



Sustainability Council

Spring 2026

Madhu Khanna
Alvin H. Baum Family Chair & Director



Institute for Sustainability,
Energy, and Environment

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- Nishi Marikumar, Student Sustainability Committee

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- Venetria Patton, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Morgan White, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of F&S
- Josh Whitman, Director of Athletics (Tim Knox, delegate)
- Dale Wright, Vice Chancellor for Advancement
- Danita Brown Young, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Nonvoting members:

- Paul Foote, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Specialist, F&S
- Jennifer Fraterrigo, Associate Director for Campus Sustainability, iSEE
- Miriam Keep, Sustainability Programs Coordinator, iSEE
- Elizabeth Murphy, Managing Director, iSEE

TODAY'S AGENDA

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ICAP 2026

02

BENCHMARKING
SUSTAINABILITY
PROGRESS

03

STUDENT UPDATES
AND PRIORITIES

04

ENGAGING COLLEGES IN
SETTING
SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

05

CURTAILING CAMPUS
ENERGY SUPPLY

iCAP 2026

ICAP 2026 – OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED!

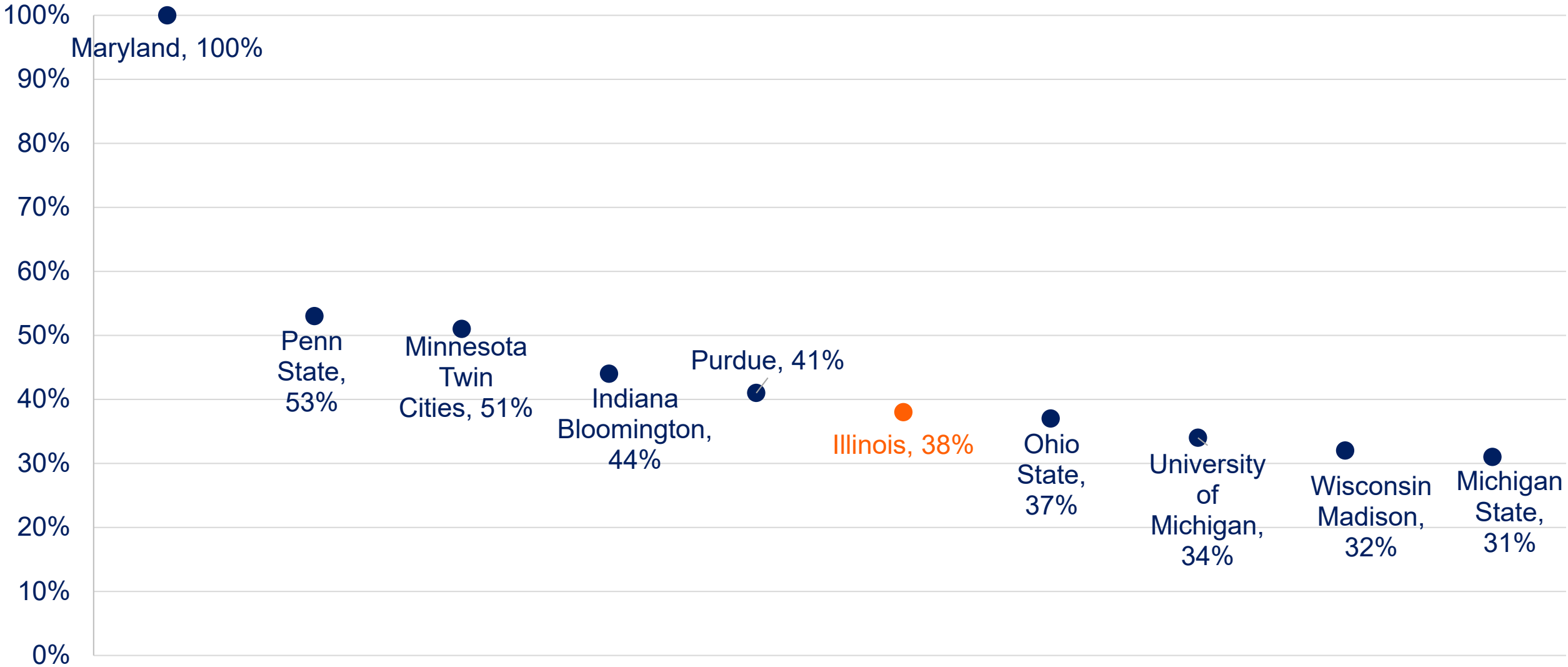


Thank you for supporting the launch of the iCAP 2026, renewing our campus's commitment to sustainability

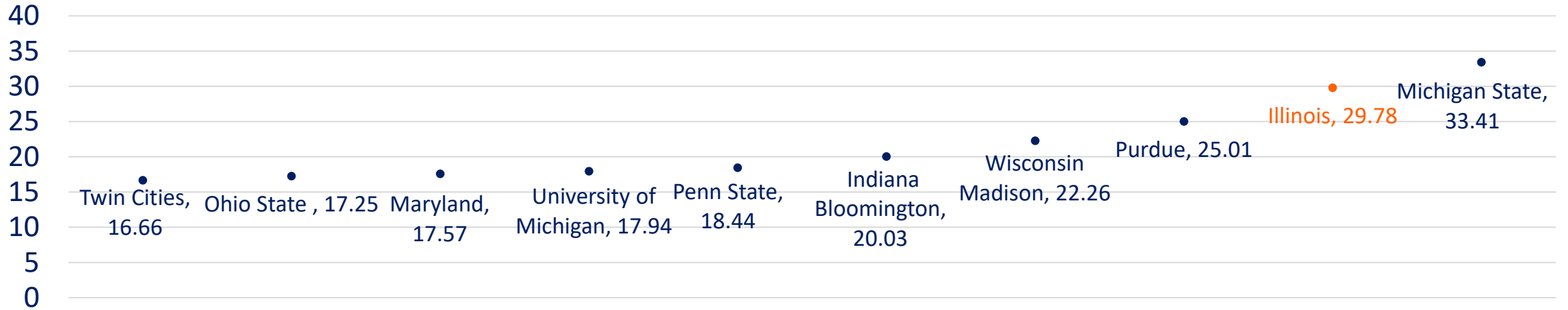


BENCHMARKING SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS

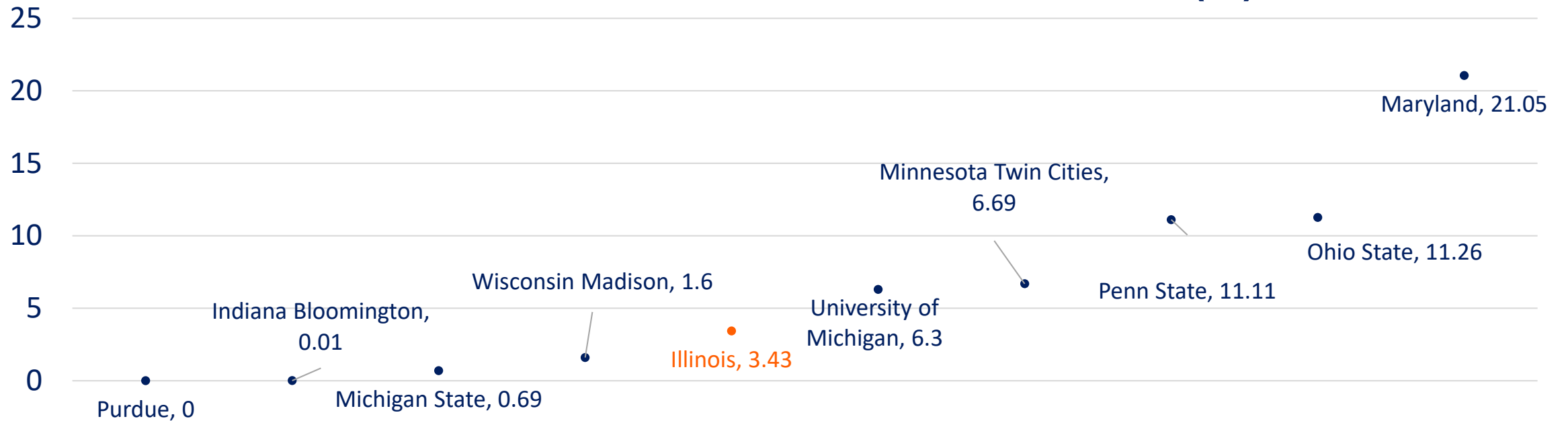
EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS COMPARED TO BASELINE



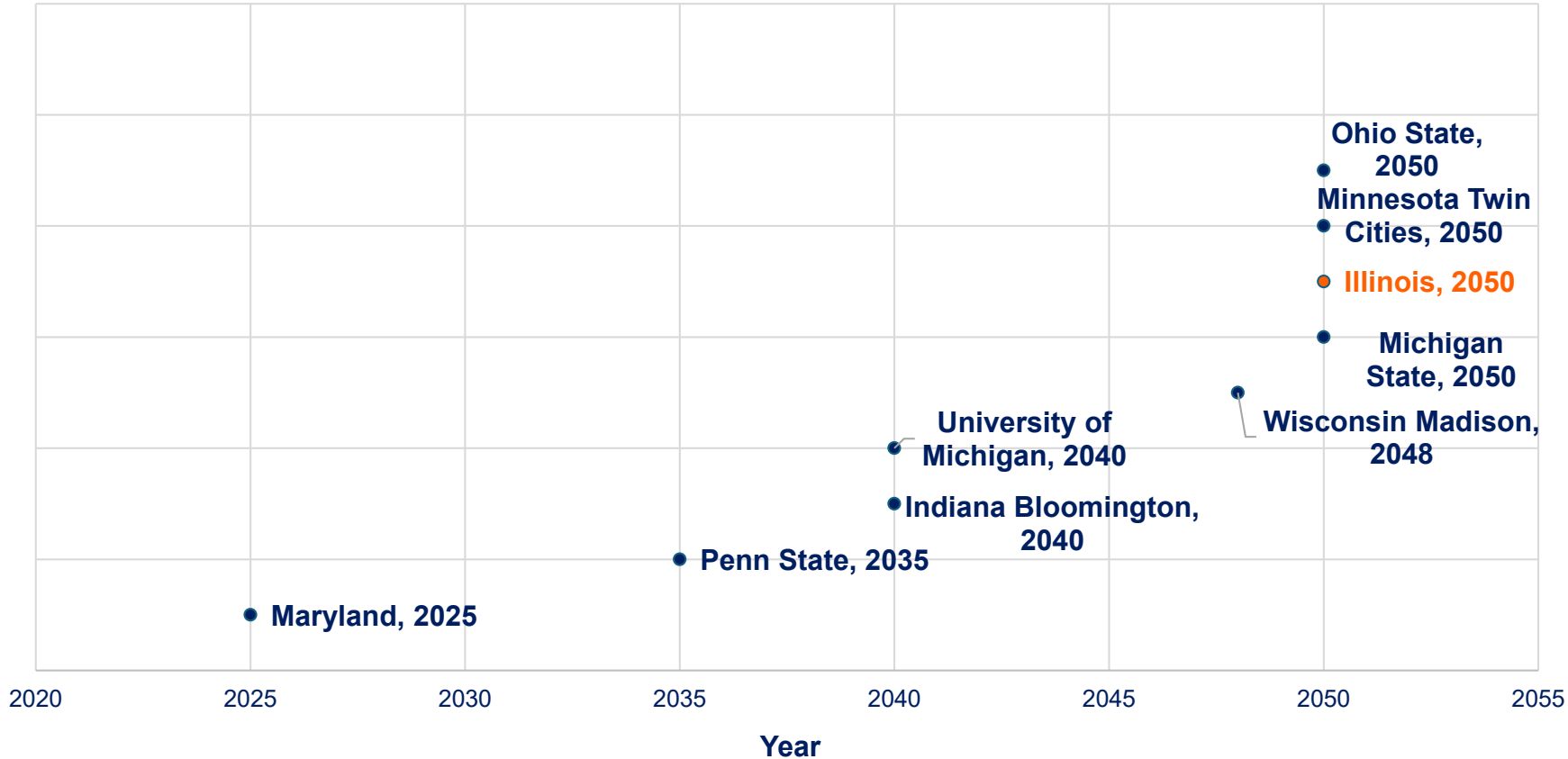
ENERGY USE INTENSITY (BTU/GSF)



ENERGY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES (%)



CARBON NEUTRALITY GOALS BY YEAR

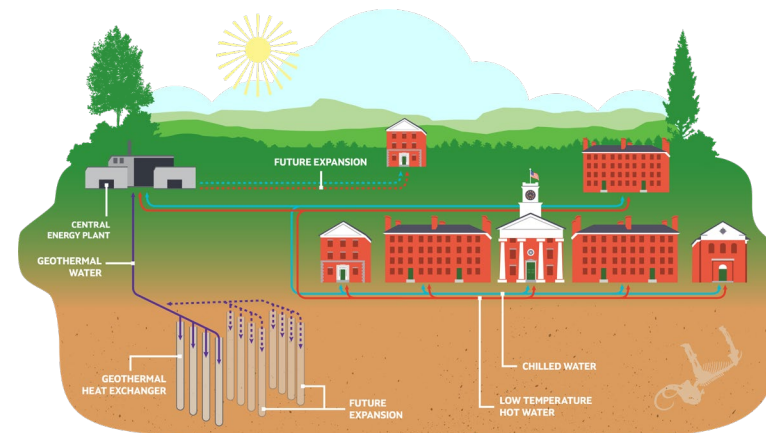


- Institutions with milestone goals to achieve carbon neutrality in Scope 2:
 - University of Michigan: 2025
 - Wisconsin Madison: 2030
 - Minnesota Twin Cities: 2033
- Maryland announced a goal of achieving a fossil fuel-free energy system by 2035



PEER EFFORTS TO TRANSITION FROM STEAM

- Various stages of planning or implementation for transitioning from steam to low-temperature hot water heating systems
 - University of Michigan
 - Minnesota Twin Cities
 - Maryland
 - Wisconsin–Madison
- Cornell 20% of the way through this process
 - Expect O&M costs to decline 73%
- Transitions are expected to lead to long-term cost savings
- The University of Michigan is exploring deep geoexchange technology as part of their plan to achieve carbon neutrality, made possible by their transition from steam to low temperature hot water for heating



ANAEROBIC DIGESTERS

- Anaerobic digester at Penn State and at Michigan State
- Providing renewable energy
- Solution for sustainable management of organic waste

Transforming waste into a public asset:
Michigan State University leads next-generation anaerobic digestion innovation

[Jack Falinski](#) - June 05, 2025



PEER APPROACHES TO ENERGY PLANNING

- Partnering with consulting firms to develop energy plans to achieve sustainability goals:
 - Wisconsin–Madison is working on a decarbonization study to develop options for converting its heating and cooling systems to a low-carbon district energy system, with Affiliated Engineers, Inc. (AEI)
 - Indiana Bloomington hired consultants to explore heat recovery/combined heat and power, including considerations for fuel switching to alternatives like hydrogen
- Minnesota Twin Cities is conducting an internal process to develop a roadmap to carbon neutrality
 - Assessing existing conditions (building-level analysis), make energy portfolio recommendations to enhance efficiency and incorporate renewables, and calculate associated costs and carbon reductions

ENERGY PARTNERSHIP AT OHIO STATE

- Ohio State launched a 50-year concession agreement in 2017 with Ohio State Energy Partners, with four components:
 - Operation of all energy facilities
 - Meeting energy efficiency targets
 - Enhancing the procurement process for energy sources
 - Support for academic activities
- Improved energy performance
 - Smart metering infrastructure installed across campus
 - Upgrading energy infrastructure and distribution systems
 - 12% improvement in energy efficiency realized in four years
 - 16% reduction in total energy use, while adding energy-intensive buildings



NEXTGEN ENERGY AT MARYLAND

- University of Maryland launched a 33-year concession agreement with Maryland Energy Impact Partnership in 2024 to:
 - Update their cogeneration system
 - Meet emissions reductions targets
 - Update the energy distribution system
 - Incorporate renewable energy

The NextGen Energy Program

The Path to Our Sustainable Energy Future

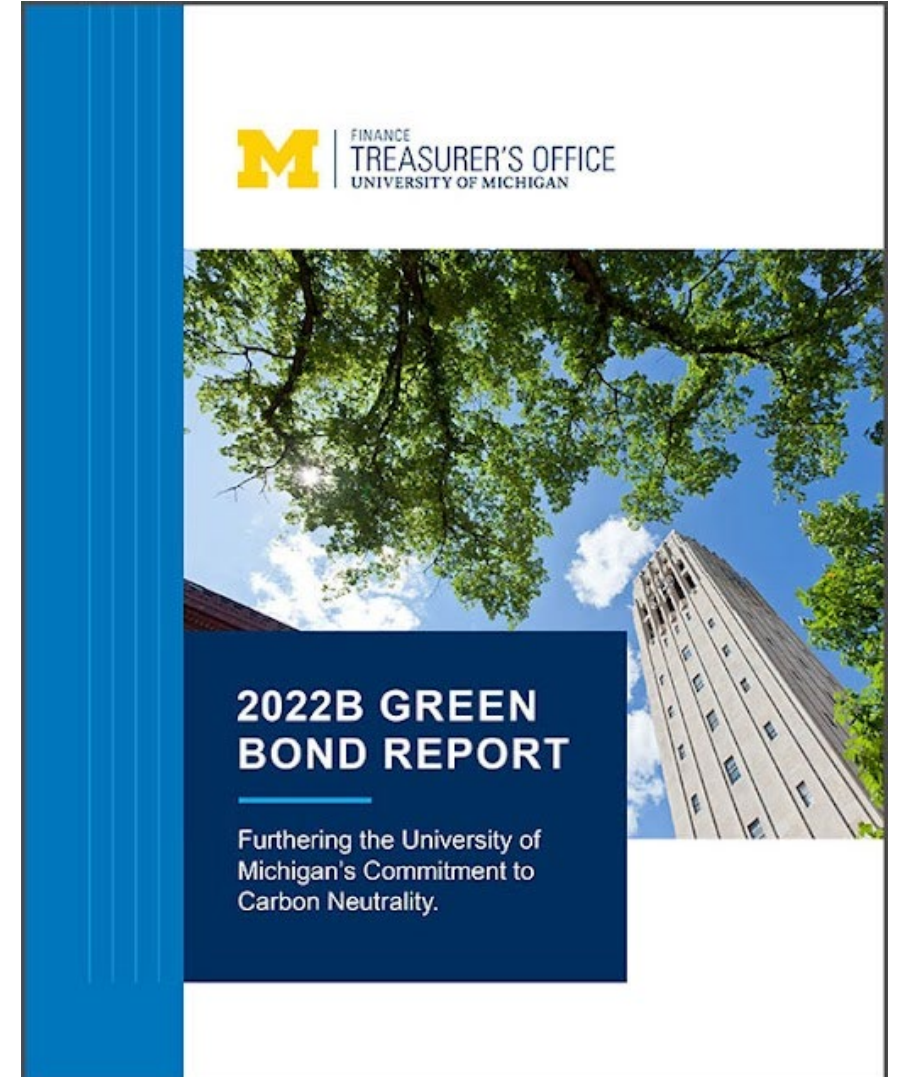


The NextGen Energy Program (NextGen) plays a critical role in ensuring that the University of Maryland can depend on a sustainable energy system for decades to come. NextGen not only puts us on a pathway to achieve the university's goal of a fossil fuel-free energy system by 2035, but will also increase our efficiency and sustainability, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our Central Energy Plant by 23% and saving 50% of the total water usage the plant requires annually.

FINANCING SUSTAINABILITY


The University of Michigan:

- Launched a \$25M **Revolving Energy Fund** in 2022 to finance energy conservation measures that generate cost savings
- Issued \$300M in **green bonds** in 2022 to finance capital projects that support climate goals
 - 91% to green buildings
 - 7% to renewable energy
 - 2% to clean transportation




SUSTAINABILITY IN STRATEGIC PLANS

Minnesota Twin Cities:



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #4

Advance our excellence to lead in the discovery and application of sustainable solutions, improving environmental, human, plant and animal health.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #5

Secure our future as a world-class university by strategically investing in our talented workforce, operations and facilities.

University of Michigan:

Energy, Climate Action, Sustainability and Environmental Equity

U-M is uniquely positioned to lead the effort of mitigating climate change through groundbreaking research, revolutionary education, campus operations, and creative programming.

Michigan State:

Stewardship for a Sustainable Future

Michigan State will provide exemplary stewardship of institutional resources to foster the long-term sustainability of education, research and outreach programs, while pursuing effective and efficient financial, operational and environmental practices. As we move toward 2030, we are committed to becoming a more contemporary institution, achieving greater effectiveness through next-generation operations and organizational alignment. Our integrated approach to stewardship lays the foundation for a more resilient future for the university and the world around us.

Penn State:

Increasing Land-Grant Impact

Sustainability and Operations

- Number of sustainability upgrades to Penn State energy grid
- Sustainable operations data for Penn State locations

As Pennsylvania's only land-grant university, Penn State is uniquely positioned to catalyze transformative change within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We envision a future where our campuses serve as engines of economic prosperity, fostering innovation, enhancing sustainability and resiliency, cultivating a highly skilled workforce, and enriching the lives of all Pennsylvanians.

Wisconsin–Madison

PRIORITY THREE

Convene and collaborate for the public good

Deepen and broaden partnerships and co-create solutions that benefit people in Wisconsin and beyond.

- Contribute to a **more sustainable future**, embedding environmental stewardship into our teaching, research, engagement, and operations while striving to share with and learn from others about these efforts.

AASHE STARS RATINGS

- Evaluation of various categories
 - Curriculum, buildings, emissions, purchasing, transportation, research
- Illinois currently rated Gold, like most of our peers (only Purdue is Silver)
- For next submission, highest point categories will be in Education:
 - Percentage of academic departments offering sustainability-focused courses
 - Percentage of undergraduate programs with sustainability-focused learning requirements
- AASHE is increasing focus on racial equity and social justice



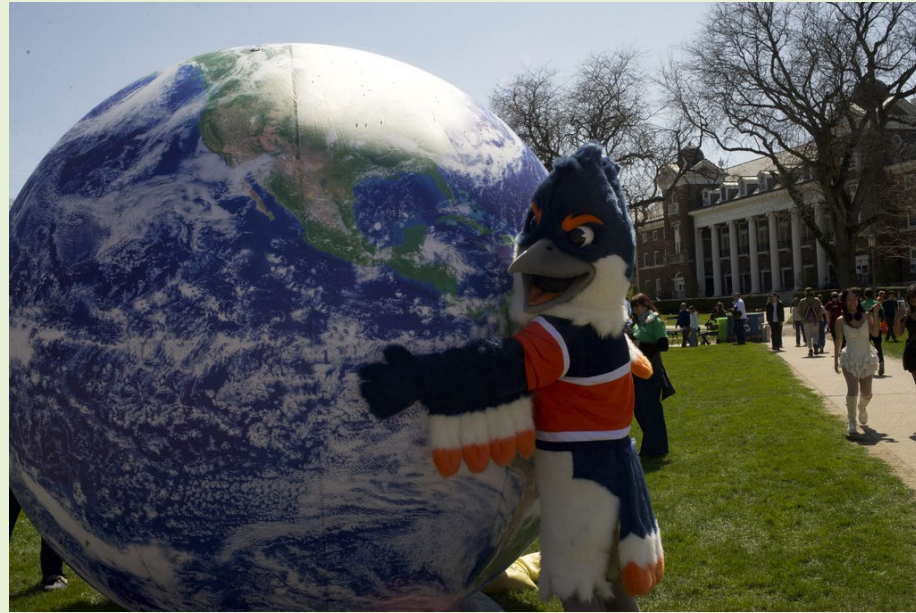
SUMMARY – PEER APPROACHES TO ADVANCING CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY

- Transitioning from steam to low-temperature hot water heating system
- Exploring deep geoexchange technology
- Advancing deadlines for climate commitments
- Developing an energy plan with a pathway to achieve carbon neutrality
- Exploring opportunities to partner with the private sector on energy management
- Creating financing resources for energy conservation and sustainable capital projects
- Installing an anaerobic digester
- Integrating sustainability into the strategic plan

STUDENT UPDATES AND PRIORITIES

Our Objectives

- Restructure our organization
- Focus on coalition building
- Hear more from students



Our Successes

- Successfully rebranded as GLC
- Hosted several major events
- Strengthened our coalition
- Advocated for signing the iCAP

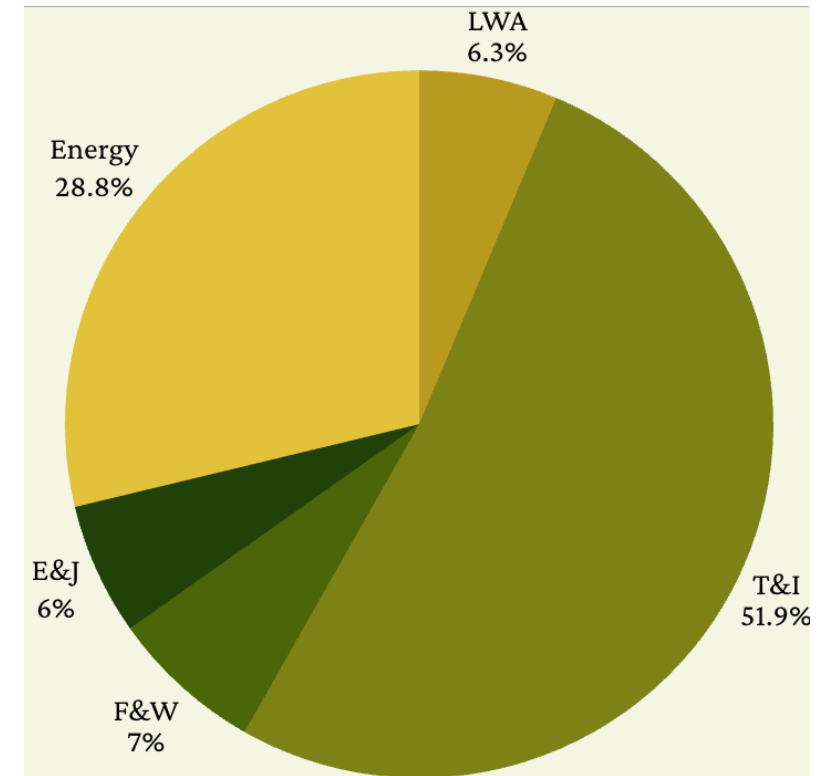


Our Asks

- We've made great strides in composting so far, but we would like to continue to see administrative support for this effort given the strong student interest
- More native plantings around campus
- Sustainability included in the campus strategic plan
- Continued support from campus administration with major sustainability events

Student Sustainability Committee Updates

- Piloted our new RSO Sustainable Microgrant funding pathway to fund 9 RSOs in making sustainable swaps during Spring 2026
- Advanced in-person communication initiatives to reach a wider campus community
 - Ex: Tabling efforts at residence halls, cultural centers, McKinley Center Health Fair, and RSO events like Sustainapalooza and the Circular Fashion Expo
- Had record numbers of Step 1/Step 2 project submissions (18 in Fall 2025, 14 in Spring 2026)



SSC Spring 2026 Budget Breakdown by Category

Total Spent: **~\$1.1 million**, with **53%** going to **student-led projects**

Our Mission for the 2026-27 Academic Year

SSC intends to expand its reach across a wider range of majors and departments, where sustainability's importance is exemplified in two major ways:

- 1) The importance of sustainability as a value to the student body via our survey sent via Massmail in 2025.
 - 1) **98%** of survey participants stated that **sustainability was either “very” or “extremely important”** to them (*n = 48 responses*)
 - 2) Yet, **students are not finding it easy to get involved in sustainability efforts** on campus (on a 0-100 scale with 100 as the “easiest” to get involved, **mean = 44.14 ± 3.37**, n = 44 responses)
- 2) Current project applicants state the importance of sustainability practices in their education to teach them desirable skills for the job market
 - 1) “Commercial **companies are already moving toward sustainability** through reusable vehicles and cleaner fuels.” – Hybrid Propulsion project (student-led)
 - 2) “The census provided **hands-on training** in forest ecology to undergrads from **four different U. of I. colleges**...These students learned surveying methods, species identification and data entry and were **trained in data management and analysis.**” – Trelease Woods Recensus (faculty-led with student RAs)

SSC hopes for the continued administrative support to **emphasize student engagement with sustainability across disciplines**, including the **involvement of sustainability in the Campus Strategic Plan**. Doing so ultimately allows the Illinois Green Fund to reap maximum benefits for students and by extension, the University of Illinois as a whole.

Illinois Student Government - Environmental Sustainability Committee

Our Recurring Initiatives



ES is continuing and/or expanding the following initiatives for students on campus

- Ecoforums: sustainability forums for students to voice issues
- Tours to Solar Farm, Abbott Farms
- Earth Week programming
- Sustainapalooza tabling
- Trash Cleanup coordination

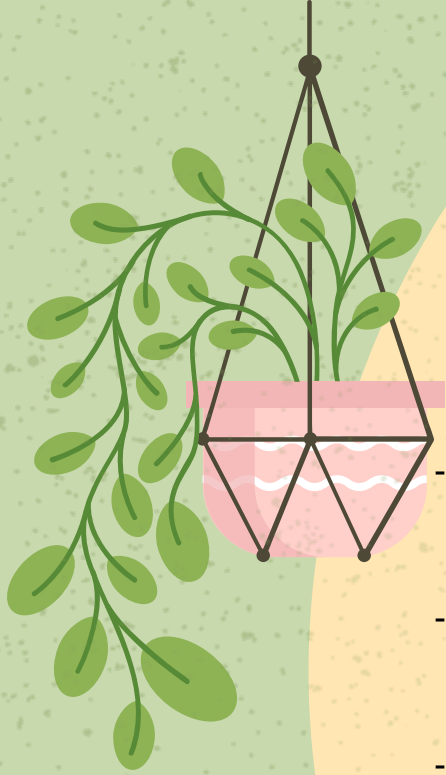


EcoForum Ideas

Students said...

- A potential **student composting campaign** would be more sustainable
- Several people expressed **frustration with cyclists riding on sidewalks**
- **VEO bikes** are often **left on sidewalks** after use, blocking pathways
- Massive concerns around **data centers**.
- Students are unfamiliar with how campus energy systems work
- More native plants, pollution cleanup, and green infrastructure.

Students want campus sustainability to be more **visible**, more **participatory**, and more **embedded into everyday student life**.

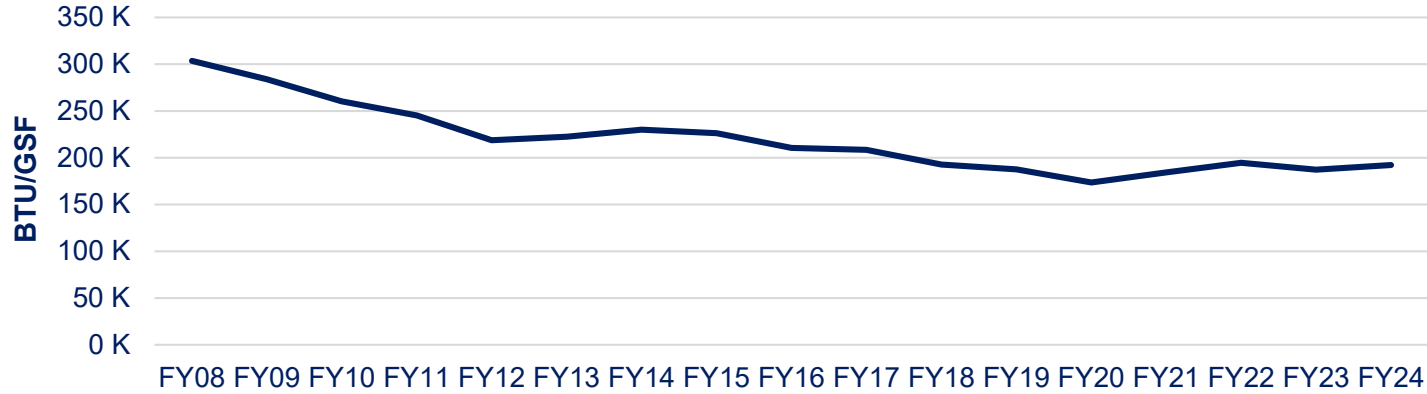


ENGAGING COLLEGES IN SUSTAINABILITY

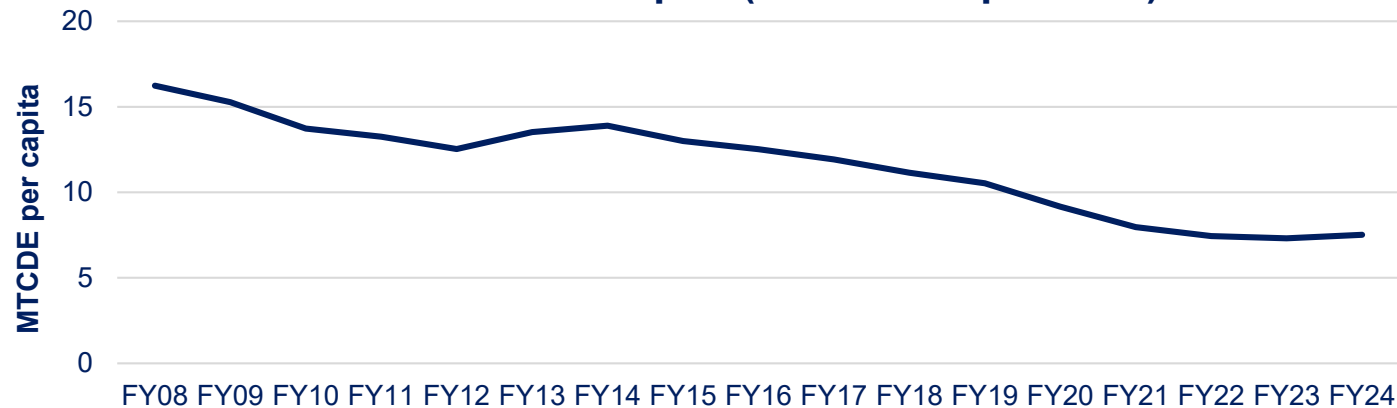
GOALS

NEED FOR SUSTAINED PROGRESS

Energy Use Intensity by Fiscal Year



Emissions Per Capita (Student Population)



- A growing campus (in population and square footage) affects progress on reducing energy use and emissions
- Progress on reducing energy use intensity has plateaued from FY18
- Emissions per capita have also plateaued from FY22
- Need to engage colleges in sustainability efforts to see deeper progress

COLLEGE-SPECIFIC APPROACHES TO CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY

- Based on college-specific priorities that vary in emphasis on campus sustainability
- Limited mechanisms for joint consideration of academic priorities, campus sustainability, and budgetary implications
 - College facility staff typically do not see savings in utility costs with energy upgrades or changes in utilities prices
 - Business offices not included in discussions on energy implications of capital projects
 - Budget model does not reflect full costs of energy inefficiency, which incentivizes facility managers to hold onto space rather than release it
 - Budget model time lag means units do not see immediate savings from investments
- Limited knowledge sharing across colleges

ESTABLISH SUSTAINABILITY GOALS WITH COLLEGES, ISEE, AND F&S



Energy conservation projects can provide living laboratory opportunities for students and researchers through data access, analytics, building performance studies, and sustainability-focused curriculum integration.

Annual review of College-Level energy performance

- Annual recognition for: most improved college, largest carbon reduction, highest participation of students and employees
- Joint prioritization meetings between F&S, iSEE, and college leadership
- Regular reporting on upcoming facilities projects and potential impacts both positive and negative

Develop Building-Level sustainability scorecards

- Total energy consumption
- Utility costs
- EUI ranking
- Recent improvements
- Potential opportunities

PROPOSED EFFORT TO ENGAGE COLLEGES

- iSEE and F&S are proposing to work with the Illinois Space Advisory Committee to engage colleges in discussions around improving energy efficiency
 - Increase clarity on IVCB budget model and utility prices + billing
 - Discuss user and financial benefits of energy efficiency projects
 - Explore case studies from other institutions
- iSEE and F&S are proposing to work with colleges to set college-level energy efficiency targets
 - What is the best time during the academic year to hold these meetings?
 - Who should participate in these meetings?
 - What data are needed?
- Energy efficiency targets should be integrated into the master planning process

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCENTIVIZING CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY

- Reinstate financial incentives for the Energy Conservation Incentive Program (ECIP) to enable investment in other sustainability projects
- Create opportunities for jointly funding mid-level projects that meet multiple objectives
- Improve functioning of the Revolving Loan Fund
- Include sustainability projects in campuswide programs, like in the Campus Strategic Plan
- Clarify how the IVCB model impacts user decisions about energy consumption

CURTAILING ENERGY SUPPLY TO CAMPUS

UPDATE: UI ENERGY CURTAILMENT PLANNING



Several Campus Units Draft Basic Plan

- 11 of the 16 Colleges submitted their draft plan for their units.
- Remaining colleges are in progress
- A handful of auxiliary units have also submitted their plans

Framework to Preparedness

- These plans consist of rough strategic outlines that identify who is responsible for what areas and what critical areas are within these spaces
- LAS has created a comprehensive draft framework that identifies specific details that lead to the creation of college-level implementation, guidelines and policy

- F&S will reduce energy consumption for the HVAC systems that are connected to the Energy Management Control Center with Direct Digital Controls
- F&S Utilities and Energy Services initiated next step curtailment assessments and response criteria
- Greater resource allocations are necessary for widespread implementation

Connections with Campus Sustainability

- Energy storage would benefit both renewable usage and curtailment issues
- Energy efficiency and space optimization would benefit the iCAP goals



THANK YOU