

NACUFS SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Categories

Sustainable Procurement
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Social Justice
Carbon Neutrality
Waste Reduction
Grand Prize

NACUFS SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Category Descriptions

1. Sustainable Procurement

Awarded to operations with the best sustainable procurement programs. This includes, but is not limited to, programs with an emphasis on buying local, animal welfare, sustainable seafood, carbon footprint, and social equity.

2. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Social Justice

Awarded to operations who place high importance on their impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and social justice. Elements of the programs who win this award could include training programs for DEI for staff, supplier expectations and purchasing policies, tracking of business types purchased from, and education and outreach to guests and staff.

3. Waste Reduction

Awarded to operations with the best waste reduction plans, for both front- and back-of-house, and in regard to suppliers and procurement. Programs who win this award will place an emphasis on reducing single use disposables, recycling and composting, diverting waste, collecting data on waste production, and educating consumers on the importance of reducing all waste, including food and other dining related items.

4. Carbon Neutrality

Awarded to operations who place a high value on reducing their carbon footprint and working toward carbon neutrality. Programs who win this award will emphasize purchasing policies that avoid deforestation and favor regenerative agriculture, educating customers on how to reduce the carbon load of their meals, and integrating their efforts with campus-wide climate action programs.

5. Grand Prize

Awarded to the overall highest impact sustainability program from the previous four categories.

NACUFS SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Awards Gallery:

Visit <https://www.nacufs.org/membership/awards-gallery/> to see the 2025 award winners and their submissions all in one place!

Contest Rules:

1. Sustainability initiatives/programs entered for judging must have occurred between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.
2. Applicants can enter multiple categories, but only one entry per category may be submitted, as each category should encapsulate all elements of the initiative on campus.
3. All entries must be received by March 31, 2026. Entries received after the deadline will be disqualified.
4. Combined essay answers are limited to 2,000 words.
5. The contest is only open to NACUFS institutional members in good standing. Non-members interested in submitting an entry must first become a member.
6. All entry materials must be designed and produced by the institution entering the contest. Entries cannot be company-wide sustainability promotions or concepts that are for use at multiple campuses or institutions as a company program.
7. The decisions of the judges are final.
8. All participants will be notified of the results by email following the completion of the judging.
9. All gold, silver, and bronze winners will be displayed at the NACUFS National Conference. The Grand Prize winner will be announced then.
10. By entering, permission is thereby given to NACUFS to publish and/or use in any way the material so submitted.
11. All entries must be submitted online via the NACUFS Awards portal.

Supporting Materials

A maximum of 20 collateral pieces may be uploaded as support documentation with each entry. They may contain examples of posters, brochures, screenshots of web pages, menus, published articles, white papers, photographs, and links to video/photo sharing websites. If an entry uses materials that could be subject to copyright and/or trademark protections, the entrant institution should consult with the entrant's legal counsel or appropriate institutional office as to whether written permission from each copyright and/or trademark owner is required. If written permission is required for the purposes reflected in the entry, a copy of each such written permission shall be submitted to membership@nacufs.org and such written permission shall also be provided for further publication and use by NACUFS.

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Sustainable Procurement

Description

Awarded to operations with the best sustainable procurement programs. This includes, but is not limited to, programs with an emphasis on buying local, animal welfare, sustainable seafood, carbon footprint, and social equity. This category places a high value on outreach and education. This is because impact of procurement can be measured in influence, education, and the impact on consumer behavior.

Evaluation Structure

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Overall Impact of Initiative or Program	Evidence that the initiative had an overall positive impact. (For example, did you increase your sustainable procurement?) Share any metrics relevant to supporting your progress, such as year-over-year changes. (10 points)	30
	Evidence that the initiative was environmentally sustainable. (10 points)	
	Evidence that the initiative was socially responsible. (10 points)	
Creativity and Innovation	Creativity and innovation were used in the deployment of the initiative. (5 points)	15
	Creativity and innovation were used to involve campus and/or greater community in initiative. (5 points)	
	Students were involved in the program or initiative. (5 points)	
Low Start-Up Resource Costs/High Return	Include financial return on investment (ROI) in comparison to start-up resource cost (show comparison figures). (5 points)	10
	Project risk: through review and revision, identified project risks were managed and minimized. (5 points)	
Applicability of Initiative	Can the operation be replicated in similar operations, or inspire like-minded ideas in operations of all types? (15 points)	15
Effectiveness of Measurement	The extent to which specific quantitative metrics were recorded that support the effectiveness of the initiative (such as graphs, charts, survey results and research results). (10 points)	10

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Sustainable Procurement

Evaluation Structure Continued

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Education, Outreach, and Marketing/Communications	Outreach was conducted to share information about the program with students and campus community, local media, etc. (5 points)	20
	Overall educational impact of the program. Did the program explain why it was important to sustainability? (10 points)	
	How were students engaged in the design or implementation of the program? (5 points)	
Total Points Possible		100

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/Social Justice

Description

Awarded to operations who place high importance on their impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and social and climate justice. Elements of the programs who win this award could include, but are not limited to, staff DEI training programs, supplier expectations and purchasing policies, tracking of business types purchased from, development of programs to create more inclusive environments, collaborations with campus groups, and education and outreach to students and campus community.

Evaluation Structure

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Overall Impact of Initiative or Program	Evidence that the initiative had an overall positive impact. (For example, did you increase your sustainable procurement?) Share any metrics relevant to supporting your progress, such as year-over-year changes. (10 points)	30
	Evidence that the initiative was environmentally sustainable. (10 points)	
	Evidence that the initiative was socially responsible. (10 points)	
Creativity and Innovation	Creativity and innovation were used in the deployment of the initiative. (5 points)	15
	Creativity and innovation were used to involve campus and/or greater community in initiative. (5 points)	
	Students were involved in the program or initiative. (5 points)	
Low Start-Up Resource Costs/High Return	Include financial return on investment (ROI) in comparison to start-up resource cost (show comparison figures). (5 points)	10
	Project risk: through review and revision, identified project risks were managed and minimized. (5 points)	
Applicability of Initiative	Can the operation be replicated in similar operations, or inspire like-minded ideas in operations of all types? (15 points)	15
Effectiveness of Measurement	The extent to which specific quantitative metrics were recorded that support the effectiveness of the initiative (such as graphs, charts, survey results and research results). (10 points)	10

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/Social Justice

Evaluation Structure Continued

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Education, Outreach, and Marketing/ Communications	Outreach was conducted to share information about the program with students and campus community, local media, etc. (5 points)	20
	Overall educational impact of the program. Did the program explain why it was important to sustainability? (10 points)	
	How were students engaged in the design or implementation of the program? (5 points)	
Total Points Possible		100

NACUFS SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Carbon Neutrality

Description

Awarded to operations who place a high value on reducing their carbon footprint and working toward carbon neutrality. Programs who win this award will emphasize purchasing policies that avoid deforestation and favor regenerative agriculture, educating customers on how to reduce the carbon load of their meals, and integrating their efforts with campus-wide climate action programs. This category places a high value on outreach and education. This is because the impact of carbon neutrality can be measured in influence, education, and the impact on consumer behavior.

Evaluation Structure

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Overall Impact of Initiative or Program	Evidence that the initiative had an overall positive impact. (For example, did you increase your sustainable procurement?) Share any metrics relevant to supporting your progress, such as year-over-year changes. (10 points)	30
	Evidence that the initiative was environmentally sustainable. (10 points)	
	Evidence that the initiative was socially responsible. (10 points)	
Creativity and Innovation	Creativity and innovation were used in the deployment of the initiative. (5 points)	15
	Creativity and innovation were used to involve campus and/or greater community in initiative. (5 points)	
	Students were involved in the program or initiative. (5 points)	
Low Start-Up Resource Costs/High Return	Include financial return on investment (ROI) in comparison to start-up resource cost (show comparison figures). (5 points)	10
	Project risk: through review and revision, identified project risks were managed and minimized. (5 points)	
Applicability of Initiative	Can the operation be replicated in similar operations, or inspire like-minded ideas in operations of all types? (15 points)	15
Effectiveness of Measurement	The extent to which specific quantitative metrics were recorded that support the effectiveness of the initiative (such as graphs, charts, survey results and research results). (10 points)	10

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Evaluation Structure Continued

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Education, Outreach, and Marketing/ Communications	Outreach was conducted to share information about the program with students and campus community, local media, etc. (5 points)	20
	Overall educational impact of the program. Did the program explain why it was important to sustainability? (10 points)	
	How were students engaged in the design or implementation of the program? (5 points)	
Total Points Possible		100

NACUFS SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Waste Reduction

Description

Awarded to operations with the best waste reduction plans, for both front- and back-of-house, and in regard to suppliers and procurement. Programs who win this award will place an emphasis on reducing single use disposables, recycling and composting, diverting waste, collecting data on waste production, and educating consumers on the importance of reducing all waste, including food and other dining related items. You'll notice this category places a high value on outreach and education. This is because the impact of waste reduction can be measured in influence, education and their impact on consumer behavior.

Evaluation Structure

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Overall Impact of Initiative or Program	Evidence that the initiative had an overall positive impact. (For example, did you increase your sustainable procurement?) Share any metrics relevant to supporting your progress, such as year-over-year changes. (10 points)	30
	Evidence that the initiative was environmentally sustainable. (10 points)	
	Evidence that the initiative was socially responsible. (10 points)	
Creativity and Innovation	Creativity and innovation were used in the deployment of the initiative. (5 points)	15
	Creativity and innovation were used to involve campus and/or greater community in initiative. (5 points)	
	Students were involved in the program or initiative. (5 points)	
Low Start-Up Resource Costs/High Return	Include financial return on investment (ROI) in comparison to start-up resource cost (show comparison figures). (5 points)	10
	Project risk: through review and revision, identified project risks were managed and minimized. (5 points)	
Applicability of Initiative	Can the operation be replicated in similar operations, or inspire like-minded ideas in operations of all types? (15 points)	15
Effectiveness of Measurement	The extent to which specific quantitative metrics were recorded that support the effectiveness of the initiative (such as graphs, charts, survey results and research results). (10 points)	10

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AWARDS Reduction

Evaluation Structure Continued

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Education, Outreach, and Marketing/ Communications	Outreach was conducted to share information about the program with students and campus community, local media, etc. (5 points)	20
	Overall educational impact of the program. Did the program explain why it was important to sustainability? (10 points)	
	How were students engaged in the design or implementation of the program? (5 points)	
Total Points Possible		100

NACUFS SUSTAINABILITY Grand AWARDS Prize

Description

Awarded to the overall highest impact sustainability program from the previous four categories.

Criteria will begin with the above, and then the highest scoring entries will be evaluated for an additional set of criteria, which are:

Evaluation Structure

Category	Criteria for Evaluation	Points Possible
Overall Impact	Did the program inspire guests to take on more sustainable initiatives and seek out more information about why it is important?	10
Forward Thinking	Is the program looking to the future and ahead of its time?	10
Achievability	Can other campuses be inspired by this program to create something within their own operation?	10
Affordability	How did this initiative meet its goal while also focusing on keeping food/meal plans affordable for students?	10
Total Points Possible		40