

2020

University of Southern Maine

Sustainability Progress Report



usm.maine.edu/sustainability

About the Report

The Office of Sustainability finalized its first Campus Sustainability Strategic Plan in April of 2017, and then published it in October of 2017, after receiving endorsement from the Student Senate and President Cummings. The plan, developed in collaboration with twelve campus departments and student groups, serves the dual purpose of being the University's climate action plan, as well as the larger University plan for all sustainability initiatives. Since publication, it has been endorsed in its entirety by the University's Master Planning Committee.

This report reveals our progress over the course of two years. Progress is evaluated both year over year, and as compared to the baseline year of FY 2006. Notable progress has been achieved for each of the major goals, and numerous initiatives have been started and completed. The University is now on track toward achieving the eight-year strategic plan goals, as well as the overarching goal of carbon neutrality.

Acknowledgements

This report represents the hard work and effort of an entire team.

Aaron Witham, Assistant Director of Facilities Management for Sustainability, wrote and edited content, as well as produced and analyzed data.

Chelsea Malacara, Sustainability Education & Outreach Coordinator, wrote and edited content, produced and analyzed data, and led the creation of the architecture, layout, and design.

Leah Soloway, former Americorps Energy Efficiency Coordinator, produced data, wrote content and helped with design.

Steve Sweeney, Resource Recovery Supervisor, edited content, as well as produced and analyzed data.

Jon Doré, Move & Operations Coordinator, wrote content, produced data and helped with design.

Emily Eschner, former Asset & Surplus Coordinator, helped to produce data. The University's energy consultant partner, Competitive Energy Services, helped produce and analyze data.

Special thanks to Michelle Tham and the late Peter Bartlett. Peter Bartlett was a true partner to the Office of Sustainability, and his contributions and friendship will be dearly missed.

Thanks to our dedicated waste crew, who works tirelessly to help us achieve our waste goals.

Members of the waste crew who contributed to the achievements in this report include Adam Longmire, Andy Jones, Billy Libby, Bob Michaud, Chris Curran, and James Cassotis. Thanks to the Executive Director of Facilities Management, John Souther, and to the Administration of the University of Southern Maine for their support. Finally, and most importantly, thank you to our Eco-rep students, who represent our greatest achievements and are the reason we are here.

Progress to Date

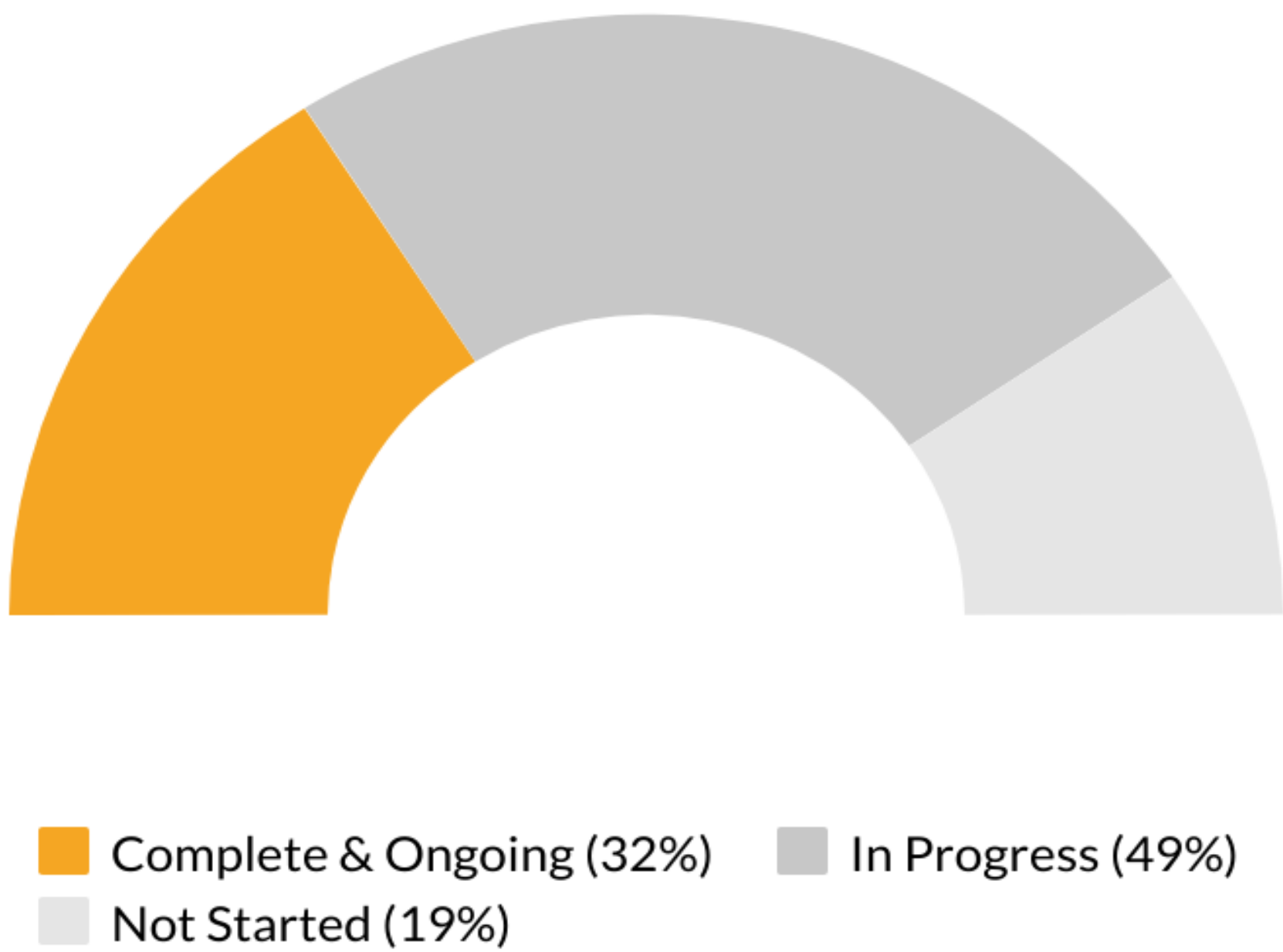
Overview

The plan is comprised of three mutually reinforcing pillars: energy, material resources, and education & outreach. Each of these pillars contains dozens of initiatives, collectively adding up to 120 total initiatives. The effort required to implement 120 initiatives is considerable and extends beyond the capacity of the Office of Sustainability alone, which is why multiple allies from multiple departments are engaged. In conjunction, these goals align with USM's President's ten goals* to ensure the university maintains its academic excellence, dedication to students, high-level engagement with our communities, and financial stability far into the future.

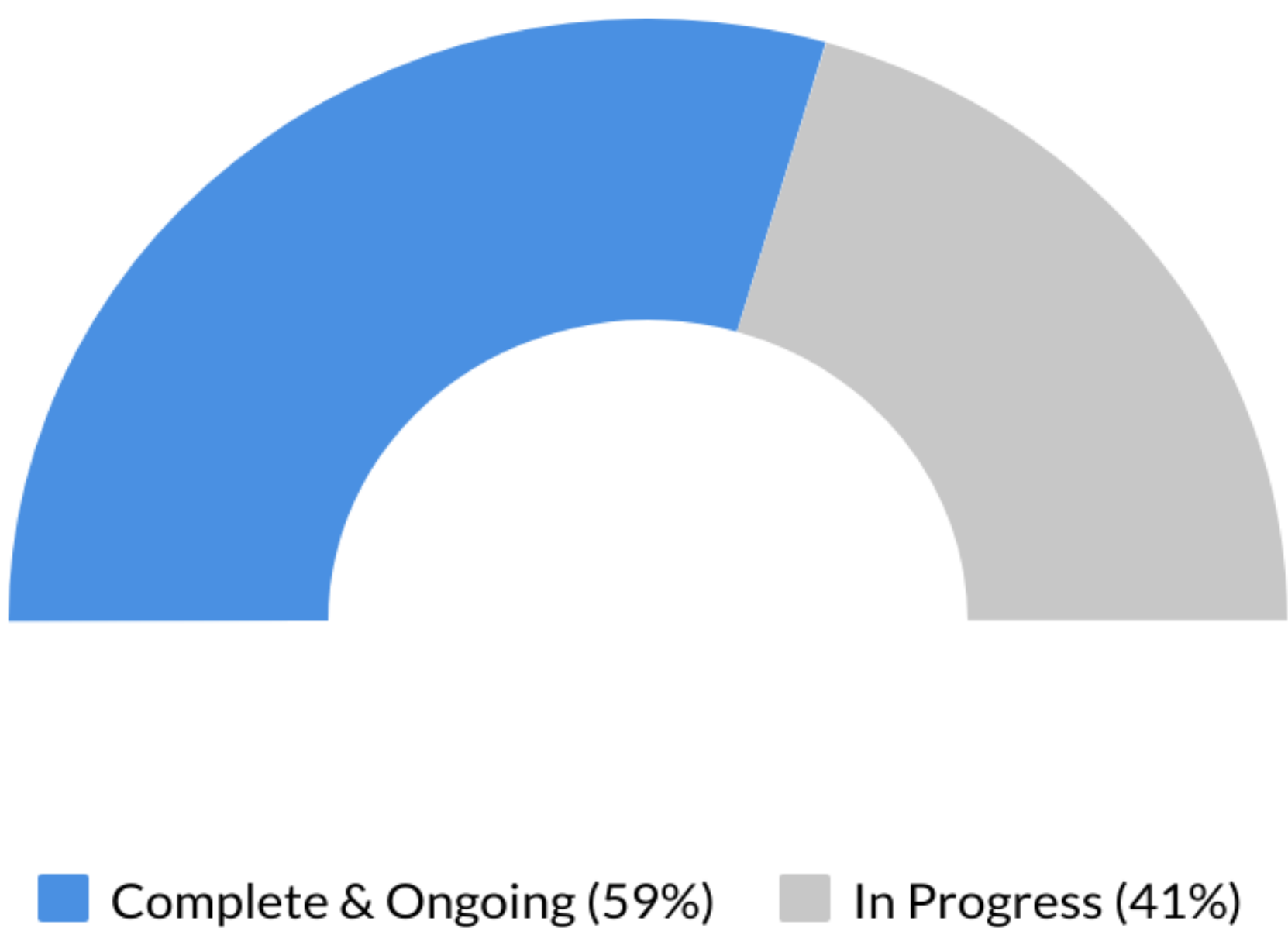
Goals	Dates
Acheive carbon neutrality	2040
ENERGY	
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from heat by 35%	2025
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity by 35%	2025
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by 20%	2025
MATERIAL RESOURCES	
Increase waste diversion rate to 70%	2020
Reduce overall waste by 25%	2025
EDUCATION & OUTREACH	
Build a community around sustainability on campus open to all students by doing the following:	2025
Utilize sustainability as a driver for enrollment, retention & giving by achieving national recognition and engaging students in meaningful, hands-on work improving campus	2020
Increase sustainability literacy among students, staff & faculty by increasing participation in ownership over sustainability initiatives	2020
*Baseline for percentage reductions is FY 2006 for energy	
*Baseline for percentage reductions is FY 2006 for waste	

Overview

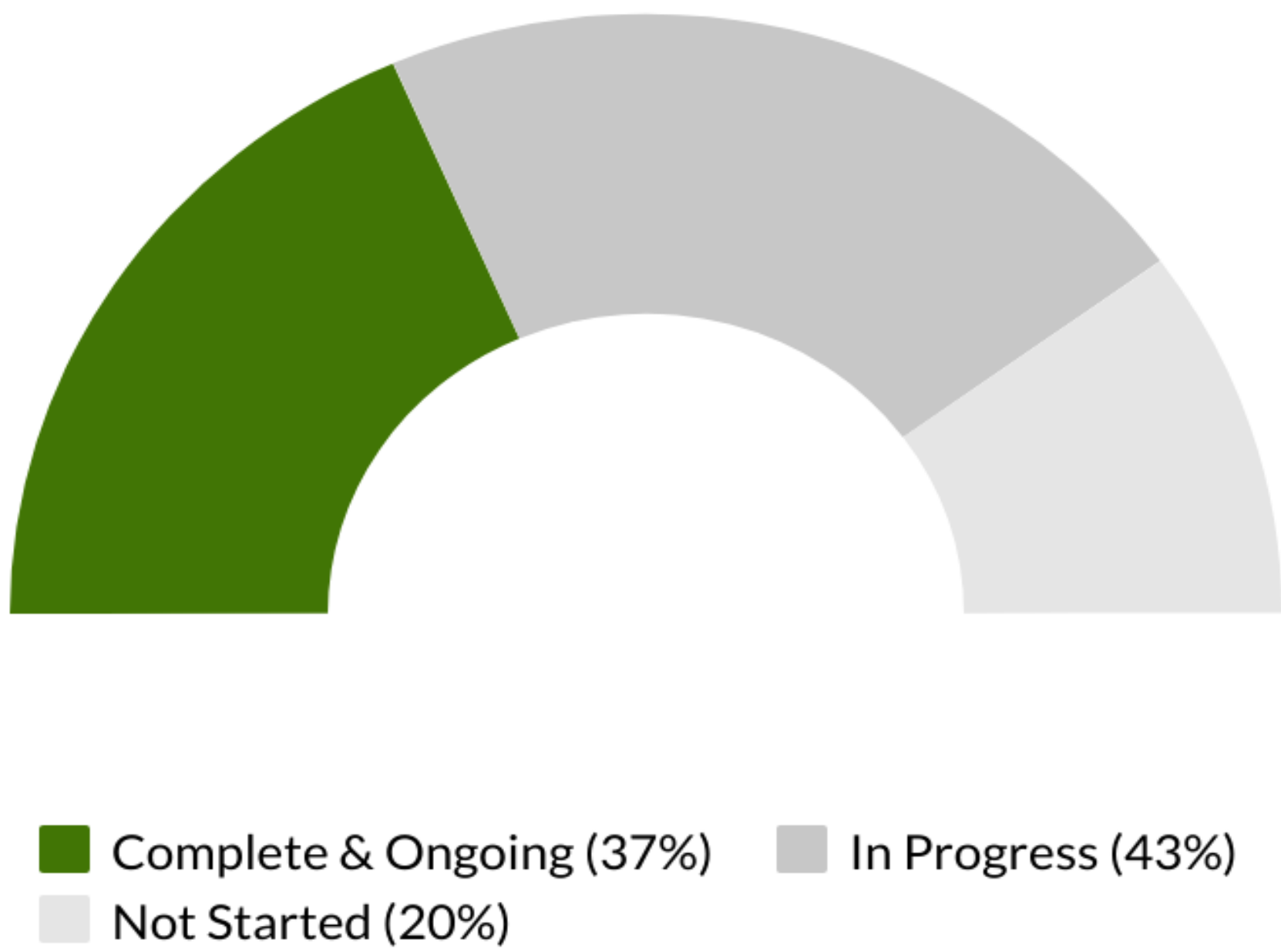
Energy Initiatives



Material Resources Initiatives



Education & Outreach Initiatives



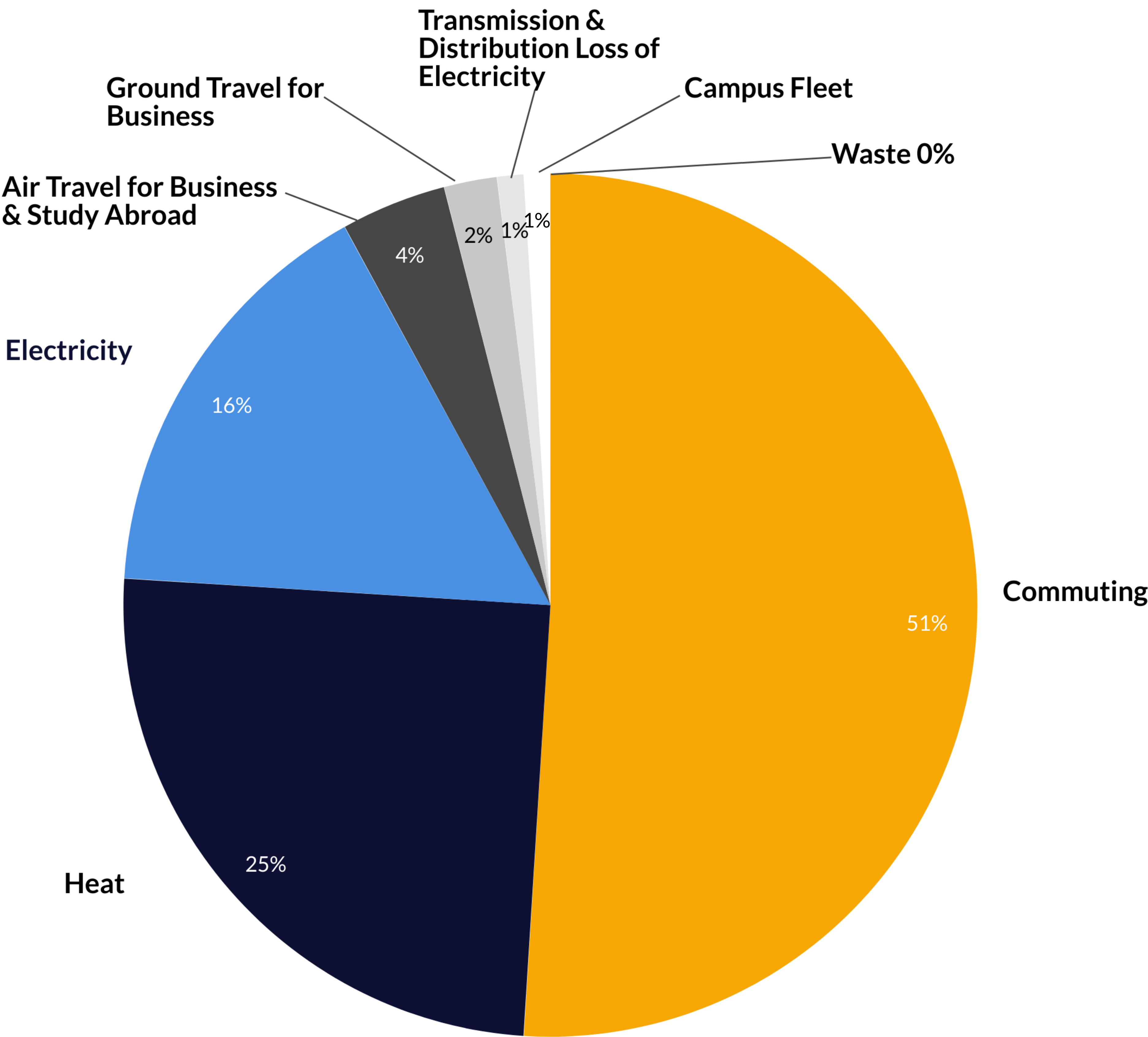
A third or more of the initiatives under each pillar are complete and final, or complete and ongoing, as some projects require continual support or maintenance. Another 40% of the projects or more have been started, but require additional research, labor, time, or other resources to complete. Most of the projects that haven’t been started are projects that are scheduled for later dates, so they don’t represent a lapse in progress. In fact, many projects have been completed or started years in advance of their planned start date.

The trends highlighted in this section show that USM is on track to hit all but one of the targets in its eight-year strategic plan. Progress toward those targets also bodes well for the likelihood of achieving carbon neutrality by 2040.

For achievement of the overall plan, gross emissions are the target. For achievement of the eight-year strategic plan’s specific categories, per capita numbers are the target.

ENERGY

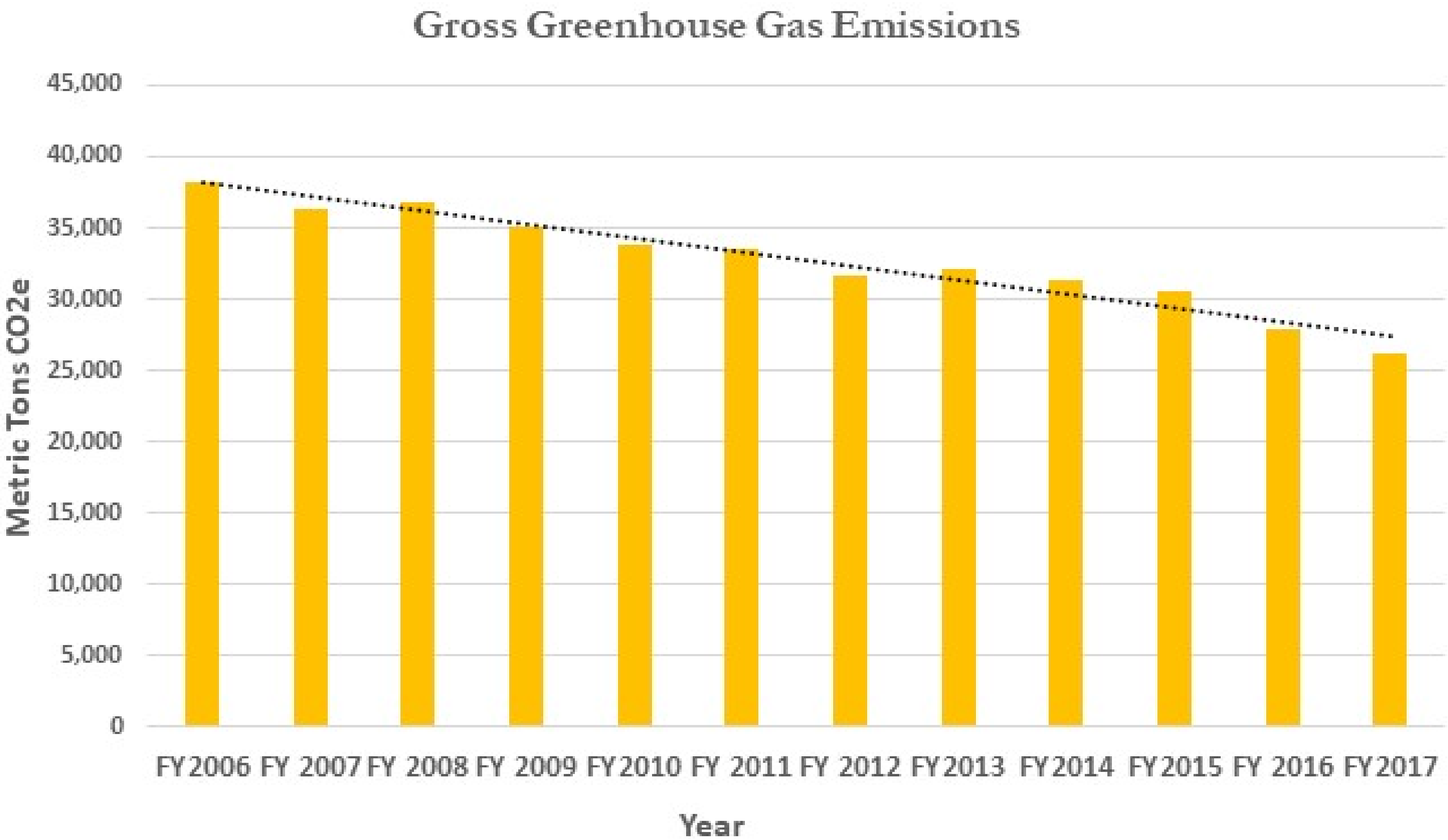
USM Carbon Emissions FY 2017



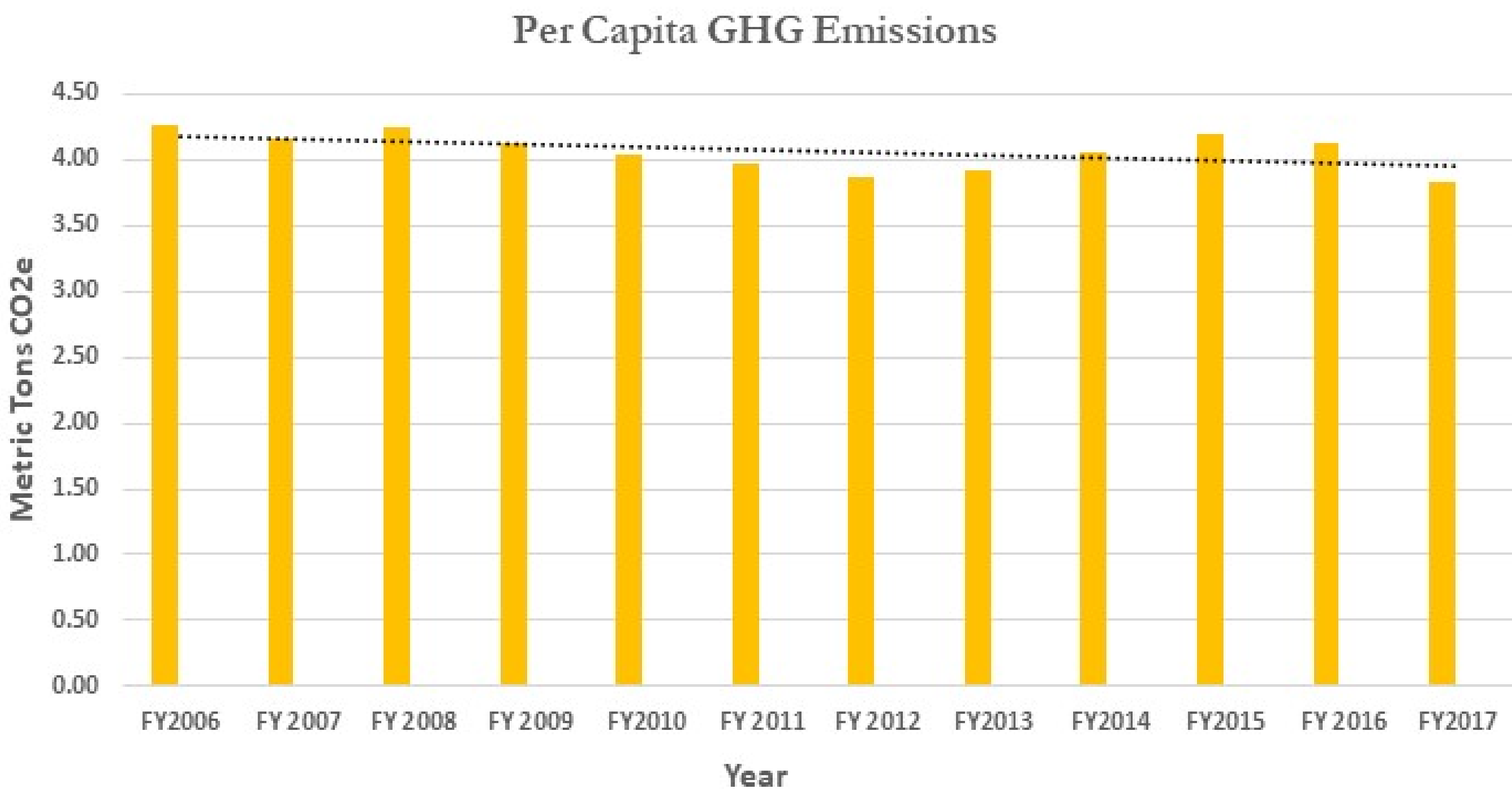
In FY 2006, the largest sector of emissions was heating fuel because USM used #6 heating oil, which is one of the most carbon intensive fuels used for modern heating applications. Since, USM switched to burning cleaner natural gas as the primary heat fuel several years ago, the largest source of emissions today is commuting of students, staff and faculty. Commuting is high not only because seven out of eight students are commuters living off campus, but also because USM has three separate campuses. A large portion of the student population takes classes on at least two of the campuses. Some students even take classes on all three campuses. The second and third highest sources of emissions, heat and electricity, originate from the buildings on campus. Collectively, they make up **41%** of emissions. To understand how emissions today reflect progress toward the strategic plan, it's useful to look at the trends in emissions since FY 2006.

ENERGY

Overall gross greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by **31%** between the FY 2006 baseline and FY 2017*, showing significant progress toward the overarching carbon neutrality goal of reducing emissions by 80% by 2040.



Per capita reductions are more modest since FY 2006. USM has achieved a **10%** reduction, as of FY 2017. The discrepancy between gross and per capita emissions can be explained by the fact that USM’s students, staff, and faculty populations have declined by nearly 24% over the last decade. But, since USM has maintained most of the buildings it had in FY 2006, there are fewer occupants using the baseload of heat and electricity now than there were in the past.

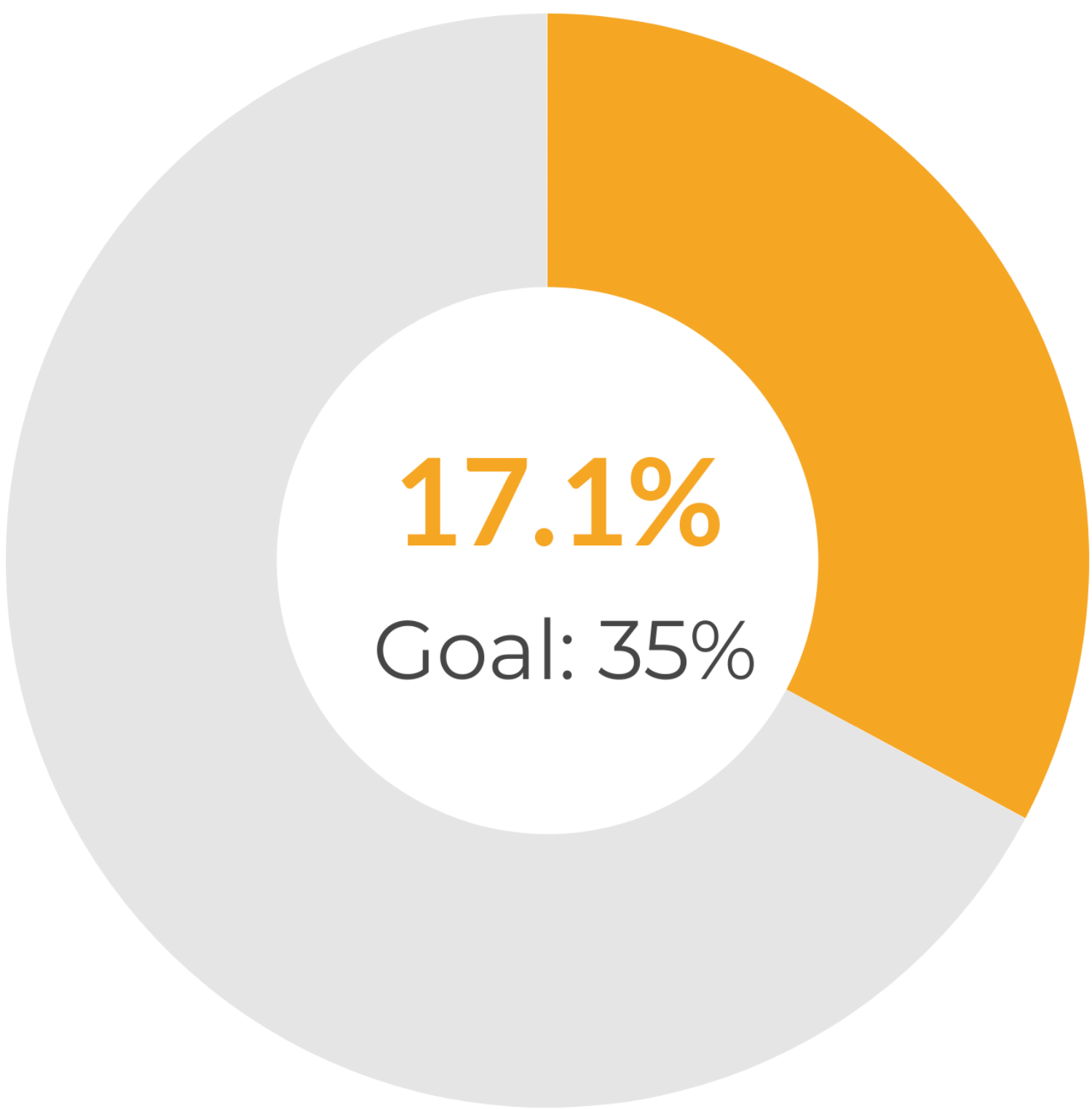


*The most current greenhouse gas inventory available for this report is FY 2017. The FY 2019 report will not be completed until May, 2020

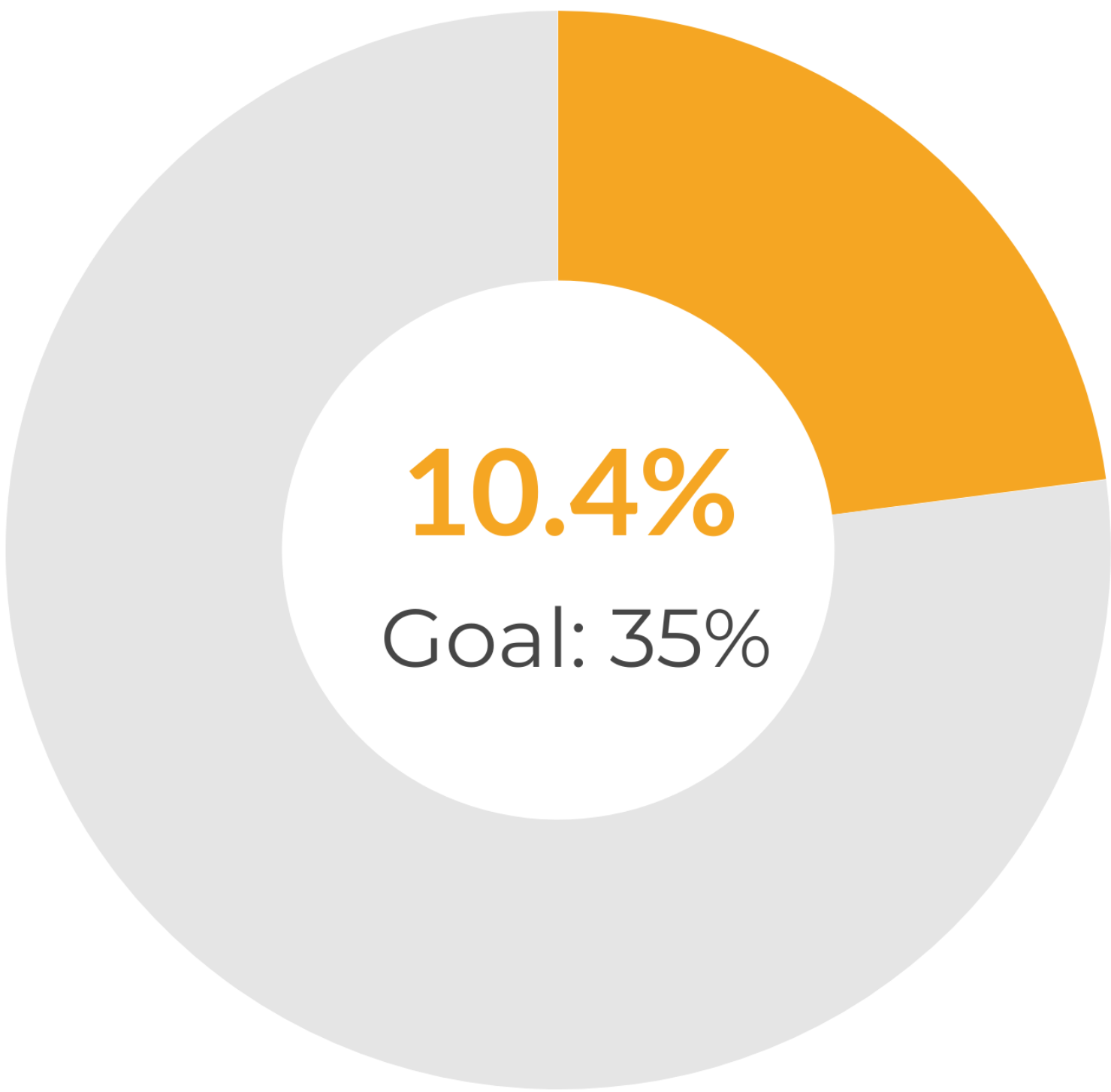
ENERGY

In the **Energy** pillar, the goal to reduce electricity emissions by 35% has seen the most progress, as per capita emissions for scope 2 have **fallen by 17%** between FY 2006 and FY 2017. Scope 2 is entirely comprised of electricity at USM. This drop in electricity can be attributed to several efficiency initiatives throughout the last decade, including utilization of the University’s green revolving loan fund, upgrading mechanical equipment, switching lights and fixtures, and installing solar panels (The University currently has three PV arrays on campus).

Scope 2 Reduction by 2017



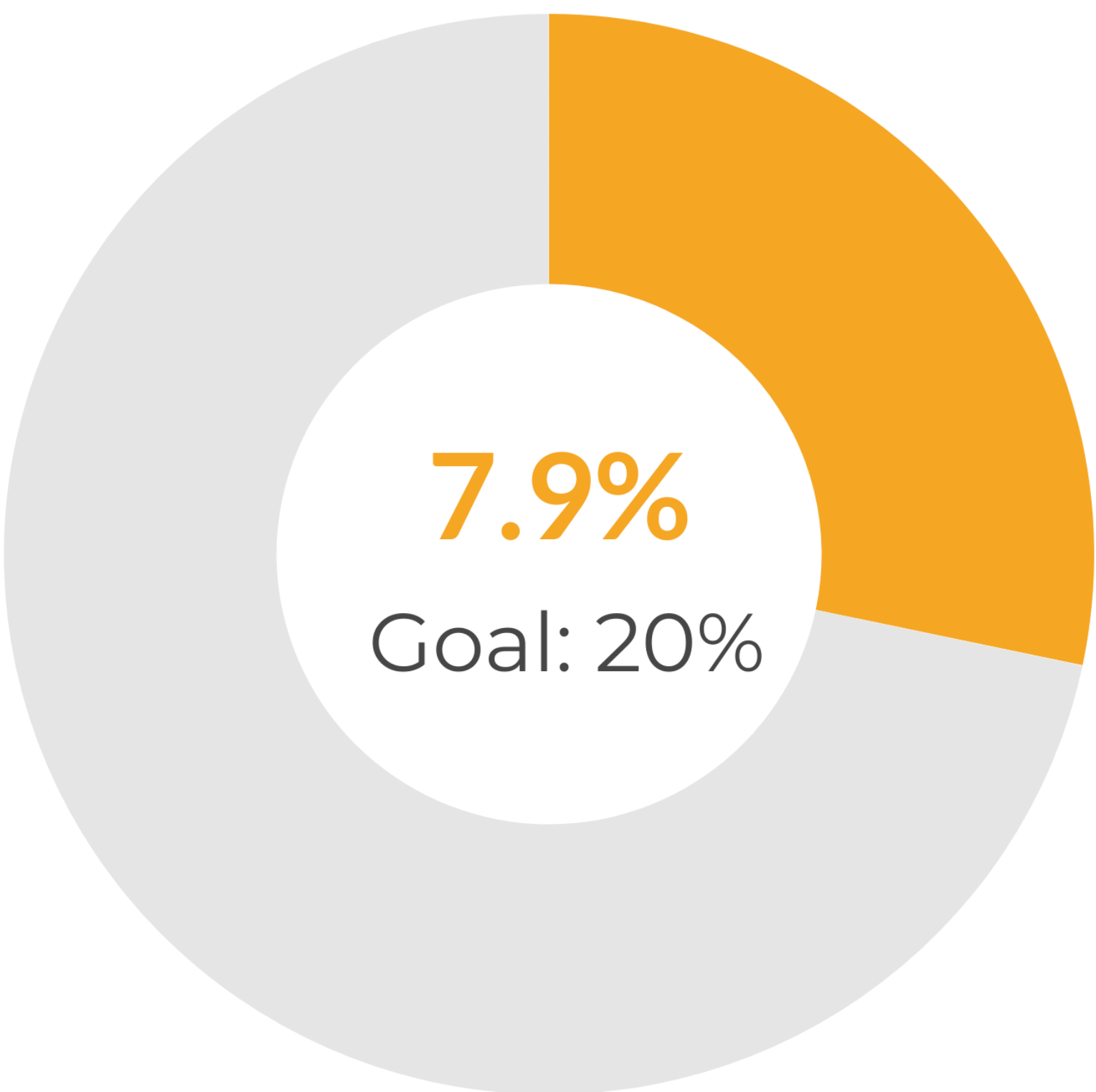
Scope 1 Reduction by 2017



Scope 1 emissions, which are primarily comprised of heat emissions, along with a smaller portion from University-owned vehicles, have fallen by over **10%** since FY 2006. At first glance, a 10% reduction in heat emissions may seem low since the University switched its primary heating source from carbon intensive number six oil to cleaner burning natural gas in both the Portland and Gorham central plants. A fuel switch of that magnitude can’t be understated, as it resulted in a gross emissions reduction of **nearly 32%** in the heat category. However, as explained above, the significant drop in student population since FY 2006 means that the University is now heating more building space per occupant, which cuts into the savings when emissions are adjusted by per capita.

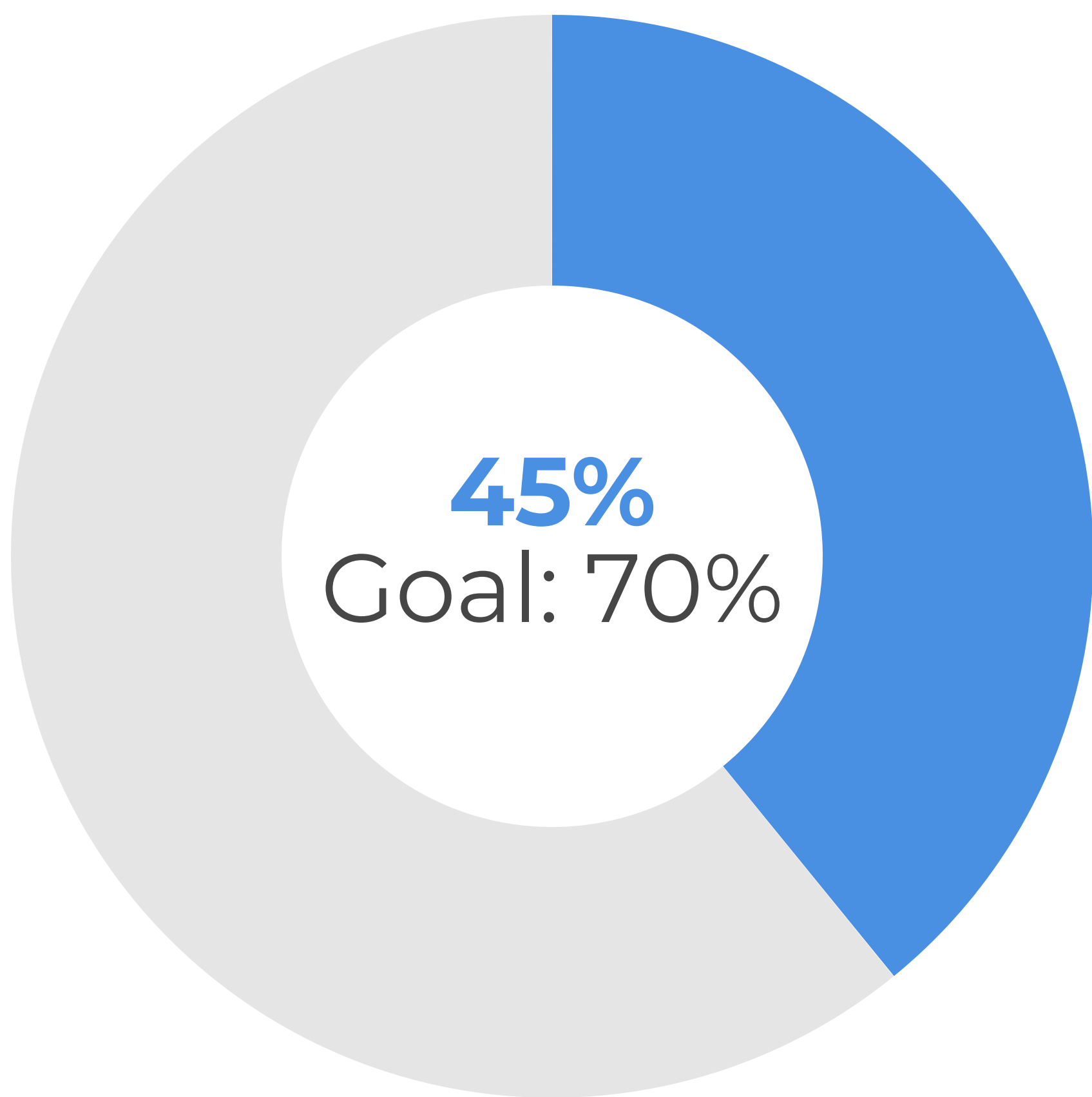
Transportation emissions can be examined by studying how scope three changes over time. Scope three includes business air travel, business ground travel, study abroad, commuting, and some non transportation items like downstream waste emissions, and the transmission and distribution losses of electricity when it is transported to the university from power plants. Scope three emissions fell an estimated **7.9%** since FY 2006. However, unlike scopes one and two, scope three emissions calculations are built on a number of assumptions, especially in this comparison because some of the FY 2006 estimate had to be reconstructed due to unreliable data. In future years, the methodology will likely be more stable, thus the reductions will be more accurate. The reduction shown here is largely a reflection of the increased fuel efficiency of the United States’ vehicle fleet. Future years will hopefully show reductions affiliated with people choosing to bike, walk, carpool, or ride the bus instead of driving a single occupancy vehicle.

Scope 3 Reduction by 2017



Material Resources

Diversion Rate by FY 2019



Progress on **material resource** targets has been highly variable since FY 2006, but on the positive side, all trend lines are moving in the desired direction. USM’s total diversion rate is 55%, approximately **10% higher**, but for the purpose of focusing on what the University’s general population has control over, several streams were excluded, including construction and demolition waste, metal recycling, and wood recycling.

USM has set a goal to reach a diversion rate of 70% by FY 2020. Unfortunately, attaining this goal by 2020 is unlikely for a host of reasons: namely student behavior and changes to the global waste market. Because of these reasons, USM may have to recalibrate its 70% diversion by FY 2020 goal to a 70% diversion by FY 2025 goal.

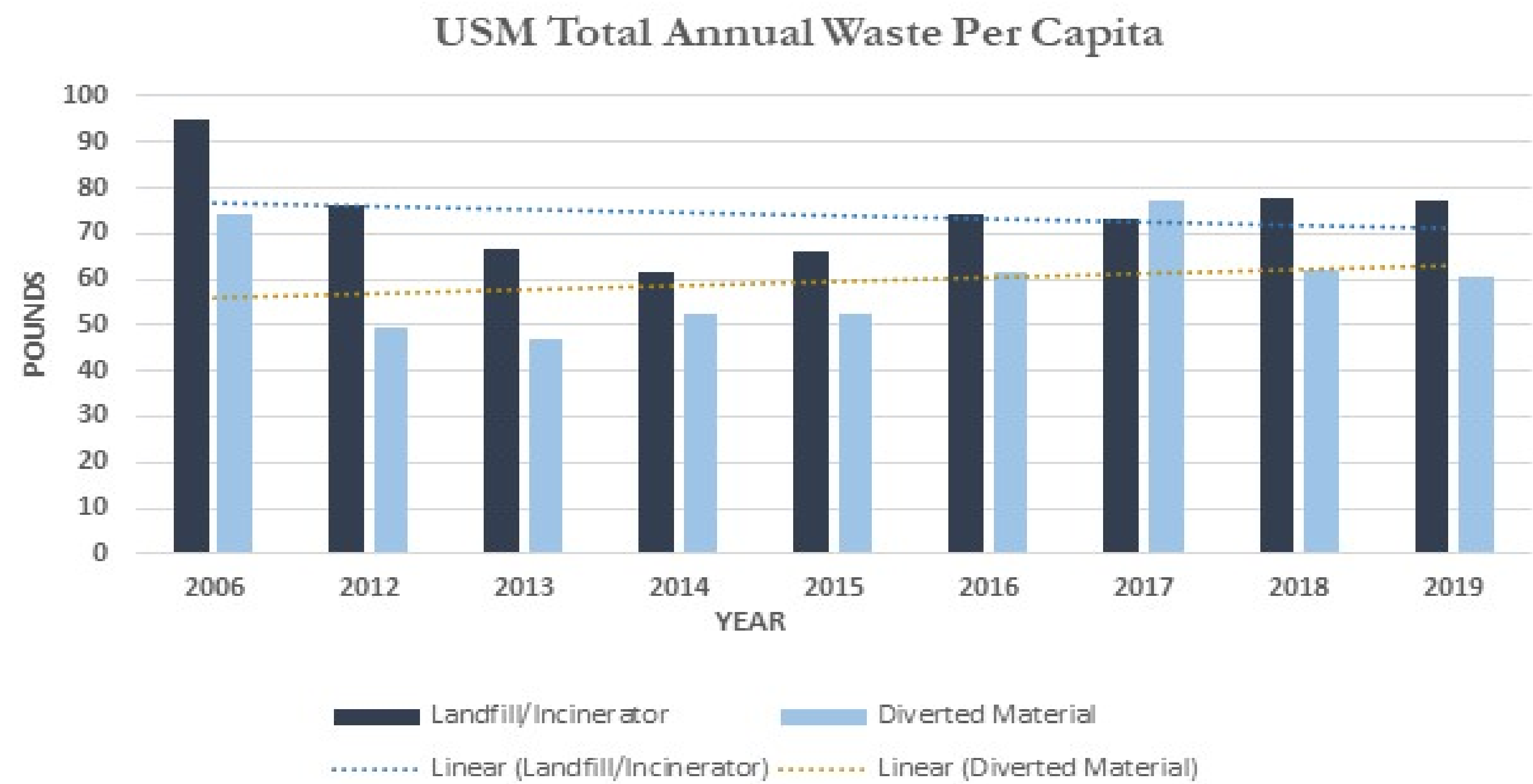
2020 Year USM hopes to reach a 70% diversion rate

▲ \$70 Cost of recycling per ton

Global markets have compounded the challenge of diversion over the last two years. In January of 2018, China stopped accepting most plastic and paper recycling from the United States. China had been the world’s largest buyer of these materials, so the market plummeted. Over the next year, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan, and India followed in China’s footsteps and began restricting the material they accepted as well. These countries were no longer willing to accept highly contaminated loads of recyclable material from the United States. Overnight, the recycling market transformed from a money maker for customers like USM (who were sometimes seeing as high as a \$30 credit per ton for recycling) to a break-even, and then to a cost of more than \$70 per ton. In response to these forces, the University’s municipally-mandated trash destination, ecomaine, altered their contract structure this year to include significant fines to its customers for contaminated loads. This fear of contamination has led to stricter practices of disposal behind the scenes at USM, and has unfortunately resulted in more material ending up in the trash stream than before.

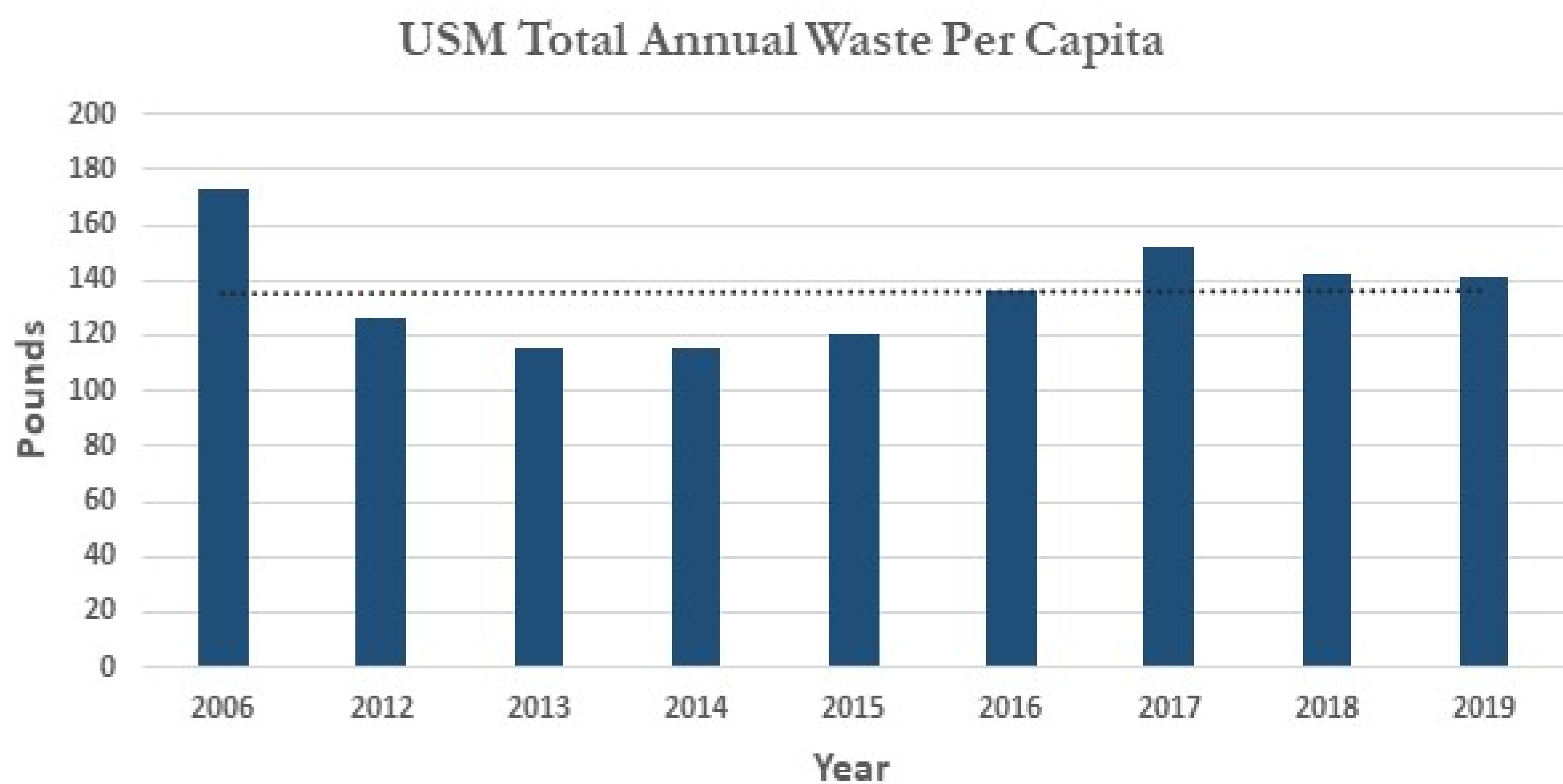
Material Resources

On the positive side, USM has seen a steady **decrease** in the average trash volume per capita over the years, while seeing a steady **increase** in the average recycling and composting volume over the years.



These trends represent considerable effort on the part of the Resource Recovery Supervisor and his crew, as well as the Sustainability Education & Outreach Coordinator and her Eco-reps. Initiatives like Tiny Trash, maintenance worker training, classroom integration and many others have kept these lines moving in the right direction.

The silver lining of the crash in global recycling markets is that USM now has the opportunity and motivation to focus on their second, more important material resources goal, which is to reduce waste creation by **25%** per capita by 2025. Such an effort represents a deeper sustainability value, one that can influence lifestyle and purchasing behavior, establishing mindful choices upstream of the problem. On this front, the University has made considerable progress compared to FY 2006, despite the high variance year over year.

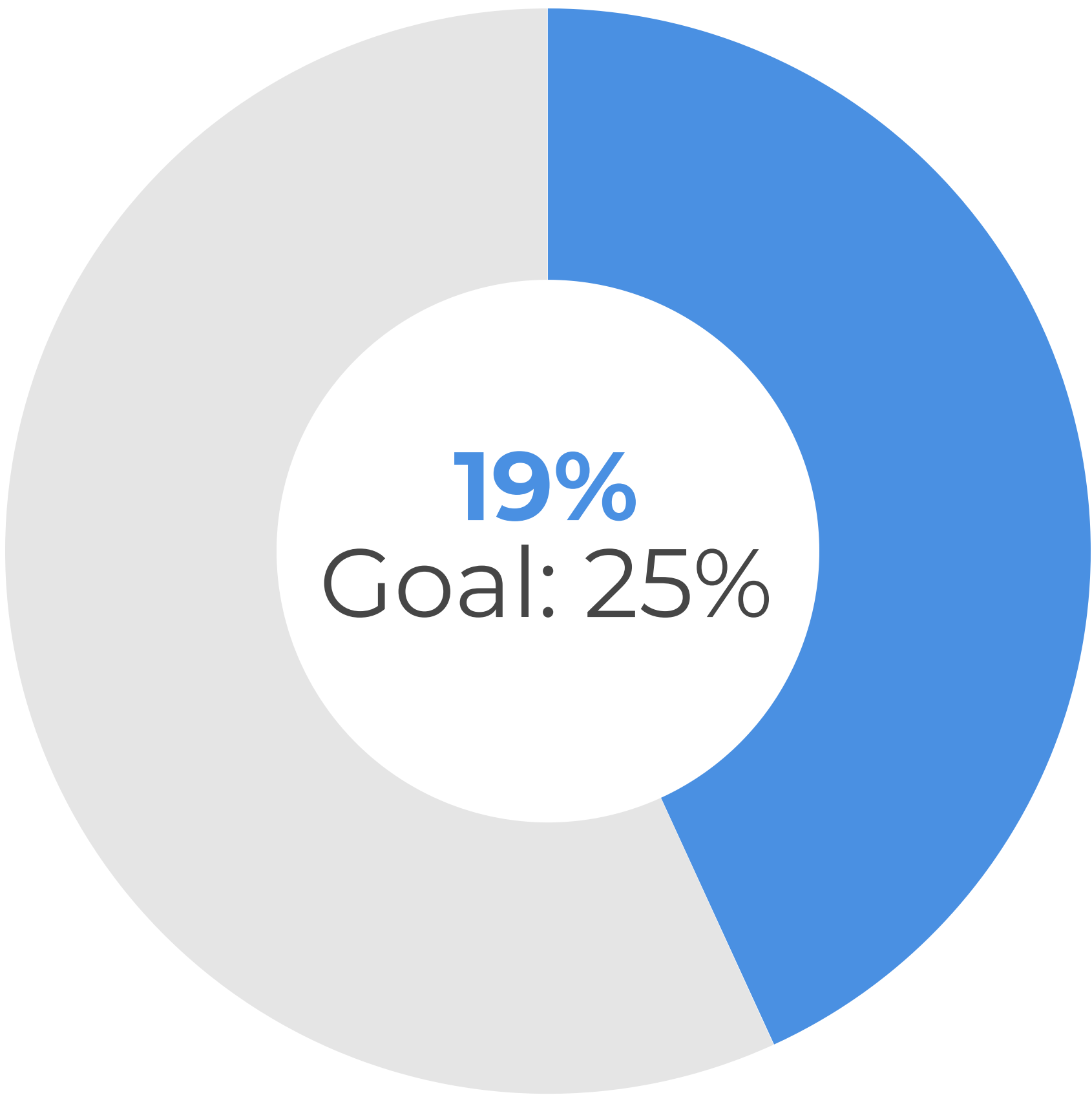


*Items under landfill/incinerator include trash generated from the campus population. Items under diverted material include universal waste, food waste, and single-stream recycling. See appendix for per capita breakdown.

Material Resources

Per Capita Waste Reduction by 2019

To date, the University has reduced per capita waste by 19%, which is only 6% away from the 2025 goal of a 25% reduction.



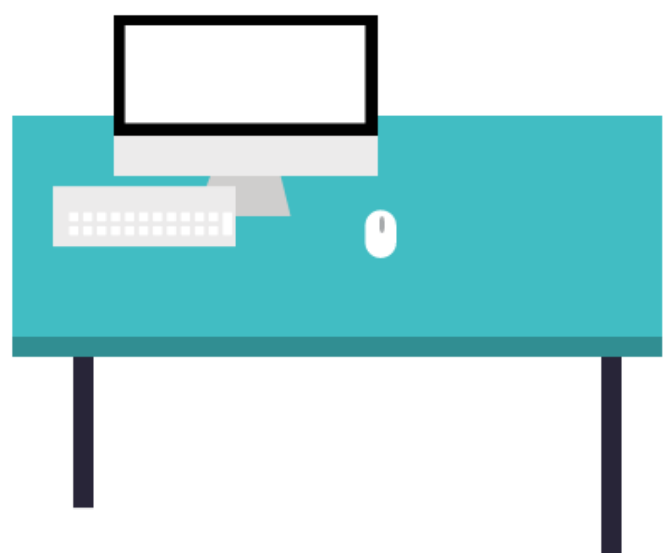
The Office of Sustainability has launched several new exciting initiatives to continue progressing.



As a supply measure, the University is working with our dining services provider Sodexo to restrict options for disposables, while making reusable more widely available and advertised.



As a demand measure, the Eco-Reps are using community-based social marketing campaigns to influence students, staff, and faculty to utilize reusables more often.



The Office of Sustainability is working to develop a new furniture policy through which employees can be incentivized to buy less furniture or buy high quality furniture that will last longer

Case Studies

Energy

USM Master Plan

On January 27th, 2019, the University of Maine Board of Trustees approved the University of Southern Maine's Facilities Master Plan, culminating a year and a half-long planning process. The Master Plan institutionalized the most significant carbon reduction guidelines in USM's history. Not only did the Master Planning Steering Committee endorse the Campus Sustainability Strategic Plan in its entirety, but it also set seven additional targets. For new buildings, these targets include following the Portland District 2030 benchmarks, a 70% reduction in energy usage for each building compared to the national average, LEED silver or higher certification, and a commitment to carry out a Transportation Demand Management study, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by 20%. For existing buildings, the plan calls for a 35% reduction in heat and electricity usage, mirroring the Strategic Sustainability Plan. The Master Plan also establishes a host of other targets that indirectly affect energy usage and embodied energy, such as using sustainable local materials like Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) in the new buildings, and reducing water usage by 50% over the district average in those buildings. The Master Plan also calls for the University to sign the Portland 2030 District Commitment. These guidelines set the stage for a historical reduction in the per square foot energy usage of campus as the University aims to construct four new buildings within the next ten years.

November 2019

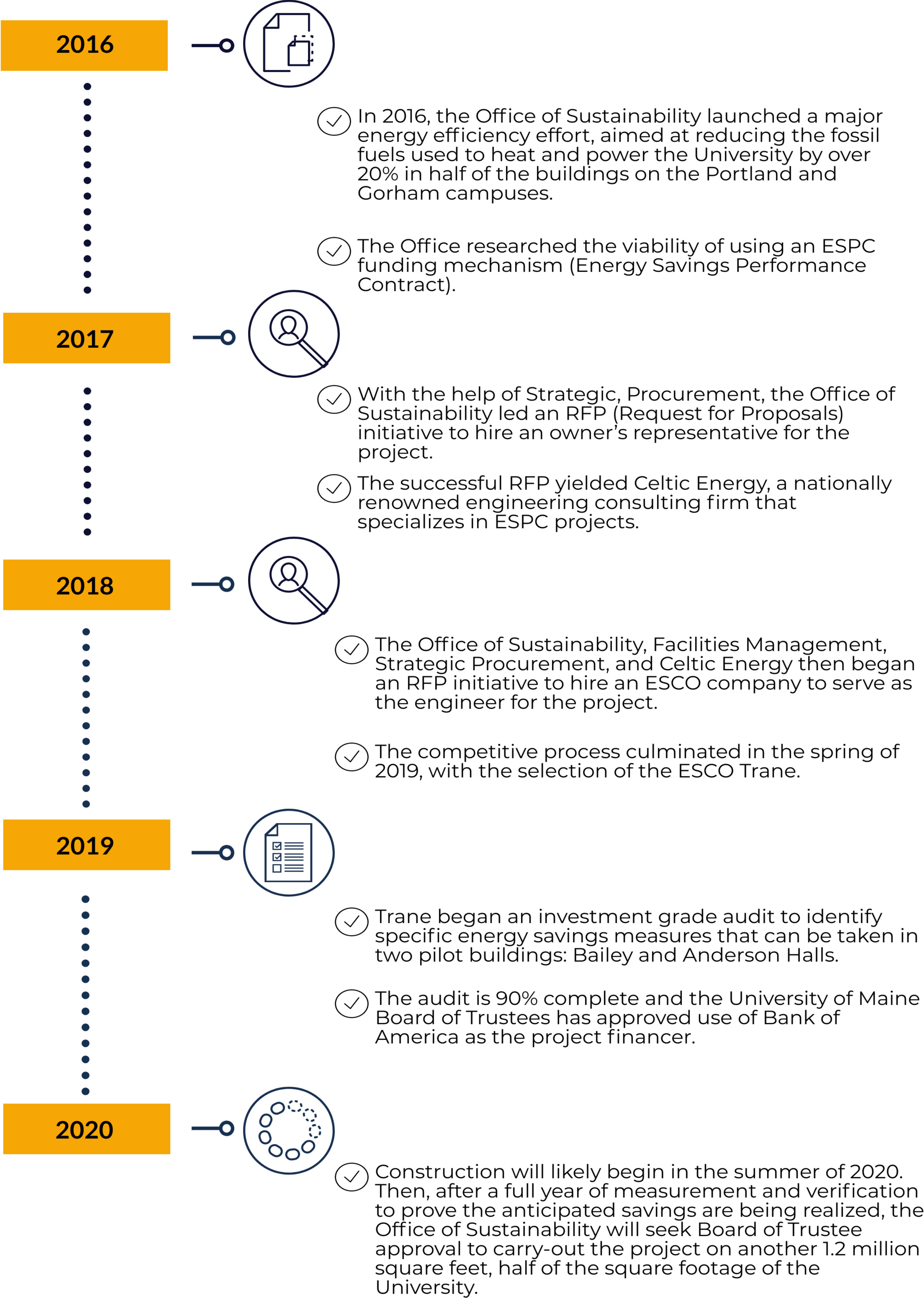
USM announced it would pursue Passive House certification for the new residence hall and LEED Certification for the new student center, which will also feature Passive House principles.

ESCO Project

In 2016, the Office of Sustainability launched a major energy efficiency effort, aimed at reducing the fossil fuels used to heat and power the University by over 20% in half of the buildings on the Portland and Gorham campuses. In order to accomplish this, the University sought out an Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) mechanism to fund the major capital improvements such as retrofits to heating and ventilation systems, installation of occupancy sensors, and envelope improvements. ESPC's require three parties: a customer who needs improvements (the University), an energy services company (called an ESCO), and a funder (usually a bank or investor). The funder provides the upfront cash needed to make improvements to the buildings that the ESCO engineers. The customer then sees significant savings on their utility bills. The savings are then used to pay the funder back over a contract length of 10-30 years. In 2018, energy services company (ESCO) Trane was selected. Construction will likely begin in the summer of 2020 for the pilot portion of the project in academic building Bailey Hall and residential building, Anderson Hall. Then, after a full year of measurement and verification to prove the anticipated savings are being realized, the Office of Sustainability will seek Board of Trustee approval to carry-out the project on another 1.2 million square feet, half of the square footage of the University.

Energy

ESCO Project Timeline



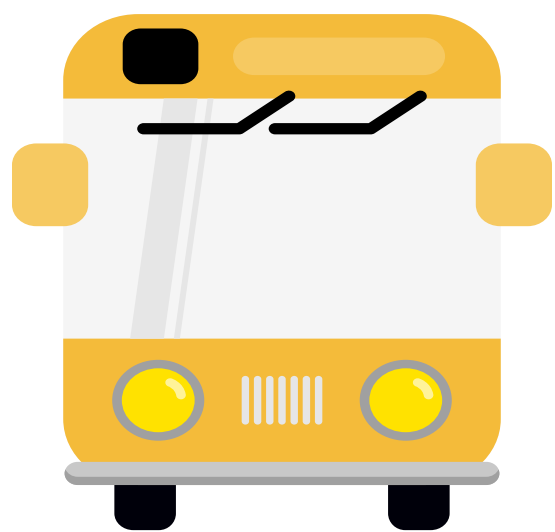
Energy

Transportation Transformation

In August of 2018, the University launched a new partnership with the Greater Portland’s public bus service, METRO. It was just the first in a long line of initiatives to improve mobility for our campus community, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The partnership with METRO came with two major changes:



Every student, staff, and faculty member may ride any of the METRO routes for **free** by showing their USM ID, which can result in less single occupancy vehicle trips for commuting, errands, and recreation.



An express bus route between Gorham and Portland, that provides higher quality, more frequent, and extended hour transportation than the private shuttle service USM had before.

In addition to the METRO initiative, the University also created a parking committee, which meets monthly to discuss transportation improvements. Some of these improvements have included development of a single transportation website that promotes alternative modes of transportation, establishment of a revenue-capturing system for the Abromson parking garage, a department to enforce parking rules, completion of a transportation survey of campus and launch of a TDM (Transportation Demand Management) study and plan.

+1000

Number of respondents to the university-wide transportation survey

Carrying-out a TDM was the most critical goal for the Office of Sustainability in its pursuit of a **20% reduction** of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Therefore, the Office co-led management of the TDM project, which launched in the Fall of 2019.* In addition to analyzing the 2019 transportation survey carried out by the Office of Sustainability, the study collected quantitative data and traffic counts from parking lots on campus, as well as qualitative data from input sessions with major stakeholder groups on and off campus, including: Student Senate, Classified Staff Senate, Professional Staff Senate, Faculty, University Council, Maine Law School, Maine Center Ventures, the City of Portland, Portland Downtown, METRO, Parking Committee, Wellness Committee, and the Office of Sustainability. The plan, due out in March of 2020, will serve as a road map for how to facilitate and incentivize students, staff, and faculty to take less single occupancy vehicle trips, and take more bus, bike, and pedestrian trips, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion on campus.

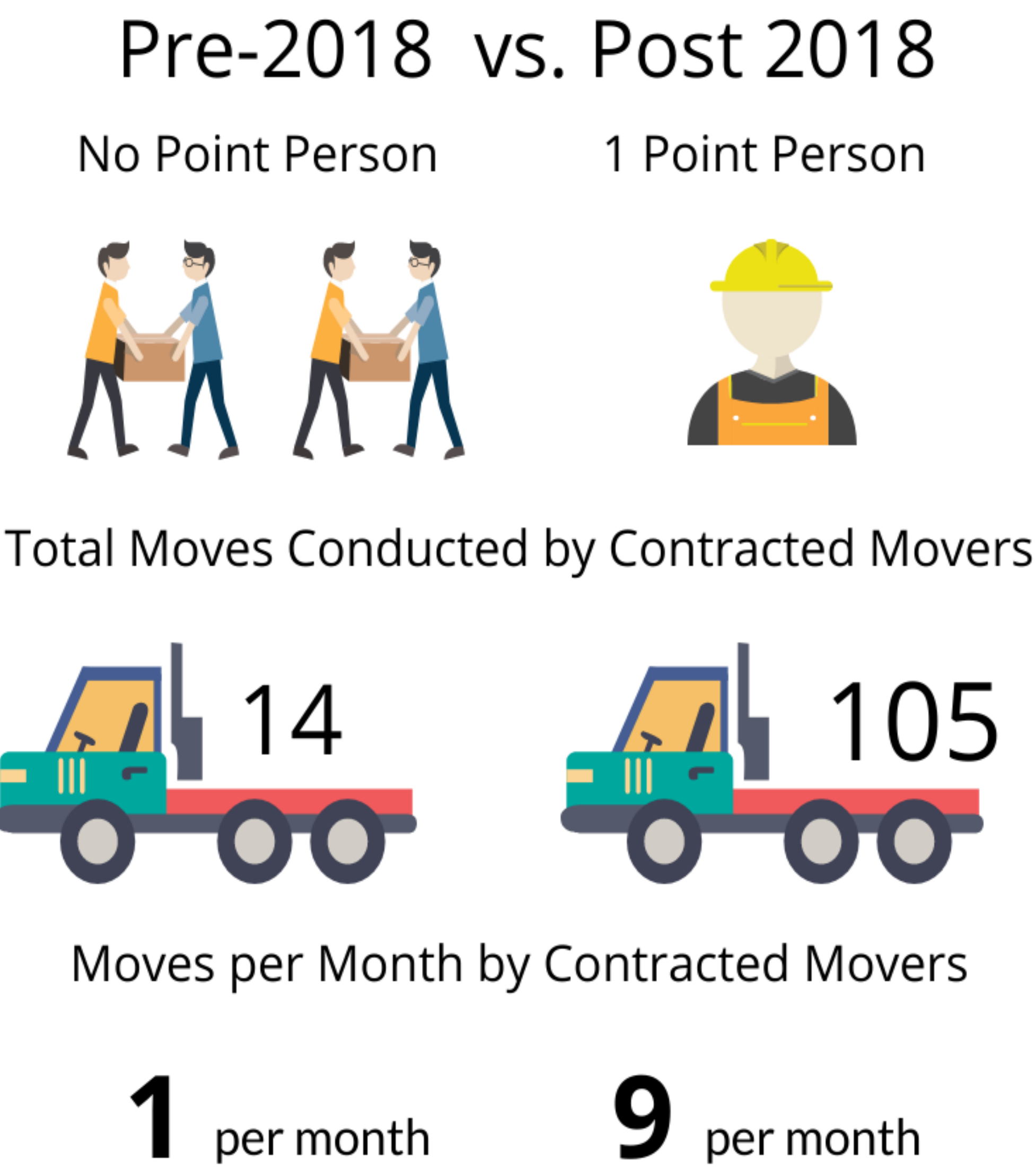
*The effort was co-led by Richard Freund, Director of Auxiliary Services and Carol Potter, Building and Construction Engineer

Material Resources

Move Coordination

In the summer of 2017, Aaron Witham, Steve Sweeney & Emily Eschner convened a group of 25 stakeholders from across campus to brainstorm improvements to the campus move process. At the time, campus moves were not the responsibility of any particular department, and suffered from a lack of information sharing, coordination, and efficiency. Over a series of three group meetings, and one-on-one interviews with all 25 stakeholders, the group developed a list of approximately 15 recommendations for how to improve the process, including the creation of a full-time move & operations coordinator. That person, Jon Doré, was hired in the spring of 2018. Since then, Doré and the Office of Sustainability staff have made the following improvements, as recommended from the stakeholder process:

- 1) established Doré as the point person for all campus moves;
- 2) provided each move customer with a checklist which guides them through the move process and ensures that we do not forget any important move tasks;
- 3) provided each customer with a move sheet to list all items to be moved and disposed of in order to determine the true scope of the move project;
- 4) completed a space inventory of all rooms on all three campuses to inform decisions on space allocation;
- 5) used move sheets to predetermine items that will go to online swap, surplus or disposal;
- 6) trained customers to find other users at the University for surplus items by using the online swap;
- 7) defined a clear decision-making process within the Space Committee, which ensures that we gather important cost and scope of project information prior to a decision and inform and/or hear from key stakeholders prior to a space request approval;
- 8) made contracted moves more efficient through clear procedures, pre-planning and good working relationships;
- 9) defined a clear decision-making process to determine which moves should be accomplished in-house (with custodial or resource recovery) or through contracted movers; and finally
- 10) used regular permit meetings to determine how work required in a move permit will be accomplished.



Material Resources

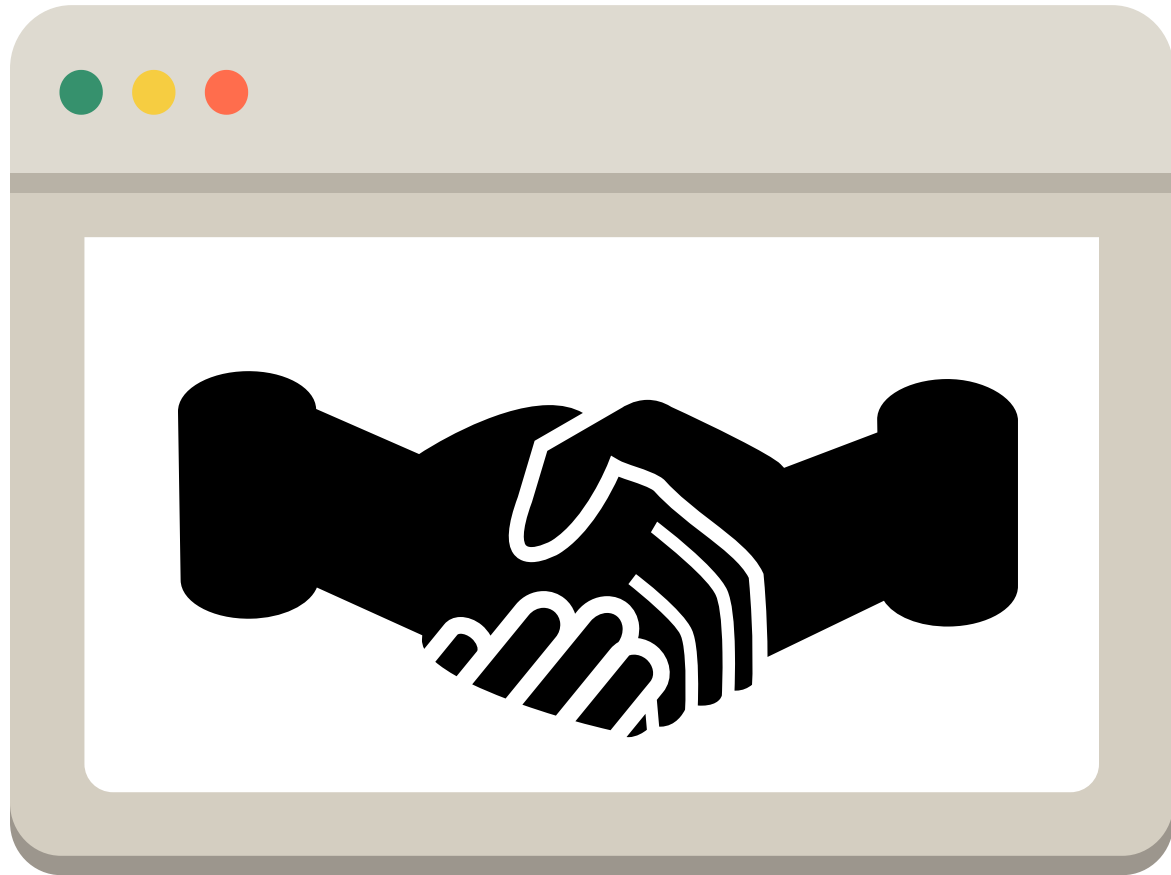
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Number of awards from EPA in the last 5 years

Over the last 5 years, the University of Southern Maine has received national recognition by the Environmental Protection Agency for innovative and best waste practices. In 2011, the University purchased new waste stations and created new signage to increase visibility and recycling convenience. In 2012, the team implemented the Tiny Trash program which had a significant impact on the university’s recycling rate. Then in 2014, the team added liquid dumping to the waste stations. Removing liquids from the trash, **reduce 20 tons of waste per year**. In addition, our Mindful Move Out program, Free Store, and Surplus operation reduces waste by 2 - 4 tons a year.

Online Swap

In 2018, the Office of Sustainability, in conjunction with a new surplus policy, launched the Online Swap, an online platform to find or dispose of surplus items. In 2017, the university’s Surplus Store closed and with that came the need to develop a system that utilized labor, time, and financial resources more efficiently. The Online Swap acts as an internal “Craiglist” where faculty and staff post items they no longer want and can look for items they need. Items include everything from general office supplies to office furniture to laboratory equipment and machinery.



USM Free Store

In the Fall of 2018, the USM Free Store moved to a new, centralized location in the Brooks Student Center on the Gorham campus. The Free Store serves as a one-stop shop for student needs. One can find everything from school supplies to clothing to room decor. The store is primarily stocked by items that did not get sold at the Annual Yard Sale during Move-In where items from Mindful Moveout are given away. Throughout the year, students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged to bring items from their offices and dorm rooms that could have a second life but otherwise would go into the trash, to the Free Store. In the Spring of 2019, the store also became the second location for the campus food pantry. The store is operated by Eco-Reps and has become an essential resource to students at USM.



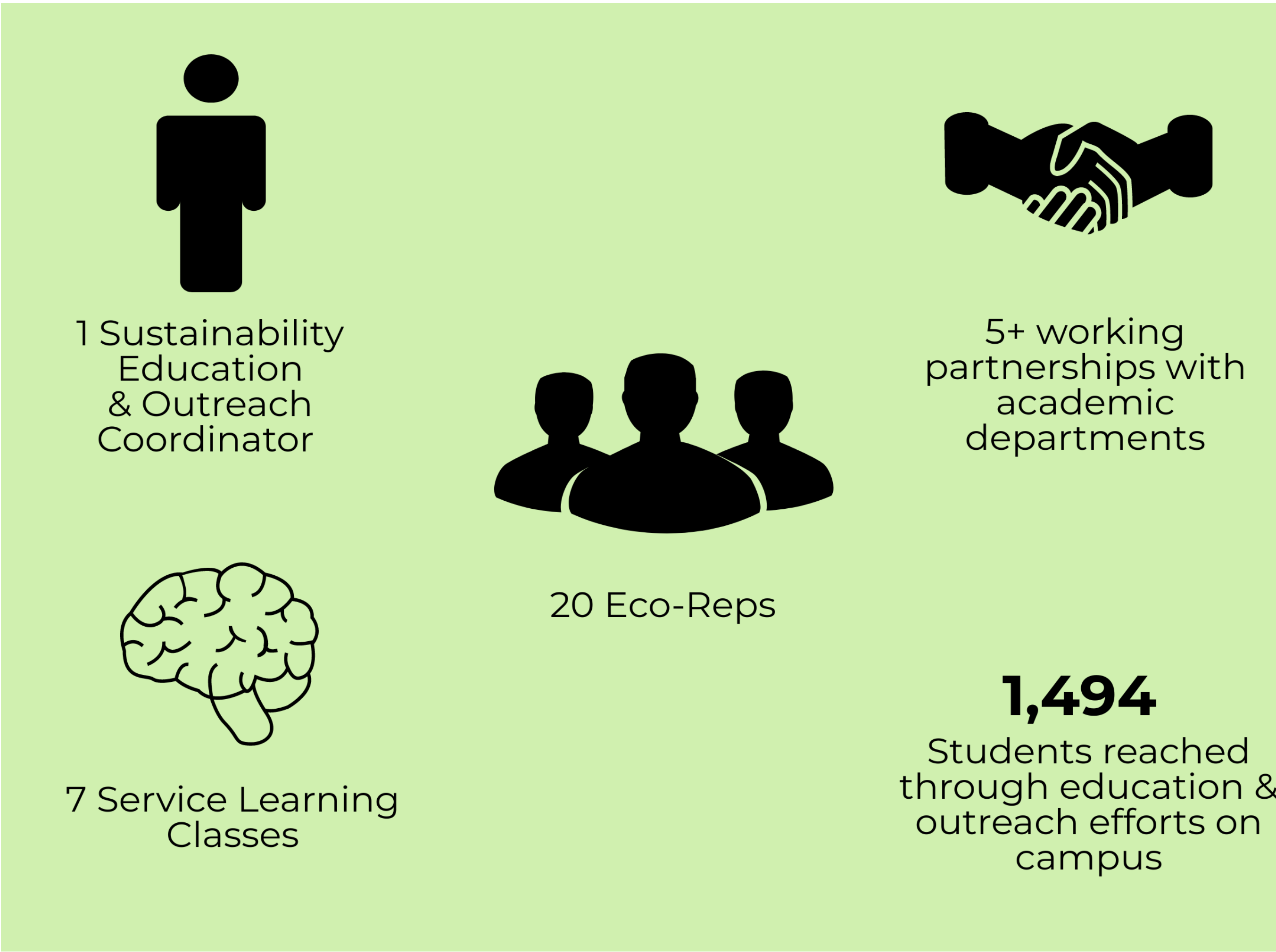
Education & Outreach

Professional and Program Development

In the spring of 2017, the Office of Sustainability re-structured the Eco-Rep program and created five specialty programs with specific learning outcomes to specialize the work of the Eco-reps and allow them to pursue certificates, demonstrating proficiency in their specialty. All Eco-reps began receiving professional development training, including resume workshops, interview training, and annual reviews. In addition, the Spring of 2019 gave Eco-Reps monthly opportunities to meet off campus with local sustainability-related professionals and engage in everything from informal talks, volunteering, and job shadowing. Since 2017, the Eco-Rep program has evolved into a program that fosters professional development alongside hands-on and deeply engaged sustainability work.

Service Learning Courses

In partnership with the Community Engagement Office, the Office of Sustainability has communicated curricular & co-curricular sustainability projects to faculty every semester, and provided support for faculty who carry them out. In the spring of 2018, the Office of Sustainability worked with the Food Studies Program on an Earth Day event that promoted different ways in which an individual can handle their food waste. They also advised on additional food-related waste projects during another semester.



The Office of Sustainability has also worked with an Engineering Economics course twice giving students the opportunity to use the campus as a living lab to learn about cost-benefit analysis and energy conservation measures.



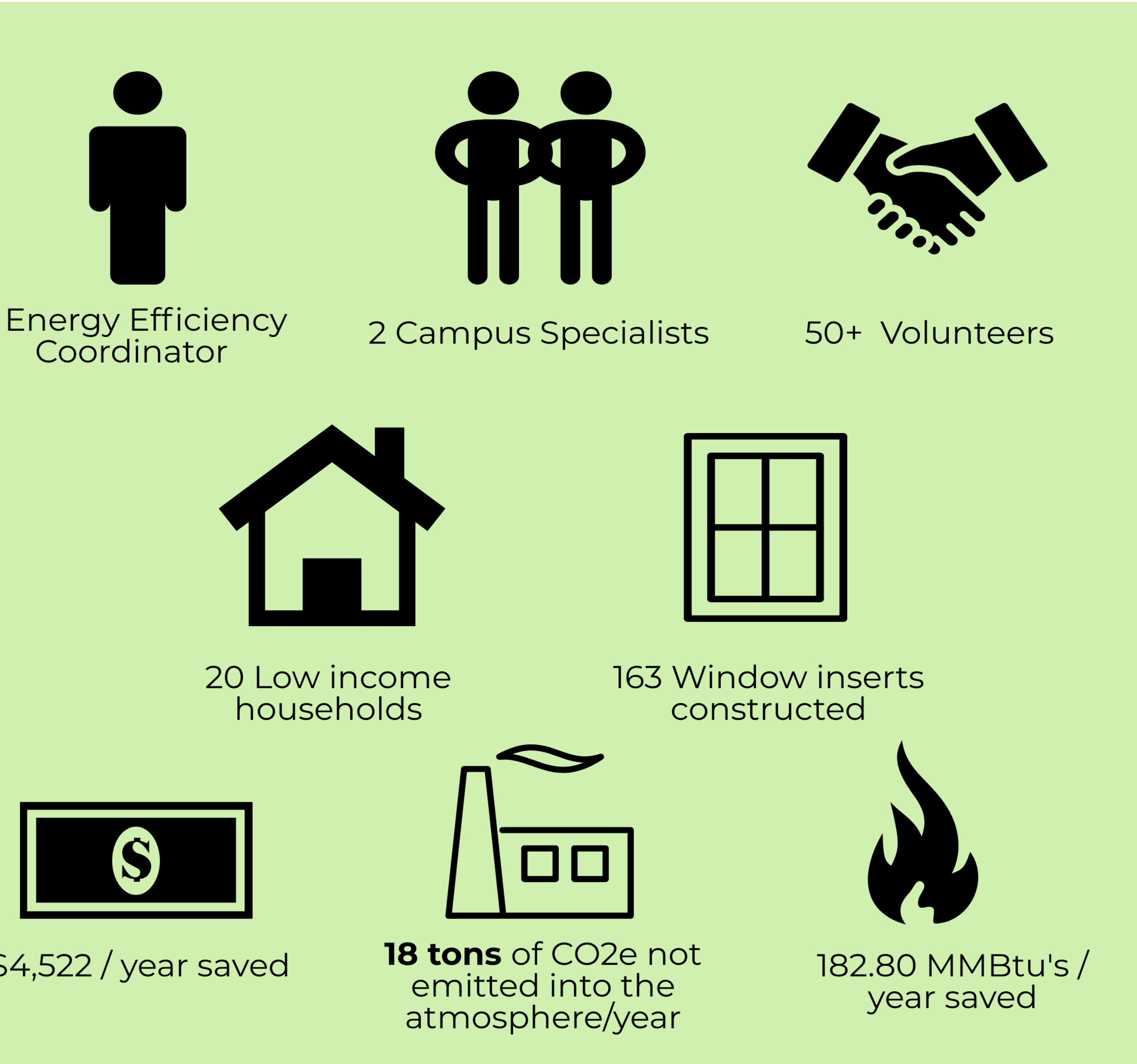
Education & Outreach

Americorps Program Overview

USM’s Office of Sustainability became one of six sites to host the Maine Partnership of Environmental Stewardship (MPES) Program. MPES is an AmeriCorps program administered by Maine Campus Compact (MCC) that builds partnerships between higher education institutions and community organizations. The mission of the MPES program is to increase energy efficiency and cost savings for low-income community members in Maine through service and education. The program increased awareness for weatherization, energy efficiency, and action for climate mitigation.

Education & Energy Efficiency

The Americorps program organized a window-insert project that provided window-insulation to over 20 low-income households within the Greater Portland area, and serviced an additional nine paying households during the workshop. The project relied on a partnership with a local nonprofit, Window-Dressers, to supply the inserts and multiple partnerships with local food pantries, social service agencies, housing authorities, businesses, and community groups to support the team’s outreach efforts. With the help of 50+ volunteers over the course of four days, the MPES program built 163 window inserts. The project has a projected savings of 18 tons of CO2e, 182.80 MMBtu/year, and \$4522/year. The project served as an educational tool to increase awareness for weatherization, energy efficiency, and action for climate mitigation.



Looking Ahead

The Office of Sustainability will be stretched thin in the coming years as it will be intimately involved with the construction and relocation required for two or more new buildings on the Portland campus, potential conversion of the Gorham central heat plant to a renewable source, procurement of 70% of the University's electricity load from solar, implementation of a comprehensive transportation demand management plan, and several waste and education engagement initiatives. This heavy workload is a good problem for a sustainability office to have, as it represents integration into the fabric of institutional decision-making and policy creation. It represents a maturing of an office that is demonstrating its critical value to the University and its ability to leverage change.

Such a maturation necessitates a new mode of operation. The Office of Sustainability is becoming an office that is more focused on big leverage points that can be described as high risk/high reward projects. As this transformation happens, the Office has less bandwidth for low risk/low reward projects. This doesn't mean that USM can't take on low risk/low reward projects; rather, it means that the Office of Sustainability must try to inspire and educate other departments and students at the University to take on those less risky projects. As others take on more projects, the potential for a grassroots movement arises. Sustainability can truly blossom at universities where sustainability experts are building the top-down initiatives, while the general population is building the bottom-up initiatives. This model represents a full permeation of a sustainability movement, and creates grounds for paradigm shifts in mindsets and behavior.

Despite the full work load of the projects discussed thus far, the Office will continue to track opportunities on the horizon and research how those opportunities may or may not fit into the sustainability movement at USM. Three opportunities are especially important for USM's development: local and statewide carbon commitments; AASHE's STARS; and climate resiliency.

In the University master plan published in January of 2019, the master planning committee advised USM to sign the Portland 2030 District pledge. The 2030 District is a business community initiative to reduce carbon emissions in the downtown area of Portland by 50% by the year 2030. To date, half a dozen major businesses have signed the commitment in Portland. If USM signs the commitment, they could play a leadership role in the District, as USM's carbon neutrality goal of 2040 is more aggressive than the district target, and the University arguably has the most comprehensive plan for reducing emissions out of all the institutions in the City.

Public entity commitments are also coalescing in Maine, with the cities of Portland and South Portland launching a collaborative effort to develop a climate action plan, and Governor Janet Mills launching a Climate Council for the State. The goals of these efforts, 80% GHG reduction by 2050 and 2030, respectively, serve as book ends for the University's own commitment of 80% by 2040. As these plans develop, there will surely be opportunities for the University to collaborate on goal setting, physical and intellectual resources, and procurement. Engagement with the City of Portland has already begun, as the University has provided consultation, and has actively carried out public input sessions on their behalf to help them build their plan. Moreover, USM is a member of the Maine Green Campus Consortium, a group of higher education sustainability professionals, who has two representatives on the State's Climate Council.

Looking Ahead

Another opportunity the Office is researching is participation in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS). STARS is the most comprehensive and well respected out of the many sustainability rating systems in higher education. It is a three-year report comprised of over 1,200 questions about sustainability initiatives and achievements on campus. STARS can be a useful tool for leveraging change on campus, as it motivates students, employees, and administrators to create and carry-out new programs. However, filling out a STARS report takes at least a quarter of a full-time position a year to complete. Therefore, the costs and benefits of completing a report must be considered. This cost-benefit analysis is underway now, as the Sustainability Education & Outreach Coordinator is working through a draft report for informational purposes. The University will have to decide whether or not it wants to become a STARS reporting institution and put necessary resources toward the project.

A final opportunity of note is becoming a signatory to Second Nature's Resilience Commitment. The University was one of the charter signatories of Second Nature's Carbon Commitment, which is the framework that governs the 2040 carbon neutrality goal. However, the Resilience Commitment was newly established about five years ago, and has been gaining traction. The Commitment is a recognition that climate mitigation, in and of itself, is not sufficient for addressing climate change. "Mitigation" is a carbon reduction effort; it is agnostic about responding to the effects of climate change. The resiliency effort stems from "adaptation," which is an acknowledgement that the world is locked into a certain amount of climate change as a result of past action, despite how effective humans are at current efforts to reduce emissions. The Resilience Commitment requires universities to have comprehensive plans in place for dealing with the environmental, social, and economic effects of climate change. Those plans must be developed in collaboration with the local community and municipalities. All three of USM's campuses are prone to increased drought, stronger precipitation events, and increased heat, and the Portland campus is prone to sea-level rise and hurricane events. The Office of Sustainability does not currently have the resources required to sign the Resilience Commitment, but the Assistant Director of Facilities Management for Sustainability and the Sustainability Education & Outreach Coordinator have both received Second Nature's resilience training in order to prepare for the possibility of joining the commitment in the future.

Regardless of whether or not the University plays a major role in any of the new opportunities explored here over the next two years, the Office of Sustainability will continue advancing sustainability on campus through policy, construction, renovation, education, and outreach. The sustainability projects that are currently underway have the potential to be truly transformative to the University of Southern Maine.

-The Office of Sustainability at the University of Southern Maine

To find the Appendix, visit:
<https://usm.maine.edu/sustainability/usm-campus-sustainability-progress-report>



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