

MOONSHOT BRIEF

SUSTAINABILITY

“Sustainability is all about our collective passage through this world. At USC, sustainability is our Assignment: Earth. It’s a centerpiece of our research and teaching, and of our policies and mindsets.”

– PRESIDENT CAROL L. FOLT, COMMENCEMENT 2022

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

BY 2025

CLIMATE NEUTRAL

Eliminate or offset emissions related to the burning of fossil fuels to power our buildings.

0

BY 2028

ZERO WASTE

Divert 90 percent of our waste from landfill by recycling, composting, and source reduction.

90%

WATER USE

Reduce water usage by 20 percent per square foot of building space.

20%

ACADEMICS

Hire 50 additional faculty and add 75 new sustainability related courses, certificates, and/or majors and minors by 2028.

75/50

ENGAGEMENT

Community self-reports practicing sustainable behaviors “most of the time” or “always.”

80%



USC received a [Silver Rating](#) on USC’s first Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) submission. STARS is an assessment framework that measures sustainability progress and performance in higher education institutions.

RESOURCES

PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES

May 2022: [139th Commencement Speech](#)

April 2022: [State of the University](#)

EDITORIAL

[New Sustainability Hub coming to University Park Campus](#)

[Nurturing native plants on our campuses](#)

[Bringing sustainability to game days](#)

[All sustainability content on USC News](#)

VIDEOS

July 2022: [APRU](#)

[Sustainability Panel*](#)

April 2022: [Sustainability Q&A with USC Viterbi’s Civil and Environmental Engineering class](#)

April 2022: [Earth Week Messaging](#)

PRINT
Fiscal Year 2022: [Sustainability Annual Report](#)

*President Folt’s presentation is from 19:40-28:44, and panel discussion begins at 43:30.

Sustainability in Academics and Research

- 17,000 USC students enrolled in sustainability-related courses; more than 1,100 courses and 11 research centers, programs, or institutes dedicated to and/or inclusive of sustainability.
- [USC Wrigley Institute for Environment and Sustainability](#) grows its portfolio to address the world's most pressing sustainability challenges.
- [USC Center for Sustainability Solutions](#): collaboration between Price School of Public Policy and Viterbi School of Engineering.
- [USC-AltaSea: March 2022, opening of new 6,000 sq. ft. Aquaculture Lab](#): advances research into the blue economy.

“The oceans not only hold the diversity of life, but they produce the oxygen that goes into the atmosphere. Aquaculture will be part of the ways that we feed the planet, and we will do it in a way that is sustainable.”

– PRESIDENT CAROL L. FOLT



Sustainability in Operations

- Launched [Assignment: Earth](#), USC's Sustainability Framework. Assignment: Earth formalizes our commitment to creating a more sustainable future.
- Elimination of [single-use plastic beverage bottles](#). More than [one million bottles diverted](#) from landfills within a few months of program launch.
- Solar panels installed on Galen Center roof.
 - USC's largest solar project to date
 - 1,500 solar modules covering 50,000 sq. ft.
- Coliseum: transitioned to operating as Zero Waste facility for all large events.
- Snapshot of 2022 successes:
 - 42,000 kWh [energy savings](#) per month resulting from centrally-managed Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Cooling (HVAC) automated scheduling programs (equivalent to avoiding burning 400,000 pounds of coal per year)
 - 20 academic buildings upgraded to energy efficient LED

lighting (equivalent to avoiding burning 400,000 pounds of coal per year)

- 60 percent lighting load reduction after LED upgrades
- 98 new exterior multi-stream waste bins deployed across UPC and HSC
- Over [200 hydration stations](#) installed to date across UPC and HSC to promote the use of refillable water bottles and reduce single-use plastic beverage containers
- 40 percent estimated average water use savings resulting from new native or climate adaptive landscaping

Sustainability with our Community

- [Urban Trees Initiative](#): partnership between USC Dornsife Public Exchange and the City of LA; green canopy in areas with sparse shade and poor air quality.
- [USC-LADWP agreement](#) not only provides a quarter of USC's electricity with green power, but brings opportunities for residents in nearby communities to gain access to affordable solar energy.
- [Trojan Shop Local](#) helped 60 diverse, small businesses across Los Angeles share local services, merchandise, and products with the Trojan community.

Sustainability in the Arts

- [Arts and Climate Collective](#): funds student-driven art and media projects that connect storytelling with topics including sustainability, climate change, and climate justice.
- [Students' caribou VR project](#): more than 15 game design, computer science, and journalism students worked together to create an interactive VR project to show the impact of climate change, specifically on Arctic wildlife.

