

STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING @RU: 2023 UPDATE

ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO / SCHAUMBURG, IL

REPORT TO 12.15.23 SENATE MEETING BY MIKE BRYSON
SLIDESHOW DESIGN BY SOPHIA GALLO (BA '22)



CONTEXT OF PROJECT

2015-2020 STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY PLAN:

Affirms that sustainability is a critical part of our institutional culture and a driver of progressive transformation.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

Encompasses environmental, economic, and ethical factors -- the "Three Es" of sustainability. Foregrounds human rights and environmental stewardship.

RU'S SOCIAL JUSTICE MISSION:

Mandates that we model and promote sustainability on and beyond our campus through our environmental, economic, and ethical practices.

INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH:

Sustainable universities work better, save money, attract students, and inspire donors.



RU'S COMMITMENT

A background image showing several people working in a rooftop garden. In the foreground, a woman in a blue shirt is crouching and tending to plants. Behind her, a man in a green shirt is also working. To the left, another man is visible. They are surrounded by various green plants in raised beds. The background shows a cityscape with buildings and a clear sky.

“The task of envisioning and creating a truly sustainable world is immense and complex. **Colleges and universities** are not only well suited to engage in this important work through innovation, education, and community engagement, **they are obliged to do so.**”

“Such a worthy task is before us at Roosevelt, a distinctive urban university long committed to **advancing social justice and cultivating progressive leadership** in its home bioregion of Chicago and beyond.”

-- President Maleksadeh, Dec. 2015 (from RU's first STARS sustainability assessment report; emphasis added)

2022–23 PLANNING GOALS

- Assess and revise the 2015–2020 Strategic Sustainability Plan based on analysis of our progress and on feedback from students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, & trustees
- Gain university leadership approval and support of a new plan for 2024–29, with support/accountability measures in place



UN Sustainable
Dvlpmt Goals
for 2030
(adopted in
2015)

- Integrate goals within our overall Strategic Plan and generate excitement in campus community

OUR PROCESSES



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE (ESC) MEETINGS:

Reviewed 2015 plan, made suggestions and observations for next plan, and prioritized new goals

PLANNING WORKSHOPS:

Gave a sustainability crash course, discussed new suggestions based on STARS categories and imagined a sustainable university




SURVEY OF STUDENTS & EMPLOYEES/ALUMNI:

Collecting feedback from a wide variety of Roosevelt's community in a quicker more accessible way

CLASS AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

Reviewed previous plan, planned open meetings, and analyzed data and feedback
SUST 350 Service & Sustainability, Student Sustainability Associates, & RU Green meetings



2015–20 SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR 2023 REVIEW:

- Stalled progress since 2016
- Limitations of volunteer efforts by the devoted few
- Need for dedicated leadership, coordination, and accountability
- Resilience of student, faculty, employee, and alumni interest



SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS:

ACADEMICS	ENGAGEMENT	PLANNING & ADMIN	OPERATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SUST Program moved to College of Arts & Sciences in 2015, combined with SOC in 2017• Many service learning courses/research opportunities; collab w/ Mansfield, Loundy, FMNH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worked with Eden Place Nature Center & Farms, Field Museum, Friends of the Chicago River, Resilience Studies Consortium, etc.• Fellowship for Activism and Community Engagement thru Mansfield (2021-), SUST 350 and Loundy (Fall 2022)• RU Green student org (longstanding) and SUST 250 Sustainable University EXL class (starting in 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of most diverse Midwest private schools, Hispanic Serving Institution Status• Ideas of social justice & EXL gen ed requirement added in 2018; many SUST classes have EXL components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retro commissioning of AUD/WB buildings and SCH campus<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ (Air handling Unit, WB cooling tower replacement, building automation systems (CHI), ATRU hot water heaters, etc.• Campus wide composting at CHI in 2019• Adopted university green purchasing policy• DIVVY bike membership and discounts since 2015• SCH campus prairie restoration and native landscape maintenance

MODERATE PROGRESS

ACADEMICS	ENGAGEMENT	PLANNING & ADMIN	OPERATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to update sustainability-focused and -related courses from 2015 • Need to update faculty-related research since 2015 • Need to hire a new tenure track professor (left in 2021) • Roosevelt Urban Sustainability Lab (AUD 526) founded in 2015, underutilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal work done to promote sustainability culture among students/staff/faculty other than "green pledge", promotion of composting, and RU green/sustainability department initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained some memberships to grant/rebate programs like AASHE while others have lapsed like USGBC. New memberships not sought • Unclear if social justice has expanded across curriculum; inventory on Ideas for Social Justice and EXL classes should be taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USEPA Green Power membership expiring next year • Bronze STARS rating expired in 2018, but AASHE membership active • Loose temperature and energy conservation policies, no real management plan • Waste and operations audits done, recommendations and promotion to improve waste disposal not yet completed • Green purchasing policy adopted but EAL program status unknown and fair trade certification started not completed • Water conservation signage updated at both campuses, but long term campaign not maintained • SCH Irrigation system installed underground for garden but not used since 2019 • Greening of SCH campus not progressed since 2016, regressed in instances of community garden and arboretum certification

LITTLE TO NO PROGRESS

ACADEMICS

- Academic sustainability office responsible for university sust work
- Need more grant writing possibilities; unsuccessful proposasl to NSF & Arthur Vining Davis

ENGAGEMENT

- Very little to no sustainability integrated into orientation, except for student OLs

PLANNING & ADMIN

- Office of Sustainability, sustainability coordinator, and sustainability funding/budget not completed
 - Sust coordinator hired in 2015, let go in 2016
- Collaboration on health and well-being programs with HR and Res life not yet attempted
- No data on increased use of stairwell, fitness center, or alternative transit. Some signage exists

OPERATIONS

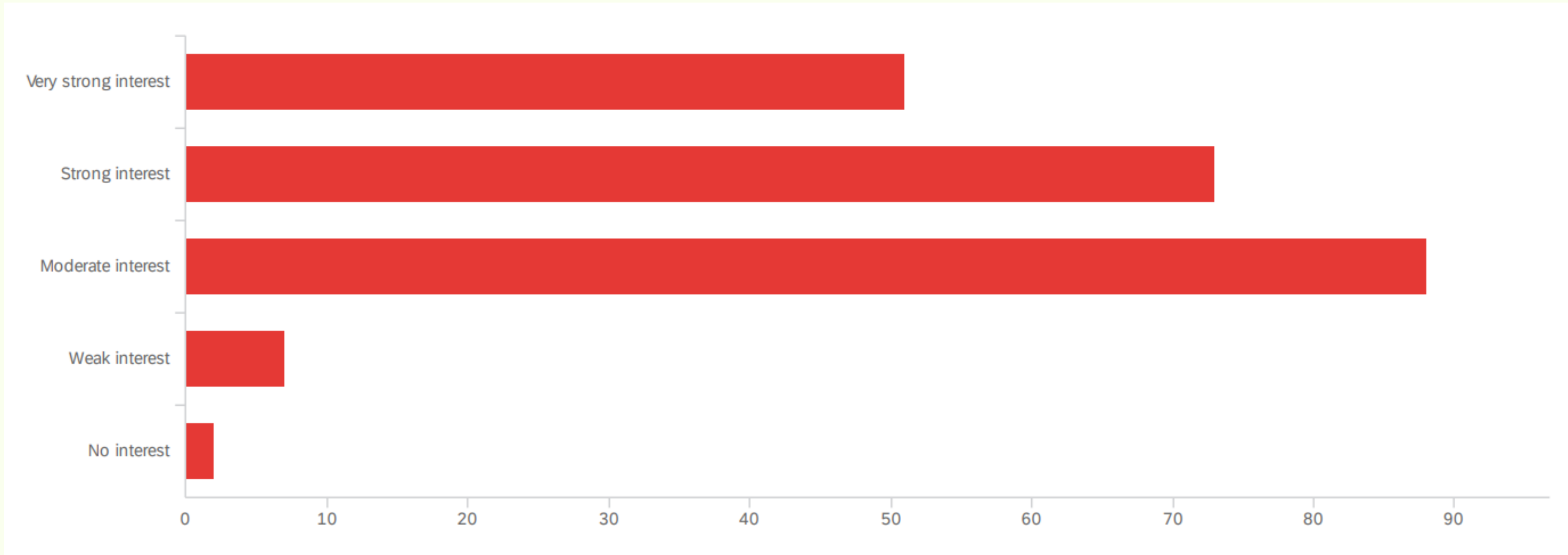
- Climate action plan not started
- Retrofitting not continued to be pursued as credits weren't given for 2019 work
- Local food opportunities and food donation system not implemented
- 25-30% waste diversion rate at CHI campus
- Review of university vendors not completed
- Did not maintain annual Green Campus Princeton Review recognition
- Did not maintain membership in USGBC and SERF
- Did not purchase alt. fuel vehicles and instal refueling stations university wide or in athletics
- WB rooftop garden unattended since 2020
- No rainwater collection system developed at SCH
- No campus wide composting at SCH
- SCH campus landscape certifications ended in 2016

**FULL LENGTH BREAK DOWN OF
GOAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABLE
HERE:**

<https://tinyurl.com/yrjr5e7p>

This is a view-only document

STUDENT INTEREST IN SUSTAINABILITY



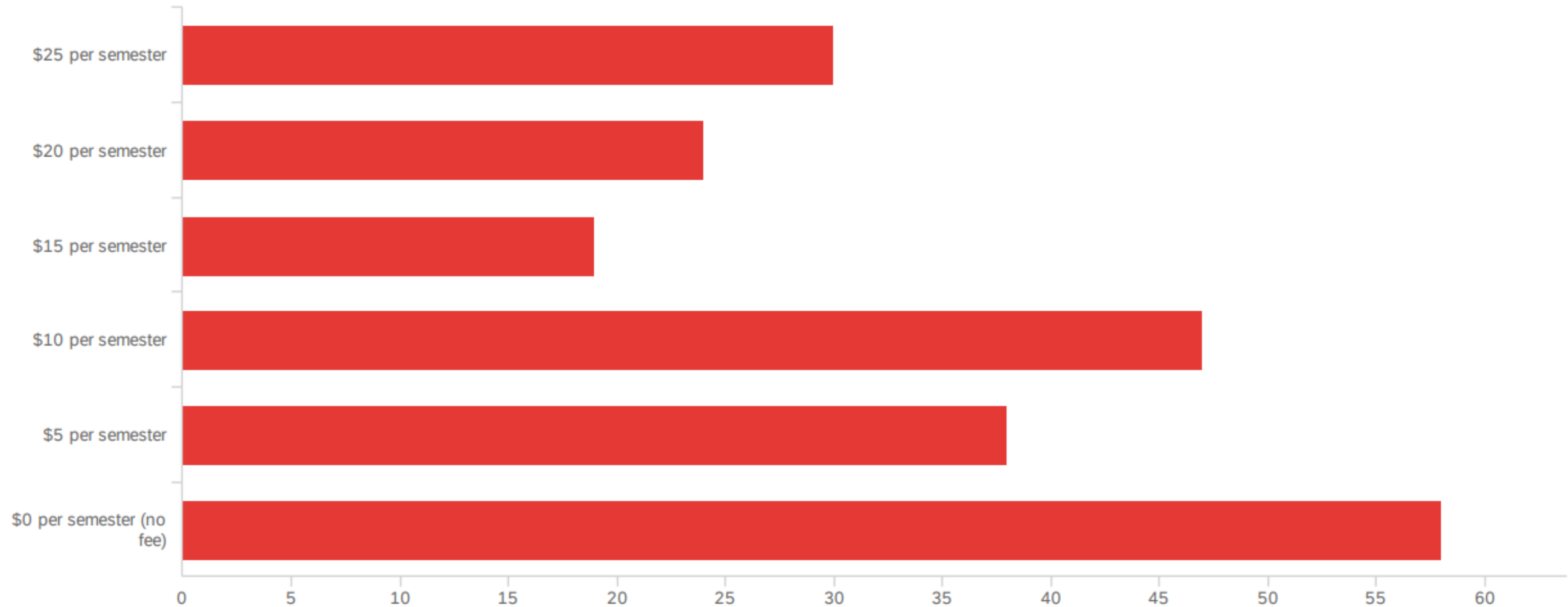
Survey data as of O3/O8/23: N = 268

WHY STUDENTS COME TO ROOSEVELT

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Social justice mission	1.00	5.00	3.67	1.28	1.63	193
2	Sustainability initiatives	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.21	1.47	173
3	Affordability / scholarships	1.00	5.00	4.49	0.77	0.60	223
4	Location	1.00	5.00	4.34	0.82	0.67	219
5	Athletics	1.00	5.00	2.20	1.61	2.58	213
6	Academic program	1.00	5.00	4.19	0.96	0.92	215
7	Campus atmosphere or "feel"	1.00	5.00	3.85	1.13	1.28	197

Survey data as of O3/O8/23: N = 268 (1 = low importance, 5 = high importance)

STUDENT SUPPORT FOR A “GREEN FEE” (N = 268)



Survey data as of 03/08/23: N = 268

CUMULATIVE SUGGESTIONS

from surveys & workshops

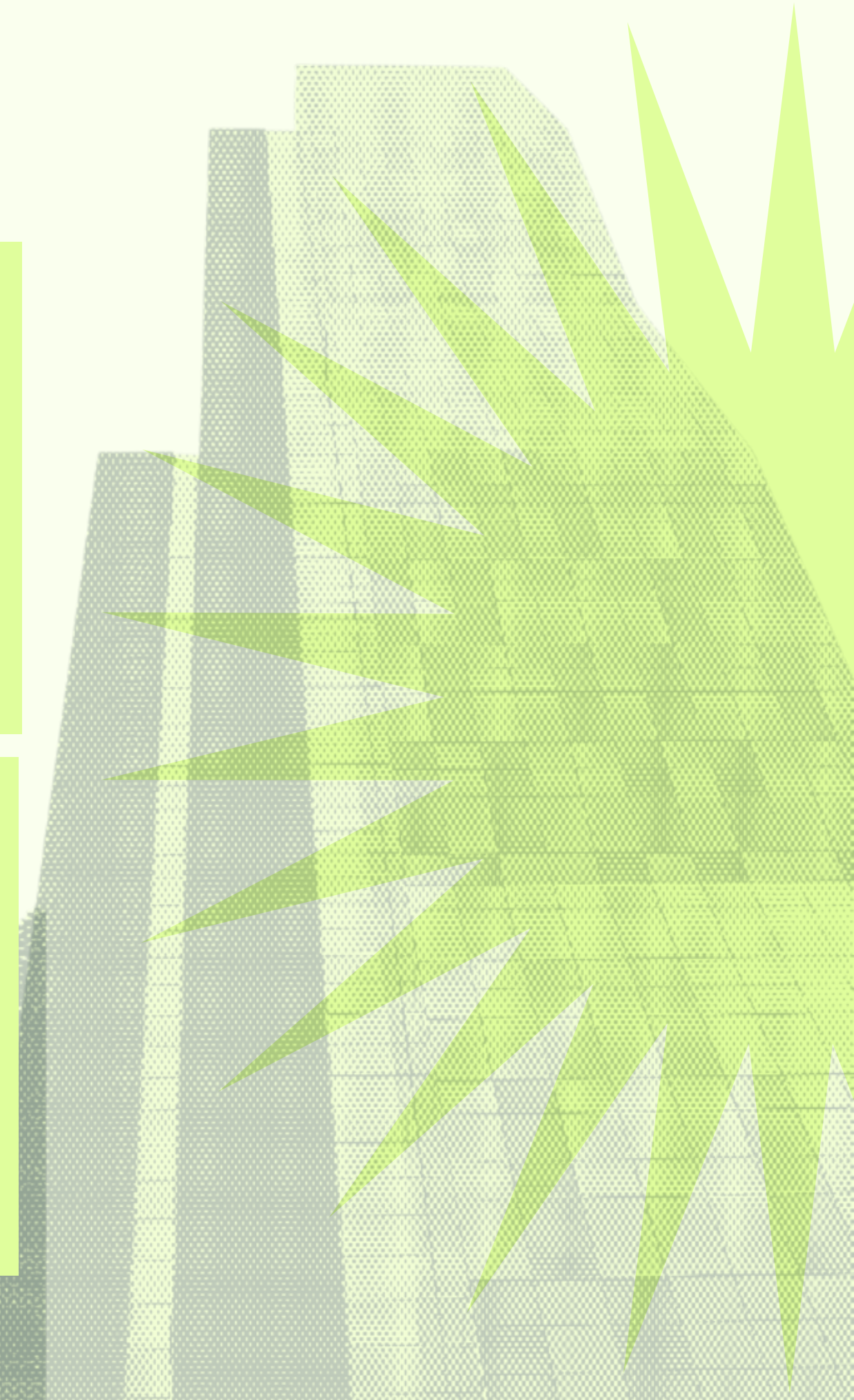
PLANNING / ADMINISTRATION:

- Prioritize and fund sustainability efforts in RU's budget
- Create and staff an Office of Sustainability (as called for in this student petition from Spring 2023)
- Adopt a climate action plan and accountability measures
- Explore and secure additional grants and rebates
- Make investments transparent and divest from fossil fuels

OPERATIONS:

- Gather, share, and analyze data on energy and waste
- Enhance waste diversion rates, reduce waste
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through on-campus clean energy solutions
- Create more sustainable dining center and catering operations
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity at WB and SCH gardens and campuses

Schaumburg Campus on left, Wabash Building on right



CUMULATIVE SUGGESTIONS

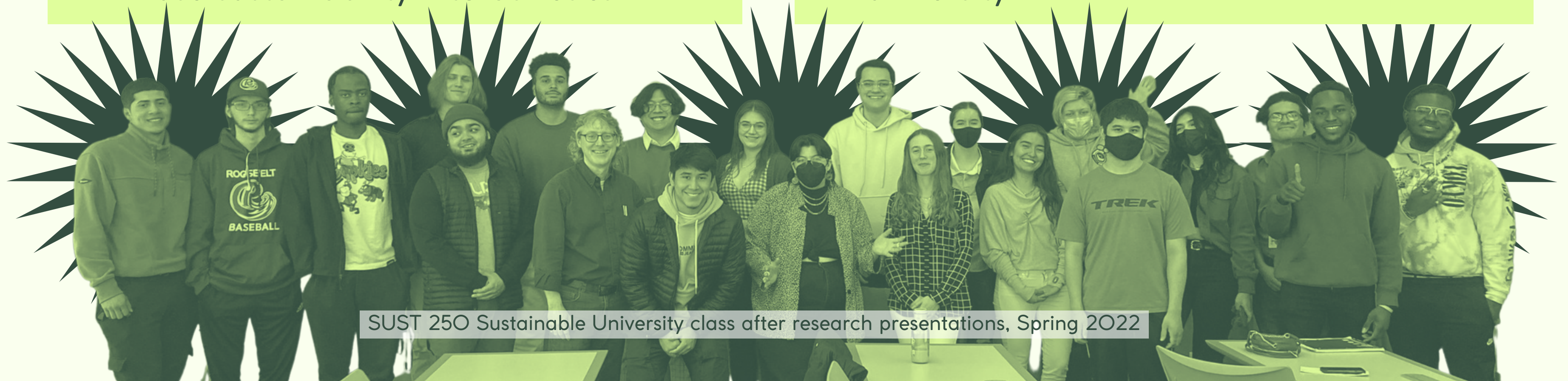
from surveys & workshops

ENGAGEMENT:

- Use UN's SDGs to promote human rights & environmental health
- Develop sustainability training sessions for students, faculty, and staff
- Create a community engaged in social & environmental justice
- Forge stronger connections to Indigenous peoples across region and state
- Reinstate service day event
- Infuse sustainability into athletics

ACADEMICS:

- Link sustainability, social justice, and Indigenous knowledge across curricula
 - Develop sustainability Gen Ed requirement
 - Integrate SSS STEM, McNair, Honors, Office of Student Research, etc.
 - Increase diversity of faculty
- Provide more sustainability EXL, service, and online learning opportunities
- Assess sustainability literacy across university



SUST 250 Sustainable University class after research presentations, Spring 2022

NEXT STEPS

1. Begin drafting the new plan for 2024
2. Solicit feedback and support from RU community
3. Work with leadership to commit resources
4. Implement the plan and stay accountable
5. Re-establish RU's leadership and competitiveness
6. Repeat as needed

**FOR A
SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE!**



SUST 350 students looking towards a sustainable future on the Schaumburg campus, 2022