

Sustainability, Environmental Justice, and Equity Considerations for the Office for Sustainability (OFS)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on the findings from a series of interviews with students and responses to a student survey, this report outlines how UVA students perceive sustainability and environmental justice and the role of UVA's Office for Sustainability (OFS). The report aims to address the question: *How can the Office for Sustainability better support and engage with UVA students while keeping environmental justice and equity in mind?*

As student consultants working with OFS through PLAN 3813/6813, we devised a plan to guide our research and outreach throughout the Fall 2021 semester. First, we researched current UVA sustainability goals and got a better understanding as to what OFS does at the university. Furthermore, we also looked at the activities of other universities and their initiatives to prioritize environmental justice and equity. Second, we identified important stakeholders, consisting of students from different contracted independent organizations (CIOs) from across UVA, both environmentally and non-environmentally focused. With our better comprehension of the sustainability programs at UVA, we developed survey and interview questions that asked respondents about sustainability, OFS, and environmental justice. After testing the survey and editing interview questions, we distributed the survey among a variety of CIOs across grounds that we identified earlier.

Through this research and outreach we found that many students hope for more open dialogue related to environmental justice issues with the administration. They also support land acknowledgments and statements of solidarity, but find that they should be paired with meaningful action. The survey and interview processes serve as a launching point for further community engagement and discovery in the future.

2. Office for Sustainability (OFS)

The UVA Office for Sustainability is the center of environmental and sustainable planning and policies at the university. OFS runs many programs on grounds, including recycling, composting, and green living. The office operates under three basic principles: engage, steward, and discover. These basic tenets guide the office in trying to bring the community together, create opportunities for new solutions, and establish discourse all around sustainability. OFS also curates the UVA Sustainability plan, setting goals for the university around the local and global climate and environment.

UVA OFS. "About Uva Sustainability." *About UVA Sustainability | UVA Sustainability*, 2021, <https://sustainability.virginia.edu/about-uva-sustainability>.

3. UVA SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The UVA 2020-2030 Sustainability Plan is a university-wide plan addressing the next 10, 20, and 30 years of sustainability-led efforts and goals. The primary goals are to be carbon neutral by 2030 and fossil fuel free by 2050, reduce reactive nitrogen losses to the environment 30% below 2010 levels by 2030, reduce potable water consumption 30% below 2010 levels by 2030, reduce waste footprint to 30% of 2010 totals by 2030, and increase sustainable food purchases to 30% of the annual total by 2030. The plan also lays out a framework to enhance leadership that promotes sustainability and engagement with the community both at UVA and in Charlottesville. The plan sets a tone for the University, while leaving room for individual schools and programs to expand.

4. PEER INSTITUTION RESEARCH

In order to better understand the ways sustainability and environmental justice can fit into the policies of universities, we conducted a literature review.

4.1. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Sustainability Plan: UNC Chapel Hill has made sustainability a priority on campus since 1999 through a variety of policies concerning energy conservation, recycling and composting programs, and other initiatives. In order to craft an official Sustainability Plan (Shea), the Sustainability Office communicated with students, faculty, and staff through interviews, town hall meetings, and surveys. A team of members from the university, surrounding community, and environmental-related industries held meetings to compile a plan that would aim to have a multi-scalar impact. The goals of this plan range from empowering individuals to act sustainably, to becoming a more sustainable institution, to leading cutting-edge research in fields related to environmentalism.

4.2. Promoting a University Culture of Sustainability: The Role of Conscious Consumption: Second, we studied the connections between economic incentives and sustainability. This paper discusses economic principles that describe people as consumers that make decisions about consumption based on price, and are not conscious of the wider impacts of their consumption (Venkatesan). The author discussed the need for a cultural shift towards conscious consumption, and the need for sustainable choices to be readily available for people to make. These concepts can be applied to universities.

4.3. Sustainability Action Plan, Princeton University: Similar to UNC Chapel Hill's plan, this plan included a range of goals that accounted for individuals, and the university as whole as it is situated in a broader community (Sustainability). Some of the main goals outlined in the plan include achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, reducing water usage, encouraging more people to be 'alternative' commuters, and designing and developing responsibly.

4.4 Draft Environmental Justice Framework, Office of Sustainability, Princeton University: Another document from Princeton that we studied was their Draft Environmental Justice Framework, written in 2020 (Draft). In this document, Princeton's Office for Sustainability

expresses their commitment to anti-racism, environmental justice, and equity. This drafted plan is a product of much reflection and many discussions with different stakeholders in the Princeton community. It includes action items such as organizing programming on environmental justice, making environmental-related careers accessible to all, maintaining inclusivity in the Office's hiring practices, and using communication channels to uplift voices of those with marginalized identities.

5. STAKEHOLDERS:

We conducted a stakeholder analysis in several phases to determine what groups at the university we should reach out to in order to gather a diverse set of data from. First, we created four CIO categories that we were interested in hearing from: environmental groups, multicultural groups, left-leaning political organizations, and right-leaning political organizations. We found that these categories would give us a broad array of beliefs and backgrounds throughout the university. These categories were intended to guide us in making sure that a variety of interests across the student body would be heard throughout the survey and interview process. While every group did not respond to our requests, this was the strategy that guided us.

Furthermore, we collaborated with Student Council's Sustainability Agency in identifying other key groups across the UVA community. The agency was completing their own survey on sustainability and environmental justice issues across grounds, but our timelines did not match up. Utilizing the contacts they provided us, we were able to reach a larger audience in our methods.

6. METHODOLOGY

Through a series of conversations with our partner and faculty advisor, we came up with a comprehensive set of questions that focused on sustainability, environmental justice, equity and overlaps within these aforementioned topics. The team brainstormed a wide array of questions with the partner, that inquired about people's habits, identity, culture, involvements at the University and with OFS, and views on sustainability and environmental justice. The team made the distinction between survey questions and interview questions. For the latter, we used more open-ended questions in order to allow people to speak about their experiences in depth.

Once we had the survey and interview questions prepared, we began to reach out, via email, to members of CIOs that we described as part of our stakeholder analysis. We decided to reach out to CIOs that focus on a variety of activities, involvements, and values. Our aim was to compile a wide range of opinions on sustainability and environmental justice at UVA.

6.1. SURVEY:

Link: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/694f72122cdd4b4caeb3c19a699f3472>

The survey questions aimed to understand the perception of the students, faculty, and staff across the university. The survey poses questions on sustainability and environmental justice in terms of demography, everyday experiences, habits and choices, education and awareness, participation in sustainability and environmental justice-oriented events and initiatives, and opportunities and limitations for sustainable practices on Grounds.

The survey was designed on ArcGIS Survey 123 and is composed of open and close-ended questions, requiring an average time of 15 minutes to complete. Further, the survey is open to the public, however each participant can complete the survey only once. This survey was tested in the PLAN 3813/6813 class. The students completed and reviewed the survey. The feedback from the class was used to refine the questions and resolve issues with the interface.

6.1.1 QUESTIONS:

Following is the list of questions that were asked in the survey. The complete survey with options can be found in Appendix B:

1. Are you a member of a student organization?
2. If yes, which organization(s) are you most involved with?
3. What is your role at the University?
4. How long have you been in Charlottesville?
5. Where do you live?
6. Are you a first generation college student ?
7. What gender do you identify as?
8. Please specify your ethnicity.
9. How do you commute on/to the grounds?
10. How do you make decisions about what you consume? (what you eat, what you buy, products you use)
11. How often do you segregate your waste?
12. Does UVA make it clear where different types of waste need to be disposed of on grounds?
13. On a daily basis, do you try to minimize your waste?
14. Are you part of a sustainability focused organization?
15. Have you taken or are taking a sustainability related course?
16. If yes, how did you learn about the course?
17. What is one sustainability, environmental, or environmental justice-related initiative you've noticed in the past couple of weeks on grounds?
18. Have you ever heard about UVA Sustainability events or attended one? If yes, how did you hear about it?
19. When you see UVA hosting sustainability initiatives or events, what impact does that have on you? Does it motivate you to be more sustainable or change your decision making process?
20. How sustainable do you consider UVA as an institution to be?

21. How sustainable do you think UVA is compared to other places and institutions in the United States?
22. Do you know about UVA's Sustainability 2020- 2030 Plan?
23. Do you know about UVA's Earth Week Events?
24. Do you know about UVA's Office for Sustainability (OFS)?
25. During your time at UVA, have you seen any change in attitude of the university, peers, and the community towards sustainability? If yes, please elaborate.
26. What is an action UVA can take to be more sustainable? Is there anything you'd like UVA's Office for Sustainability to do/change?
27. Do you believe that your identity impacts the way you think about sustainability?
28. If yes, how does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability?
29. Have you noticed a change in your own behavior towards the environment during your time in UVA?
30. If yes, how has your behavior changed towards the environment during your time in UVA?
31. How much do you know about environmental justice?
32. What does environmental justice mean to you?
33. During your time in UVA have you either taken part or discussed environmental justice in any of your classes, events or other platforms?
34. What are your opinions on statements/acknowledgements that relate to racism, justice, land acknowledgment, etc. made by UVA?
35. Please elaborate on your position to the previous question.
36. How can UVA improve in terms of environmental justice? Do you have any suggestions or concerns to statements made by UVA related to environmental justice?
37. Has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this Pandemic?
38. If yes, how has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this Pandemic?
39. Please provide feedback on this survey.

6.1.2 FINDINGS:

The complete set of findings can be found in Appendix C

The survey was answered by 46 students, staff, and faculty members. Out of these respondents, 78% were undergraduate students, 11% were graduate students, 11% were Ph.D. students and 2% were faculty. 84.4% of the respondents belonged to one or more student organizations. Further, 22.2%, 68.89%, and 8.89% were part of, were not part of, and unsure of being part of a sustainability-focused organization respectively. The sample also shows an approximate equal distribution of respondents living in Charlottesville for 0-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4+ years. Further, 84% of the sample reside in off-campus housing within Charlottesville and 16% reside in university housing on Grounds.

Demographics: The survey respondents were 62.2% female, 26.67% male, 6.67% non-binary, and 2.2% individuals who preferred not to answer. Further, out of the total sample, 71.1% were Caucasian, 6.67% African American, 6.67% Latino or Hispanic, 8.89% identified as Asians, 2.2% identified as Native Americans, 4.4% identified as two or more ethnicities, and 4.4% identified as other or unknown.

Academics: Based on some of the education and academic questions asked in the survey, 9% of the respondents were first-generation college students. The survey shows that 53% have taken, 44.4% have not taken and 2.2% are not sure if they are taking or have taken a sustainability-related course at UVA. Further, 64.4% have either taken part or discussed environmental justice in their classes, events, and/or other platforms. However, 29% have not participated in environmental justice-oriented discussions and 4% are unsure.

Mobility: For the multiple answer question on commuting on/ to the Grounds, 100% of the respondents preferred walking, followed by 29% prefer to drive privately owned cars, 18% prefer to drive privately own scooter or bike, 16% use university buses, 6.67% use city buses, 9% carpool, and 4.4% use other means of transportation such as rideshare, and 2.2% rent scooters or bikes.

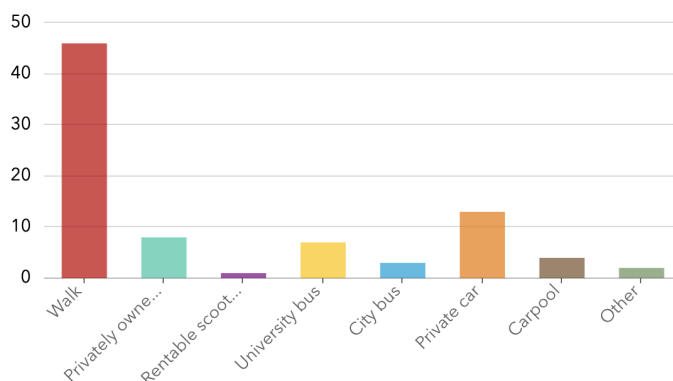


Image 1: Survey answer to: how do you commute on/to the grounds?

Consumption: In considering individual decisions and habits related to consumption, as in eating, buying, and using products on a daily basis, the survey shows that 60% of the respondents factor cost, 42% factor health, 36% factor familiarity, 24.4% factor convenience, 16% factor aesthetics, and 13% factor environmental impact. This question allowed respondents to select two to three answers to describe their habits.

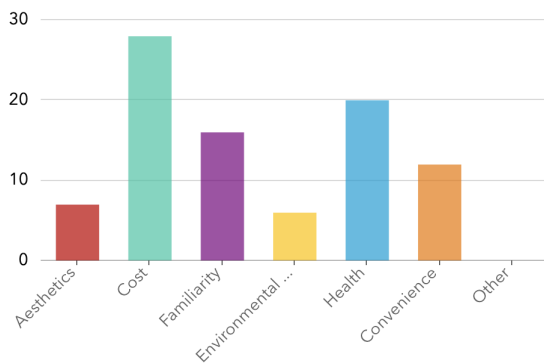


Image 2: Survey answer to: how do you make decisions about what you consume? (what you eat, what you buy, products you use)

Waste: The survey shows that 42.2% sometimes segregate their waste, 33.3% always segregate, 20% try to segregate but are never sure if they have segregated correctly, and 4.4% never segregate their waste. Further, 16% of the respondents agree that UVA makes it clear where different types of waste need to be disposed of on Grounds, however, 16% disagreed and 55.56% answered “somewhat”. Lastly, out of the total sample, 49% try to minimize waste, 16% do not minimize waste, 33% somewhat minimize waste and 2.2% are not sure if they do minimize waste daily.

Overall: In terms of sustainability, 47% of the respondents answered that UVA is somewhat sustainable, 22.2% said UVA is somewhat unsustainable, 29% were neutral, and 2% answered very sustainable. Further, 40% of the respondents believe that UVA is more sustainable than other institutions in the United States, whereas 36% said it is equally sustainable, 9% said less sustainable, and 20% were unsure. The survey also shows that 42% of respondents know about UVA’s Sustainability 2020-30 plan, however, 47% do not know about the plan and 16% are unsure and want to know more. 67%, a majority of respondents, were not aware of UVA’s Earth Week Events, and 16% and 20% of the respondents knew or somewhat knew about these events, respectively. The survey found that 67% of respondents knew about the OFS, 22% did not know and 11% were unsure and wanted to know more.

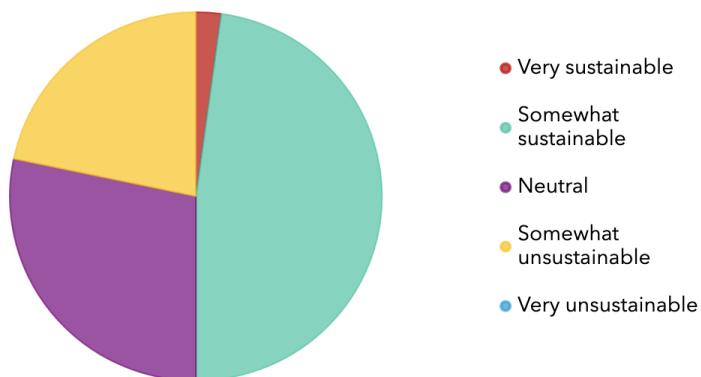


Image 3: Survey answer to: how sustainable do you consider UVA as an institution to be?

When asked whether their identity impacts the ways they think about sustainability 44.4% of the respondents said yes. However, 22% answered no, 22% answered not sure, 11% answered maybe, and 2% answered the other. Further, 53.3% stated that they have noticed a change in their behavior towards the environment during their time at UVA. However, 27% responded no, 11% responded maybe, and 9% responded not sure.

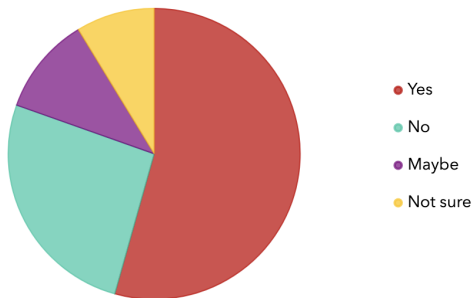


Image 4: Survey answer to: have you noticed a change in your own behavior towards the environment during your time in UVA?

In terms of environmental justice, 47% of respondents said they knew a little bit about it, 36% knew a lot, and 16% have limited knowledge and awareness about the social movement. The survey results also found that 71.1% of the respondents believe that UVA needs to pair statements and acknowledgments related to racism, justice, land acknowledgment, etc. with action. Further, 16% believe that environmental justice-oriented statements by the university are meaningful. None of the respondents answered that the statements were unimportant or not meaningful.

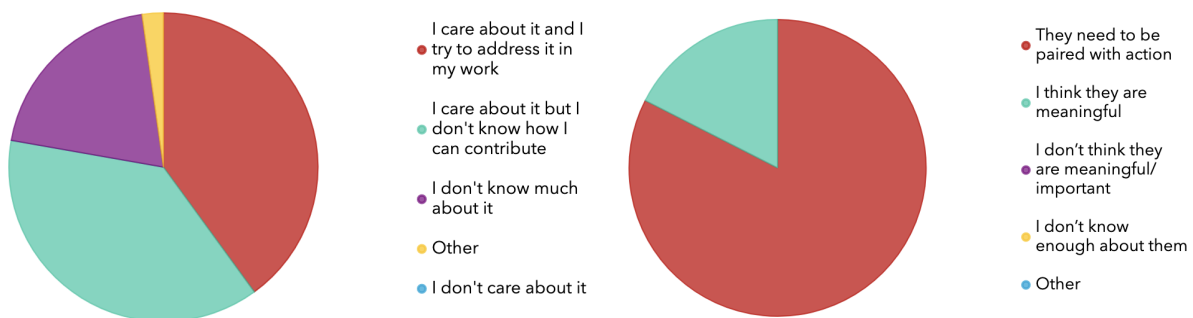


Image 5 (left): Survey answer to: what does environmental justice mean to you?

Image 6 (right): Survey answer to: what are your opinions on statements/acknowledgements that relate to racism, justice, land acknowledgment, etc. made by UVA?

Lastly, the survey also shows that 53.3% of respondents believe that their perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice has changed during this pandemic. 18% of respondents perceptions have remained unaltered, 13% are unsure.

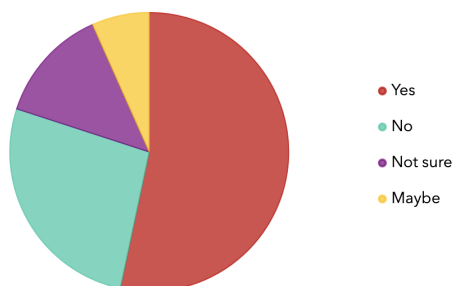


Image 7: Survey answer to: how has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this pandemic?

6.1.3 INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The following section provides a summary of the answers received in the explanatory questions. The detailed answers for all the respondents can be found in the appendix.

Sustainability:

What is one sustainability, environmental, or environmental justice-related initiative you've noticed in the past couple of weeks on grounds?

Some of the common answers include (i) identifying organizations working towards sustainability and environmental justice such as Divest UVA and Environmental Justice Collective, (ii) participating or witnessing waste drives and weighing the waste initiatives, (iii) using recycling, and compost bins in public spaces (iv) using basic infrastructure including water bottle fillers, and bike paths and racks, (v) encouraging vegetarian diets in dining halls (vi) seeing signs and participating in environmental events and campaigns such as fossil fuel protest, (vii) going to the farmers' markets and attending earth week events, (vi) automatic lighting to conserve energy (vi) and signs posted on paper towel holders encouraging people to "Take one."

When you see UVA hosting sustainability initiatives or events, what impact does that have on you? Does it motivate you to be more sustainable or change your decision making process?

While many respondents said that they are encouraged to take action when they see or take part in sustainability oriented initiatives and events, there are an equal number of respondents who are either frustrated or unmotivated by the initiatives.

Some of the positive responses include:

1. "Yes, it is motivating especially when you see other students participating in sustainability events, it encourages you to also take action."
2. "UVA's sustainability initiatives and events greatly motivate me to be more sustainable in my personal life."
3. "It gives me more hope and motivation to live sustainably myself, even if they are not perfect or not always fruitful. I would personally try to live the most sustainable lifestyle I realistically could even if UVA Sustainability was not so active, but it does feel better to be part of something bigger as I try to live sustainably myself."

Some of the negative responses include:

1. "Not really. I get frustrated. The dining hall talks about trying to encourage healthy eating but many of the options are both unhealthy and unsustainable. If there were more vegetarian and vegan options, and if they were suited to someone like me with a high metabolism and a sensitivity to carbs and sugar, I'd be able to eat them more. For the most part, I eat beef hamburger patties every day because nothing else is low-carb and can keep me full until my next meal. A greater emphasis on tofu, non-dairy yogurts and cheeses, and vegetable protein would help students (especially larger men) eat healthy. Even quality fish would be a start. But it would help if the dining hall actually splurged on food instead of focusing on the least common denominator (pizza, pasta, grilled cheese)."
2. "I don't really hear about these events/initiatives but if I did it would make me happy that the university is attempting to be more sustainable. I have always tried to have a sustainable mindset especially through architecture, so it is definitely motivating when thinking about our future climate."
3. "I think it motivates me some but the effects aren't often long lasting."

Reflective comments:

1. "It usually makes me think about how it is performative."
2. "It does not change my decision process, but it helps reinforce that the things I am doing are having an impact/reaching a broader audience."

During your time at UVA, have you seen any change in attitude of the university, peers, and the community towards sustainability? If yes, please elaborate.

This question was answered by 27 participants and most of them had a positive response

Some of the positive responses include:

1. "Yes, sustainability has become more of a commonly-held initiative and motivation by organization on grounds and in the minds of students"
2. "Yes, lots of the Batten graduate cohort is focused on sustainability."

3. "Yes definitely, I think people are noticing the move away from single-use plastics and slowly changing what they're accustomed to convenience-wise."
4. "I've seen more of my peers taking sustainability more seriously from using reusable bags and avoiding straws. I myself became vegetarian because of the environmental benefits it has of reducing water use."
5. "In my year and a half at the University, I have seen some changes in the University's attitude towards diversity. The announcement of the University's Sustainability plan seems to be a large step in the right direction. With regards to the Divestment campaign, I have first hand seen surprising receptiveness from faculty and administration in favor of sustainability and divestment."
6. "I think the University had already begun many of its efforts when I started here as an undergrad student in 2017 and the student body seemed similarly passionate at the time. I would guess students and the administration are probably just as or a bit more supportive of and passionate towards sustainability compared to four years ago."
7. "I mean, what's really cool is that basically all of the PhD students in my cohort have some kind of sustainability focus. That's not really a change in attitude, but it's awesome. A lot of professors also focus on sustainability in their own work."

Some of the negative and mixed responses include:

1. "I haven't noticed any changes."
2. "Among A-School leadership/new Dean yes, among students - no."

What is an action UVA can take to be more sustainable? Is there anything you'd like UVA's Office of Sustainability to do/change?

Some of the key recommendations include:

1. "It would be immensely helpful if more information on recycling and composting in Charlottesville was made available. What exactly goes where? Who are the people and companies responsible? Where do discarded items go? How are they treated? In addition, it would be helpful to have more recycling bins on-grounds."
2. "While the 2020-2030 Sustainability plan is a step in the right direction, to truly become a more sustainable institution, the University needs to stop investing in fossil fuels. Additionally, I would like the university to outline a plan to get rid of the coal plant, if they have not already done so. The University also needs to take accountability for the impact that it has on the greater Charlottesville community, especially those who are disadvantaged. The University's carbon foot-print and investments hurt students, alumni, faculty, and the greater community."
3. "Not sure about the university as a whole but architecture schools often generate a ton of material waste and do not always make an effort to reuse/recycle those products. I would like to see courses which focus on first reducing waste as a whole and second finding creative and sustainable ways to use the waste."

4. "...our tree canopy appears to be in decline/set to decline from earlier decades and I am very worried about that. Some areas certainly need more large native shade trees. For example, Lambeth in its current aesthetic state is a depressing place to live (I know from experience)."
5. "All university buses need to go full electric. Biodiesel still pollutes. In addition, dining halls need to actively work to improve the health of their offerings and include more (and more creative) plant-based diet options. In Addition, buildings like the A-School should make their climate control more sustainable by cooling less (a lot less!!!) in the summer and heating less in the winter."
6. "Electrify vehicle fleets, invest in bicycle infrastructure (sheltered bike racks, bike lanes, off-street bike paths), build green housing, divest from fossil fuels."
7. "Campus-wide composting."

How does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability?

This question was answered by 14 respondents. Some of insightful answers include:

1. "Not sure if this is identity really, but I definitely think the political leanings of my family growing up impacted how I thought about sustainability until I realized how important it is to care about it."
2. "My privilege hasn't exposed me to or always made me feel the importance of it. It was only recently that I have learned more and tried a bit harder."
3. "My family lives in a country that has seen some of the worst impacts of climate change. Climate change is not a future issue, it's impact people today in the Global South."
4. "Growing up in the northeast United States, I have not had to contend with the more serious impacts of climate change in my life, so sustainability and its consequences remain fairly abstract in my mind as compared to someone who might've grown up on the west coast or anywhere else in the world that is experiencing dramatic shifts in climate."
5. "As someone of Indian descent, I've directly seen the impacts of climate change take action. India will be one of the most affected countries in the world. I worry about my family and what the implications of climate change could mean to them. My grandparents and parents have already seen shifts in their communities from climate change - air quality has worsened, asthma rates have increased, and water contamination has increased. Much of these effects have come from corporations who are not regulated by the government. Every time I visit my family in India, I start coughing when I leave the airport because the air quality has worsened so drastically. The impending climate crisis combined with the issues of fresh water availability could have catastrophic implications for India."
6. "I am privileged and capable of cutting back on my carbon emissions. I also have access to resources that inform me about climate change."

How has your behavior changed towards the environment during your time in UVA?

This question was answered by 22 respondents. Some of the behavioral changes identified by the the respondents include:

1. "The only change is that I have begun composting at my off-grounds residence, a resource not available when I lived on grounds in my first few years of undergrad."
2. "One of the 3 foci of Hereford Residential College is sustainability. As such, we are encouraged to separate your waste using recycle bins in our rooms. Because of this, I have been actively recycling waste more often than before."
3. "I'm more aware of my carbon footprint. I try to walk more and cook for myself and friends."
4. "I've become more likely to participate in environmentally friendly behavior and care more about my own impact, and also more involved in pressuring administration to commit to action protecting the environment."
5. "I've become more informed about how recycling (as a large scale system runs) is not very practical or efficient and different ways to try and cut my own waste down."
6. "I stopped eating meat in order to be more sustainable."
7. "I realized that when at school, I was using the general trash bin instead of the recycling bin. I now try to always use a recycling bin, even if I have to walk a bit more."
8. "I feel like I appreciate the environment around me more and recognize myself as being more in touch with the other-than-human. I feel myself more a part of this world as a whole, and am working to find ways to not think and live so anthropocentrically."
9. "Classes made me more aware of fast fashion and environmental racism."

Environmental Justice:

What are your opinions on statements/acknowledgements that relate to racism, justice, land acknowledgment, etc. made by UVA?

While the multiple choice question was answered by everyone, 26 respondents elaborated on their responses. Some of the key insights drawn from this question include:

1. "While acts like land acknowledgements or statements addressing the University's history of racism are important, they feel empty without any action. Especially considering the University's direct impacts on disadvantaged communities. Hollow words do not help the communities they advocate for. A university that was built by enslaved laborers needs to take concrete action to help the communities it has constantly isolated and undermined..."
2. "UVA has a lot of money and is an old institution. I think it's sinful that we have no Black students in the PhD program and I think it's a crime that there are so few students of color from the United States in the entire M. Arch program. I think I've seen exactly one Black M. Arch the entire time I've been at UVA."
3. "UVA claims to be very diverse, however, I have met very few other people of color and other minorities around the grounds."

4. "No more performative statements, we need direct action."
5. "With regards to environmental justice, the University should seek to uplift the low-income BIPOC Charlottesville community who will feel the most tangible effects of climate change. These communities already harbor the brunt of negative consequences from pollution created in part by the University. Instead of just building memorials and tours, the University should look into investing to better these communities - whether that be providing scholarships specifically for Native students, additional resources for low-income Charlottesville residents, or another solution. Regardless, continued investment in corporations that have directly spread public misinformation, and actively contributed to environmental injustice should be stopped."
6. "We contribute to the urban heat island effect in lower-income Charlottesville neighborhoods—we should support increasing tree canopy there! Also, displacement of low-income communities will negatively impact their health as they are forced into auto-centric suburbs. This is less environmentally sustainable and less economically sustainable for them, and it hurts their health and well-being too. Albeit peripherally related to sustainability, UVA should play a greater part in efforts to prevent this."

How has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this pandemic?

This question was answered by 10 respondents. Some of the insights discussed in the survey include:

1. "The pandemic tested our world's infrastructure on an unprecedented scale in contemporary times ... It has served as a sneak peak into the impact that the climate crisis will have on our institutions. As such, it made me much more fearful of the climate crisis and mindful of environmental justice. Looking at the pandemic and the hoarding of vaccines from rich nations - it is clear that in a climate crisis, with developing nations in the tropics having the most devastating impacts, most developed nations will not help them."
2. "Seeing the differences in the options people had for work in the lower versus upper and middle classes really showed how skewed our society is towards the wealthy, to the point of directly harming the people who can't afford to not expose themselves to the virus."
3. "I've had more time to educate myself more on sustainability and environmental justice, and think about the ways human life is structured currently since so many aspects of it came to a pause during the pandemic."

6.1.4 TAKEAWAYS:

Our survey provided valuable insights into changes students would like to see in terms of sustainability and environmental justice initiatives at UVA and in the broader Charlottesville community. We were able to learn more about the habits and values of students, as well as how

their identities impact the way they think about sustainability: some came from privileged backgrounds, while others have seen and lived through the worst effects of climate change.

There were several key themes that emerged from our survey results. One of these was a call to action for UVA to make more structural changes in order to be more sustainable, such as divesting from fossil fuels. Another idea that came up repeatedly was the provision of recycling and composting bins around Grounds, to better enable students to participate in these practices.

Another topic that was brought up many times among respondents was performativity. Some respondents said that, at times, the university's sustainability initiatives come off as performative. This was an especially important issue as it relates to land acknowledgements, survey respondents said: they are flimsy if not paired with action.

Many suggestions to improve UVA's relationship to environmental justice were also given. Several people discussed the importance of communicating and maintaining an open dialogue with the greater Charlottesville community, and making decisions as a university with feedback from community members in mind. Divesting from fossil fuels was also mentioned. Another idea was to provide incentives for students to participate in environmental justice related initiatives. It is also worth noting that many of the respondents did not know about UVA's Sustainability Plan, or the Earth Week Events.

6.2 INTERVIEW:

In addition to the survey, we conducted interviews in order to gather more detailed insights on how UVA students feel about environmental justice and equity issues on grounds. We reached out to all of the same CIOs and organizations that we identified in the stakeholder analysis. Our goal was to conduct around ten interviews, but due to last minute cancellations and scheduling conflicts, we were only able to complete three interviews. These students represented several different organizations across UVA: Third Year Council, Student Council's Sustainability Agency, University Democrats, Young Democratic Socialists of America, and the Washington Society. At each interview, two of our group members asked questions based on how their own identity and involvements at UVA interact with sustainability in general and OFS. We focused the second part of the interview on their environmental justice views. We kept interviews short to accommodate busy student schedules, averaging about 15 minutes per interview.

6.2.1 QUESTIONS

1. What student organizations are you involved in at UVA?
 - a. If it's an environmental/sustainability focused organization, ask: does your organization include an environmental justice lens in the work that you do?
 - b. If you could personally change something that a student organization you're involved in does with sustainability, what would it be?

- c. From your interactions with people in your role as a part of ____ student organization, how engaged would you say the UVA student body is with sustainability?
2. Do you interact with UVA's Office for Sustainability at all? What has your experience been like with them?
3. If you could personally change something UVA does with regards to sustainability, what would it be?
4. How does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability and the environment?
5. What does environmental justice mean to you?
6. Does it seem like UVA cares about environmental justice?
 - a. Do you notice anything at UVA that relates to environmental justice? Any programs, events, or other things?
 - b. 'UVA' could mean many things: the administration, the students, organizations/clubs, professors, etc....
 - c. If they say no, could ask: is there something you think they could improve on in terms of prioritizing environmental justice?
7. What are your thoughts on statements and acknowledgements relating to justice and equity? How do you feel when you see them?
 - a. For example, a land acknowledgement, or a statement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, etc.

6.2.2 FINDINGS:

We conducted interviews with three students to explore topics of sustainability and environmental justice. The participants were involved in a variety of student organizations. They discussed changes they would like to see within these organizations and at the university regarding sustainability and environmental justice, and reflected on their own identities in the context of this topic.

Student Organization Involvement: Participant 1 is a part of Third Year Council, University Democrats, and The Washington Literary Society and Debating Union. Participant 2 is a part of the Student Council Sustainability Agency and Young Democratic Socialists of America. Participant 3 is also involved with the Student Council Sustainability Agency, as well as Morven Kitchen Garden.

Identity: Participant 2 described visits to China that allowed her to witness the effects of air pollution. This participant also mentioned an awareness of the topic of sustainability throughout her childhood, which she attributed to her upbringing in a politically liberal area. Participant 3 described her firsthand experience with rising sea levels and the inequitable effects of climate change, as they affected her home area of Long Island, New York.

Areas for Change Within Organizations: Participant 1 expressed a desire for the organization to collaborate with OFS outside of the necessary interactions to ensure compliance with policies such as those regarding single-use plastics. Participants 2 and 3 communicated a wish for OFS to commit to more explicit environmental justice goals, as well as collaborate more with Student Council.

Opinions on Current University Initiatives: All participants mentioned that environmental justice work at the university seems to be driven by student efforts. Participant 1 noted that most university-led initiatives they have noticed tend to be social media postings that provide recommendations focused on individual behavior as it relates to sustainability. This participant recommended that the university respond to the DivestUVA initiative, discuss sustainability and environmental justice at new student orientation events, and forge more partnerships with student groups. Participant 2 stated that environmental justice initiatives do not seem to be widely visible, and only engage small portions of the student body. They also expressed a desire for a land acknowledgement on the OFS website. Participant 3 expressed that while they do see some environmental justice work being done by OFS, it is not as radical as they would like it to be. They also described an apparent unwillingness from the administration to directly collaborate on environmental justice issues with students. Additionally, they expressed a desire for less tokenization of people with marginalized identities, and more amplification of voices from those communities.

6.2.3 KEY INSIGHTS/TAKEAWAYS:

From the interview process, our team found several coordinating themes throughout the three interviews. First, all participants recognize that sustainability, both here at UVA and across the globe, is very important and requires immediate action. Second, all participants wish to see more collaboration between students and OFS as well as the administration. Common talking points were that OFS efforts seem to often go unnoticed in every life at UVA and that the administration does not care to hear student concerns on environmental equity. All participants wish to improve dialogue, especially on student efforts such as DivestUVA. Lastly, all participants also recognized that a land acknowledgment from OFS could be beneficial. Succinctness and educational outreach were both mentioned as important aspects of an impactful land acknowledgment or statement of solidarity.

7. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The strength of this report lies in the framing of the questions for the survey and interviews and reaching out to the UVA community to understand their perception on sustainability and

environmental justice plans and considerations. Further, the survey remains open to the public and can be utilized by OFS and other stakeholders to engage with the UVA community and address some of the systemic issues in terms of sustainability, environmental justice, and equity.

The main issue we encountered throughout the study was a lack of responses from CIOs and individuals. Though we sent several emails and utilized our own connections to try to contact many organizations, we were unable to garner responses for interview requests from the majority of CIOs we contacted. Part of this may be due to the fact that we were unable to incentivize students to participate. Students have very busy schedules and an incentive like a coffee or raffle may have been beneficial, but we were not able to organize an incentive for participation. This same issue led to smaller than anticipated numbers for respondents to our survey.

8. CONCLUSION

In order to collaborate with the Office for Sustainability in their aims to better engage with UVA students and environmental justice work, we employed a variety of methods. We began with our own research on UVA's current Sustainability Plan, and then supplemental research on the plans of other universities. This helped us to understand sustainability and environmental justice initiatives at UVA, as well as gave us ideas of other ways universities can work towards sustainability and environmental justice. Next, we considered the different stakeholders at UVA, and then crafted our survey and interview questions.

Several key themes emerged from the responses to our survey and interview questions. One of these was the request for more open dialogue and collaboration between both UVA students and administration, as well as community members and the administration. In addition, many others voiced concerns over the lack of materials for composting and recycling around Grounds. Another subject discussed was that of land acknowledgements and other similar statements: many of the respondents in the interviews and survey stated that while such a statement would be beneficial, it could also be performative if it is not paired with meaningful action. The survey and interviews served as a valuable tool to gauge the attitudes, values, and ideas of various stakeholders with regards to sustainability and environmental justice. Though we may not have received as many survey responses or interview request replies as we hoped, we believe both our utilized methods can serve as a launchpad for future engagement between OFS and the university community.

9. REFERENCES

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10. APPENDICES

10.1. Appendix A: Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding

Study on the UVA Office for Sustainability's collaboration with students and the outside population with a focus on equity
Fall 2021

A. Definitions

In this Memorandum, unless the context implies otherwise, "Student Consultants" refers to the University of Virginia students conducting the study in partnership with the UVA Office for Sustainability. "Community Partner" refers to Andrea (or designated contact) at the OFS, who will work in partnership with the Student Consultants.

B. Scope of Work

This approach seeks to (a) reach out to a variety of students /student organizations and gather opinions on the current work of the office sustainability after a thorough review of all current plans and programs; (b) question both environmentally-focused and non-environmentally-focused CIOs at the university on their opinions of the Office for Sustainability's programs targeting equity through intercept surveys after meetings and events; (c) create a final report which better informs the Office for Sustainability about how UVA's 2030 Sustainability Plan's 'Engage' goals can better support students in action relating to climate justice and equity. This process will take place from October-November 2021, with the intention to make the Office for Sustainability's climate equity more effective for the student body.

The student consultant will provide following services

1. Work with the community partner to investigate this question: *How can the Office for Sustainability better support and engage with UVA students while keeping environmental justice and equity in mind?*
2. Review UVA 2030 Sustainability Plan: understand the intent of the plan and identify the gaps in knowledge.
3. Identify key actors and stakeholders in the project
 - a. While working with community partners including the OFS and Student Council Sustainability Agency.
 - b. Mapping stakeholder power dynamics
4. Identify key communication strategies to advance equitable sustainability planning initiatives.
 - a. Qualitative: Survey, visualizing outcomes, word cloud
 - b. Quantitative: Based on demographics and statistical data.
5. Document research findings and provide recommendations in the form of a report.

C. Responsibilities of the Community Partner

The Community Partner will recognize and adhere to the following responsibilities:

1. Respond to the student consultant email inquiries within three business days.
2. Answer questions related to the project and OFS.
3. Convey bi-weekly (once every two weeks) status updates, either over email, zoom, phone, or in person on developments or other information relevant to the report on UVA, and Community Relationships.
4. Read project reports prepared by the students and give the students feedback with two Weeks.

D. Outputs

1. Report and recommend ways for the OFS to better engage and support UVA students, staff, and the larger Charlottesville community in their efforts to promote environmental justice and equity. The focus of this report will be outlining communication strategies to advance this mission. This audit will be conducted through surveys with students, review of the UVA 2030 Sustainability Plan, identification and communication with key stakeholders at UVA and within the Charlottesville community and supplemented with case studies of environmental justice work at peer universities.
2. Copies of student surveys as well as analysis of data from the surveys
3. Final presentation to UVA Office for Sustainability

E. Costs

No financial support is required of either party. The Community Partner is responsible for the purchase of any event materials or other outside services necessary to carry out the agreed upon scope of work with the Student Consultants.

F. Warranty

Nothing in this Memorandum shall be construed as consent by either party to enter into a contract, subcontract or other business relationship. Activities (if any) in which the parties wish to engage pursuant to this Memorandum will not be binding unless agreed to in a separate written document executed by an authorized representative of each party, including an authorized signatory in the University of Virginia Office of Sponsored Projects. Neither party will be liable for any incidental, consequential or special damages under this Memorandum.

G. Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property, materials or other work product jointly created by a Student Consultant and one or more employees of OFS (such that they would be joint inventors or joint copyright holders under relevant intellectual property law) will be jointly owned by both parties, with each party able to use the jointly-created work without accounting to the other and without the consent of the other.

H. Effective Date

Zoe Larive
Anna Stein
Hunter Hess
Tithi Sanyal

Community Partner:

Andrea Trimble, signed 10.15.2021

UVA Students & Community Dynamics Work Plan

Study Conducted by Zoe Larive, Anna Stein, Hunter Hess, and Tithi Sanyal

Person of contact: Hunter Hess (dhh7vy@virginia.edu)

10.2. Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

UVA Office of Sustainability Community Engagement Survey

We are student consultants working with the Office of Sustainability (OFS) to identify ways by which the OFS can better support and engage with UVA students, faculty, and staff members while keeping environmental justice and equity in mind. This collaboration and work is part of the PLAN 3813/6813: Community-Engaged Methods: Tools for Equitable Research & Practice course.

The following survey aims to understand the perception of the student, faculty, and staff on questions of sustainability and environmental justice at UVA in terms of everyday experiences, habits and choices, education and awareness, participation in sustainability-oriented events and initiatives, and opportunities and limitations for sustainable practices on grounds. The survey should take approximately 15 mins of your valuable time and the risks of taking the survey are no greater than everyday life.

The results from this survey will be used to draw insights and provide recommendations in the form of a report to the OFS at the end of Fall 2021. The report will be made available on Libra. Further, the outcomes of the survey will be presented to OFS and other partners on 7th December 2021. Please contact us (dhh7vy@virginia.edu, tithi@virginia.edu) if you have further questions and concerns.

Are you a member of a student organization?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, which organization(s) are you most involved with?

What is your role at the University?*

Choose as many as apply.

☐ Undergraduate student

☐ Graduate student

☐ Ph.D. student

☐ Faculty

☐ Staff

☐ Other

How long have you been in Charlottesville?*

☐ 0-1 years

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 2-3 years

☐ 3-4 years

☐ 4+ years

Where do you live?*

☐ University housing on grounds

☐ Off-campus housing in Charlottesville

☐ Off-campus housing outside of Charlottesville

☐ Other

Are you a first generation college student ?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

☐ Prefer not to answer

What gender do you identify as?*

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-Binary

☐ Prefer not to answer

Please specify your ethnicity.*

Please check one or more of the following groups in which you consider yourself to be a member:

☐ Native American

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Latino or Hispanic

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

☐ Two or More

☐ Caucasian

☐ Asian

☐ African-American

☐ Other/Unknown

How do you commute on/to the grounds?*

Choose as many as apply.

☐ Walk

☐ Privately owned scooter / bike

☐ Rentable scooter / bike

☐ University bus

☐ City bus

☐ Private car

☐ Carpool

☐ Other

How do you make decisions about what you consume? (what you eat, what you buy, products you use)*

☐ Aesthetics

☐ Cost

☐ Familiarity

☐ Environmental Impact

☐ Health

☐ Convenience

☐ Other

How often do you segregate your waste?*

☐ Always

☐ Sometimes

☐ I try but I am never sure if I placed an item in the right bin

☐ Never

Does UVA make it clear where different types of waste need to be disposed of on grounds?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Somewhat

On a daily basis, do you try to minimize your waste?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Somewhat

☐ Not sure

Are you part of a sustainability focused organization?*

Sustainability, as defined by the [U.N.](#), is focusing on "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ N/A

Have you taken or are taking a sustainability related course?*

Sustainability, as defined by the [U.N.](#), is focusing on "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ N/A

If yes, how did you learn about the course?

1000

What is one sustainability, environmental, or environmental justice-related initiative you've noticed in the past couple of weeks on grounds?*

It could be something small, like the 'Take One' signs on paper towel holders.

Have you ever heard about UVA Sustainability events or attended one? If yes, how did you hear about it?*

1000

When you see UVA hosting sustainability initiatives or events, what impact does that have on you? Does it motivate you to be more sustainable or change your decision making process?

1000

How sustainable do you consider UVA as an institution to be?*



How sustainable do you think UVA is compared to other places and institutions in the United States?*

☐ UVA is more sustainable

☐ UVA is equally sustainable

☐ UVA is less sustainable

☐ Not sure

☐ Other

Do you know about UVA's Sustainability 2020- 2030 Plan?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe, what to know more

Do you know about UVA's Earth Week Events?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe, want to know more

Do you know about UVA's Office of Sustainability (OFS)?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe, what to know more

During your time at UVA, have you seen any change in attitude of the university, peers, and the community towards sustainability? If yes, please elaborate.

1000

What is an action UVA can take to be more sustainable? Is there anything you'd like UVA's Office of Sustainability to do/change?

1000

Do you believe that your identity impacts the way you think about sustainability?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ Not sure

☐ Other

If yes, how does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability?

1000

Have you noticed a change in your own behavior towards the environment during your time in UVA?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ Not sure

If yes, how has your behavior changed towards the environment during your time in UVA?

1000

How much do you know about environmental justice?*



What does environmental justice mean to you?*

☐ I care about it and I try to address it in my work

☐ I care about it but I don't know how I can contribute

☐ I don't know much about it

☐ I don't care about it

☐ Other

During your time in UVA have you either taken part or discussed environmental justice in any of your classes, events or other platforms?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

☐ N/A

What are your opinions on statements/acknowledgements that relate to racism, justice, land acknowledgment, etc. made by UVA?*

- ☐ I think they are meaningful
- ☐ I don't think they are meaningful/important
- ☐ They need to be paired with action
- ☐ I don't know enough about them
- ☐ Other

Please elaborate on your position to the previous question.

1000

How can UVA improve in terms of environmental justice? Do you have any suggestions or concerns to statements made by UVA related to environmental justice?

1000

Has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this Pandemic?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ Not sure

If yes, how has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this Pandemic?

1000

Please provide feedback on this survey.

Thank you for filling out the survey. We appreciate your time and patience. Please mention your email address, if you want to stay in touch with us and OFS. Further, if you have any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions regarding this survey please mention here.

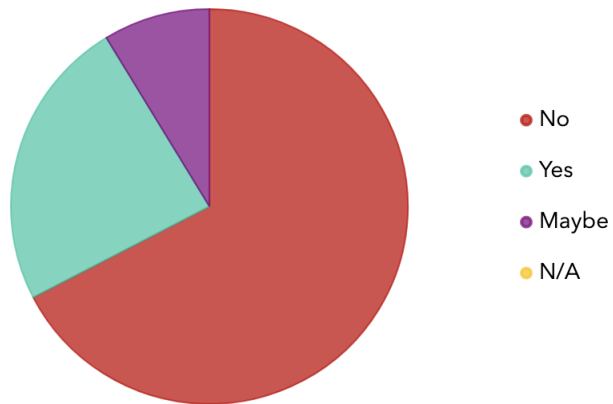
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Submit

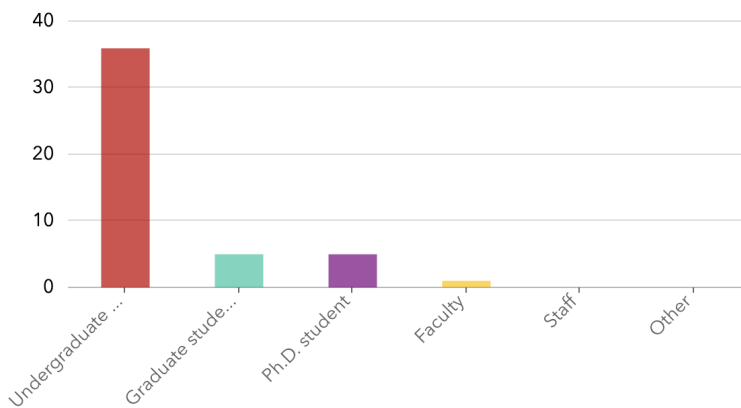
10.3. Appendix C: Survey Outcomes: Answers and Graphs

Demographic Information

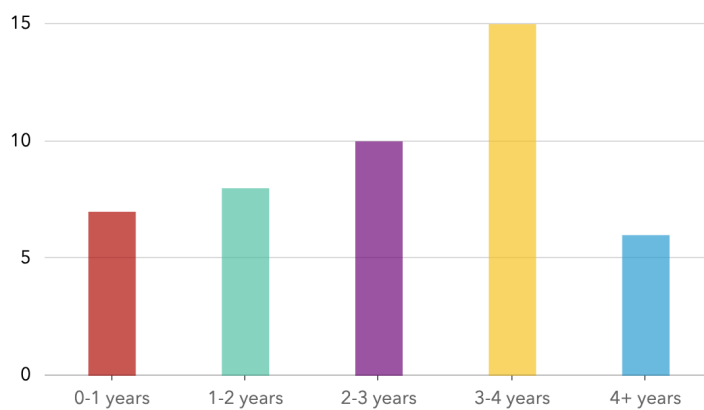
Are you a member of a student organization?



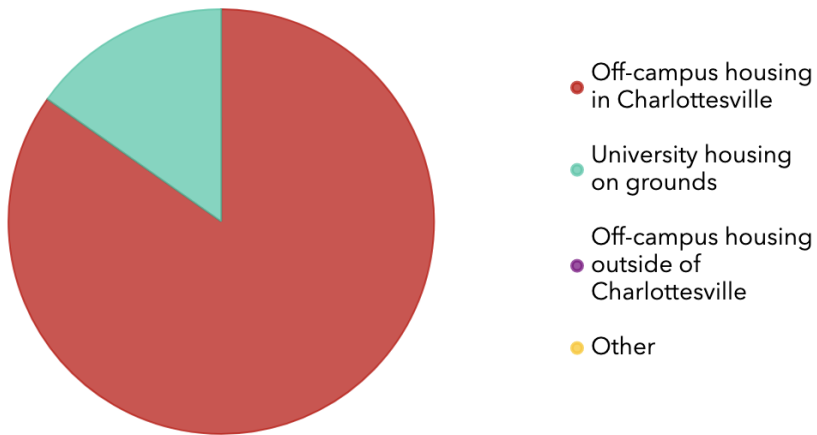
What is your role at the University?



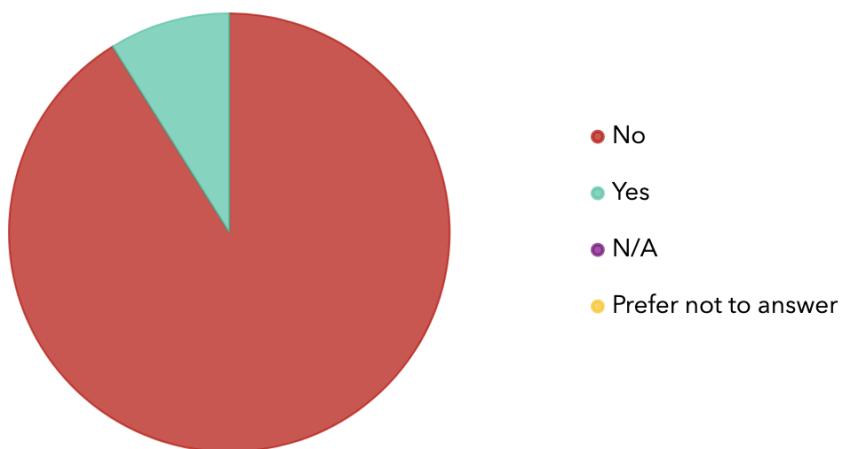
How long have you been in Charlottesville?



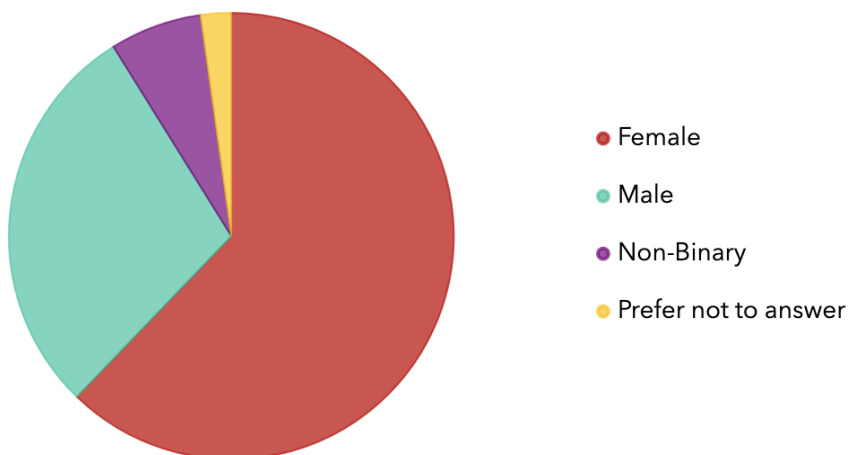
Where do you live?



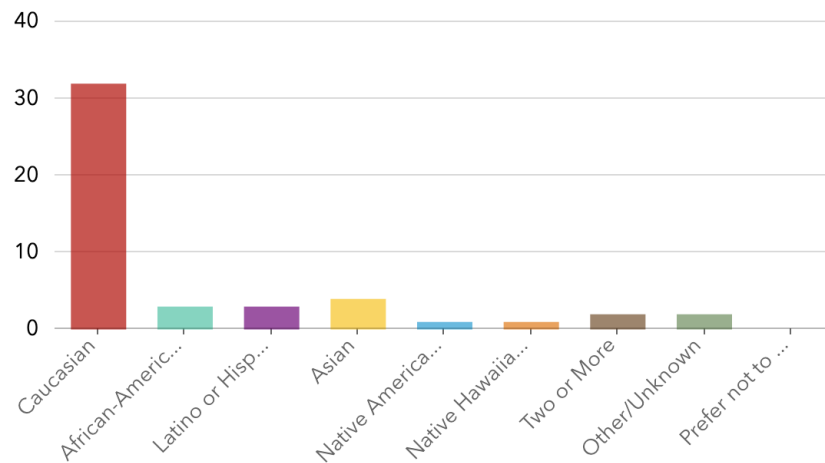
Are you a first generation college student?



What gender do you identify as?

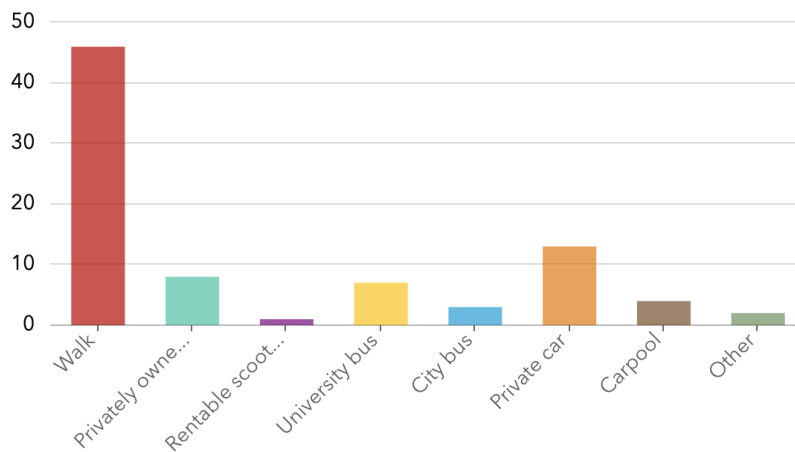


Please specify your ethnicity.

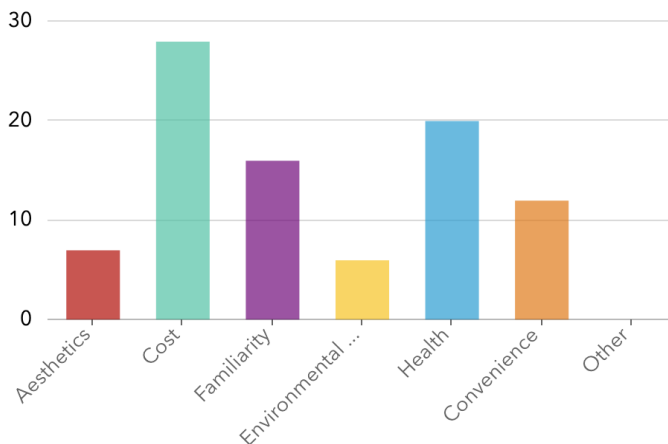


Consumption and Waste Segregation

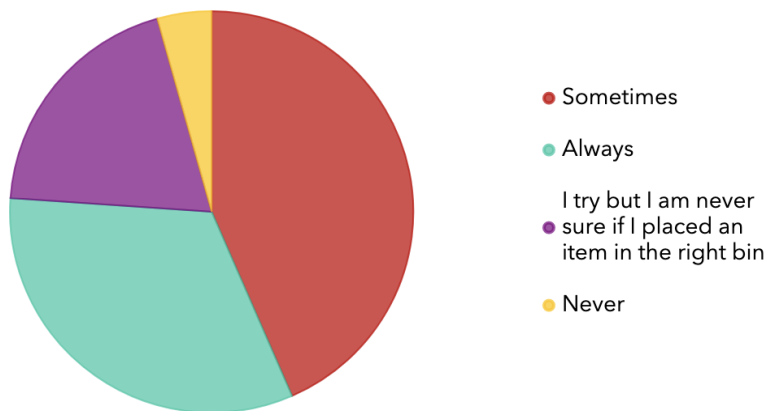
How do you commute on/to the grounds?



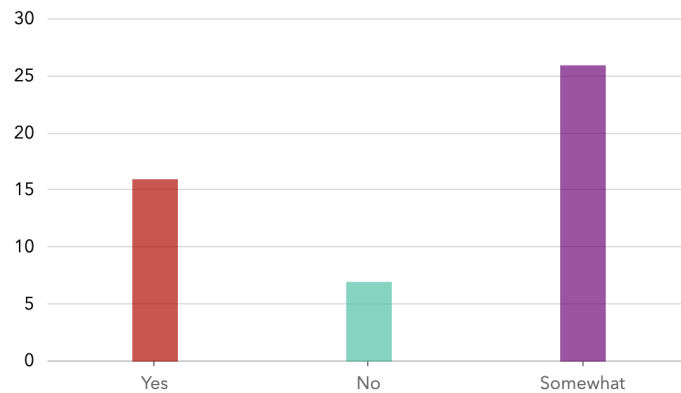
How do you make decisions about what you consume? (what you eat, what you buy, products you use)



How often do you segregate your waste?

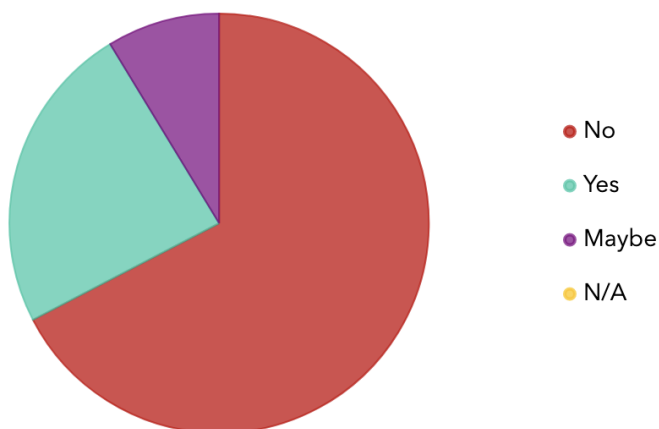


Does UVA make it clear where different types of waste need to be disposed of on grounds?

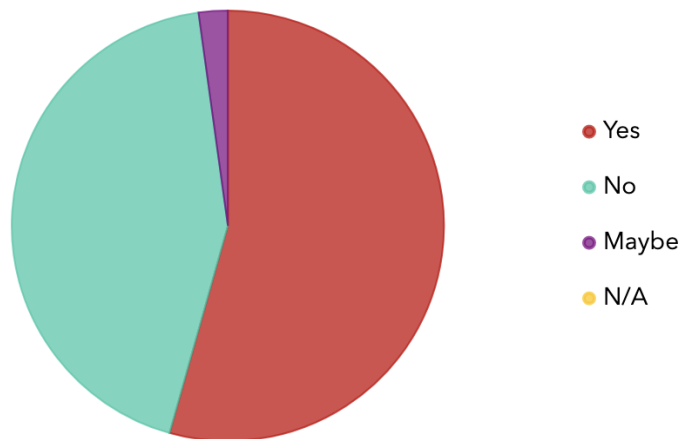


Sustainability at UVa

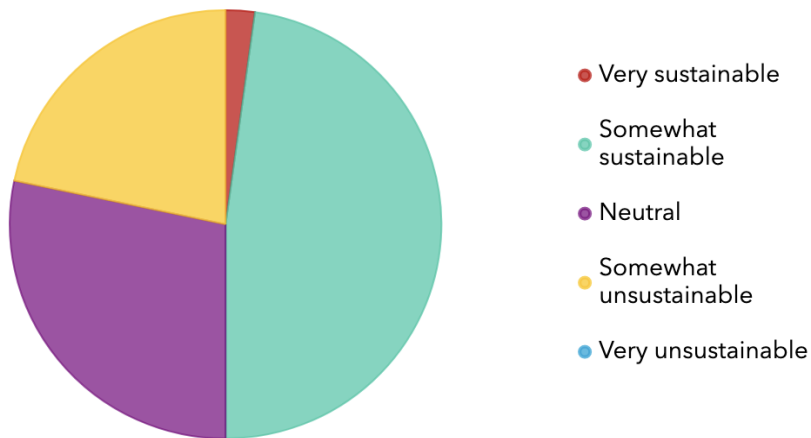
Are you part of a sustainability focused organization?



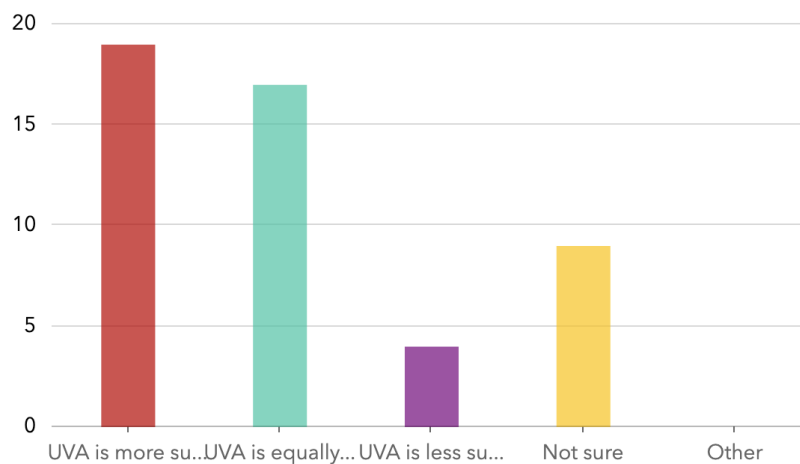
Have you taken or are taking a sustainability related course?



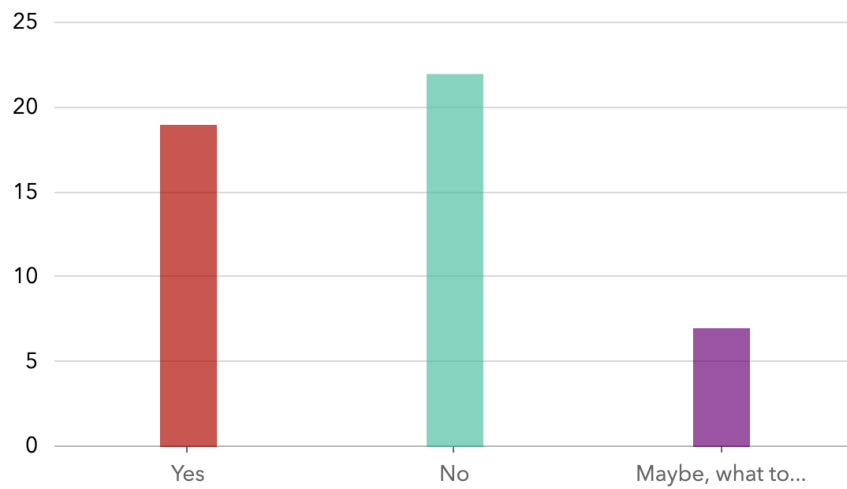
How sustainable do you consider UVA as an institution to be?



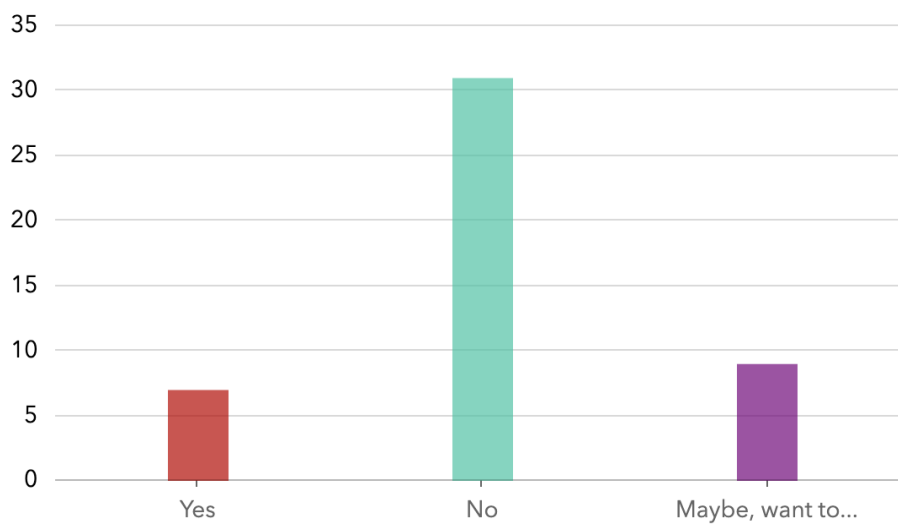
How sustainable do you think UVA is compared to other places and institutions in the United States?



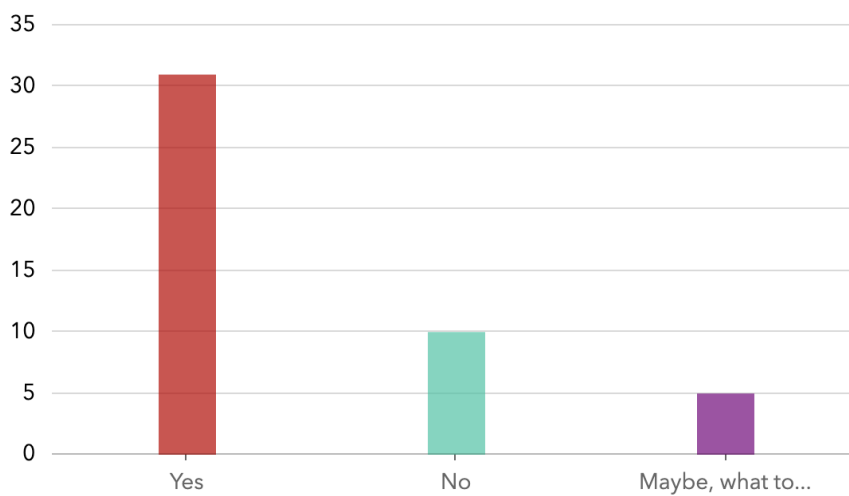
Do you know about UVA's Sustainability 2020- 2030 Plan?



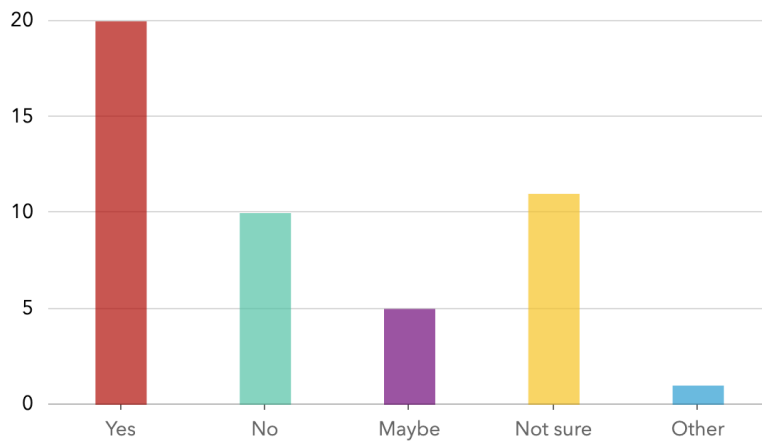
Do you know about UVA's Earth Week Events?



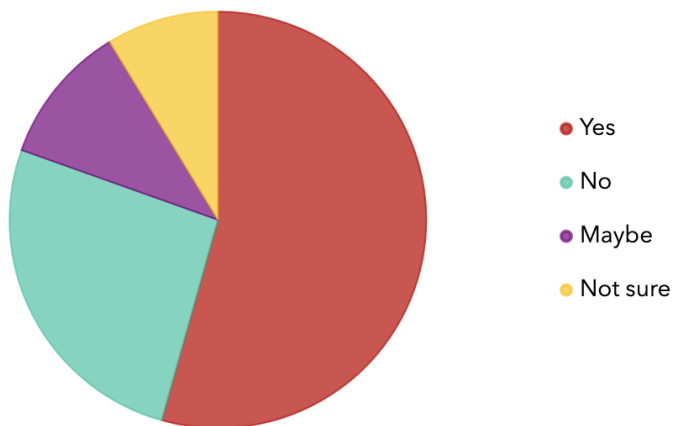
Do you know about UVA's Office for Sustainability (OFS)?



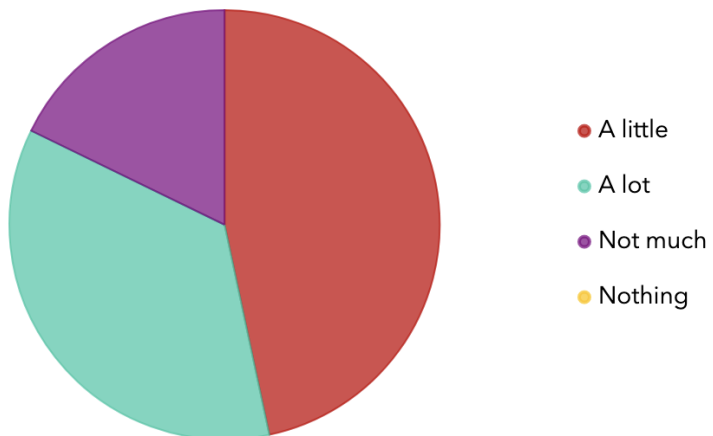
Do you believe that your identity impacts the way you think about sustainability?



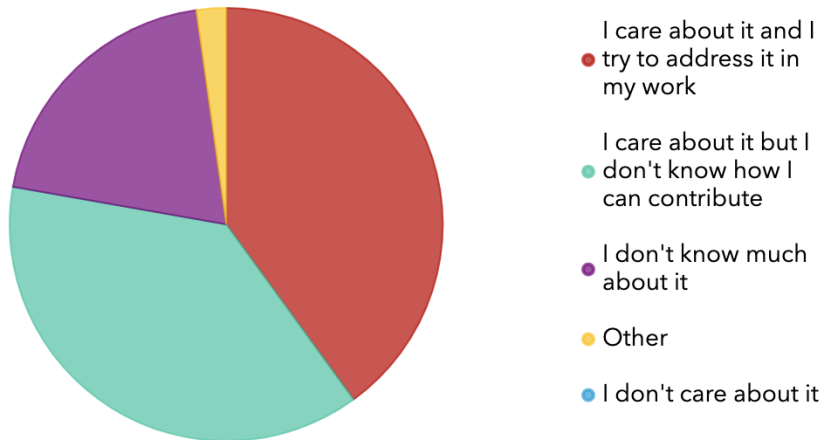
Have you noticed a change in your own behavior towards the environment during your time in UVA?



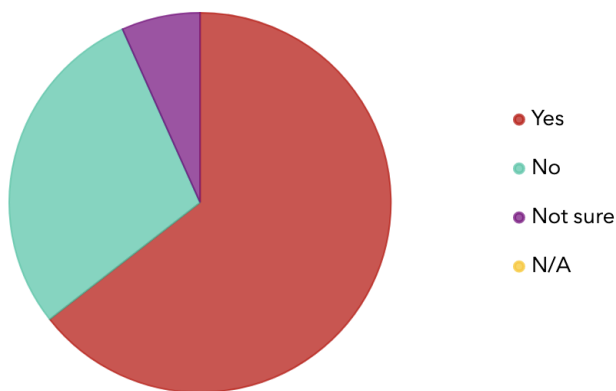
How much do you know about environmental justice?



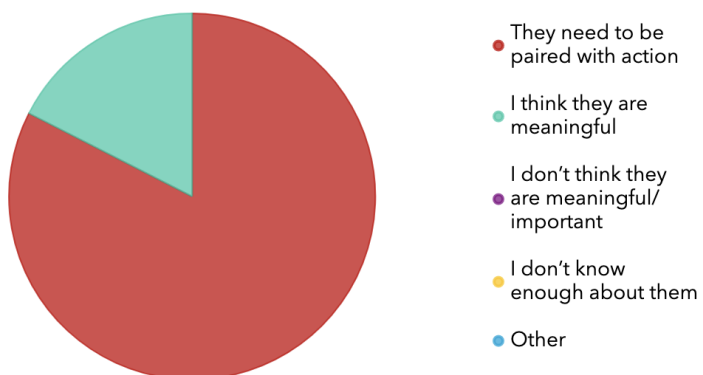
What does environmental justice mean to you?



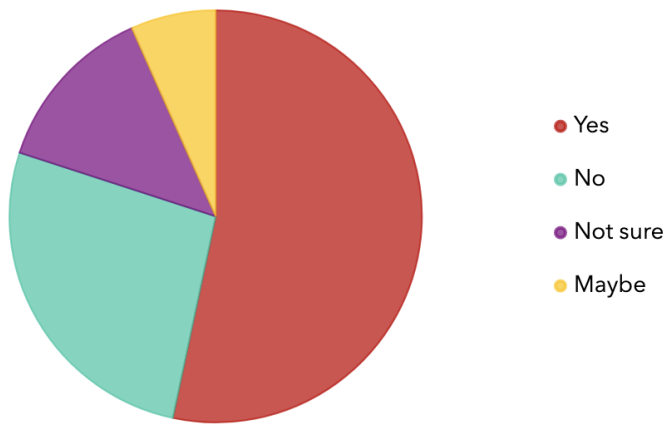
During your time in UVA have you either taken part or discussed environmental justice in any of your classes, events or other platforms?



What are your opinions on statements/acknowledgements that relate to racism, justice, land acknowledgment, etc. made by UVA?



Has your perception of sustainability and/or environmental justice changed during this Pandemic?



10.4. Appendix D: Student Interview Introductory Statement

"Hi! My name is [your name] and this is [partner's name]. We are student consultants this semester working with UVA's Office for Sustainability . Our goal is to learn about what students know about sustainability, how they interact with the office, and what the office can do to better connect and interact with students, especially in terms of environmental justice issues. This interview should only last around 15-20 minutes and feel free to answer any question as much or as little as you would like. Does this all sound good to you? (Wait for response). [If yes] Great! Also, do you mind if we record this meeting for future reference? This decision is completely up to you."

10.5. Appendix E: Interview Questionnaire

Introduction

- What does sustainability mean to you?
 - Answer:

Broad UVA/OFS-related Questions:

- What student organizations are you involved in at UVA?
 - Answer:
 - If it's an environmental/sustainability focused organization, ask: does your organization include an environmental justice lens in the work that you do?
 - Answer:
 - If you could personally change something that a student organization you're involved in does with sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer:
 - From your interactions with people in your role as a part of ____ student organization, how engaged would you say the UVA student body is with sustainability?
 - Answer:
- Do you interact with UVA's Office for Sustainability at all? What has your experience been like with them?
 - Answer:
- If you could personally change something UVA does with regards to sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer:

Environmental Justice Questions:

1. How does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability and the environment?
 - a. Answer:
1. What does environmental justice mean to you?
 - a. Answer:
2. Does it seem like UVA cares about environmental justice?
 - a. Do you notice anything at UVA that relates to environmental justice? Any programs, events, or other things?
 - i. Answer
 - b. 'UVA' could mean many things: the administration, the students, organizations/clubs, professors, etc....
 - i. Answer:
 - c. If they say no, could ask: is there something you think they could improve on in terms of prioritizing environmental justice?
 - i. Answer:
3. What are your thoughts on statements and acknowledgements relating to justice and equity? How do you feel when you see them?

- a. For example, a land acknowledgement, or a statement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, etc.
 - i. Answer

Closing Questions

- Ask follow-up questions
 - Question:
 - Answer:
 - Question:
 - Answer:
- Before we wrap up, is there anything else you would like to add to this conversation? Relating to sustainability, UVA's Office for Sustainability , or environmental justice concerns here at UVA?

Answer:

10.6. Appendix F: Interview Outcomes

Results:

- All participants discussed sustainability as our interactions with the environment and referenced the future
- Represented organizations in interviews:
 - Third Year Council (President) [Participant 1]
 - Student Council Sustainability Agency [Participants 2 and 3]
 - University Democrats [Participant 1]
 - Washington Society [Participant 1]
 - YDSA [Participant 2]
 - Morven Kitchen Garden [Participant 3]
- Possible Changes in organizations
 - Third Year Council
 - Participant wishes they interact with OFS outside of just university regulations (i.e. single-use plastics)
 - Student Council
 - More explicit environmental justice goals and collaboration
- Identity
 - Participant 1 mentioned how growing up in liberal northern Virginia has made her always think about sustainability and her family visits to China gave her experience with air pollution
 - Participant 3 talked about how Hurricane Sandy and rising sea levels in her home area of Long Island, NY gave her firsthand experience with the inequitable effects of climate change
- Thought on UVA's environmental justice initiatives and stances
 - All participants mentioned that environmental justice work at the university seem to be driven by student efforts
 - Participant 1 mentioned how most initiatives are signs and posts on social media; mostly recommendation-based.
 - Recommends that UVA could respond to the DivestUVA initiative and more commitment could be shown to plans by using new student orientation to discuss these topics and by more partnerships with student groups
 - Participant 2 only sees environmental justice initiatives in niche corners of UVA
 - Would like to see a land acknowledgment on the OFS website, but not on general UVA sites
 - Participant 3 sees some environmental justice work within OFS, but it is not as radical or vocalized as they would like it to be. They also see an unwillingness from the administration to work on environmental justice issues with students.
 - Would like to see less tokenization and more amplification of communities. They also recommend the administration work more directly with students on environmental equity issues.

10.7. Appendix G: Interview Notes

PARTICIPANT 1:

"Hi! My name is [your name] and this is [partner's name]. We are student consultants this semester working with UVA's Office for Sustainability . Our goal is to learn about what students know about sustainability, how they interact with the office, and what the office can do to better connect and interact with students, especially in terms of environmental justice issues. This interview should only last around 15-20 minutes and feel free to answer any question as much or as little as you would like. Does this all sound good to you? (Wait for response). [If yes] Great! Also, do you mind if we record this meeting for future reference? This decision is completely up to you."

Introduction

- What does sustainability mean to you?
 - Answer:
 - : very broad question (too broad?), environmental protection, long term thinking, where will be in the future, future generations
 - Broad UVA/OFS-related Questions:
- What student organizations are you involved in at UVA?
 - Answer: class council tyc president, university democrats finance chair, washington society, VISAS
 - If it's an environmental/sustainability focused organization, ask: does your organization include an environmental justice lens in the work that you do?
 - Answer: not strictly so, UDems supports issues, but not directly
 - If you could personally change something that a student organization you're involved in does with sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer: class council - one two members were directly linked to OFS to learn about composting and recycling
 - Only interacting w/ OFS through regulations
 - Single-use plastic policy (UVA's)
 - Class council has to follow those guidelines, no new plastic
 - Interacting with OFS through regulations ("boring")
 - Rather a presentation, FAQ page
 - Knows very little
 - From your interactions with people in your role as a part of ____ student organization, how engaged would you say the UVA student body is with sustainability?
 - Answer:
- Do you interact with UVA's Office for Sustainability at all? What has your experience been like with them?
 - Answer:

- If you could personally change something UVA does with regards to sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer:

Environmental Justice Questions:

- How does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability and the environment?
 - Answer: seems like a tough question to answer, where Participant is from a (NoVa) is a liberal place, Reston is a planned community, keep green spaces, local history, sustainability has been the goal in her mind always.
 - Parents are from China, immigrated here, used to go back to China a lot, firsthand view of Beijing pollution
- What does environmental justice mean to you?
 - Answer: the way sustainability and environmental impacts affects class, race, minorities and low-income communities
 - Unequal effects of climate change - equity issue
 - Ej is trying to level the playing field and make the world more hospitable for everyone
 - Sense of hopelessness and how to combat
- Does it seem like UVA cares about environmental justice?
 - Do you notice anything at UVA that relates to environmental justice? Any programs, events, or other things? ('UVA' could mean many things: the administration, the students, organizations/clubs, professors, etc....)
 - Answer: student side, walk-out last year
 - UVA itself: stall seat journal, recommendations there. Not major events. Initiatives : no single-use plastic. Great thing they did. Small changes to everyday life. Silverware in dining hall
 - If they say no, could ask: is there something you think they could improve on in terms of prioritizing environmental justice?
 - Answer: respond to the DivestUVA initiative, endowment is related to fossil fuel companies
 - Jim Ryan has a lot of big plans, but they need to show more firm commitments (like single use plastic enforcement)
 - Needs to be more than just another regulation
 - Themed events throughout the university tied to CIOs and other groups on grounds
 - Sustainability at orientation
 - Seems to be in the background
- What are your thoughts on statements and acknowledgements relating to justice and equity? How do you feel when you see them?

- For example, a land acknowledgement, or a statement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, etc.
 - Answer: when first heard about them, thought wow this is great. Feels more performative now if you aren't doing anything. If you're actively doing things then they can work. Not a waste of time. Organizations restart every year - have to teach a new group of people each year about this history. Sometimes these statements are unnecessarily long -- just for the sake of being long.

Closing Questions

- Ask follow-up questions
 - Question:
 - Answer:
 - Question:
 - Answer:
- Before we wrap up, is there anything else you would like to add to this conversation? Relating to sustainability, UVA's Office for Sustainability , or environmental justice concerns here at UVA?
 - Answer: University's like to take the academic route - actions that shows urgency now would be beneficial

"Thank you for your time! We truly appreciate your input. If you have any questions or anything else that you might like to add to the conversation later, please feel free to reach out!"

PARTICIPANT 2:

"Hi! My name is [your name] and this is [partner's name]. We are student consultants this semester working with UVA's Office for Sustainability . Our goal is to learn about what students know about sustainability, how they interact with the office, and what the office can do to better connect and interact with students, especially in terms of environmental justice issues. This interview should only last around 15-20 minutes and feel free to answer any question as much or as little as you would like. Does this all sound good to you? (Wait for response). [If yes] Great! Also, do you mind if we record this meeting for future reference? This decision is completely up to you."

Introduction

- What does sustainability mean to you?
 - Answer: I think of how humans can improve the earth and reduce our impact on it. Like to believe it is impacted on more of an infrastructure

Broad UVA/OFS-related Questions:

- What student organizations are you involved in at UVA?
 - Answer: Student Sustainability, young democratic socialist eco club, ...
 - If it's an environmental/sustainability focused organization, ask: does your organization include an environmental justice lens in the work that you do?

- Answer: Environmental justice is often an add-on and not the main focus, which sucks because it should be how we view sustainability. But I have seen a shift in the UVA Culture, especially for Student Council
 - If you could personally change something that a student organization you're involved in does with sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer: Being in student council there is a built in relationship with the OFS, trying to have more environmental justice goals, working on the survey, working on including a land acknowledgement, which they've been very open to
 - From your interactions with people in your role as a part of ____ student organization, how engaged would you say the UVA student body is with sustainability?
 - Answer: As a woman, a lot of sustainability groups are led by women, which is great. But tends to be upper middle class white women which can be exclusionary and change the narrative. Also as a woman of color and an immigrant from Nepal, a prominent developing nation, it is interesting to see the differences. In Nepal you can see more clearly the effects of climate change but here at UVA more actions are being taken for sustainability because of the privileges here. At uva in classes
- Do you interact with UVA's Office for Sustainability at all? What has your experience been like with them?
 - Answer:
- If you could personally change something UVA does with regards to sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer:

Environmental Justice Questions:

- How does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability and the environment?
 - Answer:
- What does environmental justice mean to you?
 - Answer:
- Does it seem like UVA cares about environmental justice?
 - Do you notice anything at UVA that relates to environmental justice? Any programs, events, or other things?
 - Answer: Office for Sustainability's blog post, often in more niche corners of the university which is a problem. Reliant on student organizations to
 - 'UVA' could mean many things: the administration, the students, organizations/clubs, professors, etc....
 - Answer:
 - If they say no, could ask: is there something you think they could improve on in terms of prioritizing environmental justice?

- Answer: Have more courses relating to environmental justice, have classes talk about it so there's a more forceful teaching of it. A required module where it shares information about environmental justice
- What are your thoughts on statements and acknowledgements relating to justice and equity? How do you feel when you see them?
 - For example, a land acknowledgement, or a statement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, etc.
 - UVA making a land acknowledgement might not do it well, might twist the narrative to paint the University's relationship with native peoples in a better light. I don't think the University should do a land acknowledgement for this reason. But other smaller entities like the OFS have the ability to do it better and focus on
 - Closing Questions
- Ask follow-up questions
 - Question:
 - Answer:
 - Question:
 - Answer:
- Before we wrap up, is there anything else you would like to add to this conversation? Relating to sustainability, UVA's Office for Sustainability, or environmental justice concerns here at UVA?
 - Answer:

"Thank you for your time! We truly appreciate your input. If you have any questions or anything else that you might like to add to the conversation later, please feel free to reach out!"

PARTICIPANT 3:

"Hi! My name is [your name] and this is [partner's name]. We are student consultants this semester working with UVA's Office for Sustainability. Our goal is to learn about what students know about sustainability, how they interact with the office, and what the office can do to better connect and interact with students, especially in terms of environmental justice issues. This interview should only last around 15-20 minutes and feel free to answer any question as much or as little as you would like. Does this all sound good to you? (Wait for response). [If yes] Great! Also, do you mind if we record this meeting for future reference? This decision is completely up to you."

Introduction

- What does sustainability mean to you?
 - Answer: Sustainability means shifting the culture away from extraction and exploitationcreating systems that are regenerative and self-fulfilling, that can be sustained in perpetuity without harm to people and the environment.

Broad UVA/OFS-related Questions:

- What student organizations are you involved in at UVA?
 - Answer: Student Council Sustainability Agency, intern with Green Dining (sustainable agriculture intern), Morven Kitchen Garden, organizing with DivestUVA.
 - If it's an environmental/sustainability focused organization, ask: does your organization include an environmental justice lens in the work that you do?
 - Answer: Studco sustainability: something they're focusing on a good amount this semester. Land acknowledgements on the OFS website. Working on a survey to collect data from BIPOC students to understand what specific environmental justice issues people experience at UVA -- want to advocate on behalf of those students.
 - Food justice, food equity. Sustainable food systems at Morven Gardens. Food insecurity is a huge problem at universities.
 - If you could personally change something that a student organization you're involved in does with sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer:
- Do you interact with UVA's Office for Sustainability at all? What has your experience been like with them?
 - Answer: They did the Eco-leaders program last year. Not currently involved in any OFS program. Still work with them a lot through Student Council. Work with other students, collaborating with them.
 - Feels like OFS does want to work with them
- If you could personally change something UVA does with regards to sustainability, what would it be?
 - Answer: UVA individualizes a lot of aspects of sustainability. While it's important for the OFS to focus on student outreach/education, the majority of what the OFS does could be more useful in terms of creating more sustainable **infrastructure** around grounds : **composting** and zero-waste initiatives. Instead, they're doing more education of students on how to be more mindful with their waste. Maille said they want OFS to do more stuff about funding, placing composting around university.
 - Energy awareness/energy reduction: a lot of materials coming out of OFS are about individual energy use. Should be more about changing infrastructure.

Environmental Justice Questions:

- How does your identity impact the way you think about sustainability and the environment?
 - Answer: From Long Island, NY - lives 20 feet above sea level. Issues with hurricanes, Sandy. Coast erosion, flooding, severe storms. Working-class neighborhoods saw detrimental effects of food insecurity and infrastructure. Big influence on how they think of environmental justice.

- Also able to see it from a point of privilege
- What does environmental justice mean to you?
 - Answer: an intellectual framework that describes how things are, how they should be, and why they are this way
 - Looking at systems - imperialism, racism - manufacturing landscapes
 - What would it look like to transform and reverse these unjust systems?
- Does it seem like UVA cares about environmental justice?
 - Do you notice anything at UVA that relates to environmental justice? Any programs, events, or other things?
 - Answer: there has been work in OFS - not maybe as radical or intense as some students would hope for. Lots of great faculty dedicated to environmental justice work. Admin does not seem willing to work with students, even when climate justice is at the center. They focus on a market-based approach.
 - If they say no, could ask: is there something you think they could improve on in terms of prioritizing environmental justice?
 - Answer: Willingness to work with students. Approach environmental justice and equity not from a tokenizing perspective, but rather amplifying and working with affected communities.
- What are your thoughts on statements and acknowledgements relating to justice and equity? How do you feel when you see them?
 - For example, a land acknowledgement, or a statement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, etc.
 - Answer: has been working - would rather have something than nothing. It will be somewhat performative, but could include resources and communication with the Monacan nation, this may reduce performativity. If people see OFS acknowledges this, could bring UVA students to think about the issue more, but the conversation needs to continue.

Closing Questions

- Ask follow-up questions
 - Question:
 - Answer:
 - Question:
 - Answer:
- Before we wrap up, is there anything else you would like to add to this conversation? Relating to sustainability, UVA's Office for Sustainability, or environmental justice concerns here at UVA?
 - Answer:

"Thank you for your time! We truly appreciate your input. If you have any questions or anything else that you might like to add to the conversation later, please feel free to reach out!"