

Commitment to Sustainability

From ESF's "Vision 2020" strategic plan update (2016). Read the full plan [here](#).

Sustainability is central to ESF's mission. This, as well as an evolving understanding of its many dimensions, causes the College to continuously undertake a full-scale evaluation of its sustainability commitment.

In 2011, ESF framed its re-accreditation assessment around sustainability. The College proclaimed that "Sustainability begins with an obligation to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs through:

- the understanding of basic functions of natural and social systems;
- acknowledging and quantifying the limitations of nature's capacity; and
- developing solutions through the integration of social, economic, technological, and environmental systems."

This refers to the long-term viability of a system with regard to economic, social and environmental goals and constraints.

One of ESF's important efforts remains quantifying its commitments and actions over time, and benchmarking against other colleges and universities to stay informed and to lead with best practices. ESF commits to an annual cycle of assessment, planning, and implementation, guided by the industry-standard for measuring campus sustainability: STARS—Sustainability Tracking and Rating System. By 2020, ESF will move from its present Gold STARS rating to Platinum status – the highest level – and, as a component of this, achieve carbon neutrality.

ESF also recognizes that sustainability uniquely involves linking academic and physical operations of the institution for the purpose of mutually beneficial interactions. The campus as a "living laboratory" is an example of this; as such, the College will improve teaching and research by opening up operations and processes. Ultimately, this will result in the intellectual might of the College community continuously improving the physical and social operations of the College, including reducing costs.
