



# Sustainability Initiatives @

**OHIO**  
UNIVERSITY



*Ohio University has earned a reputation for being green – and not just because of its athletic uniforms or its rural setting.*

Over the last decade, Ohio University has positioned itself as a leading institution in the sustainability movement. “Green” projects that emphasize resource conservation, energy efficiency, and campus sustainability are blossoming around the university. In addition to Ohio University’s successful efforts to promote the traditional “Three Rs” of sustainability—Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle—sustainability efforts at Ohio also include two additional Rs: Rethink and Research.

## *Reduce*

In 2007, Ohio University President Roderick McDavis became the first president at a four-year public college in Ohio to sign the Presidents’ Climate Commitment, which commits institutions to strive for carbon neutrality by implementing a comprehensive climate strategy. Thinking green starts at the top, but efforts to reduce waste have also sprouted throughout the university community. Ohio University’s Office of Sustainability directs the Green House Project, which seeks to reduce energy use in off-campus student rental units in Athens by conducting efficiency audits. Dining Services conducts periodic waste audits around campus to reduce food waste, and purchases food locally to reduce the emissions and costs of transportation. Ideas also spring from the grassroots. The Green Network, a coalition of Ohio University students, faculty, and staff, led a “Think outside the bottle” campaign to rid the campus of bottled water and promote other environmentally-conscious and fiscally-smart office policies to reduce waste.

## *Reuse*

In 2009, Ohio University began an ambitious composting initiative by purchasing an industrial composting system, located at the Ridges. It composts pre- and post-consumer campus food waste, as well as paper goods and special biodegradable service ware. The system transforms waste into soil, and the grounds staff reuses the nutrient-rich soil around campus.

## *Recycle*

In 2001, Ohio University co-founded RecycleMania, a ten-week competition to maximize recycling and minimize waste which has grown to include over 500 colleges and universities throughout the United States. Recycling bins cover the grounds, and Campus Recycling has set an ambitious goal of recycling 80% of the waste generated on campus.

## *Rethink*

Ohio University supports the rethinking of sustainability in the form of the Ohio Ecohouse, a university-owned house that was transformed into a learning center about ecologically sustainable lifestyles. Since 2005, the Ecohouse has hosted events, tours, and school groups in order to demonstrate the practicality of affordable green technology and sustainable living.

## *Research*

Ohio University is quickly becoming a leader in green technology. University researchers are currently working on projects involving clean coal, fuel cells, and various other sustainability issues. This innovative research has the potential to reduce the university’s impact on the environment of southeast Ohio, and even to produce ideas that have wider applicability.

## **How to Give to Sustainability**

Ohio University’s sustainability efforts give College Green a new meaning. While these projects are impressive, there is more to be done. If you are interested in supporting sustainability efforts at Ohio University, please contact Sonia Marcus, Sustainability Coordinator, at (740) 593-0460 or [marcuss@ohio.edu](mailto:marcuss@ohio.edu).