COLORADO COLLEGE

2015
STATE OF SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

AN UPDATE OF THE 2014 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY
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### Colorado College Campus Sustainability Council cont’d

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Introduction

In 2014 the Office of Sustainability at Colorado College released its first State of Sustainability Report. Following the creation of the Office of Sustainability in fall of 2013 as an official department in pursuit of the goals outlined in the college’s strategic plan and the college’s first Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS®) report in early 2014, the report provided a benchmark for the college’s performance across broad sustainability metrics while providing a road map for incremental improvement through recommending specific strategies for a holistic systems approach to the integration of educational, engagement, operational, and planning outcomes.

Many of those recommendations have been realized in the year since the benchmark report through the impressive efforts of the Campus Sustainability Council, Facilities Services, individual academic departments, student efforts and persistence, support from the administration and the Board of Trustees, and countless individuals dedicated to making Colorado College a model for sustainability at all levels. As a result, Colorado College has moved from a STARS® Silver status in 2014 to Gold in 2015.

This update outlines areas where priority actions outlined in the 2014 benchmark report have led to substantial improvements and, in some cases, where the college has regressed substantially in its sustainability performance. For the purposes of this update, substantial change in performance is defined as a change of more than 0.5 points in the STARS® weighted scoring system in any one category. Individual recommendations for improvement remain the same as in the 2014 benchmark report and should be referred to specifically in crafting goals and strategies for continued improvement into the next year.
The *Colorado College 2015 State of Sustainability Update*, in a similar approach to the 2014 benchmark report, is organized around the STARS® organizational model. Individual college goals and efforts, such as efficiency upgrades, community engagement, and carbon neutrality, are captured in this robust metric.

CC’s 2015 performance across sustainability indicators in the STARS® outline is as follows: (green indicates a significant increase over 2014; red indicates a significant decrease since 2014; significant is defined as a change of more than 0.5 points in the STARS® weighted scoring system).

### ACADEMICS
- **Curriculum**: 23.17/37.00
- **Research**: 11.05/18.00

### ENGAGEMENT
- **Campus Engagement**: 17.93/20.00
- **Public Engagement**: 12.13/16.00

### OPERATIONS
- **Air & Climate**: 5.73/11.00
- **Buildings**: 2.31/8.00
- **Dining Services**: 3.07/7.00
- **Energy**: 3.05/10.00
- **Grounds**: 2.81/4.00
- **Purchasing**: 3.12/6.00
- **Transportation**: 3.18/7.00
- **Waste**: 5.43/10.00
- **Water**: 5.94/7.00

### PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION
- **Coordination, Planning, and Governance**: 7.50/8.00
- **Diversity and Affordability**: 9.05/10.00
- **Health, Wellbeing, and Work**: 4.58/7.00
- **Investment**: 1.33/7.00

**Innovation**: 4.00/4.00
Academics

Curriculum

Curriculum refers to formal education programs and courses that address sustainability. The primary function of Colorado College as an institution of higher education is to educate students. CC is uniquely positioned to prepare students to understand and address sustainability challenges as it trains and educates future leaders, scholars, workers, and professionals. In offering courses that cover sustainability issues, Colorado College has helped to equip its students to lead society to a sustainable future.

Colorado College substantially improved its performance in the Curriculum category. Much of this improvement stemmed as a result of redefining what constituted an academic course. In 2015 only for-credit regular block courses were considered, while non-credit courses, adjunct courses, half block, and A and B block courses were not considered. Nearly 16% of the courses offered included sustainability at some level. This number is expected to continue to increase in the coming years as the Office of Sustainability continues to offer its Sustainability Across the Curriculum Workshop annually and as the college implements a sustainability designation in support of a Certificate in Sustainability that is under development.

Through the Office of Sustainability, the college has also defined Sustainability Learning Outcomes, which are critical in identifying courses with sustainability content and in developing a Certificate in Sustainability. Information about the learning objectives and an application for courses to be considered for the Sustainability Designation is available at https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/sustainability/academics/curriculum/
Research

The Research sub-category focuses on research, scholarly, and creative activities that are related to or focused on sustainability. CC is primarily a teaching institution, but a number of faculty are engaged in sustainability research. By researching sustainability issues and refining theories and concepts, Colorado College can continue to help the world understand sustainability challenges and develop new technologies, strategies, and approaches to address those challenges.

Colorado College largely maintained its level of performance within the Research sub-category.

24 of 164 fulltime faculty in 14 of 35 academic departments were engaged in sustainability research at the time of this report.

Major strides could be made in the Research category by formally adopting an open access policy that ensures that versions of all future scholarly articles by faculty and staff and all future theses and dissertations are deposited in a designated open-access repository.
Engagement

Campus Engagement

The Campus Engagement sub-category recognizes the importance of providing students with sustainability learning experiences outside the formal curriculum. Engaging in sustainability issues through co-curricular activities allows students to deepen and apply their understandings of sustainability principles. College sponsored co-curricular sustainability offerings help integrate sustainability into the campus culture and set a positive tone for Colorado College. In addition, this subcategory recognizes the importance of support for faculty and staff engagement, training, and development programs in sustainability. Faculty and staff members’ daily decisions impact Colorado College’s sustainability performance. Equipping faculty and staff with the tools, knowledge, and motivation to adopt behavior changes that promote sustainability is an essential activity of a sustainable campus.

Colorado College has made exceptional improvements in campus engagement around sustainability.

Additional improvements in Campus Engagement could be made by developing a faculty/staff peer-to-peer sustainability educators campaign with formal training sponsored by the college; and by making training and/or professional development opportunities in sustainability available to all staff at least once per year.
Public Engagement

The Public Engagement category recognizes efforts that give back to our community through community service, engagement, and partnerships. Volunteerism and the sense of compassion that community service helps develop are fundamental to achieving sustainability. From tutoring children to removing invasive species to volunteering at the CC Community Kitchen, students, faculty, and staff can make tangible contributions that address sustainability challenges through community service. Community engagement can help students develop leadership skills while deepening their understanding of practical, real-world problems. Colorado College can contribute to our campus community by harnessing our financial and academic resources to address community needs. In addition, we can contribute toward sustainability broadly through inter-campus collaboration, engagement with external networks and organizations, and public policy advocacy.

Colorado College declined significantly from 2014 in the Public Engagement category, largely as a result of fewer tracked community service hours per student. The college could regain significant traction in this performance area by developing a comprehensive method to track community service hours performed by students and employees and by providing incentives to increase the participation in community service.

Additionally, joining a monitoring and verification organization that ensures fair-labor conditions for the production of Colorado College’s trademark-licensed apparel, such as Worker Rights Consortium, Fair Labor Association, or a Designated Supplier’s Program would also boost the college’s performance in the Public Engagement category significantly.
Operations

Air & Climate

The Air & Climate subcategory pertains to CC’s measurement of and action to reduce greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions. In 2009 Colorado College signed the American College & University President’s Climate Commitment, outlining its goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2020. Since 2006, the College has recorded and published yearly inventories of greenhouse gas emissions using the Clean Air-Cool Planet Campus Carbon Calculator™. The inventory covers scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

The college’s performance in the Air & Climate category remained largely unchanged. Emissions due to energy use went up slightly during this year, largely as a result of a colder winter, but changes were minimal and within normal fluctuations.

Carbon Neutrality by 2020
Colorado College’s emissions were up slightly in 2014 to 28,190 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent. Despite major successes in efficiency and reduction projects in building energy use and the associated emissions, the college is not currently on track to meet its goal of carbon neutrality by 2020. Business travel and employee and student commuting remain the most difficult emissions sector to address.

The Office of Sustainability is working with Facilities Services to identify new ways to meet our goal and has begun conversations with a network of institutions that have committed to neutrality by 2020 or sooner to identify and leverage ways to utilize our collective efforts to help us all meet our goals.
**Buildings**

The buildings subcategory pertains to steps that Colorado College is taking to improve the sustainability performance of its buildings. Buildings are one of the largest users of energy and the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions on campus. They also use significant amounts of potable water. By designing, building, and maintaining buildings in ways that provide a safe and healthy indoor environment for inhabitants while simultaneously mitigating the building’s impact on the outdoor environment, Colorado College can address the sustainability of its buildings.

Colorado College largely maintained its performance in the building category during the 2014 year.

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**Building Certification**

During the 2014 academic year, the Campus Sustainability Council began discussions around creating a tiered building certification system, similar to LEED, amongst ACM schools. Under the program, the participating schools could rely on experts from other ACM colleges to commission and certify new building performance. The intent was to create a third-party verification scheme, garner recognition for individual college’s efforts, and mitigate the steep fees that accompany LEED certification. After surveying ACM schools, it was determined that the complexity and minimal recognition of such a system made the idea unattractive at this time.
Dining Services

The Dining Services subcategory pertains to efforts at Colorado College to help build a sustainable food system. Modern industrial food production often has deleterious environmental impacts. Pesticides and fertilizers used in agriculture can contaminate ground and surface water, which has potentially dangerous impacts on wildlife and human health. Furthermore, the often long-distance transportation of food to CC produces greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution. Additionally, farm workers are often paid substandard wages, subjected to harsh working conditions, and exposed to dangerous pesticides. Colorado College can use its food purchases to support local economies; encourage safe, environmentally friendly farming methods; and help alleviate poverty for farmers.

Dining services can also play an important role in conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and purchasing environmentally preferable materials other than food. The STARS® metric and this plan measure these impacts across the institution instead of by department; therefore, the benefits of these actions are captured in the Energy, Water, Waste, and Purchasing subcategories, respectively.

Colorado College largely maintained its performance in the Dining Services category through 2014.

Real Food?

In early 2015, a group of students updated the Real Food Calculator results through an EcoFund grant from the Office of Sustainability. Students surveyed food purchases for the months of October 2014 and February 2015 to gain an average understanding of our food purchases. Using the criteria set by the Real Food Guide, it was determined that 22% of the food used in the college’s dining services was “Real Food” while 78% remains conventional.
Energy

Colorado College continues to address its energy consumption through conservation and efficiency and through switching to cleaner and renewable energy sources, particularly solar. Energy consumption directly impacts our greenhouse gas emissions, impacting global climate change. Energy costs are also one of the most volatile operating expenses the college grapples with. Reducing our overall energy use and becoming self-sufficient to the largest degree possible stabilizes these costs and allows us to better plan for future costs while reducing our associated greenhouse gas emissions. Colorado College largely maintained its performance in the Energy category through 2014. Energy use was up slightly, largely due to a colder winter, but well within normal fluctuations.

Renewable Energy at CC

- In 2014, 6 new solar installations were completed on our campus, totaling 296kW of electrical energy and 135,000 kBtu per year.
- In 2014, CC became a US EPA Green Power Partner, sourcing 16% of its power from renewable sources.
- The Office of Sustainability and Facilities Services have identified community-based solar partnerships that have an attractive payback, generate revenue, save public tax dollars, and help CC meet its carbon neutrality goals through projects in our city. The proposal was presented to the Board of Trustees in February of 2015.
- The contracts that CC had with Colorado Springs Utilities to purchase renewable wind power have expired as of 2015. Wind power is no longer available at an advantageous rate. As a result, the college’s renewable energy use is likely to decline significantly in the coming year.
- The fuel mixture for the energy we purchase changes regularly. Colorado Springs Utilities sources the majority of its power generation from coal, which significantly impacts the college’s associated greenhouse gas emissions from energy use. 52% of the power in CSU’s territory was coal-based in 2014.
Grounds

The Grounds subcategory recognizes and recommends areas where Colorado College plans and maintains its grounds with accordance to sustainability principles. Beautiful and welcoming campus grounds can be planned, planted, and maintained without the use of toxic chemicals and while protecting wildlife habitat, and conserving water and resources. Colorado College has excelled in sustainable landscaping by means of its centralized irrigation control system, use of non-potable water, and placement of several native plant gardens on campus.

The college made significant improvement in the Grounds category through 2014. The major priority action identified in the 2014 State of Sustainability Report in the grounds category was to develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan. This action was completed by the Grounds department, resulting in a significant improvement to the college’s overall sustainability performance and the resulting score in the Grounds category. The plan can be viewed at http://stars.aashe.org/media/secure/367/6/500/3772/Colorado%20Collee%20IPM%20Plan.doc

An Evolving Landscape
Several new sustainable landscaping projects were completed in the 2014/15 academic year, including the first phase of an Eco Village project on East campus that highlights climate-appropriate plants, edible landscaping, medicinal landscaping, pollinator gardens, and a contemplative and meditative space designed and installed in close collaboration with several student groups.
Purchasing

Colorado College can use its purchasing power to help build a sustainable economy. Each purchasing decision represents an opportunity for CC to choose environmentally and socially preferable products and services that support companies with strong commitments to sustainability.

Colorado College made significant improvements in the Purchasing category through 2014.

Purchasing Policies

Colorado College’s electronics purchasing already met the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool’s (EPEAT) guidelines. It was an easy win, then to make this an official purchasing policy preference to demonstrate our commitment and ensure that future purchases continue to meet these standards. Similarly, the college’s design guidelines provided a window to improve purchasing considerations with regards to considering Life Cycle Cost Analyses (LCCA) across all divisions when evaluating energy- and water-using products and systems, particularly in new or remodeled buildings. The guidelines require a LCCA on major components of new facilities and renovation projects.
Transportation

Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that contribute to health problems such as heart and respiratory diseases and cancer. Due to disproportionate exposure, these health impacts are frequently more pronounced in low-income communities next to major transportation corridors. In addition, the extraction, production, and global distribution of fuels for transportation can damage environmentally and/or culturally significant ecosystems and may financially benefit hostile and/or oppressive governments.

Partnering With the City
Colorado College and the Office of Sustainability are currently partnering with the City of Colorado Springs to complete a bikeshare feasibility study. The study will make recommendations on corridors, fleet size and type, and rollout schedules. With the college at the northern end of the downtown business district, it is likely that a bikeshare system would include facilities at our campus, helping to connect our campus to other areas of our community and build engagement opportunities.

Alternative Transportation
During the 2014/15 academic year, Colorado College students completed the Veggie Van project. A dual-fuel system was added to allow a 12-passenger van to burn either conventional diesel or filtered cooking oil from the college’s dining services. A separate, mobile filtration unit was also built with the help of the Office of Sustainability. The van runs equally well on either fuel source and gets similar mileage. The added fuel system gives the van a range of over 700 miles without refueling. The college’s Outdoor Education department will be the primary users, taking the van on its many regional trips on weekends and block breaks.

The College can reap benefits from modeling sustainable transportation systems. Bicycling and walking provide human health benefits and mitigate the need for large areas of paved surface, which can also help CC better manage storm water. There may be associated cost savings and benefit to local economies by reducing dependency on petroleum-based fuels for transportation.

The College largely maintained its performance in the transportation category in 2014/15.
Waste

The Waste category highlights management practices and areas where Colorado College can improve by moving toward zero waste by reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. These actions mitigate the need to extract virgin materials, such as trees and metals. It generally takes less energy and water to make a product with recycled materials than with virgin resources. Reducing waste generation also reduces the flow of waste to incinerators and landfills, which produce greenhouse gas emissions, can contaminate air and groundwater supplies, and tends to have disproportionate negative impacts on low-income communities. Waste reduction and diversion also save Colorado College costly landfill and hauling service fees. In addition, waste reduction campaigns can engage the entire campus and broader community in contributing to a tangible sustainability goal.

Colorado College declined in performance significantly in the Waste category during 2014. Although waste diverted from the landfill exceeded 45%, actual waste generated per weighted campus user increased over 2013 numbers.

A New Look

Look for the streamlined waste diversion centers in Worner Center in 2015/16 academic year. All of the waste receptacles will be replaced with custom containers that fit the intent and space of each placement, are mobile, and utilize the international standard colors for recycling, compost, and landfill. Creating a consistent look and message for waste handling across campus is a strategy the college has identified in reducing confusion resulting in reducing landfilled waste.

Diversion of Waste

Colorado College took first place in the RecycleMania® competition’s organic waste diversion category in early 2015. Students composted over 29lbs per capita during the 8-week competition.
Water

This category applies to efforts and recommendations to protect water quality. Because pumping, delivering, and treating water are major energy users, Colorado College can help reduce energy consumption and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy generation by conserving water. Likewise, conservation and effective stormwater management are important in maintaining and protecting finite groundwater supplies. Water conservation and effective stormwater management also reduce the need for effluent discharge into local surface water supplies, which helps improve the health of local water ecosystems.

Colorado College largely maintained its level of performance in the water category throughout 2014. Water use is down substantially over 2008 levels and individual drought-tolerant landscaping projects and wetter season have allowed the grounds shop to make modest reductions in overall water usage.

Where Does our Water Come From?
It’s amazing that a city of nearly half a million people can find enough water in our semi-arid climate. Where does it all come from?
During second block break, the Office of Sustainability and Office of Field Studies will team up to offer a first-hand tour of where our water comes from, how it gets across the continental divide, how it is stored and pumped, and eventually treated to be distributed throughout Colorado Springs.
Planning and Administration

Coordination, Planning, & Governance

This subcategory recognizes the institutionalizing of sustainability at Colorado College by dedicating resources to sustainability coordination, developing plans to move toward sustainability, and engaging students, staff and faculty in governance. Staff and other resources help CC organize, implement, and publicize sustainability initiatives. These resources provide the infrastructure that fosters sustainability within CC. Sustainability planning affords an institution the opportunity to clarify its vision of a sustainable future, establish priorities and help guide budgeting and decision making. Strategic planning and internal stakeholder engagement in governance are important steps in making sustainability a campus priority and may help advocates implement changes to achieve sustainability goals.

Colorado College largely maintained its performance in the Coordination, Planning, and Governance category throughout 2014.
Diversity & Affordability

This category recognizes efforts at Colorado College to advance diversity and affordability on campus. In order to build a sustainable society, diverse groups will need to be able to come together and work collaboratively to address sustainability challenges. People of color and low-income communities tend to suffer disproportionate exposure to environmental problems. This environmental injustice happens as a result of unequal and segregated communities. To achieve environmental and social justice, society must work to address discrimination and promote equality. The historical legacy and persistence of discrimination based on racial, gender, religious, and other differences makes a proactive approach to promoting a culture of inclusiveness an important component of creating and equitable society. Higher education opens doors to opportunities that can help create a more equitable world, and those doors must be open through affordable programs accessible to all regardless of race, gender, religion, socio-economic status and other differences. In addition, a diverse student body, faculty, and staff provide rich resources for learning and collaboration.

Accessibility and Affordability Indicators

- 10% of entering CC students are low-income
- The graduation rate for low-income students at CC is 87%
- On average, 100% of student financial need is met at CC
- 8% of CC students graduate with no interest-bearing student loan debt

Colorado College made significant improvements in the Diversity and Affordability category throughout 2014. Significant improvements have been made as a result of The Colorado College Plan: Building on the Block including assessment of diversity and equity in terms of governance and public engagement and the assessment of affordability and accessibility indicators.
Health, Wellbeing, & Work

This subcategory pertains to Colorado College’s incorporation of sustainability into its human resources programs and policies. The College’s people define its character and capacity to perform; and so, its achievements can only be as strong as its community. CC has bolstered the strength of its community by making fair and responsible investments in its human capital. Such investments include offering benefits, wages, and other assistance that serve to respectfully and ethically compensate workers and acting to protect and positively affect the health, safety and wellbeing of the campus community. Investment in human resources is integral to the achievement of a healthy and sustainable balance between human capital, natural capital, and financial capital.


Assessing Employee Satisfaction
Colorado College conducts a bi-annual campus climate survey that solicits opinions related to the overall campus climate in these areas:

- Job Satisfaction/Support
- Teaching Environment
- Professional Development
- Compensation/Benefits/Work-Life Balance
- Facilities/Resources
- Shared Governance
- Communication
- Respect and Appreciation
**Investment**

Colorado College can support sustainability by investing in companies and funds that, in addition to providing a strong rate of return, are committed to social and environmental responsibility. Investing in these industries also supports the development of sustainable products and services. Finally, CC can engage with the businesses in which we are invested in order to promote sustainable practices.

Performance in the Investment category remains unchanged for 2015.
Innovation

Innovation credits are reserved for new, extraordinary, unique, ground-breaking, or uncommon outcomes, policies, and practices that exceed the highest criterion of an existing STARS® credit or are not covered by an existing STARS® credit. Below are a list of four different programs in which Colorado College is displaying its unique, innovative character and commitment to sustainability in all of its different forms.

#1. Sense of Place

In fall of 2014 Sense of Place programming was added to the existing New Student Orientation (NSO) programming organized by Outdoor Education at Colorado College. The Sense of Place programming was built to familiarize new students to the unique ecology, community, and cultural history of Colorado Springs while fostering the spirit of sustainability that Colorado College aims to embody. The presentation introduced students to plant, bird, and animal species within the area as well as the food, energy, and waste disposal systems that support Colorado Springs and Colorado College. The program included videos and live speakers on various subjects and developed a field guide to supplement discussions that were organized by trip leaders during the service trip component of NSO. The program now also has a website that is open to the public. In 2015 this programming was built upon to include a more community-based offering and additions of cultural and historical significance of the area.

The Outdoor Education department, the Office of Sustainability, and the Office of Field Study are broadening the use of the program themes to underpin outdoor education activities as well as to design new co-curricular field trips and to build relevance around the concept to all students as they begin or continue their career at Colorado College.

#2. The Office of Sustainability Model at Colorado College

The Office of Sustainability (OoS) at Colorado College is a unique and innovative office model. In order to fully address all aspects on campus related to sustainability, there are student interns working across campus in leadership positions. The Sustainability Director reports to the Dean of the College. The placement of this office is to further facilitate the development of curricular aspects of sustainability at the college and is in contrast to typical models of sustainability in higher education, which generally places the function in a facilities context. The OoS is equally as focused on the co-curricular efforts on campus. Many of the OoS interns are funded to work directly with other offices across campus, building bridges into areas not often associated with sustainability while decentralizing and demystifying sustainability efforts across campus. For example: the Building and Grounds intern works in the OoS as well as in facilities; The Communications intern works in the communications department working on the OoS website, the blog, and the student newspaper; the Residential Life intern is housed both in the OoS and the Residential Life and Housing department on campus; and the Local Food Intern works as a leader within the Collaborative for Community Engagement. In
addition, the OoS has interns working solely on efforts such as the STARS® report and the greenhouse gas inventory. Additionally, interns are funded to work directly with community organizations on projects that have direct impacts for the college and the community. The model of the Office of Sustainability is truly innovative and demonstrates the commitment that the college has to infusing sustainability in all parts of campus and the Colorado Springs community.

#3. Care and Share Zero-Waste Program

The Care and Share Zero-Waste Program is a partnership between the Care and Share Food Bank for Southern Colorado and Colorado College. The Care and Share mission is to provide food, partnering opportunities, and education to combat hunger and food insecurity in Southern Colorado communities. Their Zero-Waste program develops innovative strategies to divert all waste that comes as a result of processing food at Care and Share from the landfill. The office of Sustainability at Colorado College employs an intern to work specifically on this project to develop these channels for waste diversion. The goals of the program are to manage recyclables for sale to local vendors, design a program to optimize farmer relationships, research and implement best practices for handling waste food and partnering with farmers, and develop a disseminable model for Care and Share's affiliates. In exchange for the time and money investment, Colorado College receives the rights to any carbon offsets that can be quantified from the diversion of landfill waste.

#4. The Soup Project

The Soup Project is a collaboration between The Food Coalition and The Arts for Social Change Coalition at CC. For 23 years, there was a weekly community kitchen on Sunday offering a free meal to community members in need at the college. At its inception, the community kitchen on Sunday was the only one of its kind and served an important role in the Colorado Springs community. Over the last 20 years other Sunday community kitchens have been created, and the community kitchen at the college became disconnected from poverty and hunger efforts in Colorado Springs. Together, the Collaborative for Community Engagement and the Arts for Social Change Coalition are building on The Community Kitchen’s 23-year legacy to imagine creative new ways of addressing poverty, hunger, and homelessness in Colorado Springs. Empty Bowls is an annual benefit addressing these topics.

Empty Bowls has historically raised around $2,000 for The Community Kitchen Club by partnering with The Pottery Studio to sell handmade bowls. This year, Empty Bowls hosted the $20,000 Soup Project Challenge, which funds student designed social innovation projects addressing poverty hunger and homelessness in the local community. The four chosen projects are:

1. Grits- Students will partner with the Marion House to run a weekly writing and visual arts program for their patrons which will culminate in a publication titled "Grits" that will be included in the Colorado Springs Independent and featured installments on KRCC.
2. Mobile Meals - This project will partner with organizations such as the Flying Carrot, Colorado Springs Food Rescue, and Seeds Community Café to bring healthy food and educational programs to the community. The project aims to provide a free meal and food education programs for low-income, low-access communities.

3. Ponderosa Pastries – This program envisions partnering with Seeds Community Café to create a student-run café that connects students and the community through food and art.

4. The Family Day Center - Students envision an all-inclusive space that provides homeless families access to a variety of services without trips to multiple agencies throughout the city. The space will include access to showers, bathrooms, computers, an area for children, a homework tutoring center, as well as a mailing address and storage space.
Conclusion

Colorado College has made exemplary strides in sustainability performance within the past year and sustainability continues to be a centerpiece of our strategies to remain relevant to our students and the world moving forward. Indeed, sustainability is a prominent piece of our strategic plan and the aster plan and is exemplified in our daily actions, including our continued drive towards carbon neutrality, our design of the new Tutt Library as a net-zero energy/net-zero carbon building, and our increasing portfolio of sustainability courses. Our STARS® Gold benchmark rating is evidence of the ethic and practices that permeate the administration, faculty, staff, and students at our college. By using this widely accepted and comprehensive metric, we have made solid improvements in our performance and have a clear road map of where to head in the coming years.

This update has built upon the 2014 benchmark study and has shown areas of significant improvement and, in some cases, significant decline. For the purposes of this report, significant change in performance is defined as 0.5 points change in any one STARS® category.

The Colorado College 2015 State of Sustainability Update provides the self-check on the efforts that we have begun over the past year. Our status as a STARS® Gold institution validates many of the efforts begun over the past years as well as re-focuses our efforts in new areas as we strive to become a STARS® Platinum institution and a premier sustainability example while providing the ‘finest liberal arts education in the country.’