking in Community events**
- Received MLEAD's Equitable Partnership Award for their collaboration with the DFA
- Saw a record number of customers at the Farm Stand
- Completed construction of the mobile farm stand

**Shiryn Affendi, Yumna Dagher, Leyna Doerr, Bailee Duke, Aarushi Ganguly, Lashaun Jackson, Lauren Jones, Meera Kumar, Camille McMurtry, Nick McNutt, Noelle Shields, Laura Topf, Jade Whittaker-Mitts, Navya Yagalla, Lucy Zhang**

## SUSTAINABILITY CULTURAL ORGANIZERS

- Received a **Projects in Partnership grant** from UM Arts Initiative to host artist-in-residence dawn weleski for a social practice art project, Noon at Night
- Led **three events** for Noon at Night, including
  - "Sowing Your Knots," at HarvestFest
  - "Radical Radicle Recipes" at the Stamps Gallery
  - "Belly of the Beast" with a soft opening of the Noon at Night Cafe
- Engaged **over 1,500 students** through campus tours, teach-ins, and their student-run pop-up cafe.
- Led **eight screen printing workshops** free of charge to student organizations.



**Co-Conspirators: Nicolette Harvey, Dona Jazrawy, Nicole Tooley, Darren Spirk, Mina Kambakhsh, Jenna Jarjoura, Kavya Ramesh, Ghaida Alduays, Yumna Dagher, Marsalis Jolley**  
**Fellows: Jasmine Paulk, Cat Diggs, pruneah, Marta Frank, Sam Lilly, Lunia Oriol, Jade Whittaker-Mitts**

## SPECIAL PROJECT INTERNS



### **SAM BARNES**

#### **\* MAIZE AND BRINE PICKLES**

Sam Barnes has worked with Student Life Sustainability for the last two years to create a line of student-made pickled products to sell at the campus Farm Stand. Her work this year included leading multiple pickling workshops, creating a logo, successfully pitching the product in optiMize's Social Innovation Challenge, and receiving MLEAD's Innovation or Research Award. With the funding and resources through optiMize, Maize and Brine will continue exploring production spaces and recipes with the goal of starting production in Fall 2024.

### **LUNIA ORIO**

#### **\* THEORY OF CHANGE**

Using the Theory of Change (TOC) as a method to evaluate our programs and learning outcomes, Intern Lunia Orio was able to answer these three questions

1. Is there a shared understanding between SL Sustainability and its programs regarding program mission, objectives, and activities?
2. How can SL Sustainability program's work be accurately and consistently measured
3. In what ways can SL Sustainability's programs be improved?

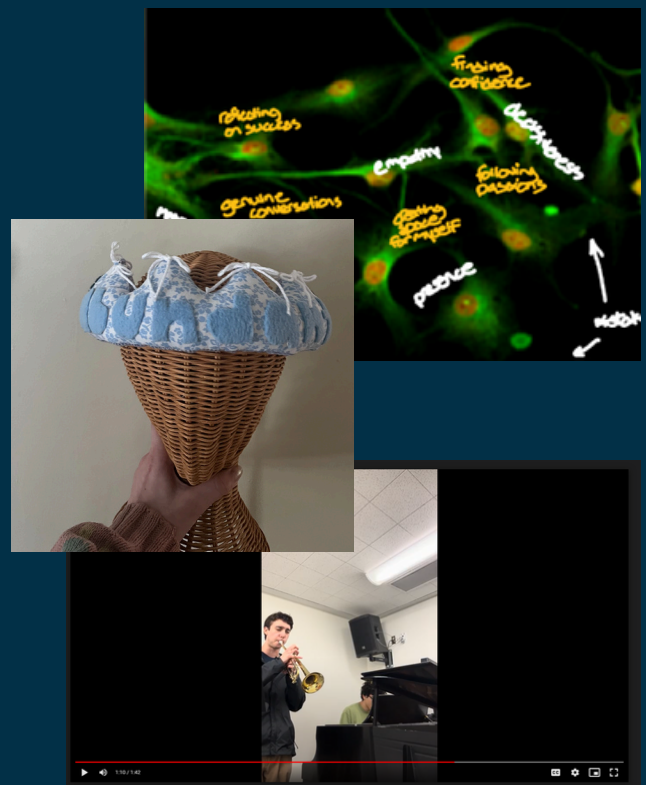
Most of her work came from conducting exercises with each program and 1:1 interviews with students and staff in SL Sustainability. Her findings suggest strong parallels in the mission of SL Sustainability and its programs and the desire for a consistent campus-wide impact on sustainability, with additional suggestions on expanding learning outcomes to more accurately reflect what students want and currently take away from SL Sustainability programs.

## ANTI- RACISM FACILITATION LAB

In response to SL Sustainability’s core values and the strong interest in developing anti-racist practices among students with the unit, former PBSL and UMSFP team member Ashvin Pai proposed leading an ongoing Anti-Racism Facilitation Lab within SL Sustainability programming. The labs began in the Fall of 2023 with 1-2 students from each of the four programs meeting weekly to participate in skill-building sessions and engage in dialogue, reflection, and action planning around anti-racism and sustainability. Participants held adapted labs for their specific organization. By the end of the program, participants were equipped to lead conversations, reshape organizational goals, and apply anti-racist frameworks in their work, fostering a more inclusive approach to sustainability within SL Sustainability. For his work, Ashvin was recognized with MLEAD’s Social Justice Award.

## Leadership Portfolios

As part of our mission to empower students while becoming change agents for a resilient planet, our interns produced Leadership Portfolios highlighting their work throughout the academic year. Each independent portfolio included documented intentions using the Inner Development Goals (transformational skills for sustainability development), an artifact or object of creative expression, and a personal statement reflecting on their values, leadership growth, and evolving sustainability practice.



(Artifacts submitted were diverse in mediums including a handmade hat, a musical piece, and an interpreted cell slide)

**Program Support Intern:**  
**Event Photographer- Micherlange Francois-Hemsley**

# SUSTAINABILITY CULTURE FOR STAFF & STUDENTS



— “

SL Sustainability, I believe, is currently the most profound and impactful thing I have done in my life so far. I believe that SL Sustainability has significantly changed my outlook on life, the ways I think about things and has made me specifically care more about the social lens of environmental work”. - Anonymous, SSC

Student Life Sustainability is committed to increasing sustainability knowledge, skills, and behaviors among its staff while integrating fundamental sustainability concepts into the U-M student experience. This includes supporting student-led, peer-to-peer learning, training, and workshops to further engage the community in sustainable practices. Through these initiatives, Student Life fosters a culture of sustainability that empowers both staff and students to contribute to a more sustainable future.

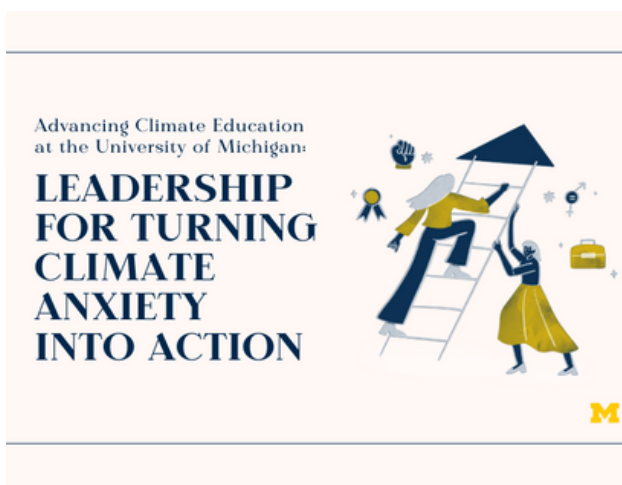
## CROSS-CAMPUS EFFORTS

Given the sustainability dynamic on campus, cross-campus collaborations are crucial to driving impactful and sustainable change. This year, we proudly co-sponsored the Advancing Climate Education 2.0 event. The two-day event included resources and tools for turning climate anxiety into action.



Additionally, Student Life Sustainability began contributing content for a “Sustainability Corner” column in Student Life Today’s biweekly newsletter, allowing us to share valuable insights and sustainability stories with a broader audience.

Also, with funding through the Arts Initiative, our artist-in-residence program has allowed for an interdisciplinary humanities-focused approach to sustainability culture. Like other units on campus, we remain actively engaged in U-M’s Planet Blue Initiatives, which includes providing event support and project collaboration.





***“Hands-on learning opportunities for students that merge academics and campus facilities management to provide students with real-world skills and, for the institution, a path to meet its sustainability goals”***

**(American Association of Community Colleges)**

Our campus-as-lab (CAL) approach integrates student engagement and Student Life facility operations to advance and inform campus sustainability goals. Students, staff, and faculty are empowered to apply creative and innovative approaches to campus-based research questions and operational challenges while ensuring students learn in a real-world environment.

**8** Students Projects  
**3** Community Projects  
**11** Staff & Faculty Projects

In Fall 2023, we hired Heather King as our Campus-as-Lab and Student Engagement Manager. Her position has allowed Student Life Sustainability to take on over 20 student, community, staff, and faculty projects this last academic year. Her CAL work includes expanding our unit’s project engagement AND acting as a resource for connecting and supporting across Student Life’s broad portfolio.

## **Campus- As- Lab Projects Include:**



### **Move Out Ann Arbor (MOAA)**

Around 13 tons of unwanted items were collected from students living off-campus during Spring move-out through a partnership with the city of Ann Arbor, community partners, and multiple U-M units. SL Sustainability was part of the MOAA engagement committee, helping shape the marketing and communication efforts to students throughout the campaign.

### Plastic Bag Collection

SL Sustainability collaborated with students in Central Student Government to coordinate a plastic bag collection drive from March 18-29. Additional partners, MDining, Office of Campus Sustainability, and Munger Residence Hall staff, helped market and coordinate locations for collection bins. At the end of the drive, students donated bags to the Maize and Blue Cupboard. With ongoing coordination by SL Sustainability, Munger will continue to collect bags for MBC year-round.

**Recycle Plastic Bags**

Your effort supports U-M's waste reduction goal: Reduce landfill waste by 40% by 2025

**Place your**  
 4 Clean  
 4 Dry  
 4 Intact  
**plastic shopping bags here for reuse at the Maize and Blue Cupboard.**

**Did you know?**  
 Plastic bags don't belong in regular recycling bins. They must be processed separately from other recyclable items. Or reused via programs like this one!

**Questions:** recycle@umich.edu

GET INVOLVED: [ocs.umich.edu](http://ocs.umich.edu) | OFFICE OF CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY | PLANET BLUE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Possibly Student Life Logo Here Instead

**Bring your bike to the Diag for light installation help!**

limit of 1 set per person

**Saturday, April 20th**  
 Starting at noon until Supplies Last  
**DIAG PLANET PARTY**

**free bike light distribution**  
 open to all students & staff!

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY:**  
 PLANET BLUE STUDENT LEADERS UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
 @umich\_pbsl | PBSL Podcast

### Socially Engaged, Engineering & Design (SEED) Capstone

The Michigan Bike Cooperative/ Resource Hub project was a feasibility project that identified stakeholders, possible locations, and desired resources for a campus Bike co-op. SL Sustainability worked with a team of four students to provide feedback and support for project partners at outreach events, including two bicycle light giveaways and a winter bike maintenance event.

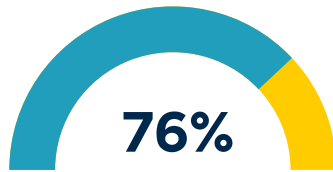
**For the complete list of projects or to propose your own sustainability idea or project, please reach out to our Campus-as-Lab and Student Engagement Manager, Heather King, at [hking@umich.edu](mailto:hking@umich.edu)**

# EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY HONORS CORDS

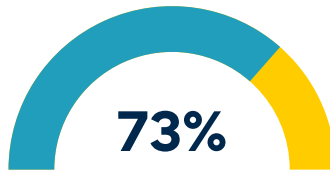


Excellence in Sustainability Honors Cords are awarded to University students who demonstrate a significant commitment to sustainability by participating in sustainability activities during their time at U-M. The cords are created by students from locally sourced wool and dye. This year, the program awarded over **280 cords** to graduates across **23 degrees** and **80+ majors**.

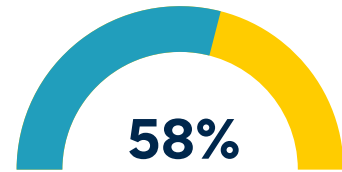
## 2023-24 Recipient Highlights



**76%**  
Completed a major with a clear sustainability focus



**73%**  
Attended a sustainability event



**58%**  
Were members of a sustainability based student org

This year, the Sustainable Living Experience hosted two spindling workshops, during which students made the cords that Stamps students would later dye. The dye is made from native goldenrod and wild indigo harvested at the campus farm. The sheep's wool yarn is produced in Frankenmuth, Michigan.



### Marsalis Jolley

Marsalis served as the Special Project Intern for the honors cord program this year, overseeing the marketing, cord creation, and distribution. He also organized outreach events such as tabling and cord-creating sessions with student staff throughout the year. In the program's third year, Marsalis played a critical role in establishing foundational elements and offered valuable insight into improving the program.



# ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Through a partnership with the Arts Initiative, Fall 2023 Student Life Sustainability began hosting an artist-in-residence, dawn weleski, who works collaboratively with the Sustainability Cultural Organizers on Noon at Night.

*Noon at Night is a cafe, living archive, and global student movement collaboration and resource hub anchored at the University of Michigan. Co-stewarded by socially engaged artist dawn weleski, UM students and staff, local cultural organizers and educators, and experiential learning hubs worldwide, Noon at Night will ultimately take the form of a classroom, cafe, and living archive that connects students at UM to other transgressive educators and learners around the world.*



This year's cohort of Cultural Organizers participated in a co-curricular studio art class, during which they imagined the possible futures for Noon at Night at UM. Drawing from a wide range of academic disciplines and art practices, they designed participatory workshops and public programs that explored themes including transgressive education and learning, institutional violence, elite capture of politicized identities, the poetics of collective healing, and the lineage of student activism at UM.

In April, the cohort opened a pop-up cafe in Palmer Commons. This two-day event brought in 400+ customers who participated in an immersive experimental theater production exploring past and present student movements at UM -- from the Black Action Movement to climate activism. In addition to a menu imagining what student activists over the decades may have eaten, Noon at Night customers participated in teach-ins and "disorientation" tours visiting sites of notable student protests and engaged with videos, photos, oral histories, and ephemera from these movements. With this event, Noon at Night laid the groundwork for what might be possible in a future hub for student sustainability activism and a living archive that uses food to build relationships across identities, interests, and institutions.

# STUDENT LIFE FACILITIES & OPERATIONS




With our Student Life Facilities and Office of Campus Sustainability partners, we focus on tracking, managing, and reducing energy, waste, water, and steam to support sustainable changes that lower carbon emissions and costs. This includes building retrofits, LED re-lighting, and cultivating spaces that drive a culture of daily sustainability opportunities for students and staff.

**9 Building Assessments**

**5 Building Tune-Ups**

**Did you Know?**

 Building energy accounts for well over 90% of all campus greenhouse gas emissions.

**Building Assessments**

are routine and comprehensive evaluations that combine facility capital projects, environmental health and safety considerations, and sustainability efforts to review a building in Student Life’s portfolio. Using our newly curated sustainability checklist.

**Building Tune-ups**

are deep dives with the Office of Campus Sustainability Energy Team, DTE, and Student Life staff looking for heating and cooling efficiency and repair opportunities.

**East Quad LED Lighting Project**

One of several DTE energy rebates received this year was for the East Quad LED Lighting Project, which involved replacing all lights within public spaces with LED. The rebate totaled \$78,480, covering 34% of the total project cost.

*“LEDs can use 50% less energy than traditional fluorescent bulbs. Reducing energy consumption lowers the amount of energy the university needs to generate and procure, thus reducing operating costs and carbon emissions as we work to achieve carbon neutrality” - Office of Campus Sustainability*

# Utilities & Waste

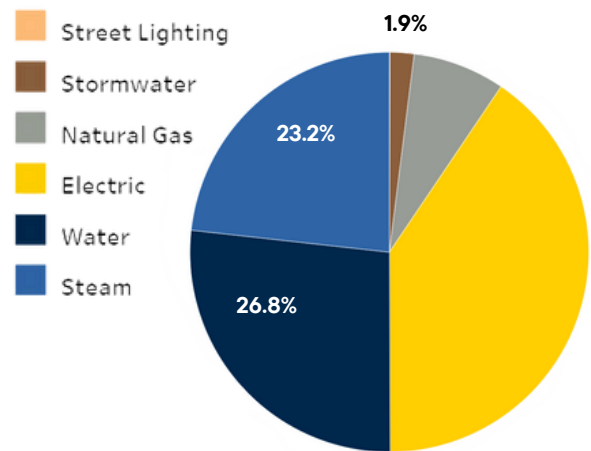
Looking at utility data, it's clear that Student Life pays a lot to operate buildings, and a significant portion of that expense goes toward heating, cooling, and lighting. While improving building efficiency is crucial, changing behaviors can also have a considerable impact.

Consider simple actions such as:

1. Adjusting your thermostat to be slightly warmer on hot dates and cooler in the winter
2. Turning off lights in empty spaces
3. Keeping windows closed when not needed

These small actions can add up to save a substantial amount of money!

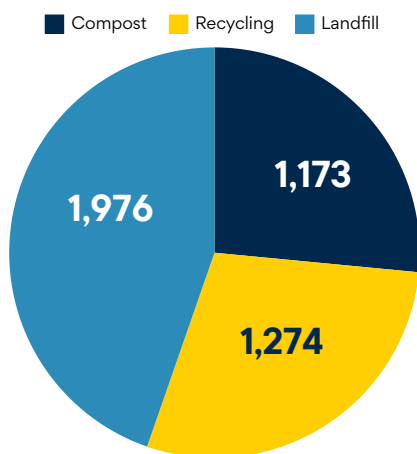
## Cost Breakdown for all Student Life Building Utilities



**Total Utility Costs: \$9,695,595**

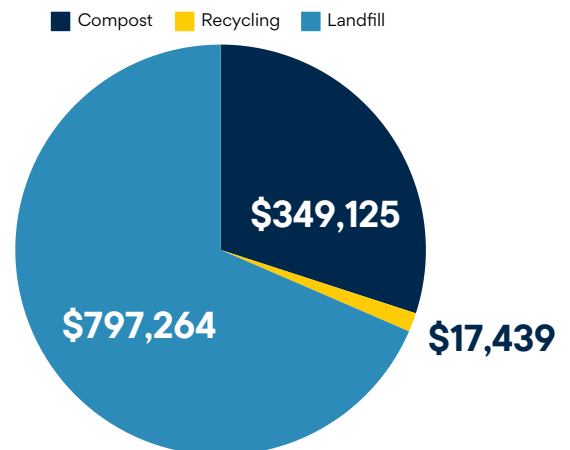
*Data courtesy of the Office of Campus Sustainability*

## Quantity of Waste for All Student Life Buildings (Tons)



Student Life has made impressive strides in composting, thanks to highly effective bins in the dining and res halls. Looking ahead, we have a chance to expand efforts in the Unions, where we've piloted a few compost interventions this year.

## Cost of Waste for All Student Life Buildings (Dollars)



Did you know that bulk recycling is free for U-M? That's why it's crucial to boost our recycling rates! Our spending on waste management alone exceeds over one million dollars, presenting a significant opportunity for savings.



## Sowing Seeds

As we close out our first full academic year as a unit, we are excited about the opportunities ahead, including advancing and refining our programs while supporting the rollout of Campus 2050 and Vision 2034. As a unit, we are working to create a future where sustainability leadership can transform our campus community, shift our operations, and build a culture to meet the future.

### Other Priorities

- The Mobile Farm Stand will ‘roll’ out in late August 2024 and relocate to a new site at South Ingalls Mall.
- In early Fall 2024, the Planet Blue Student Leaders will launch a Sustainability Resource Lending Library, using an outreach and inventory plan developed by a previous cohort.
- With a rising interest in 'sustainable swag,' we anticipate increased demand from student organizations for screenprinting workshops. As a result, we will train additional staff to lead these sessions.
- Expanding our Campus as Lab initiatives, including launching a public-facing project tracker.
- Auditing, improving, and amplifying our digital sustainability materials across different Student Life websites.
- Starting a small community of practice for Student Life staff that focuses on sustainability in their unit, sharing best practices across units, and disseminating campus-wide priorities and initiatives.
- Deepening ties with new campus sustainability leadership and ensuring connectivity between sustainability, DEI 2.0, and the Wellbeing Collective.
- Additionally, we will continue building Noon at Night with two large events and workshops focused on climate resilience and mutual aid.
- Strengthening partnerships and collaboration. We are committed to deepening our existing partnerships and fostering new ones. Want to chat? Please email us at [sl.sustainability@umich.edu](mailto:sl.sustainability@umich.edu).