



Missouri State
UNIVERSITY



Sustainability Commission Report

Fall Semester, 2025

Chief Sustainability Commissioner Preston Jones



Executive Summary

During the Fall 2025 semester, the MSU Sustainability Commission delivered sustainable outcomes for students while supporting and advancing the university's strategic goals.

This semester, the Commission funded over \$65,000 in student-led projects that directly improve student experience, including renewed support for the Bear Pantry to address food insecurity, a composter in the dietetics lab providing professional skills to students while sustaining the campus garden, new hydration stations in Meyer Library, and accessibility upgrades to the Campus Garden. The Sustainability Fund remains financially strong, with over \$280,000 available for future projects.

Outreach and engagement were major priorities for the Commission this semester. The Commission held two major events and several tabling sessions to educate and engage the student body. These events were a huge success, reaching numerous students who were previously unaware of the Sustainability Fund. We also made it simpler to access resources by updating our website for the first time in a decade, increasing the accessibility of information on the Sustainability Fund, proposal-writing, the Sustainability Commission, past projects, and more. As well as reaching individual students, commissioners held meetings with numerous student organizations, faculty, staff, and administrators to advocate and coordinate for broader sustainability initiatives on campus.

We also recognized that without a sustainable commission, we could not have sustainable impacts. We worked to strengthen internal capacity by streamlining meeting and communication procedures, creating tools for commissioners such as the project tracking spreadsheet and proposal-writing cheat sheet, creating more complete and accessible archives for the Commission, and developing goals to direct our activities.

These initiatives have improved the sustainability of our campus while working towards many goals of the MSU strategic plan such as expanding experiential learning, increasing equitable access to resources, providing opportunities for leadership and professional development, increasing participation in campus events and opportunities, and improving the campus environment to develop MSU's brand and attract enrollment.

Altogether, these efforts illustrate how student-led sustainability initiatives at MSU serve not only as a driver of environmental sustainability, but also support student success, build organizational capacity, expand engagement and access to campus resources, and advance MSU's strategic priorities. The Sustainability Commission is excited to be a part of making MSU the choice institution for students to live, learn, and grow.

Commission Goals

The core goal of the Sustainability Commission is to implement student-led projects that benefit students while advancing environmental, economic, and social sustainability for the MSU campus. This year, the Sustainability Commission decided to set four specific goals to guide our work throughout the year. These goals were formed and approved by student commissioners and aligned with our core goals, the Student Body President's campaign goals, and emerging needs for the year. Here are the goals:

Goal 1: Increase understanding and awareness of sustainability in a real-world context among MSU students, faculty, and staff across all disciplines.

1. Steps Taken
 - a. Participated in the development of the Spring 2026 Sustainability Fellows Program.
 - b. Sent two students to the 2025 AASHE Conference to develop sustainability understanding and skills.
 - c. Distributed sustainability resources and pamphlets at our events.
2. Future Steps
 - a. Work with administrators and faculty to develop sustainability as a learning objective for general education.
 - b. Continue to educate the student body on the concept of sustainability through our events.
 - c. Develop new educational pamphlets to distribute to students.

Goal 2: Increase student engagement with the Sustainability Fund to foster transparency, raise awareness of the commission, and encourage students to pursue their project ideas.

1. Steps Taken
 - a. Held three outreach events that informed numerous students of the Sustainability Fund and distributed 50 flyers providing resources for submitting proposals
 - b. Worked on updates to the sustainability website to provide more accessible resources to students.
 - c. Held training session during SGA cabinet retreat to help cabinet members understand how to write sustainability proposals.
 - d. Simplified the proposal process through guidelines edits.
2. Future Steps
 - a. Work with professors to allow commissioners to speak in their classes, introducing the Sustainability Commission and Sustainability Fund to students in relevant courses.

- b. Continue holding events and growing their scope and impact for engagement.
- c. Work to distribute knowledge of the Sustainability Fund and other student opportunities to the student body through first-year foundations courses.

Goal 3: Increase the sustainability of the commission by streamlining and developing its internal structures for the long term.

1. Steps Taken

- a. Created project tracking spreadsheet for commissioners to track current projects and project ideas.
- b. Changed monthly meetings to biweekly meetings to allow dedicated work time during meetings.
- c. Updated Sustainability Guidelines
- d. Created templates and guides to assist future Chief Sustainability Commissioners

2. Future Steps

- a. Continue to maintain and develop the project tracking spreadsheet
- b. Continue to explore methods of distributing sustainability workload and building capacity for the Commission.

Goal 4: Support the university's goals of financial sustainability and increased enrollment, bringing affordability and a better experience for students.

1. Steps Taken

- a. Met with administrators to discuss the possibility of geo exchange infrastructure on campus that could reduce costs and environmental impacts for the university.
- b. Funded and implemented projects such as the Bear Pantry funding, Campus Garden upgrades, and hydration stations that improve student experience and sustainability at MSU and align with goals in the university's strategic plan.

2. Future Steps

- a. Continue to explore the feasibility of geo exchange infrastructure and maintain open discussions with administrators.
- b. Work with university administrators to market MSU as Missouri's most sustainable university
- c. Continue to implement student sustainability projects that make MSU a more sustainable and desirable place to live, learn, and grow.

Meetings

This semester, the Sustainability Commission held four meetings, including three student commissioner meetings and one meeting with the full commission.

Commissioners also held numerous meetings with students and organizations to create connections, plan events, and work together to make MSU more sustainable.

Commission Meetings

- ***Student Commissioner Meeting, 09/18/25***
 - Attendance
 - ♣ 5/7 student commissioners present
 - Topics
 - ♣ Introduction to the Commission & Procedural Discussions
 - ♣ SAC Breaking BEARriers Event Planning
 - ♣ Develop new pamphlets and promotional materials
 - ♣ Project ideas
 - Native plants for stormwater management on campus
 - Bird safety, working with bird club
 - Centralizing, expanding, and improving recycling
 - Dark sky projects
 - Bear line improvements
 - Sustainability awards or competitions
- ***Student Commissioner Meeting, 10/24/25***
 - Attendance
 - ♣ 5/6 student commissioners present
 - Topics
 - ♣ Earth week event planning and proposal discussion
 - ♣ AASHE Conference Takeaways
 - ♣ Contacting faculty for sponsorship of native planting proposal
 - ♣ Elevate to 8 Event Planning
- ***Full Commission Meeting, 11/05/25***
 - Attendance
 - ♣ 8/9 commissioners present
 - ♣ 3 ex-officio members present
 - ♣ 2 student project managers present
 - Topics
 - ♣ AASHE Conference Takeaways
 - ♣ Sustainability Fund Updates
 - ♣ Outreach and Events Overview

- ♣ Library Hydration Station Proposal Updates
- Voting
 - ♣ Sustainable Waste Management in Foods Lab: Approved 7-0
 - ♣ Bear Pantry Proposal: Approved 6-0
- ***Student Commissioner Meeting, 11/21/25***
 - Attendance
 - ♣ 4/6 student commissioners present
 - Topics
 - ♣ Website updates discussion
 - ♣ Spring project discussions: AASHE, Earth Week, Native Plants
 - ♣ Fellows Program Applications
 - ♣ Commissioner Recruitment
 - ♣ SAC Meetings about Earth Week
 - ♣ Semester Reflection
 - ♣ Goalsetting
 - ♣ Compostable Packaging for Dining Halls Research

Other Meetings

1. ***Green Bike Meeting, 09/05/25***
 - a. Resolved issues and confusion from previous year on funding mechanisms of the proposal
 - b. Discussed potential need for Green Bike program expansion or more funding. Program is gaining more bikes which may mean more maintenance costs, need for more space, etc.
 - c. Discussed potential for funding a Green Bike worker to coordinate efforts.
2. ***Campus Garden meeting, 09/09/25***
 - a. Discussed issues with delivery process, storage of items near stadium, camera proposal, etc.
 - b. Need to work to find a delivery location with people consistently staffed to sign for packages, close in proximity to the garden, and appropriate for the nature of the materials that are being ordered.
 - c. May need additional storage for campus garden to prevent future conflicts or aesthetic issues.
3. ***Meeting with Facilities Management, 09/11/25***
 - a. Discussed the feasibility of geothermal heating and cooling infrastructure to save the university millions of dollars per year in energy costs and reduce CO2 emissions.
 - b. Discussed the possibility of funding options such as Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPC)

- c. Potentially not feasible right now due to many construction projects. Needs to be explored further.
 - d. Discussed other possible projects related to energy efficiency.
- 4. *Sustainability Academic Subcommittee Meetings, 10/07/25 & 11/10/25*
 - a. Discussed themes and ideas for the Sustainability Fellows program.
 - b. Discussed possibility of a sustainability newsletter
 - c. Talked about potential upgrades to GEP classes, including a unit about Sustainability including resources at the university and how the concept relates to each discipline.
 - d. Talked about the need for a Sustainability Center to connect interdisciplinary research opportunities, community partnerships, and house university sustainability groups.
- 5. *Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting, 10/20/25*
 - a. Provided updates on SGA activities
 - b. Discussed STARs report and need for more sustainability education and research opportunities.
 - c. Heard reports from various administrators on campus.

Proposals

This semester, four proposals were passed, totaling \$66,575. Here are some of the specific proposals we worked on this semester:

Passed Proposals

- Waste Management in the Foods Lab
 - Purpose
 - ♣ Provides an industrial composter to the foods lab in the dietetics department.
 - ♣ Will reduce food waste in the foods lab and provide compost to be used by the campus garden.
 - Costs
 - ♣ \$1,440 one-time commitment
 - Notes
 - ♣ Maintenance costs will be incurred by the dietetics department.
 - ♣ Passed with 6 in favor.
- Bear Pantry Funding
 - Purpose
 - ♣ Renews funding for the bear pantry to address funding gaps
 - Costs
 - ♣ \$20,000 renewed for 2026-2027

- Notes
 - ♣ Proposal edited to include any major funding gaps that assist students rather than specifically bread and eggs.
 - ♣ Proposal requires voting every year to renew.
 - ♣ Passed with 7 in favor.
- Campus Garden Accessibility Proposal Phase I
 - Purpose
 - ♣ Provides two disability-accessible garden beds and a bike rack station to increase the accessibility of the campus garden.
 - Costs
 - ♣ \$16,500 one-time cost
 - Notes
 - ♣ Passed via online voting, with 7 in favor and 3 abstentions.
- Meyer Library Hydration Stations
 - Purpose
 - ♣ To construct 3 water bottle filling stations in areas of the Meyer library that are unserved or underserved.
 - Costs
 - ♣ \$28,635 one-time cost
 - Notes
 - ♣ Cost includes labor and costs to purchase the hydration stations.
 - ♣ Passed via online voting, with 8 in favor and 2 abstentions.

Tentative Proposals

- AASHE Conference Proposal
 - Will be revisited in Spring 2026 to determine renewal
- Green Bike Program
 - Will be revisited in Spring 2026 due to potentially changing needs for funding. If no funding changes are needed, it will be automatically renewed. If funding changes are needed, it will need to be voted on.
- Native Plantings Proposal
 - Still being developed, waiting to hear from faculty sponsors.

Project Implementation

- Strong Hall Hydration Stations Proposal
 - Project completed, account closed
- Meyer Library Hydration Stations Proposal
 - Project account created for \$28,635 and PRF created
- Hammock Stands Proposal
 - Project account created for \$33,000 and PRF created
- Campus Garden Accessibility Proposal
 - Project account created for \$16,500 and PRF created.
- Sustainability Fellows Program/AASHE Conference Proposal
 - Project completed, account closed
- Electric Truck Proposal
 - Project stalled, working with project managers to fix issues
- Campus Garden Camera Proposal
 - Created new PRF due to changes in safety systems since the proposal was passed.

Education & Public Outreach

This semester, the Sustainability Commission committed to student outreach and quality events. Here are some specific outreach and education activities that we have participated in:

- PSU Tabling
 - Date(s) Held
 - ♣ Tuesday, 10/07/25, 3:30-5:00
 - ♣ Monday, 10/13/25, 2:30-4:00
 - ♣ Tuesday, 10/14/25, 3:30-5:00
 - Activities
 - ♣ Talked to students about the Sustainability Fund
 - ♣ Provided “Submit a Proposal” flyers, free stickers and tote bags, and resource pamphlets for sustainability.
 - Outcomes
 - ♣ Educated students about the Sustainability Fund and Sustainability Commission.

- SAC Breaking BEARriers Event
 - Date(s) Held
 - ♣ Tuesday, 09/30/2025, 6:30-8:00
 - Activities
 - ♣ Tabling with other sustainability organizations in a PSU room with usual flyers, tote bags, stickers, and other resources.
 - ♣ Button making station that allowed students to draw their own button designs and turn them into buttons.
 - ♣ Seed activity hosted by Campus Garden
 - Outcomes
 - ♣ Educated many students about the Sustainability Fund and Sustainability Commission, as students listened to receive signatures for their prize tickets.
 - ♣ Provided a fun activity for students to engage in and a button to remember the event and the Commission!
 - ♣ Forged stronger connections between participating organizations and their members (SGA, SAC, Campus Garden, Hidden Gem).
- Elevate to 8 Event
 - Date(s) Held
 - ♣ Thursday, 11/06/25, 3:30-6:30
 - Activities
 - ♣ One of eight activities corresponding to the eight dimensions of wellness, held in partnership with the MSU Counseling Center.
 - ♣ Tabling in front of the fountain with usual flyers, tote bags, stickers, and other resources.
 - ♣ Gave away **30 free plants to students** along with care guides
 - ♣ Displayed a poster with graphics about the concept of Environmental Wellness, allowing students to write and place sticky notes answering questions such as “How can you support your local environment?” and “How do you connect with the environment?”
 - Outcomes
 - ♣ Educated many students about the Sustainability Fund and Sustainability Commission.
 - ♣ Received numerous sticky notes from students describing the ways they enjoy and support their environment, raising awareness of human interdependence and connection with their environment.

- ♣ Provided free plants that will give students a greater connection to their environment and serve as a reminder of this event and the Sustainability Fund.

State of the Sustainability Fund

Project/Account	Beginning Balance	Expenses	Transfers	Current Balance	Notes
Funds Available for Allocation					
EO2149 STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY FUND	\$356,430.90	\$3,655.29	\$61,600.14	\$358,548.47	Does not include fall 2025 proposal costs – see below
Reserve					
EO2627 SUSTAINABILITY-RESERVE	\$3,400.45	\$0.00	\$3,599.55	\$7,000.00	
On-Going Projects					
EO2293 SUSTAINABILITY-RECYCLING	\$23,093.89	\$3,736.58	\$39,300.00	\$58,657.31	
EO2294 SUSTAINABILITY-CAMPUS GARDEN	\$43,083.50	\$16,708.53	\$1,000.00	\$27,374.97	
EO2295 SUSTAINABILITY-BIKE RENTAL	\$7,214.52	\$0.00	\$3,850.00	\$11,064.52	
EO2377 SUSTAINABILITY-SOLAR STOP	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	
EO2646 SUSTAINABILITY-OFFICE INTERNSHIP	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Account Closing
EO2713 SUSTAINABILITY-STDT EDU, ENGAGEMENT, AWARENESS	\$1,781.85	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,781.85	Account Closing
EO2705 SUSTAINABILITY-BEAR PANTRY	\$3,992.54	\$6,829.27	\$20,000.00	\$17,163.27	
EO2761 SUSTAINABILITY - ELECTRIC TRUCK	\$31,653.06	\$209.19	\$0.00	\$31,443.87	
One-Time Projects					
EO2729 SUSTAINABILITY-FELLOWS PROGRAM	\$2,500.00	\$1,852.08	\$647.92	\$0.00	Account Closing
EO2715 SUSTAINABILITY-REUSABLE CUTLERY	\$1,500.00	\$1,292.20	\$208.71	\$0.00	Account Closing
EO2714 SUSTAINABILITY-MENSTRUAL EQUITY	\$3,450.00	\$2,881.90	\$568.10	\$0.00	Account Closing
EO2704 SUSTAINABILITY-CAMPUS GARDEN CAMERAS	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	Account Closing

E02650 SUSTAINABILITY- BEAR PANTRY - Hydroponic Expansion & Maintenance	\$2,937.49	\$2,880.54	\$56.85	\$0.00	Account Closing
E02621 SUSTAINABILITY- INTGRD WASTE MGT	\$48,227.00	\$10,336.00	\$3,846.00	\$0.00	
E02452 – KARLS GREENHOUSE LED	\$16,456.52	\$0.00	\$16,456.52	\$0.00	Account Closing
E02757 SUSTAINABILITY- STRONG HALL HYDRATION	\$37,720.00	\$21,154.36	\$16,565.64	\$0.00	Account Closing
E02762 SUSTAINABILITY - EQUITABLE EATING	\$1,800.00	\$885.00	\$915.00	\$0.00	Account Closing
Funds Available for Allocation Including Fall 2025 Proposals				\$280,274.18	
Total Net Assets				\$511,227.41	

Conclusion

This semester demonstrated both the impact of the Sustainability Commission's work and its resilience. The Commission navigated challenges, capacity limits, and complex projects while continuing to deliver meaningful outcomes for students and the university. Despite challenges beyond our control, the Commission adapted by improving our internal structures, developing resources, and maintaining our commitment to making MSU more sustainable.

Looking ahead, the Commission is committed to building this foundation. We will continue to develop and pass student proposals, scale the reach and impact of our education and engagement efforts during Earth Week and beyond, and build the capacity of our organization through accessible communication and resources. With the continued support of the university and passion from the student community, the Sustainability Commission will continue to make MSU more sustainable for many semesters to come.