

# Sustainability Survey 2019



## Background

Sustainability is a core value at Grand Valley State University and it is accepted and valued as having an integral role in fulfilling the mission of the university. This integration of sustainability builds the capacity to positively impact sustainability issues across complex and interrelated economic, environmental, and social frameworks.

With help from the Statistical Consulting Center, Office of Institutional Analysis and some key faculty members, the Office of Sustainability Practices conducted the assessment to understand students' knowledge and perspectives about sustainability at GVSU. The survey is designed to gauge progress on sustainability awareness at Grand Valley State University. Having information about the understanding and activities regarding sustainability will better help us plan future efforts, programs and communications with the GVSU community.

## Methodology

The assessment was administered through Qualtrics with the corresponding link sent through email. With an invitation and one follow-up email, we invited a pool of 5000 students, randomly selected from among winter 2019 enrollees and yielded 11.22% response rate.

Included in the survey were questions that assessed the sustainability literacy, sustainability culture and sustainability behavior of students on campus.

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## Key Observations

### Sustainability Literacy

- Students from all class standings seem to have a good knowledge of sustainability literacy
- The percentage of correct responses in the sustainability literacy assessment, generally increased from freshmen up through to senior students

### Sustainability Culture

- Awareness of sustainability initiatives in GVSU appears to increase from freshmen up to the senior class standing. The percentage of awareness of GVSU sustainability initiatives is high among seniors (44%) than freshmen (28%).
- Students generally, ranked the importance of GVSU sustainability initiatives as very high but indicated they are not aware of them. For example, 99% of students ranked the Sustainable Agricultural Project as “slightly important to very important” but 38% indicated they were not aware of it. This trend runs through for most of the sustainable initiatives with low awareness level among freshman class standing.
- The majority of respondents indicated that they have moderate interest in sustainability (around 61%), while just a few (around 30%) have a passion for sustainability.
- Generally, the environment and its associated issues are valued the most when compared to safety and security, economic issues, and local economy.
- Nearly 36% of respondents identified that they “care about GVSU providing sustainable food/dining options, but unaware of whether there are any”.

### Sustainability Behavior

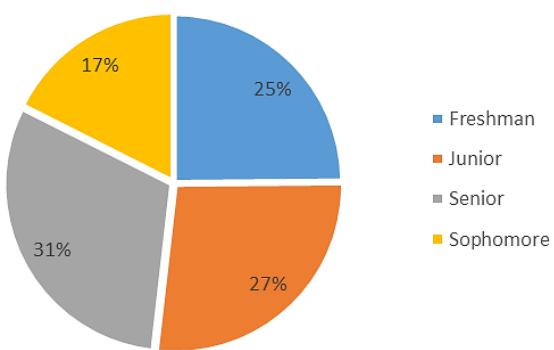
- Across all personal responsibility behavior questions, 99% of respondents answered “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to make a difference in environmental sustainability issues. 78% of students indicated that they recycle waste (whether food waste or plastic/ metal waste)

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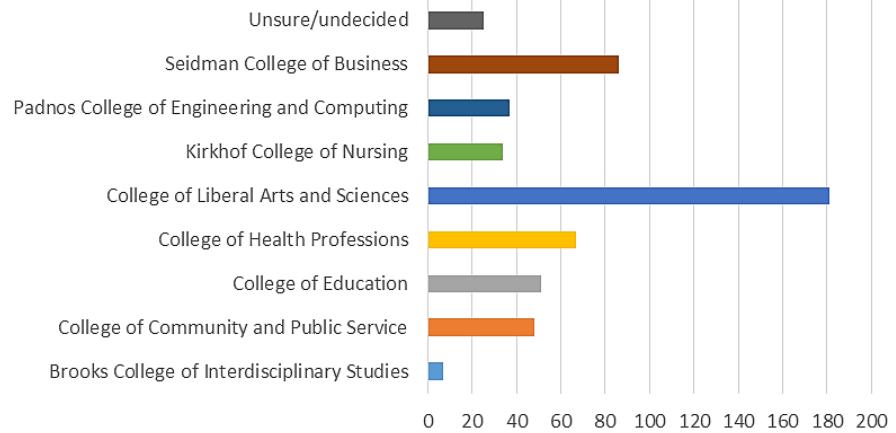
## Select Charts

### Profile of Respondents

Current class standing

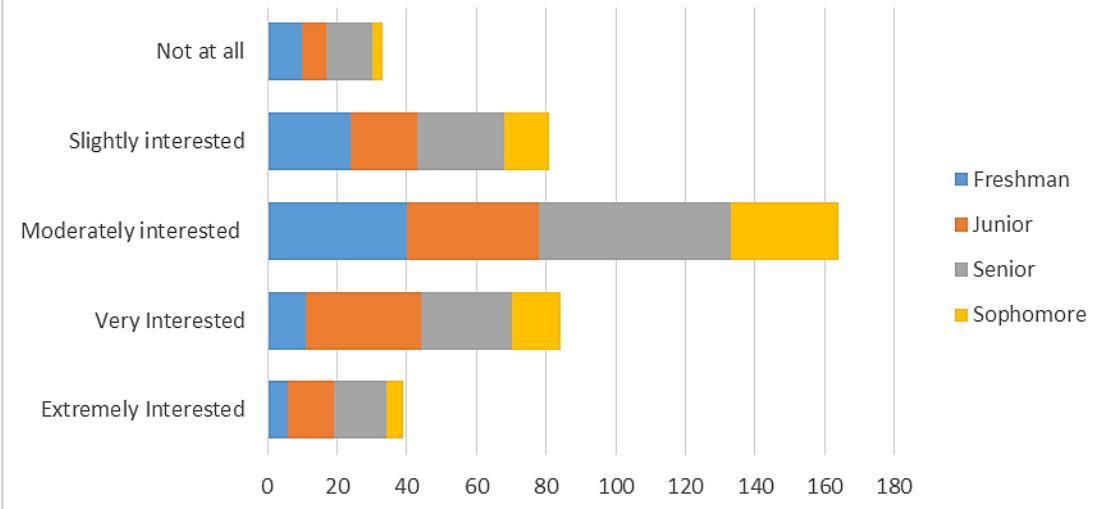


Represented Colleges



1. Please indicate your interest in sustainability at GVSU

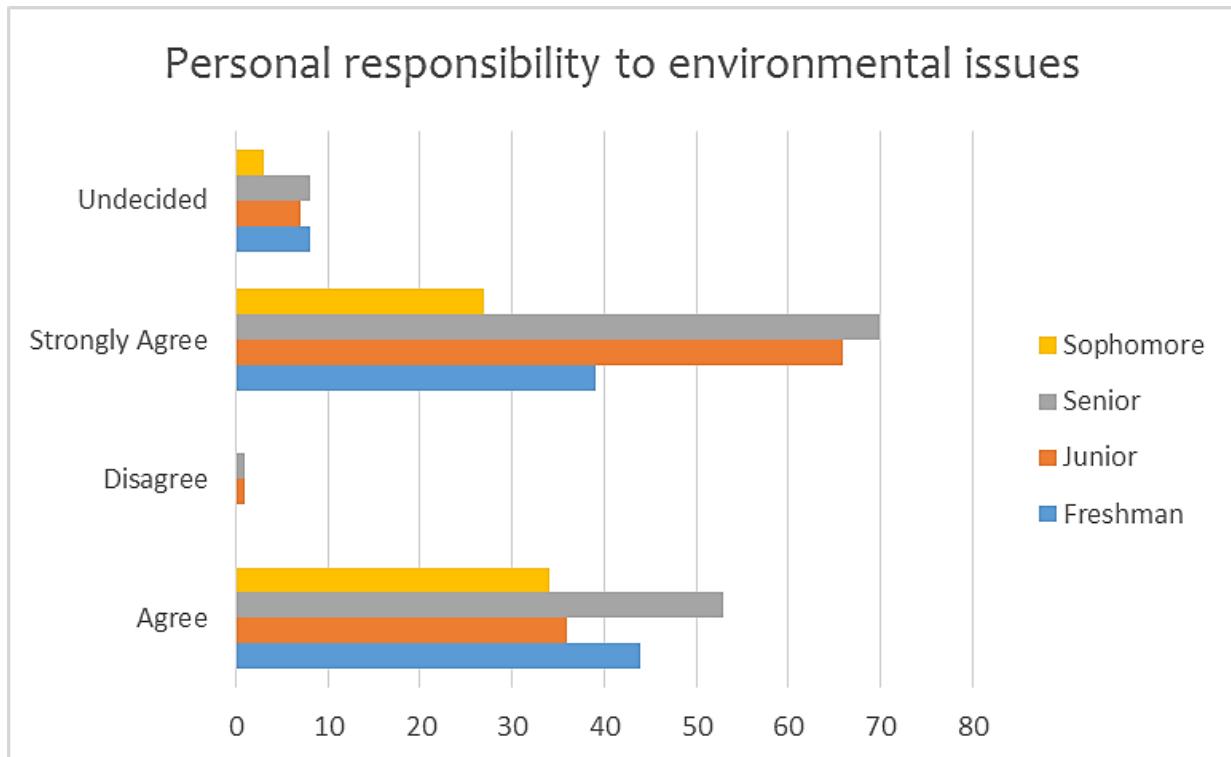
Level of interest in sustainability at GVSU



Key Takeaway: Students express high interest in individual sustainability issues. However the greatest interest lie within the upper class standings other freshmen.

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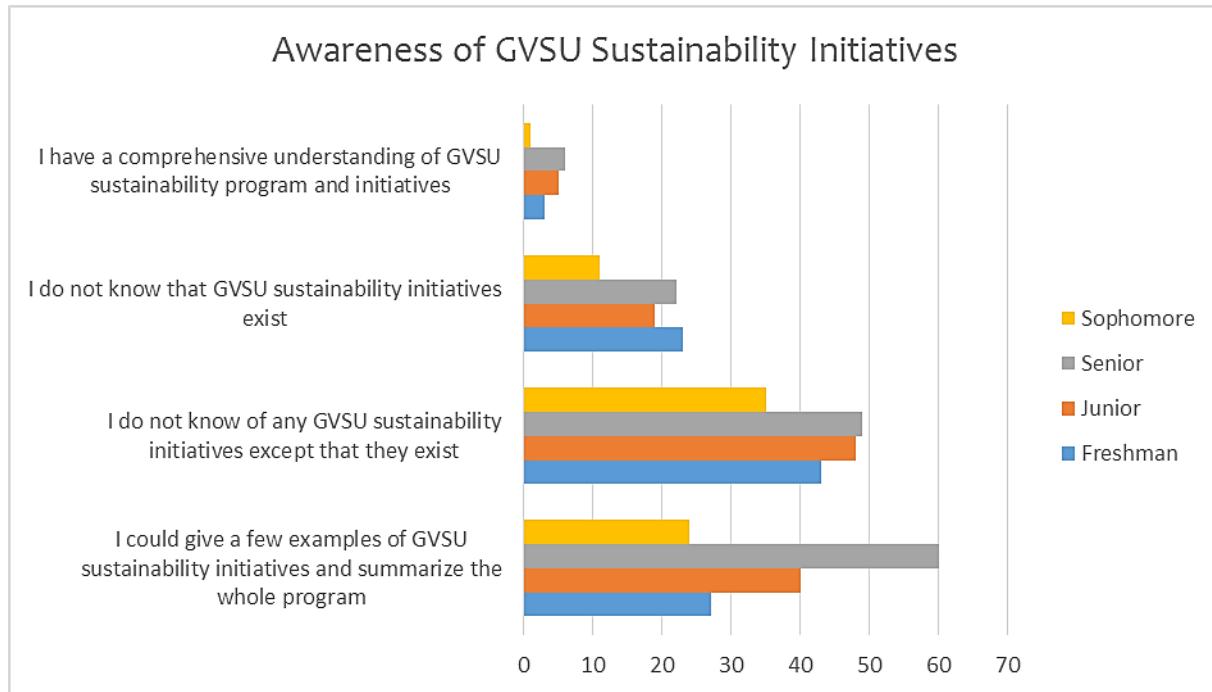
2. Please respond to this statement: I have a personal responsibility to help make a difference on ENVIRONMENTAL issues.



Key Takeaway: Almost all students strongly agree that they have personal responsibilities to help make a difference towards environmental issues like waste, resource consumption, and water use. Most students agree to have a personal responsibility towards environmental issues than having a personal responsibility to help make a difference on economic issues like unemployment, inflation, and local business/local economy.

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3. Please indicate your level of awareness of GVSU sustainability initiatives.



**Key Takeaway:** Senior students demonstrated high knowledge and awareness of GVSU Sustainability initiatives. 60% of respondents demonstrated that they were unaware of the sustainability initiatives in GVSU. However, 61% responded “yes” to learn more about GVSU sustainability initiatives and 98% responded that the initiatives are highly important.

4. Do you want to learn more about GVSU sustainability initiatives?

