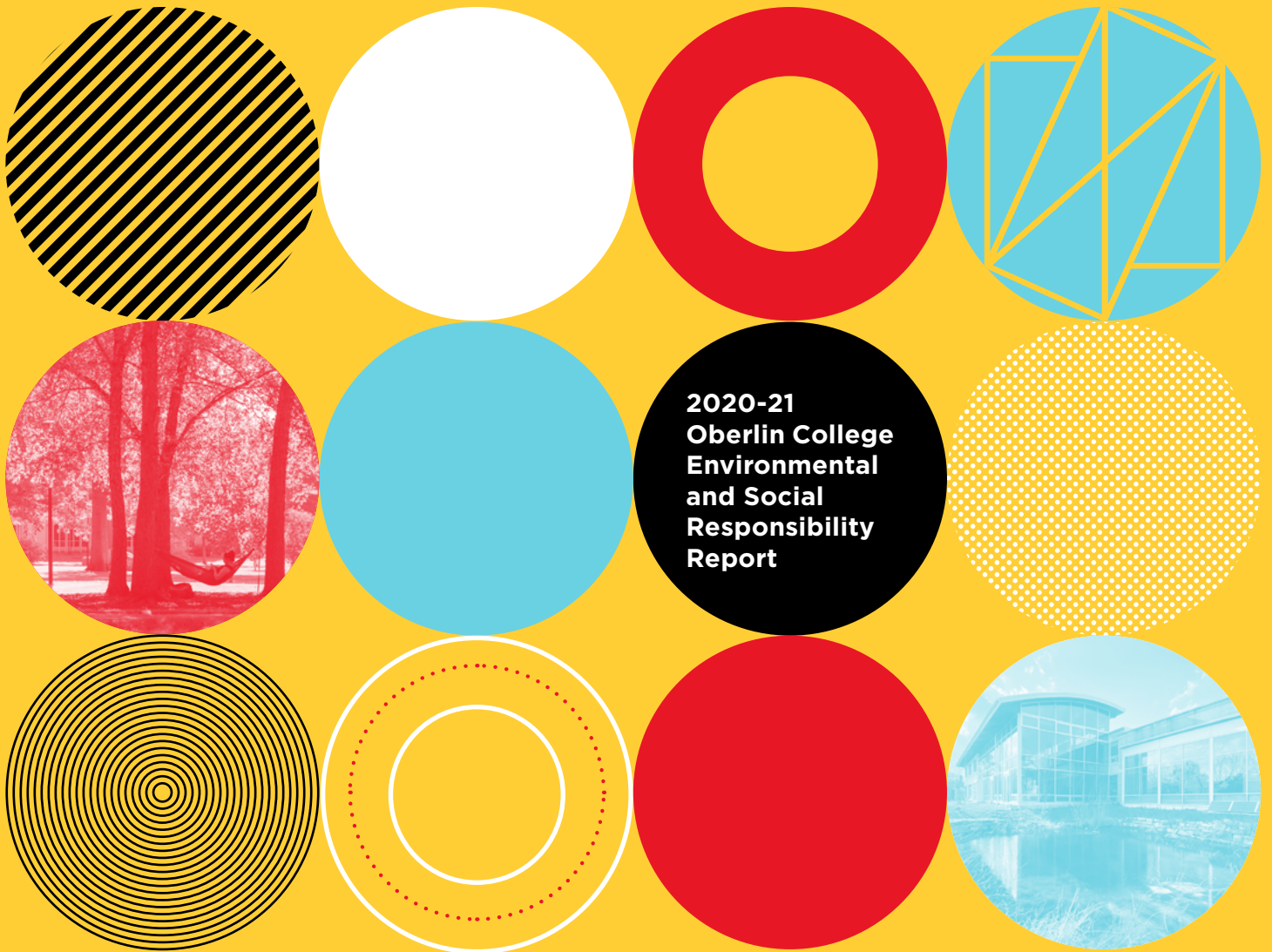


# INSPIRING THE WORLD WE NEED

**Oberlin's Commitment to People and Planet**



# **INSPIRING THE WORLD WE NEED: Our Commitments**

**In this, our first Environmental and Social Responsibility Report, we are proud to share the many ways in which Oberlin College and Conservatory students, faculty, staff, and the broader Oberlin community are working together to inspire the world we need.**

**Through education, research, collaboration, and resilience, Obies on campus, in the community, and around the globe are addressing some of the most challenging social and environmental issues of our time, making an impact that extends well beyond our campus and far into the future. **Think one person can change the world? So do we.****

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**Please note:** Many of the photos appearing in this report were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and do not reflect Oberlin's 2020-21 requirements for masks and physical distancing.





### President's Greeting

Oberlin College has a proud legacy of historic influence, dating back to our founding in 1833. For almost two centuries, we have boldly addressed the issues of the day while remaining focused on a better future. Beginning with a race-blind admissions policy and the invention of coeducation in the 1830s, and more recently working to address profound climate change-related challenges that are inextricably linked to broader issues of social justice, Oberlin has always been—to quote historian Geoffrey Blodgett '53—a “peculiar mix of scholarly ambition and stubborn moral idealism.”

At Oberlin, we recognize the enormous responsibility we have—to our students, our faculty, our legacy, and our society. Our students are drawn to Oberlin because they, like so many generations of Obies, feel compelled to make a difference. Each day, alumni shoulder their self-appointed task to improve the world. As I say often, the world needs more Oberlin graduates.

In 2000, we opened the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, a widely celebrated achievement that played a critical role in launching the U.S. green building movement, and we now have six campus buildings that are LEED-certified. In 2006, Oberlin was the first of our peer institutions to commit to achieving carbon neutrality, and our sustainable infrastructure plan puts us on track to meet that goal by 2025. Over the last decade, the college has invested in broad-spectrum energy-efficient technologies, installed a 10-acre solar array, and worked with the city of Oberlin to secure green electricity for the entire town. Perhaps most importantly, we prepare our graduates—regardless of major—with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to address the environmental and social challenges of our rapidly changing world.

The past year elevated our longstanding commitment to social engagement. Following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and too many others, we launched our Presidential Initiative on Racial Equity and Diversity. The resulting commission is charged with creating the internal and external framework to address issues of violence, police-community relationships, and racial injustices. We are committed to leading the way in promoting social equity on college campuses and in communities across the country and world. Examples of early progress from the Department of Athletics and the Conservatory of Music appear in this report.

There is so much passion for this work in Oberlin—both on campus and in the city—that we felt it important to chronicle the energy and drive. This report showcases just some of our ongoing commitments and progress.

I want to thank Oberlin's students, faculty, staff, and partners in the community for their collaboration and vision. We look forward to continuing to inspire and contribute to the change that our world so desperately needs.

Carmen Twillie Ambar  
PRESIDENT, OBERLIN COLLEGE

**Oberlin College  
Mission Statement**

Oberlin educates students for lives of intellectual, musical, and artistic rigor and breadth; sustained inquiry, creativity, and innovation; and leadership. Oberlin aims to prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives essential to confront complex issues and to create change and value in the world.

Oberlin is committed to educational access and opportunity. It seeks to offer a diverse and inclusive residential learning environment encouraging a free and respectful exchange of ideas and shares an enduring commitment to a sustainable and just society.

## About Oberlin College

Oberlin College, an independent coeducational institution, holds a distinguished place among American colleges and universities. Oberlin was the first college to grant undergraduate degrees to women in a coeducational program and, historically, was a leader in the education of African Americans. We are known for our academic and musical excellence and our commitment to social engagement and diversity.

Located in the Northeast Ohio town of the same name, Oberlin uniquely combines an outstanding professional school of music with a leading undergraduate college of arts and sciences. The Oberlin Conservatory of Music provides flexible programs to prepare students as professional musicians and teachers of music. Deeply committed to academic excellence, the College of Arts and Sciences offers a rich and balanced curriculum in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences. Within that framework, the college expects that students will work closely with faculty to design an educational program appropriate to their own particular interests, needs, and long-term goals.



## What Starts Here Can Inspire the World

Our progress on social and environmental matters is driven by academic departments, offices with subject matter expertise, student-led groups, cross-functional committees, and external partnerships. These diverse and inclusive groups inspire a multidisciplinary way of thinking about the world and prepare our students for the world outside of Oberlin. Environmental and social issues are inherently overlapping and reinforcing. In this report the two are organized into separate categories, but this is a logistical differentiation, not a philosophical one.

At Oberlin and in this report, we focus on how our efforts address environmental and social responsibility in three spheres of influence: 1) on campus; 2) in the communities of Oberlin, Lorain County, and Northeast Ohio; and 3) on a global scale.



## Awards and Recognition

Oberlin holds a distinguished place among American colleges and universities for its long-standing leadership and action around environmental and social issues.

### DISTINGUISHED LEGACY

- Oldest coeducational liberal arts college in the United States and the second-oldest continuously operating coeducational institute of higher learning in the world.
- Oldest continuously operating music conservatory in the United States.
- The first college in the United States to admit African Americans under a race-blind admissions policy (1835).
- First college in the United States to admit women students (1837).
- Three visits to the Oberlin campus by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement (1957, 1963, 1965).
- Major catalyst for the environmental movement, and, later, the green building movement, with the completion of the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies (2000). The center was recognized as one of the top 53 game-changing buildings of the past 170 years by *Building, Design + Construction* magazine and the #1 Greenest Building of Our Generation by Scribol.

While the success of our institution is not based solely on awards and recognitions, Oberlin is proud of its long-standing history of third-party recognition and award-winning programs. These achievements reflect the ongoing, best-in-class efforts led by our students, staff, and faculty. The following is a sampling of awards and recognition we have received over the last decade.





### ONGOING LEADERSHIP

- Gold rating on the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), a program of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) (2021 rating is pending).
- #13 among the top 1,240 liberal arts colleges in the U.S., as ranked by the new AcademicInfluence.com.
- Encouraging Environmental Excellence award from Ohio EPA at the Silver Level (2016).
- #3 Eco-Conscious Hotel in the *New York Times* (spring 2016).
- Six consecutive years on the Sierra Club Cool School List, including a Top 10 rank (2015).
- Top 5 in Campus Conservation Nationals (in 2015) and Water (2014).
- Finalist in Second Nature's Climate Leadership Awards (2013).
- APPA-Leadership in Educational Facilities Sustainability Award (2013).
- Bronze in League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly University awards (2013).
- #7 largest solar array in Ohio (2012, 2013).
- USGBC's Center for Green Schools Best 4-Year Institution award winner (2012).
- President's Higher Education Community Services Honor Roll with Distinction in the Interfaith Community Service category, and on the organization's Honor Roll in both the General Community Service and Education categories.
- Carnegie Community Engagement Classification for excellence in civic engagement.
- Partner to the White House American College and University Call to Action on Climate Change Initiative.
- Partner to United Nations' Environmental Programme (UNEP) District Energy in Cities Initiative.

# #2

in the *Princeton Review's* Top 50 Green Colleges List (in 2021) and among the Top 50 for five additional years (2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2015)

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# #5

in the Baccalaureate Institutions category of the 2020 Sustainable Campus Index (SCI)

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# #1

in *College Magazine's* Vegan-Friendly Campus rating (2019)



# CAMPUS COMMITMENT



# DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENTS THROUGH EDUCATION AND ACTION

Since our founding in 1833, Oberlin College has been a community dedicated to environmental stewardship, social engagement, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our commitment begins on campus, with students, faculty, and staff driving change from all areas of the institution. Whether in classrooms or athletics, dorm rooms or concert halls, Obies continue to learn, grow, and act in pursuit of a common goal: a more just, sustainable, resilient, and interconnected world.



## Environmental Commitment

Environmental awareness and resilience are essential to the way we learn and live at Oberlin. As an institution of higher learning, we believe Oberlin has a special obligation to ensure that the ways in which faculty, students, and staff learn, teach, manage internal affairs, and interact with each other and the broader community serve as inspirational examples of environmental commitment. We are not satisfied in merely reducing the negative impacts of campus operations. Our focus is on improving the world around us now and for the long term.

Oberlin has been on the front lines of the environmental movement since the 1970s. In 2000, we opened the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, which was a seminal catalyst for the green building movement in the U.S. and was named “most important green building constructed in the last 30 years” by Architect Magazine in 2010. Today, we have six campus buildings with LEED certification. On campus and in the community, we monitor and publicly display energy and water use in real time, using technology developed by faculty and students. We eat foods that are grown locally, and we find creative ways to reuse and repurpose materials that serve our communities.

In 2006, Oberlin was the first of our peer institutions to commit to achieving carbon neutrality. Over the last decade, the college has invested in a broad spectrum of energy-efficient technologies, installed a 10-acre solar array, and worked with the city of Oberlin to secure green electricity for the entire town. Now, we are looking ahead to being a carbon-neutral campus by 2025. And we have the plans, commitment, and knowledge in place to make that our reality.



## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PLAN

In 2004, we adopted the [Oberlin College Environmental Policy](#), which was updated with a comprehensive implementation plan in 2015. These documents outline our core commitment to be a responsible steward of the natural environment. As such, the college is unwavering in its commitment to:

- Protect and preserve natural resources
- Increase the use of renewable resources
- Consider other measures that can enhance the physical environment in which we live

Our policy—and our overarching approach to environmental sustainability and resilience—encompasses the full campus experience, including development and management of buildings and grounds, transportation of materials and people, purchasing of materials, provision of food, financial and human capital investments, and classroom teaching.

Our approach is subject to regular review and refinement through assessments of current best practices and new, innovative solutions developed by students, faculty, and staff. The intellectual capacity of our campus community helps implement policies to address issues, seize opportunities, and inspire those around us.

In 2006, the General Faculty approved the creation of the Committee on Environmental Sustainability (CES) to oversee development, implementation, and oversight of the college's Environmental Policy, including creating institutional procedures that help advance commitments outlined within the plan. CES membership is drawn from faculty, students, and staff and includes two representatives from the city of Oberlin to provide a holistic and comprehensive perspective.

In 2015, CES presented an [Environmental Implementation Plan](#) to General Faculty, which reaffirmed the guiding principles of the Environmental Policy, updated progress in various categories, and provided insights and aspirations to be used as a road map for further advancements—including our educational mission. The Implementation Plan has been critical in continuing to drive the progress described throughout this report.

**“Sustainability is embedded in virtually everything we do at Oberlin College—in the classroom, internships, research, campus activities, community interactions, and so much more. We all have a passion for it. Our job in the Office of Environmental Sustainability is to help everyone coordinate and to make sure we’re managing our resources—people, natural, and financial—effectively so we can maximize the positive impact of everyone’s efforts.”**

**Meghan Riesterer**, Assistant Vice President, Campus Energy and Sustainability

## Monitoring Energy Consumption on Campus

As stipulated in Oberlin's Environmental Policy, one of our major goals is to reduce energy consumption on campus. In 2008, students and faculty developed an innovative approach to energy consumption awareness and reduction. With funding from the Green EDGE Fund, we installed “energy orbs” in dormitories and eventually other buildings to make electricity use information

available and visible to everyone.

The orbs change color to display how much energy a building is consuming throughout the day. The orb glows red if a building is consuming more than double its normal electricity use, turns yellow at a more normal consumption rate, and glows green when energy consumption approaches a more efficient rate.

Approximately 41 energy orbs are in use in campus buildings today, with many others installed on campuses and in buildings across the country. Our surveys have found that the orbs enable building occupants, including students, faculty, and staff, to learn more about their energy use and pursue energy conservation measures.

“What we are trying to do in Environmental Studies and in other environmentally focused offerings, programs, and committees is impact students on every level—their personal habits, ways of thinking, learning how to work together to make important things happen, and helping them understand the big picture. We have a strong sense of interdisciplinarity.”

**Cindy Frantz**, Professor of Psychology and Environmental Studies

## **SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) was established in 2006 to help oversee implementation of the Environmental Policy and lead campus sustainability, resilience, and carbon neutrality efforts. OES focuses on campus management and programming that is environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, financially prudent, and resilient in the face of a rapidly changing world. The office is responsible for managing numerous on-campus programs such as:

- **Ecolympics**, an annual competition and event series that has included energy and water reduction contests between dormitories and local community schools and a packed event series that includes film screenings, guest speakers, trivia, arts and crafts, workshops, and more.
- **Green Office Program (GOPro)**, an internal certification that is designed as an opportunity for offices to take ownership of their role in Oberlin’s commitment to sustainability and be recognized for their efforts.
- **Community-Based Social Marketing**, an approach that promotes sustainable behavior on campus and extends out to the broader Oberlin community. This effort, a collaboration between OES and an Oberlin professor of psychology and environmental studies, utilizes social psychology methodology to measure and influence sustainability-oriented behavior change.
- **Energy Conservation Rebate Program**, an effort to help Oberlin College staff, faculty, and student organizations understand and take advantage of various energy efficiency rebates.
- **OES Hangouts**, a monthly potluck-style gathering where students, community members, and visitors can talk to OES staff and others interested in sustainability. These casual events have spurred relationships and project development.

OES has a large impact in part because of its robust internship program. Each year, the office employs up to a dozen students as OES interns. With guidance, interns work on unique campus and broader community projects that advance sustainability and resilience while building their professional skills (as described in the Community section of this report).

CES and OES were instrumental in the development of this report, and the impact of their work is featured throughout.

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN EDUCATION**

Learning to think in terms of sustainability and resilience is a fundamental characteristic of an Oberlin education. We strive to prepare our graduates, regardless of major, with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives to address a rapidly changing world in ways that address interrelated social and environmental challenges.

The **Environmental Implementation Plan**, developed by the CES and adopted by General Faculty in 2015, made clear that education must be at the center of everything we do. On one hand, we recognize that every field of study contributes to understanding humans' relationship with the natural world. On the other hand, we likewise recognize that every element of campus management, from the way Oberlin heats buildings to the food served in dining halls and student cooperatives, contributes to students' understanding of sustainability and resilience.

While environmental issues are addressed across the curriculum, Oberlin's Environmental Studies Program provides interested students the opportunity to focus their educational experience on this highly interdisciplinary field. The program is designed to cultivate a deep understanding of the technical, social, political, and behavioral causes and consequences of our environmental impact. Just as importantly, students develop creative problem-solving skills needed to design a more sustainable relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world. Core courses build a foundation in natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities, providing the context necessary to understand and analyze social, economic, and environmental issues from multiple perspectives. Faculty include professors from departments across campus, further underscoring how environmental education is interwoven across the college curriculum.

For more information on how the program and related courses prepare students for the environmental challenges ahead, see the Global Impact section of this report.

### **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Our commitment to sustainability and resilience in education extends beyond the classroom and facilities and into the daily lives and activities of our nearly 3,000 students. Students have unlimited opportunities to actively engage through campus jobs, on and off-campus internships, and student-led clubs and organizations.

For example, the **Green EDGE Fund** is a student-run, grant-giving organization that finances projects that promote greenhouse gas reductions, environmental sustainability, education, and resource conservation on campus and in the Oberlin community. Each semester, all Oberlin students contribute \$20 to the fund as part of their school fees. Student board members then determine how funds are distributed to fulfill proposals submitted by students, staff, faculty, and community members.

In recent years, these projects have included energy monitoring system installations in campus buildings and local public schools, LED lighting retrofits, low-flow shower heads, local gardens and forestry, and bike fix-it stations to promote bike safety and ridership on campus and in town. In spring 2019, the Green EDGE Fund made the largest commitment in its history—approving \$133,000 to help fund implementation of the Oberlin College Carbon Neutrality Resource Master Plan, which is discussed in detail later in this section.

Another student-powered group, the **Resource Conservation Team**, focuses on waste diversion and community aid in Oberlin. The team seeks to make

### **Earth Day: A Virtual Celebration in 2020**

Every April since its founding in 1970, Earth Day has been an important part of Oberlin College's events calendar. It often features guest speakers, lively discussions, local environmental cleanup projects, and other listening, learning, and doing activities. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic that limited our ability to hold in-person events, Earth Day's 50th anniversary in 2020 was still a vibrant celebration and learning opportunity for the college and the city of Oberlin.

Between April 15 and April 25, 2020, the college and city held more than a dozen virtual events that included webinars and panel discussions on climate change, climate communications, and environmental policy, with a specific focus on environmental racism. We also held a virtual celebration party and a virtual sustainability fair that featured local organizations and student groups.



### Leading the Way with Green Buildings

In June 2006, the Oberlin College Board of Trustees adopted a policy that all new construction and major renovations on campus have to be designed and built in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standards.

The following campus buildings have LEED certification:

- **Robert L. Kahn Hall** is a sustainability-themed first-year residence hall that opened in 2010.
- **Allen Memorial Art Museum** is a 100-plus-year-old building that was renovated in 2011 to upgrade mechanical, lighting, space, and climate control systems, which reduced the carbon footprint by 75% and achieved LEED Gold certification.
- **Bertram and Judith Kohl Building** is a sleek, modernistic LEED Gold building that is home to jazz studies as well as programs in composition, musicology, and music theory.
- **Williams Field House** is a LEED Gold building that opened in 2009. It remains comfortable year-round with the use of four large fans, 64 remote-controlled skylights, and operable windows along the east and west sides to promote air flow.
- **The Hotel at Oberlin** was built in 2016 to LEED Platinum standards, featuring geothermal wells, rainwater harvesting, and creative reuse of materials, in addition to a restaurant that specializes in serving local foods.
- **The Apollo Theatre** was built in 1913 and renovated in 2011. Enhancements allowed the historic building to achieve LEED Silver certification and earn recognition by the Ohio Historic Preservation Association.

recycling, source reduction, and regeneration part of daily life at the college. The team manages the Free Store, the Big Swap (move-in and move-out material collection and redistribution), and runs the Johnson House garden and a residential composting system. The team also facilitates Oberlin Food Rescue, which provides environmental and social benefits in the greater Oberlin community. More about these programs is described in the Community Commitment section of this report. Other student-initiated groups include active chapters of **Oberlin Sunrise**, **Citizens Climate Lobby**, and **Students for Energy Justice**.

### Environmental Studies Program Has a Home in the Lewis Center

Lauded as “the most remarkable” of a new generation of environmentally responsible buildings by *The New York Times*, the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies has earned national acclaim as a showcase for green building technologies and operating systems.

Completed in 2000, the solar-powered Lewis Center has photovoltaic (PV) panels on the center’s roof and parking pavilion and south-facing windows that allow for passive solar heating. When the solar parking pavilion was added to the site, Oberlin had the largest PV array in Ohio at the time, with a total rated production of 159 kW.

The idea for the building, first conceived by David Orr, former chair of the Environmental Studies Program, was to develop a “living” building that could act as a testing ground, educational venue, and catalyst for the then emerging field of ecological design. Today, the Lewis Center is a learning lab for our students to learn and conduct research, and for us to share the building’s lessons with other stakeholders such as local schools, community leaders, and architecture and design professionals.

Sustainability is embedded in the building’s operating systems:

- **Sensor System** Flows of energy and cycling of materials are monitored by more than 150 sensors placed strategically throughout the building. The real-time results and learnings are displayed prominently in the building and available on the college’s Environmental Dashboard. To learn more about the dashboard, see page 33 of this report.
- **Landscape:** The building’s landscape features a variety of constructed ecosystems that utilize native Northeast Ohio ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Living Machine:** The Living Machine, designed by notable ecological design expert John Todd and operated by Oberlin students, is a specially engineered wetland that purifies non-potable wastewater for reuse in toilets and the landscape.
- **Sustainable Materials:** Materials for the building’s construction were evaluated based on local sourcing, low energy usage, and recyclability.



### **OUR FACILITIES**

Our campus strives to be an exciting, welcoming place to learn and grow and one that embodies social and environmental commitment and ideals. The design, construction, and maintenance of our facilities is essential in our efforts to minimize our environmental impact and overall carbon footprint and to maximize the learning environment for our students. Our environmental strategy for facilities management can be summarized as follows:

- Maintain high standards for building construction and modernization. This includes the Board of Trustees' commitment to LEED Silver standards for all new construction and investing in high-performance buildings to secure long-term environmental and financial savings, educational value, and healthy occupants.
- Utilize integrated design processes.
- Engage in a rigorous initial and continuous commissioning process in which improvement is ongoing.
- Systematically monitor and communicate building performance for both management and educational purposes.



### **Our Unyielding Commitment to Address Climate Change**

**2000:** Completed construction on the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, one of the first and most innovative green buildings on a college campus

**2004:** Adopted a comprehensive environmental policy for Oberlin College—one of the first such policies in the country

**2005:** Partnered with local electrical utility to acquire 60% of campus electricity from carbon-free sources

**2006:** Signed the ACUPCC Climate Commitment and established 2025 target date for carbon neutrality on campus. Created the Office of Environmental Sustainability and Committee on Environmental Sustainability

**2007:** Completed first campus greenhouse gas emissions inventory

**2009:** Released first Climate Action Plan

**2012:** Installed the largest solar array on a liberal arts college campus, a 10-acre 2.27 MW array meeting approximately 12% of the college's electricity needs

**2016:** Trustees formed Carbon Neutrality Subcommittee of Capital Planning Committee and commissioned Oberlin College Carbon Neutrality Resource Master Plan, Implementation Strategy, and Economic Approach

**2021:** Beginning construction on a new campus energy system, a critical component in Oberlin College's ability to achieve its carbon neutrality goal by 2025

The Oberlin College Board of Trustees' Sustainable Infrastructure Subcommittee of the Capital Planning Committee is responsible for oversight and strategic and financial decision-making related to building a new campus heating system. The subcommittee's decision to move forward was a result of multiple factors: the age of the current system, the financial feasibility of the intended path, the confidence that the new system will enable Oberlin College to meet its 2025 carbon neutrality goal, and the educational opportunities that will come from the development and operation of the new system.



### **OUR PATHWAY TO CARBON NEUTRALITY**

In 2006, Oberlin became one of the nation's first institutions of higher education to commit to the goal of climate neutrality by signing the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), now known as the Carbon Commitment. As a charter signatory, Oberlin was one of four schools in the United States and the first in our peer group to sign the ACUPCC. After signing the ACUPCC, we made a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025. This relies on three types of improvements:

- Educate, conserve resources, and alter our behavior in line with our commitments.
- Implement resource efficiencies and advanced technology.
- Make use of renewable energy to the fullest extent possible; offset the impact to our carbon profile over which we do not have direct control.

Since Oberlin's baseline greenhouse gas emissions assessment in 2007, we have halved on-campus emissions through several key initiatives, including collaborating with our local utility to secure green electricity, installing a 2.27 MW solar array, and ending the use of coal for campus heating. In 2012, when the solar array was completed, it was the largest such installment on any campus in Ohio. Even with this progress, we recognize that further advancements must be made to reach our goal of carbon neutrality by 2025.

Therefore, in 2016, the Board of Trustees commissioned Ever-Green Energy to develop the **[Oberlin College Carbon Neutrality Resource Master Plan, Implementation Strategy, and Economic Approach](#)**. Ever-Green Energy is a St. Paul, Minnesota-based consulting firm specializing in implementing new, highly efficient campus and community utility systems. In early 2021, Oberlin's Board of Trustees and its Capital Planning Committee and Sustainable Infrastructure Subcommittee approved a plan to connect buildings on campus and in the community to a new district energy system, replacing a system built in 1913. Construction of this new system is expected to begin in May 2021 and be completed by 2024, enabling the college to achieve its goal of carbon neutrality by 2025. For more information on this project, visit: <http://carbonneutraloc.com>.



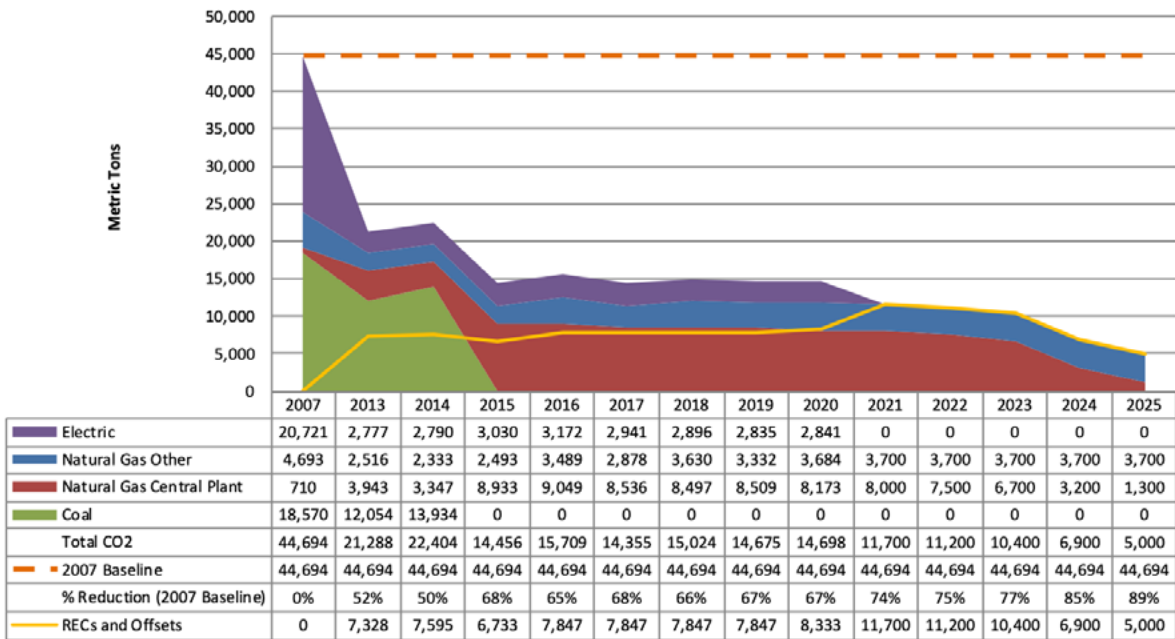
### Our Carbon-Free Goal

Since 2007, Oberlin College has taken significant steps toward achieving its carbon-free-by-2025 goal and is currently realizing a 67% reduction from that 2007 baseline. Implementation of the Sustainable Infrastructure

Program (SIP) is estimated to accelerate that reduction to 89% by 2025 by both modernizing campus infrastructure and implementing geothermal as our primary energy source. As we move into phase I of

implementation in the summer of 2021, the team will begin strategies to eliminate the remaining Scope I and II carbon emissions on campus, as well as reduce Scope III emissions and unnecessary campus waste.

**CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS**  
(As Metric Tons CO<sub>2</sub>)



Note:  
2021-2025 Emissions and RECs/Offsets are projected.  
Geothermal plant operational in 2024 and 2025.  
OMLPS to 100% renewables in 2021.

## Social Commitment

Advocating for and advancing social engagement are central to the ethos of Oberlin College. Since our founding, we have been a place for those who seek a rigorous education with integrity and purpose, designed for impact. We were the first college in America to adopt a policy to admit Black students in 1835 and the first college to grant bachelor's degrees to women in a coeducational program in 1837. Throughout our history—from our formative years to the civil rights and environmental movements to today—members of the Oberlin College community have been outspoken and active on a variety of social topics.

Our focus on social responsibility became ever more critical in 2020 as we faced the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting economic downturn, and disturbing signs of increasing racism and bigotry in America. These events reinforced our need to take a more active and deliberate position to help address social issues on campus, in our community, and in our nation. To this end, we have worked across the college to enhance existing efforts and establish new commitments that will create a more equitable campus and culture for all. As we work on

these efforts, we understand that we are not perfect, and we must continue to look for opportunities to better ourselves and our community. Our efforts are designed to support, teach, and lay the foundations for lasting change at Oberlin and beyond.

Oberlin is eager for change and is driven by a noble desire to make a difference. Throughout our history, Oberlin students and faculty have been instrumental in ensuring that we push forward to impact our campus community. Each class brings new and unique perspectives that help us challenge the status quo and build a more equitable and fairer environment. Through policies, initiatives, and multidisciplinary organizations, our students, faculty, and staff collaborate to deliver on our values of diversity and social justice and create a community in which all individuals feel a sense of belonging, are respected, and have equitable access to opportunities and outcomes. This strength is apparent throughout campus and student life—in our academics and musical education, housing, dining, athletics, recreation, support systems, and cocurricular activities.



## LAUNCHING PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE ON RACIAL EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Our strong commitment to social justice starts at the very top of our institution and is supported at every level. We strive for equity, diversity, and inclusion on our campus, and we want to help set the tone for social engagement in the nation and around the world.

While creating a diverse and equitable campus environment has always been a priority, in August 2020, Oberlin took an additional step forward when President Carmen Twillie Ambar launched the Presidential Initiative on Racial Equity and Diversity. The initiative was established in direct response to increasing injustice and racial tensions in America and focuses on elevating and advancing Oberlin's more than 180-year commitment to the education and rights of Blacks in America.

President Ambar appointed a 21-member commission to implement the initiative and develop both internal and external frameworks for addressing issues of violence, police-community relationships, and racial injustices in America. The commission is co-chaired by Meredith Gadsby, associate professor of Africana studies and comparative American studies, and Bill Quillen, dean of the Conservatory of Music.

The cross-functional commission is divided into four working groups that focus on a range of impactful topics such as personnel, curriculum, student life on campus, and student success. The working groups are also tasked with developing metrics to measure progress in these areas, ensuring progress and forward movement. The commission is specifically charged with leading the development of meaningful antiracism education and professional development for all members of the campus community. It is also working to assess the viability, form, and structure of what a Center on Race and Equity could look like on Oberlin's campus. The commission's recommendations and a go-forward plan are due to be completed in mid-2021, with progress being shared regularly to ensure transparency and ongoing learning.

In its journey toward achieving full equity on campus and in the community, the commission has already made an impact on campus and is inspiring other groups to also answer President Ambar's charge for change. Recent activities are included below.

- The commission initiated conversations with campus leaders engaged in equity and diversity work focused on the success of students, faculty, and staff of color. The group also launched a series of programs to explore topics at the heart of the commission's work, including a conversation about Black student wellness and activism.
- Oberlin's Student Senate formed a Race Relations and Equity Committee to elevate concerns surrounding the myriad forms of violence perpetrated against Black people.
- College of Arts and Sciences departments are offering curricula and events exploring racial injustice, police-community relationships, and violence, including a 2021 lecture on policing Black people in Puerto Rico.

**“The work of dismantling the vestiges of white supremacy, anti-Black policies, and gender inequality has long been embedded in the promise of Oberlin College. This work in the 21st century, however, looks different than it did in 1833. There are national moments that call upon all of us to gather our energies and take hold of moral missions, and this is one of those moments.”**

**Carmen Twillie Ambar,**  
President, Oberlin College, in  
announcing the creation of the  
Presidential Initiative on Racial  
Equity and Diversity



**Campus Diversity and Demographics**

While we have made progress in enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus, we recognize there is more to be done. Through the work of the Presidential Initiative, the EDI office, and countless organizations and individuals, we continue to strive toward creating a campus environment that embraces all of the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

**STUDENT BODY:**

**Female: 58%**

**Male: 42%**

**White: 59%**

**International: 12%**

**Two or more races: 9%**

**Hispanic/Latino: 8%**

**Black: 6%**

**Asian: 5%**

**Unknown: 1%**

**FACULTY AND STAFF:**

**Female: 44%**

**Male: 56%**

**White: 68%**

**International: 12%**

**Asian: 6%**

**Black: 6%**

**Hispanic/Latino: 2%**

**Unknown: 5%**



Additional efforts are being driven by the Multicultural Resource Center, Afrikan Heritage House, and the Oberlin Conservatory and are covered in more detail throughout this report.

Oberlin’s Presidential Initiative is working with support from the University of Southern California’s (USC) Race and Equity Center to conduct a set of longitudinal climate assessment surveys of the college and conservatory.

In November 2020, President Ambar was also one of six cofounders of the new Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA), which has nearly 70 member institutions. Alliance participation reaffirms our position as a leader in higher education and provides Oberlin with access to a range of campus surveys, resources, and monthly virtual learning sessions about antiracism, diversity, and equity provided by USC’s Race and Equity Center.

For more information on the Presidential Initiative, visit <https://www.oberlin.edu/about-oberlin/presidential-initiative-racial-equity-and-diversity>. For more information on LACRELA, see [this announcement on Inside Higher Ed](#).

**TEACHING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE ACROSS CAMPUS**

Through our current efforts and aspirations, Oberlin is creating a diverse and promising student body. Recognizing that diversity broadens perspectives, Oberlin is dedicated to recruiting a culturally, economically, geographically, and racially diverse group of students. This commitment, which we refer to as inclusive excellence, is critical in achieving our institutional goals of academic and artistic excellence. We also seek to recruit diverse administrators, staff, and faculty who reflect a global mindset and sense of overall responsibility. With a campus-wide commitment to diversity comes the unwavering promise of equity and inclusion to ensure that everyone is valued, respected, and appreciated for their differences and for their contributions to our culture.

At Oberlin, we stress the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion from the very first interactions with prospective and new students, faculty, and staff—



during the admissions and hiring process, as well as in our orientation programs. The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) provides new and transfer students and new employees with non-discrimination and anti-harassment education, including Title IX Sexual Harassment training. Oberlin requires new and transfer students to attend two peer-led, small-group training sessions within their first year on campus.

PRSM (Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct), a student organization that partners with the EDI office, conducts the Title IX Sexual Harassment workshops and Oberlin's consent education and awareness efforts. The workshops are typically in-person but were moved to a virtual format for the first time in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in the virtual environment, we saw a high level of engagement, as some students felt more comfortable using the chat function to discuss sensitive topics rather than having to speak up in the in-person sessions.

In 2020, we offered an additional series of programs designed to introduce students to Oberlin's commitment to inclusive excellence. Students participated in multiple tracks to help them become aware of Oberlin's commitments and their responsibilities in contributing to inclusive excellence on campus. One highlight was a bystander intervention workshop, which helped students develop the skills to respond effectively when incidents of bias, harassment, or discrimination occur, whether they experience them directly or want to be effective anti-discrimination and anti-harassment allies.

### **OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION ENSURES COMPLIANCE AND APPLICATION OF BEST PRACTICES**

Oberlin's EDI office plays a critical leadership role in creating an inclusive environment, supporting equal opportunity, and protecting all members of the college community against discrimination and harassment. While the EDI office leads these efforts, preventing discrimination and harassment and creating an inclusive and equitable living, learning, and working environment is the responsibility of all members of the Oberlin College community.

To ensure that all students, faculty, and staff understand their role in creating a safe, inclusive environment, the EDI office regularly reviews and updates policies. In 2020, the office updated the Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Prohibited Relationships Policy and the Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy to reflect regulatory changes and the latest best practices. You can find these policies and others at <https://www.oberlin.edu/equity-diversity-inclusion>.

Campus members can report alleged instances of harassment, discrimination, and misconduct online and anonymously, if they so choose, or another person may file a report on their behalf. The EDI office offers numerous support measures and on- and off-campus support services. In addition, the office offers a variety of formal and adaptive resolution processes to make sure we are accommodating the needs and concerns of affected parties.

The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion was instrumental in the development of this report, and the impact of its work is featured throughout.

**“Education is the central tenet of our approach to addressing harassment, discrimination, and misconduct. The student-led training and the other conversations that we are able to facilitate have made everyone in our campus community safer, more aware, and respectful.”**

**Rebecca Mosely**, Director for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Title IX Coordinator





### SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN OBERLIN'S CURRICULUM

Through academics, research, and community engagement, Oberlin students foster a sense of social responsibility, strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills in communication and problem-solving, and an ability to apply knowledge in complex real-world settings. Our students have access to a wide array of majors, minors, and individual courses related to social responsibility and social justice.

Within the College of Arts and Sciences, academic departments include Africana studies; anthropology; comparative American studies; comparative literature; East Asian studies; gender, sexuality, and feminist studies; Hispanic studies; Jewish studies; Latin American studies; Russian language, literature, and culture; and Russian and East European studies. In many departments at Oberlin, students are exposed to topics such as peace and conflict, cultural diversity, colonialism, Indigenous Peoples, poverty and affluence, human rights, racism, and much more. For more information on our social-related courses, refer to the Global Impact section of this report and [see the full list on our website](#).

We also support student education through learning communities, which are comprised of individually instructed courses from different academic departments. Faculty and students within a learning community work together at key points throughout the semester for multidisciplinary discussion, shared assignments, and programming. In 2020, we expanded our learning and living community to include Roots in STEM, which seeks to address diversity and inclusion in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields by promoting a sense of belonging and community for under-represented students.

### Afrikan Heritage House Builds Community and Cultural Awareness



Our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion shines through in the many experiences, activities, and living spaces available to Oberlin students. One

of our longstanding examples is Lord-Saunders Program House, also known as Afrikan Heritage House, or A-House. It is a residence for students who want to heighten their understanding of cultures, traditions, and issues among African, African American, and African Caribbean societies.

Closely connected with Oberlin's Department of Africana Studies and the Multicultural Resource Center, this space offers a comfortable atmosphere grounded in Africana cultural traditions. It is a place where students interact with Africana faculty outside of the classroom,

learn about various identities within the Black community, discuss important issues, and find support and camaraderie with fellow students and staff.

A-House students and staff host a variety of educational and cultural programs, including the Community Paint Session, No Talent-Talent Show, Soul Session Open Mic, Black Alumni Panel Discussion, and special appearances by noted Africana artists and musicians. In addition, the Lord-Saunders Dining Hall features traditional foods from across the African Diaspora.



Learning about social topics is not relegated to the classroom. We regularly offer out-of-classroom dialogues on political and societal issues; events that honor culture and language; concerts and recitals that showcase classical artists and new age musicians; symposia on issues such as poverty, sustainability, globalization, and gender identity and expression; and culturally themed residential housing. Students also learn from each other through a variety of student groups and in internships, co-ops, and research projects.

### **PROVIDING SUPPORT TO MULTICULTURAL STUDENTS**

Since opening in 1995, the **Multicultural Resource Center (MRC)** has been a critical voice and activator in promoting equity for students of color, LGBTQ+ students, and first-generation college students. The MRC has a variety of impactful signature programs that address the needs of Oberlin's multicultural students. Some programs include:

- **Colors of Rhythm**, a forum for disenfranchised student artists and performers of color.
- **Culture-specific commencement celebrations for graduating students**, for Asian and Pacific Islander Diaspora (APID) students; Black Parent and Family Appreciation; Latinx Graduation; and Lavender Graduation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and ally (LGBTQ+) students.
- **Indigenous Women's Series**, a series of programs created to increase the institutional awareness and support of indigenous issues in the curriculum and among the campus community.
- **My Name is My Own**, a series of public lectures, film screenings, artistic and activist performances, workshops, and small discussion groups to support queer communities of color at Oberlin.

The MRC also actively engages with those who use its services and develops resources to help students and campus members deal with various challenges that they face in their daily lives. For example, in 2016, the MRC launched an official support initiative for undocumented immigrant/ Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students to help them fill out paperwork and protect their rights. In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MRC worked with the Oberlin College Counseling Center and Health Promotion to develop and launch an online mental health toolkit for people of color who have been disproportionately affected by the virus. In 2020, the MRC also published an anti-racism and radical self-care toolkit for students and staff that includes tips for anti-racist allyship and recommended educational resources such as podcasts, books, videos, and social media profiles.

Education and training is also a large piece of the MRC mission. The center's staff is trained in facilitating interactive training sessions to foster and develop diversity and multicultural competency through awareness, knowledge, and skills.

### **Bridging the Gap**

**Bridging the Gap: Dialogue Across Campus in a Time of Political Polarization** offered a team of Oberlin students the opportunity to build dialogue skills with nationally recognized facilitator Simon Greer and to apply that practice with students from the conservative evangelical college Spring Arbor University in Michigan. Through a combination of classroom learning, off-campus trips, and observations of a broad criminal justice reform initiative in Michigan, both groups collaborated to envision how those dialogue skills could be applied to a range of social challenges. A guiding principle of Bridging the Gap is that students developed the skills to truly listen, understand, be heard, and seek common ground without attempting to change minds. Classwork focused on active listening and how to have hard conversations.



### Barefoot Dialogue

Sustained dialogue brings small groups of students together for multiple meetings to discuss wide-ranging topics. Unlike debate, which promotes persuasive practice, sustained dialogue focuses on understanding; participants seek to listen deeply with the goal of comprehending each other's viewpoints and perspectives.

At a time of extreme political polarization, sustained dialogue intervenes in support of democratic civil society by fostering respect for diversity and promoting peacebuilding. Oberlin has joined the broader movement to promote respectful and empathetic engagement through the launch of a campus-developed program called Barefoot Dialogue. Groups of approximately 16 students, under the guidance of a trained student facilitator, spend a semester in weekly gatherings, responding to prompts that draw out their differences and encourage their deep understanding of each other.



### Conservatory of Music Addresses Equitable and Diverse Music Education

For more than 150 years, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music has been inspiring artistic achievement and cultivating musical and intellectual creativity, rigor, and breadth; training our students to confront complex problems and create change and value in the world; and preparing our graduates to lead productive, meaningful lives as artist-citizens who change the world for good.

In September 2020, the Oberlin Conservatory reaffirmed and strengthened this commitment through adoption of its **Racial Equity & Diversity Action Plan**, with the intention to underscore these commitments and outline immediate steps to help realize these values more fully. Implementation is overseen by a new multidisciplinary advisory council comprising faculty, staff, students, alumni, professional leaders, and community members.

Faculty and staff collaborated with student and alumni leaders, in particular members of the Oberlin College Black Musicians Guild (OCBMG), to build out the plan, which includes the following equity, diversity, and belonging commitments:

- **Curriculum and how it is taught:** Diversifying our curriculum and broadening the repertoires, artworks, musical traditions, and analytical perspectives that our students encounter and with which they engage. This includes diversifying the music theory sequence, which had been centered primarily in the Western art-music tradition.
- **Programming, repertoire, and performance:** Working aggressively to diversify the repertoires, artists, genres, practices, and traditions with which our students engage in the studio and on stage. We will familiarize our students with historically marginalized genres and traditions in the music world—and, in so doing, inspire our students' creativity while expanding their intellectual and artistic horizons.
- **Admissions and auditions:** Working to increase the recruitment and enrollment of students from underrepresented communities. This includes creating a new fund to help low-income students afford travel to campus for in-person auditions.
- **Personnel:** Increasing the diversity of the faculty and staff is one of our top priorities for long-term success.
- **Climate:** Creating a conservatory climate in which all individuals experience a sense of belonging and support. In August 2020, we launched a new Racial & Social Justice in Music module as a key part of new student orientation in the conservatory.
- **Community engagement:** Expanding the level of community engagement by our students, faculty, and staff—including the possibility of creating a community-based learning or community-engagement requirement for all conservatory students.

## UNIQUE HOUSING EXPERIENCES REFLECT OUR DIVERSITY

As part of the effort by Residential Education and Dining Services to provide singular and individual housing experiences, 10 houses are arranged across campus to promote inclusion and create a sense of community among our diverse students. These residential communities within our broader campus community enable group members to share and learn from each other's challenges and accomplishments and to create a network that can work together to address broader issues that affect everyone.

**Students may also choose to live in themed learning communities within a residence hall. Here are two examples:**

### Roots in STEM

While a large percentage of Oberlin students graduate with STEM majors, persistence in STEM at Oberlin is lower for students of color, first-generation college students, and low-income college students. A key component of many students' decision to drop STEM majors is the feeling that they do not belong in and are not prepared for the sciences. The Roots in STEM Living Learning Community promotes a sense of belonging and community in STEM among underrepresented students and offers students a space wherein they can identify as a scientist without losing their connection to their communities and identities.

### Sustainability Hall

Robert Lewis Kahn Hall is part of the First Year Residential Experience Cluster and is focused on sustainable living. First-year students living in Kahn Hall apply to live in the space and have pledged to make sustainability part of their everyday life by working to conserve water and energy, reduce waste, avoid bringing cars to campus, and minimize their negative impact on the environment. Students wishing to live in Kahn Hall must apply and sign a pledge committing themselves to living sustainably.



### Language Houses

- Allencroft (Russian House)
- Bailey (French House: Maison Francophone)
- Harvey (Spanish House: La Casa Hispanica)
- Kade (German House: Deutsches Haus)

### Identity-Based Communities

- Baldwin Cottage (Women and Trans Collective)
- Johnson House (Hebrew Heritage House)
- Lord-Saunders (Afrikan Heritage House)
- Quadrangle (Asia House)
- Zechiel House (Latinx Heritage House)
- Old Barrows (Third World House)



### Student Organizations Promote Diversity and Social Justice

#### A Sample:

- Oberlin Animal Rights
- As I Am
- Black Musicians Guild
- Black Scientists Guild
- Black Student Athletes Group
- Oberlin Climate Education, Advocacy and Lobbying
- Students for Energy Justice
- Students for Gender Inclusivity in Music
- Oberlin Student Labor Action Coalition
- Ability–Dis/Ability Solidarity
- Oberlin in Solidarity with El Salvador
- Oberlin Students in Solidarity with Guatemala
- Student Senate
- Sunrise Oberlin
- Obies for Undocumented Inclusion

### SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES IN THE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

#### Oberlin Music at Grafton

Developed by Professor of Music Education Jody Kerchner in partnership with administrators at the nearby Grafton Reintegration Center (GRC), Oberlin Music at Grafton (OMAG) is a choral program in which GRC residents and Oberlin conservatory students use music to engage in activities that promote community-building, cooperative group learning, discipline, self-esteem, and self-expression. OMAG consists of regular visits with GRC residents that include rehearsing choral music, discussing musical principles, and seasonal performances at GRC, which are often attended by the residents' loved ones.

#### Community Music Engagement in the Schools

Through this PACE (Pedagogy, Advocacy and Community Engagement) course, college and conservatory students develop strategies for engaging diverse populations of young people with music. During visits to area public grade schools, college students teach basic music concepts through interactive hands-on activities and performances. Through these experiences, Oberlin students develop skills essential for becoming effective teachers in a variety of settings.

#### Collaboration with Oberlin Center for the Arts

Beginning in 2019, OCA launched the Performing Artists in Residence, or "PAIR" program, connecting students from the conservatory with partnering institutions Mercy Allen Hospital and Welcome Nursing Home. Using the arts as a tool for healing and for building understanding, PAIR introduces music into lobbies and along bedsides to help alleviate patient pain, reduce stress, and decrease overall recovery time.

#### Oberlin Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble

More than a mere spot in an elite jazz group, admission to the Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble requires a demonstrated commitment to service through music and a willingness to give for others—core principles exemplified by Rollins throughout his life and career. Community outreach programs were built into the program at its inception. Students who audition and interview for the program articulate a statement of purpose for participating in these engagement activities in schools and areas that are economically disadvantaged.

#### Girls Electronic Arts Retreat

The Girls Electronic Arts Retreat (GEAR) is a day camp for 3rd to 5th grade girls that fosters curiosity, creativity, and confidence through playful, collaborative projects that integrate science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. GEAR is housed in the newly renovated Technology in Music and Related Arts (TIMARA) studios at the conservatory and co-sponsored by TIMARA, Oberlin Center for the Arts, and the Community Music School.



### Sonic Arts in Society Program

Led by Abby Aresty, technical director and lecturer in TIMARA, this group of students worked on three community-based project prototypes: creating hospital bracelets that tell the story of patients' lives through audio recordings and fabric collected by friends and family; a "gratitude showers" installation that involves the entire hospital community; and a Better Breather's Club that includes COPD patients and involves breath-inspired experiments that explore intersections of sound, breath, mindfulness, craft, and technology.

### Conservatory Winter Term Projects

Winter Term projects take the shape of both individual and group projects, independent and conservatory sponsored, and faculty led or student led. While the scope of these projects is limitless, social justice is a frequently visited theme, applied to locations in and around Oberlin, students' hometowns, and regions across the world. Recent social justice initiatives woven into Winter Term projects include:

- A student string quartet's performances in Washington, D.C.-area homeless shelters as part of a regional tour.
- The Oberlin Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble's service and performance at an inner-city church in San Francisco.
- A faculty-led mission trip with conservatory brass students to Uganda with the nonprofit Brass for Africa.
- A faculty-led mission trip to hurricane-ravaged regions in Texas and Puerto Rico.





## Student-Athletes and Department of Athletics Pursue Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Oberlin is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all students and athletes. We offer 21 NCAA Division III varsity sports, approximately 20 student-run club sports, and a robust intramural program.

The Oberlin Department of Athletics, which administers the varsity sports program, is committed to the personal development and well-being of all Yeomen and Yeowomen, the student body overall, and the college community. Under the direction of Natalie Winkelfoos, associate vice president for athletics advancement, the department has led the way in adopting an inclusion mindset in athletics and received national recognition for its implementation of inclusive programs and policies, including the development of the [Black Student-Athlete Group \(BSAG\)](#) and the [Transgender Inclusion Policy](#).

The department works to improve inclusion in sports through collaborative conversations, training, and action. 2020 was a key year for these actions, as the department—inspired by the voices, actions, and activism of Oberlin student-athletes—met with Black student-athletes, alumni, community members,

and colleagues across the nation to rethink the role and responsibilities of an athletics department in a time of social change.

This collaboration continues, with the department working with athletes to implement a series of programmatic and cultural changes, including holding implicit bias/anti-bias/micro-aggression training for all students, coaches, and staff members; creating the Yeo-Vote Athletics Initiative to support nonpartisan voter registration and voter participation; expanding promotion of the achievements of Black student-athletes and alumni; and creating a diversity and inclusion designation within the Department of Athletics.

While the inclusion efforts of the athletics department have made a great impact on Oberlin and its students, it has also helped shape and influence the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) and other Division III programs across the country. For example, Oberlin's Transgender Inclusion Policy has served as a template for others looking to improve their program inclusivity. Oberlin's program is also actively working with the NCAC to implement the Russell Rule, which would require diversity among finalists for senior athletics positions.



# COMMUNITY COMMITMENT





## Community Commitment

Oberlin College and the city of Oberlin are inextricably linked. We were founded by the same people in the same year, 1833. In fact, the college sits in the center of the city with no boundaries to separate it—literally or figuratively—from the city of Oberlin.

Over the years, students and faculty and the city of Oberlin and surrounding communities have worked together on important issues of the day. As one example, Oberlin College was a center for abolitionist activities, and the college's presidents embraced multiple efforts to end slavery in America, while the city of Oberlin was a key stop along the Underground Railroad. Over its history, the college and larger community worked together on civil rights, women's rights, and later the environmental movement. That mutual support continues today as the college and city collaborate to combat climate change, enrich opportunities in the local schools through music programming and tutoring, support public transportation and affordable access to electric vehicles, expand access to fresh local foods, and provide energy efficiency services to low-income residents, among other activities. The city motto—"Live. Learn. Lead."—reflects a shared ethos of college and city.

In 2007, the city of Oberlin became one of the first Ohio communities to join ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, an international network of more than 1,700 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. As part of its initial commitment, the city enlisted an Oberlin student to conduct the city's first greenhouse emissions inventory, completed in 2007.

Faculty and students continue to be intimately involved in all aspects of climate action planning in the

city. In 2019, the third update of the city of Oberlin's Climate Action Plan was released; it includes more than 100 strategies to enable the city to secure its goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Those strategies address such areas as renewable energy, energy efficiency, transportation, land-use, high-performance buildings, waste management, water management, education and outreach, food and agriculture, resilience, and coordination with the college.

In 2020, the city of Oberlin embarked on a comprehensive climate vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning process designed to foster community resilience in the face of the changes to climate now underway. In spring 2021, through a unique Practicum in Community Climate Resilience Planning, 15 Oberlin students played a leadership role in coordinating and facilitating meetings and workshops with 30-plus government officials and community leaders from business, health care, cultural organizations, public utilities, and emergency services. Through this process, the students played a central role in crafting a draft assessment and report for the city that will serve as the basis for future planning.

Oberlin City Council has adopted a Climate Action Plan written by a Climate Action Subcommittee. The city also formed an Education and Outreach Climate Action Plan (CAP) Working Group and a Social Equity Working Group, which are strong partners with the college. These initiatives are explained in more detail throughout this section of the report.

In addition to this report, see the [2019 Oberlin College Community Impact Report](#) for more information on the many ways that Oberlin College contributes to the well-being of the residents of Oberlin, Lorain County, and Northeast Ohio.

### Community as Classroom

Oberlin offers academic courses related to both “sustainability” and “community based learning.”

Courses that concentrate on sustainability—including the social, economic, and environmental dimensions—or that examine an issue or topic using sustainability as a lens are termed sustainability-focused courses.

Community-Based Learning (CBL) is a pedagogy in which faculty collaborate with community partners to identify community needs and goals and integrate these—through community-based research or class projects—into the academic goals of a course for the mutual benefit of the partner and student learning.

The concept of “community” is defined broadly to include areas immediately neighboring the college (Oberlin, Lorain and Cuyahoga counties, and greater Northeast Ohio) but also extends to national and international partnerships with nonprofit organizations, NGOs, and government and public sector agencies.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

Many students, faculty, and staff say that engagement with the broader community is an important aspect of their time at Oberlin. The college partners with more than 100 local social service agencies, schools, religiously affiliated service organizations, grassroots community initiatives, and municipal government entities that result in opportunities to give back. The college also welcomes local organizations to recruit students, staff, and faculty for community service needs. Each year, more than 1,200 students volunteer about 115,000 hours in programs such as teaching Spanish to elementary school students, serving as math and reading tutors, assisting with musical education, transporting donated food to nonprofit food pantries, and promoting a sustainable transportation system on campus and in the community.

Many of these community programs are coordinated through Oberlin College’s Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching and Research. Students can also explore and participate in one-time and ongoing volunteer and service projects identified by community partners on [serve.oberlin.edu](https://serve.oberlin.edu). By subscribing to this platform, campus members receive updates about opportunities that may fit a particular interest.

Oberlin College’s efforts in the community have been recognized nationally on the President’s Higher Education Community Services Honor Roll with Distinction in the Interfaith Community Service category. The college also secured a place on the Honor Roll in both the General Community Service and Education categories. Finally, Oberlin College is one of 361 institutions to be awarded the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification for excellence in civic engagement.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

Oberlin College is working closely with the city of Oberlin to build an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable model of a post-fossil-fuel community. The college’s Committee on Environmental Sustainability includes two representatives from the city of Oberlin—one from Oberlin City Council and one from the city’s Office of Sustainability. The city’s Office of Sustainability works with college students, faculty, and staff on environmental projects such as landscaping, solar energy, transportation, climate change, environmental communications, and sustainability behavior change.

#### Climate Action

Like the college, the city of Oberlin is committed to decisive action on climate change, including implementing its Climate Action Plan, which was adopted by Oberlin City Council in 2011. The plan calls for a 75% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and a more than 100% reduction (net-positive) by 2050 (compared with a 2012 baseline).

The Office of Sustainability and its Education and Outreach Climate Action Plan Working Group are tasked with implementing the climate action plan, which includes a streamlined process for installing solar in local homes and businesses. The city has a Sustainable Reserve Fund (SRF) to provide funding for

energy efficiency, energy conservation, greenhouse gas emission reductions, and development of renewable generation resources. In 2020, the city of Oberlin's electricity grid reached 100% renewable energy, including utilizing 89% carbon-free electricity and offsetting the other 11% by purchasing Renewable Energy Credit (RECs). The city is also working with the college on plans for a new district energy system for the campus, which will have the capability to provide no-carbon heating to local hospitals, schools, churches, and public facilities.

**Environmental Dashboard**

One of the best examples of the college's collaboration with the city of Oberlin is the Environmental Dashboard, which was developed over the last two decades in partnership with the city.

Led by Oberlin College Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology John Petersen, Environmental Dashboard (ED) is a comprehensive community-focused data acquisition, management, and communication platform. First developed by Oberlin faculty and students in the early 2000s for monitoring and displaying resource flows for the college's Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, the platform is designed to engage, educate, motivate, and empower sustainable development and resilience within organizations and whole communities. Since its inception, the project has received significant attention and funding from the federal government and nonprofit organizations, helping the project expand significantly. Today, 21 screens are installed throughout the city of Oberlin, including public schools, store fronts, city hall, a food pantry, and the Kendal at Oberlin retirement community. In addition, a dozen screens on campus display content from the dashboard. Four linked content components engage the users:

1. **Building Dashboard** tracks and communicates real-time energy and water use within buildings, translating complex data into visualizations that are easily understood by a non-technical audience.
2. **Citywide Dashboard (CWD)** is an animated visualization of whole-community flows of electricity, drinking water, and current environmental conditions, designed to enhance community members' understanding of how they are part of a larger whole.
3. **Community Voices (CV)** combines images and words drawn from the full diversity of a community to celebrate and develop social norms around the positive thought, action, and historical legacy that move a community toward sustainability.
4. **The Community Calendar** provides a crowd-sourced venue through which community members easily share and promote events and announcements with the entire community, thereby encouraging engagement in all aspects of civic life.

**“The Environmental Dashboard has been a decade-long collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and Oberlin residents. The campus and the larger communities in which we work are a laboratory developing and testing how novel communication technology can be used to enhance ‘systems thinking’ and build more just, sustainable, connected, and resilient communities.”**

**John Petersen**, Oberlin College  
 Professor of Environmental  
 Studies and Biology



**“The city of Oberlin has a goal of becoming climate-positive by 2050, which means we will be taking more of the heat-trapping gases that lead to climate change out of the atmosphere than we put in. We’re all working together to help Oberlin College reach its goal of carbon neutrality by 2025 because that helps all of us substantially.”**

**Linda Arbogast**, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Oberlin

Overall, the ED provides users with information they can use to understand the impact of changing their consumption habits. The dashboard team’s research has shown that this information changes behavior—people are more aware of their energy and water consumption and know that changes they make can lead to tangible benefits.

Two separate companies—Lucid Design Group and Community Hub—formed by former Oberlin students, have spun off from the project to develop commercial technologies. Lucid’s “BuildingOS” technology is being used by hundreds of corporations and government entities to conserve resources in thousands of buildings across the U.S. In 2018, Oberlin College was able to extend the work into Cleveland, completing major Cleveland Environmental Dashboard installations at Great Lakes Science Center and Cleveland Metroparks.

The data for the city of Oberlin and for individual buildings on Oberlin’s campus are available online at [environmentaldashboard.org](https://environmentaldashboard.org).

### **Transportation Solutions**

Oberlin College students and faculty and community leaders have worked together on various issues related to transportation, including bike programs, expanded bus service, and electric vehicles. In 2020, the Office of Sustainability worked with Oberlin College Professor of Psychology and Environmental Studies Cindy Frantz on a Sustainable Transportation Survey. The survey helped determine the feasibility and implementation strategy for an electric vehicle car share program available to campus and community members. This strategy built upon the successful implementation of a car-share service available to college and community members since 2006.

The result was implementation of a community car sharing pilot program with two Chevy Bolt electric vehicles (EVs). The cost for users is \$8 per hour. All maintenance, insurance, and fuel costs are covered. The two EVs are based at locations where EV chargers are already installed. The low cost is intended to benefit both the college community and city residents, including lower-income families without regular access to transportation.

### **Resource Conservation**

As noted earlier in the Environmental Responsibility section of this report, the student-run Resource Conservation Team (RCT) is involved in many projects that deliver campus and community benefits. Two of the community programs are:

- **Oberlin Food Rescue**, which gathers edible food that would otherwise go to waste from campus dining facilities and distributes it to local emergency food programs. The campus dining facilities team partners with Oberlin Community Services (OCS), and members of the RCT deliver the leftover prepared food.
- **Oberlin Free Store**, which is open to anyone who wants to donate or take items for free. Available items include kitchenware, small furniture, clothes, craft supplies, books, and more. At the end of every semester, the Free Store is often overflowing with gently worn reusable goods, which find a new owner instead of becoming trash in a landfill.

### FOSTERING STRONG SOCIAL CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

Community engagement is an important part of an Oberlin education. It enables students to develop and hone the skills they learn on campus and in the classroom to benefit the residents of Oberlin, Lorain County, and Northeast Ohio. During their time on campus, our faculty and students become part of the broader Oberlin community and look for ways to make a positive impact on their “home” and its residents.

#### The Bonner Center Drives Community-Engaged Learning

The Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Research is at the heart of the college’s community engagement and social responsibility efforts, offering community service programs, opportunities, and grants for students, faculty, staff, and alumni. For more than 15 years, the Bonner Center has promoted socially responsible, ethical, and meaningful engagement by linking college members’ interests with the city’s goals supported by organizations in Oberlin and beyond.

This strong connection between the college and broader community empowers students to become creative leaders and inspires academic innovation and interdisciplinary problem-solving to address pressing community challenges. The Bonner Center’s signature programs include:

- **The Bonner Scholars Program**, a four-year community service scholarship for 15 underrepresented and first-generation students with a high financial need and a record of community service.
- **America Reads** and **America Counts** programs, which enable Oberlin students to fulfill their Federal Work-Study requirements by tutoring Oberlin school students in reading and math.
- The **Ninde Scholars Program**, which provides academic support and college access services to 7th to 12th graders in Oberlin City Schools.
- Oberlin College’s **Community Based Work Study Program**, allowing students to work with one of the Bonner Center’s 19 nonprofit and public sector partner organizations as part of the students’ Federal Work Study awards.

All Bonner Center programs emphasize ongoing training and reflection to prepare students for ethical and responsible community engagement. Students explore academic and career interests, build professional skills, and learn from leaders in nonprofit and government agencies while addressing community-identified needs.

For more information about the Bonner Center, visit <https://www.oberlin.edu/bcsl>.



1,200

Oberlin students work with local nonprofits, government agencies, and schools each year.

**Enabling and Encouraging Community Connections**

Oberlin’s Community Engagement Institute, held during New Student Orientation, is the first of many opportunities in which first-year Oberlin students partner with local organizations. The day-long program includes breakout sessions led by alumni and community leaders, a workshop on volunteer etiquette, and participation in a service project. We are fortunate to have strong partnerships with many local organizations that provide valuable experiences for new Oberlin students every year.

The program was hosted online in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but students still joined the discussion, which helped them learn the local area, build relationships, and engage with local community organizations.

Students are encouraged to maintain this level of community engagement throughout their time at Oberlin. This allows them to explore academic and career interests, build professional skills, and learn from leaders in nonprofit and government agencies while addressing community-identified needs. Across Northeast Ohio, Obies are making an impact. Here are some examples:

- **Coalition for Oberlin History** is devoted to telling the stories of the city of Oberlin’s history, including Westwood Cemetery, Groveland Street’s African American community, and Oberlin College.
- **Oberlin Drama at Grafton** prepares residents of the Grafton Reintegration Center for a successful return to society through increased self-knowledge, social understanding, and enhanced life skills gained from studying and performing meaningful drama.



- **El Centro Volunteer Initiative** connects students, faculty, and community members with Latinx residents in Lorain County. Volunteers teach citizenship and classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The initiative also includes working groups focused on fundraising, grant writing, and curriculum development.

### Community in the Curriculum

In addition to its community outreach, Oberlin College takes its classrooms into the community through community-based learning (CBL) courses. Professors intentionally design classes to integrate academic learning with community experiences to create a nuanced and thought-provoking experience for students. More than 50 CBL courses are offered each semester including:

- **The Cleveland Immersion Program:** Students learn about the history, challenges, and opportunities of Greater Cleveland in six themes: social justice, sustainability, entrepreneurship, economic development, arts and culture, and community leadership.
- **Community Music Engagement in the Schools:** Students learn musicmaking strategies that lead to a community music engagement project in a Lorain County school.
- **Environment and Society:** Students explore ways to transition local communities toward sustainability and resilience with respect to food, energy, and shelter in the face of local and global change.



### Oberlin's Economic Impact

Oberlin College has a positive economic impact on the city of Oberlin and the surrounding region. A recent study conducted by Oberlin College and IMPLAN consulting group noted that the college is directly and indirectly responsible for more than \$143 million in annual spending in the local economy through student spending, employee payroll, visitor spending, construction, and institutional expenditures.

In addition, Oberlin College is one of the largest employers in Lorain County, with approximately 1,100 full-time and part-time employees. Most of these employees live and raise their families in Lorain County. More than 600 Oberlin graduates live and work in Lorain County, and almost 700 reside in neighboring Cuyahoga County, serving as doctors, dentists, teachers, civic leaders, executives, entrepreneurs, real estate developers, and leaders in art, culture, and music.



# GLOBAL COMMITMENT





## Global Commitment

Oberlin's reach extends beyond our campus and our community—Obies are everywhere. Through education, leadership, and service, Oberlin graduates are academically prepared and personally driven to change the world for good.

Think one person can change the world? So do we. We challenge ourselves and everyone around us to make positive change happen.



## Reinforcing Our Commitment to Fight Climate Change Globally

Oberlin has long been committed to action on climate change and social justice. On campus, we have established 2025 as the target year for achieving carbon neutrality. On a global scale, our efforts have included signing the Carbon Commitment (previously the American Colleges & University President’s Climate Commitment) in 2006. In 2014, the college signed the Resilience Commitment to acknowledge that mitigating carbon is not enough—we must work within our communities to be resilient in the face of changing climate conditions. This combined approach is recognized as the Climate Commitment.



## OUR GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Encouraging students to think and act globally is an important characteristic of an Oberlin education. We enroll and graduate students from around the U.S. and all parts of the world and prepare them to take on great challenges—in environmental sustainability and social justice, education, the arts, social sciences, math and natural sciences, languages, religion, and more. An Oberlin education prepares graduates to pursue their interests in any of these areas while committing to positive action with regards to the environment, diversity, and communities.

Oberlin provides students with the historical and cultural perspectives, technical knowledge, critical thinking skills, and real-world experiences to truly change the world for good. We encourage students to recognize interdependence among our social systems, the natural environment, and economies. Our college aims to be a model community, applying this intersectional approach to drive the world we live in today toward the thriving world we need for the future. We take pride in taking on challenges and digging deep for the opportunities—through a community- and world-engaged approach to learning.

At Oberlin, we also believe that experiencing, understanding, and embracing other cultures is an invaluable part of a liberal arts education. Our global perspective is not limited to classes, but shines through in the experiences, living and learning spaces, and activities available to students. Each year, international students make up 10 percent of our student body, hailing from nearly 50 countries. All students are encouraged to expand their perspective and worldview, both on and off campus, through opportunities and resources such as:

- **Study away programs**, which allow students to study off campus for a semester or year by choosing from Oberlin-sponsored programs, consortial programs, or more than 100 affiliated programs. Oberlin believes that all interested students, regardless of major, should participate in an academic program in a different part of the country or world as part of their Oberlin experience. Oberlin is frequently ranked among the top 25 baccalaureate institutions with the greatest number of students studying abroad.
- **The Paul and Edith Cooper International Learning Center**, an educational laboratory and social center that enables students, faculty, staff, and community members to build proficiency in world languages, consider new perspectives, and explore cultures.
- **Oberlin Center for Languages and Cultures**, which strives to increase collaboration around international topics, raise our global profile through language education and study abroad, and offer resources to students who are learning world languages. In fact, more than 10 percent of Oberlin’s courses are taught in a language other than English.
- **International Student Resource Center**, which provides international students with one-on-one advising appointments and educational programs, community-building support, cultural adjustment, help with visa regulations, and immigration paperwork.
- **10 language- and identity-based houses**, which are communities on campus that enable group members to share and learn from each other’s challenges and accomplishments.

## EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS

The study of sustainability and resilience in the natural environment and social systems is everywhere at Oberlin. Academic courses that concentrate on sustainability—including its social, economic, and environmental dimensions or which examine an issue or topic using sustainability as a lens—are termed sustainability-focused courses, and they can be found in programs and departments across the college.

Oberlin offers both a major and a minor in environmental studies. This interdisciplinary program seeks to foster an understanding of the causes and consequences of the world’s environmental condition and helps students define the opportunities to solve challenges and ultimately contribute to a net-positive world. With a focus on designing a more sustainable relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world, we believe sustainable systems must be environmentally sound, socially just, and economically viable. Environmental studies courses include, but are not limited to:

- Environmental Repair
- Environmental Issues Beyond Borders
- Community Climate Resilience Planning in the City of Oberlin
- Indigenous People and Climate Change
- Indigenous Environmentalism
- Environmental Communication
- Sustainable Cities
- Climate Change & Community Resilience in London
- Global Environmental Politics
- Natural Resources and Conflict



**“Environmental studies is not just about science and conservation. In addition to natural sciences and social sciences that are traditionally associated with the discipline, we promote environmental humanities, which combines scientific rigor with creative practice. Environmental humanities offers a sustainable vision for our future by putting human faces on socio-environmental problems.”**

**Karl Offen**, Director, Environmental Studies Program, and Professor of Environmental Studies



## We're Ready, and We're All In!

Oberlin College was a signatory to the 2017 “We Are Still In” climate declaration created in response to the United States’ intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. December 2020 marked the five-year anniversary of the world coming together to sign the Paris Agreement for climate action. To commemorate this moment and reaffirm the institution’s commitment to combating climate change, Oberlin joined more than 1,000 leaders from local governments, businesses, tribal communities, and other institutions as a signatory of the “America Is All In” joint statement.

In January 2020, when the Biden-Harris administration decided to re-enter the global agreement, Oberlin welcomed this change of policy and is pleased to work with the global community in addressing one of the biggest challenges of modern times.

Our students learn from diverse faculty from North America, Europe, and Asia, and from other leading scholars who are actively engaged in research, writing, and education. Our students also learn from each other through a variety of student groups and in internships, co-ops, and research projects.

Overall, Oberlin offers more than 50 sustainability-focused courses. These can be found in many academic departments and programs at Oberlin—in environmental studies, as well as in Africana studies, anthropology, biology, chemistry, economics, English, geology, mathematics, politics, psychology, religion, the conservatory and more. In addition to the environmental studies courses listed earlier, the courses below reflect the wide variety and global relevance of our sustainability-focused curricula:

- Ecological Perspectives on Small-Scale Societies
- The Nature of Sexualized Identities: Gender, Race, Queerness, and Environmental Justice
- Environmental Economics
- Energy Economics
- Natural Hazards
- Environmental Policy
- Advanced Methods in Community Based Social Marketing
- Seminar in Environmental Psychology
- Building Resilience in the Face of Climate Change Through Effective Conflict Resolution
- Religion, Ethics, Environment
- Making a Sustainable, Inclusive, and Just Future: The New Industrial Revolution
- Music and Ecology

Oberlin’s course definitions align with the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), a self-reporting system developed by the Association of the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Oberlin is a member of AASHE and uses STARS to track progress toward its sustainability goals relative to other colleges and universities. For more information on our sustainability-related courses, [see the full list on our website](#).

## Global Climate Change Research on Campus

Climate change defines the world our students will inherit for generations. It is a defining factor in how we operate our campus, how we educate our students, and how we plan for the future. It is also a primary focus area for faculty research, which provides students with real-world opportunities to understand and solve global challenges, especially in underrepresented and Indigenous communities.

Current fieldwork and research by our faculty include:

- **Julia Christensen, Associate Professor of Studio Art:** Christensen's interdisciplinary artwork investigates how "upgrade culture" impacts our lives and planet. This body of work began when she visited e-waste dumps in India, leading to questions about technology consumption and obsolescence. She is now working with scientists and engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab to design space technology that can transcend contemporary cycles of obsolescence.
- **Mary Garvin, Professor of Biology:** The causative agents of childhood cancer clusters are rarely determined. Garvin and her students study heavy metal contamination in an Ohio cluster and found a high abundance of the carcinogenic heavy metal cadmium in eastern cottonwood trees. Her research examines cadmium cycling in both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in the cancer cluster area.
- **Michael Moore, Professor of Biology:** Moore and his students explore the evolution and population genetics of rare plant species all over the globe, especially in southwestern North America and Hawaii. Their field and lab work helps document levels of genetic diversity remaining in these plants, which is useful in helping to conserve these species, some of which have been reduced to less than 10 wild individuals.
- **Swapna Pathak, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies:** Pathak's research relates to conflict and environment, global environmental politics, and environmental policy in developing countries. She explores ways for Oberlin faculty and students to interface with the United Nations and other organizations on the UN's climate action agenda.
- **Chie Sakakibara, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies:** Sakakibara and her students explore how Indigenous Peoples of North America process the consequences of global climate change. With a focus on transformative hope rather than human vulnerability, Sakakibara's projects look into how Indigenous communities foster resilience through reinvigorating social customs, sovereignty politics, and cultural performances in a time of accelerating environmental uncertainties.
- **Amanda Schmidt, Associate Professor of Geology and Archaeological Studies:** Schmidt's research focuses on studying which forces—over hundreds, thousands, and millions of years—have shaped the landscapes that we see today. She is currently researching how erosion relates to land use and climate change in China.
- **Md Rumi Shammin, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies:** Shammin's global research focuses on energy solutions and climate change adaptation initiatives in Bangladesh. He recently completed a book project on climate change adaptation and community resilience in South Asia with collaborators in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. He is also developing guidelines for refugee camp environmental management based on fieldwork in the Rohingya refugee camps in the Cox's Bazaar district of Bangladesh. Student research assistants are involved in both projects and are included as coauthors in some of his publications.

**“The pandemic has taught us the importance of international collaboration in facing the world’s most challenging public health issues. Oberlin believes our students can help change the world. Our new integrative concentration in global health is another example of Oberlin’s commitment to applying academic rigor to address the vulnerabilities in our society.”**

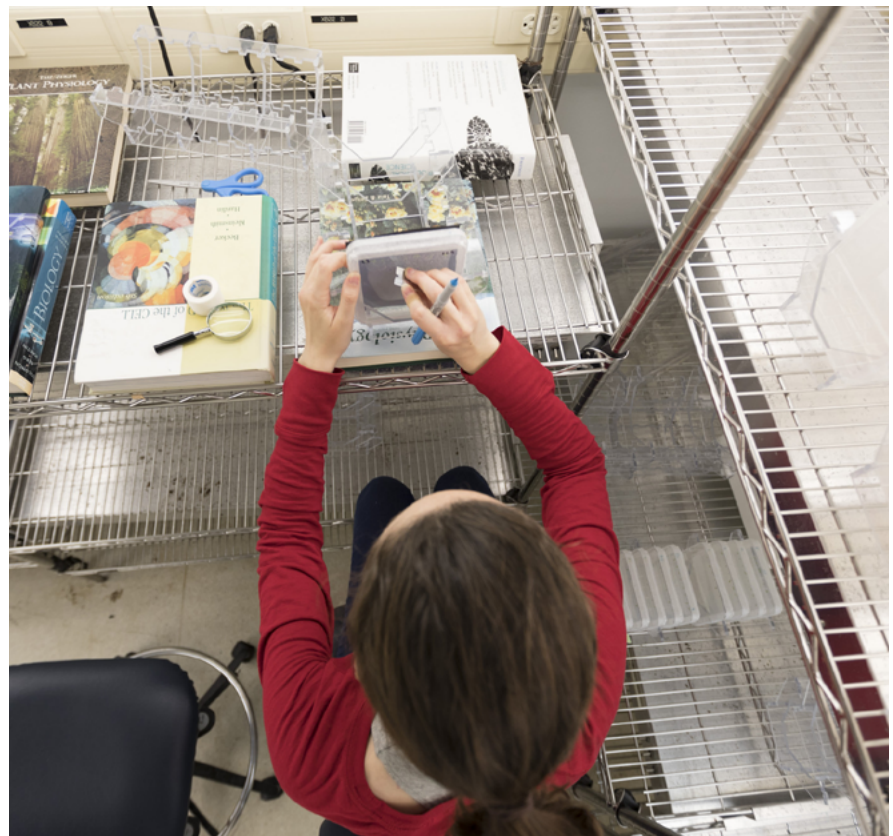
**Carmen Twillie Ambar,**  
President, Oberlin College

### **WE’RE DEVELOPING A GLOBAL HEALTH PATHWAY**

Oberlin is dedicated to preparing the next generation of global health professionals, helping to ensure that health care is delivered in a high-quality, equitable manner. We believe that worldwide threats to mental and physical wellness are most successfully addressed with the holistic, interdisciplinary approach that is the core of a liberal arts education.

In fall 2021, we will launch the Global Health Integrative Concentration. The program will cultivate globally minded graduates who can apply critical thinking and creative problem-solving to a wide range of public health challenges. Students will explore a spectrum of topics—from the mechanisms of disease, to the social, political, legal, and economic structures that determine health, to the ethical tenets of equitable health culture—utilizing coursework, mentors, and intensive work-related and project-based experiential learning. Required courses will focus on the broad scope of global health, ethics, and quantitative skills. Through elective courses, students will have the freedom to focus on the areas that most interest them while also developing critical thinking and writing skills.

The concentration will pay particular attention to issues and challenges that transcend national boundaries, including lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Oberlin Alumni Continue to Impact the World

We believe the world is a better place with Obies in it, and we are proud to see our alumni inspiring the world through their careers and ambitions. Our hope is that students take what they've learned at Oberlin—environmental awareness and resilience; a sense of social justice; a belief in people, systems, and rigorous debate; and an optimism about the future—and use it to make an impact in their careers and communities.

Alumni making a mark include, among many others, **Ana Maria Alvarez** and her activist dance company, CONTRA-TIEMPO; **Nan Aron**, founder of Alliance for Justice; **Adrienne Bloch**, managing attorney for the fossil fuels program at Earthjustice, an organization whose motto is “Because the Earth needs a good lawyer”; **Kara Carmosino**, senior manager for social justice leadership at the Coalition of Asian American Leaders; writers **Cathy Park Hong** (*Minor Feelings*),

**Mira Jacob** (*Good Talk*), and **Kiese Laymon** (*Heavy*), who explore their own experiences with depth and sensitivity while addressing the social injustices that pervade the American experience; **Alicia D'Arrio**, a senior attorney at the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama; **Thomas Frieden**, former director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who continues his commitment to global health issues as president and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives; **Jerry Greenfield**, who helped turn Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream into a model of corporate responsibility and environmental stewardship; **Mary Annaïse Heglar**, whose newsletter *Hot Take* brings an intersectional analysis to the climate conversation; **Sylvia Hood Washington**, who, as chief environmental research scientist at Environmental Health Research Associates, works on the impact of industrial

pollution on human health and ecosystems; **Landis Hudson**, executive director of Maine Rivers, which restores the ecological health among that state's river system; **John Kellett**, inventor of the quirky, solar-powered waterways-cleaning barge Mr. Trash Wheel; **Naomi Sabel, Ben Ezinga**, and **Josh Rosen**, founders of Sustainable Community Associates, which develops mixed-use, mixed-income projects to revitalize neglected buildings and neighborhoods; **Michael Sorrell**, whose “We Over Me” ethos as president of Paul Quinn College is creating a new model of urban higher education; and atmospheric scientist **Paul Wennberg**, director of the Ronald and Maxine Linde Center for Global Environmental Science, which works to provide a quantitative, process-based understanding of the earth and its interactions with humanity.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Multicultural Resource Center  
Green EDGE Fund  
Resource Conservation Team  
Office of Admissions  
Office of Communications  
Office of the President  
Office of Environmental Sustainability  
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
Presidential Initiative on Racial Equity and Diversity

### **External Partners**

City of Oberlin Office of Sustainability  
Oberlin City Council  
Ever-Green Energy