Purpose of Submittal:

Seth Vidaña, Campus Sustainability Manager, is providing members of the Board of Trustees with the following annual report on Western Washington University’s sustainability programs, initiatives, and activities.
2016 Report

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Office of Sustainability
Preface
The 2016 Western Washington University Sustainability Report highlights the forward-thinking initiatives, projects, and advances implemented by departments and programs across the University’s campus in the past year. A national leader in sustainable education, Western’s commitment to creating a more equitable, environmentally-secure world is manifest in its operational strategies, inventive coursework, outreach efforts, and student accomplishments. This report lists some of the many efforts made by Western students, staff, faculty, and friends to progress the cause of sustainability through environmental, economic, and social engagement.

The report illustrates Western’s progress across four overarching arenas: Academics, Operations, Engagement, and Planning & Administration. These four categories reflect the model set forth by the Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS), a campus sustainability assessment tool created by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. This tool is utilized with full awareness that there are infinite intersections among these categories, and that all sustainable undertakings are ultimately holistic and interdisciplinary.

Executive Summary

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Sustainability initiatives in academic curriculum and research can be found in every college at Western. The projects being produced in these varied disciplines across campus combine to provide a broad spectrum of knowledge and potential solutions to local and global concerns. Currently, over 100 Western faculty members self-identify as engaged in sustainability teaching, research, or community service. Some highlights from the past year include:

• **Western Researchers Join Scientists at Other Northwest Universities to Advance Solar Energy**

  On the road toward a more sustainable future, teamwork amongst Pacific Northwest scientists is making a measurable difference. Mark Bussell of the Department of Chemistry and Advanced Materials Science and Engineering Center and David Patrick, an expert in solar concentrators in the Department of Chemistry at Western Washington University, joined scientists at three other universities to research an emerging technology for improving the efficiency of photovoltaic solar cells, thanks to the support of a $240,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust.

  The innovative collaboration among the largely undergraduate institutions was initiated by the Murdock Trust to help advance the science on renewable energy and to build the capacity of smaller colleges to take a key role in important research. The team will investigate luminescent solar concentrators (LSCs), devices that collect sunlight over a large area, focus the light, and convert shorter wavelengths of light into longer wavelengths. The resulting light can be converted to electrical energy in photovoltaic solar cells—such as those found in the solar panels used in homes and solar energy plants—much more efficiently than current technology allows. Ultimately, the work could lead to a cheaper means of harnessing the energy of the sun.

  The three-year grant to the newly-formed Collaborative Research Alliance will support materials science research by chemistry and physics professors at George Fox University, Pacific Lutheran University, University of Puget Sound, and Western Washington University. The benefits of having scientists from different institutions work together goes beyond the optimization of the research work. Each university will gain from experiencing the research culture and from sharing the equipment at the other schools. The professors also will be able to share expertise on practical goals, such as winning competitive research grants. Undergraduate students from each school will be involved in the research project and will have their learning experience enriched by the variety of expertise.

• **Western Professor Helps Cambodian University Establish Sustainability Program**

  "When most Americans hear the word 'Cambodia,' they think only of the Khmer Rouge genocide," says Mart Stewart, a professor in the Department of History and affiliate professor for the Huxley College of the Environment at Western Washington University. "But this was only a momentary aberration in Cambodian history, and one that shared in the general madness in Southeast Asia during what the Vietnamese call 'the American War.'" The true Cambodia can be found in Angkor Wat and the deep traditions of culture and the arts, Mart says. "It's also found in the gloriously optimistic generation of young people who are remaking Cambodia right now."

  Professor Stewart engaged with many of these young people during a month-long Fulbright Senior Specialist appointment in the Department of Resource Management and Development at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in January. He also worked with the faculty as part of a curriculum-development team that is creating a new interdisciplinary graduate science program in climate change studies at RUPP. Stewart put together a course module and syllabus on the history of climate change politics and
governance and collected relevant resources for the program. Stewart has received four Fulbright appointments in Southeast Asia, and has conducted research and taught there for 20 years, so he is extremely familiar with the strengths and needs of the region’s academic institutions. The new master’s degree in science program at RUPP is intended to serve the employees of Cambodian government agencies and the Cambodian employees of international NGOs and civil society organizations who are creating climate change adaptation strategies for Cambodia. "The energy and talent is there," Stewart says. "Education is the pathway."

- **North Cascades Institute Celebrates Thirty Years of Promoting Conservation**
  In the mid-1980’s, Saul Weisberg, now the executive director of the North Cascades Institute, was a climbing ranger in North Cascades National Park and finishing up a graduate degree in biology. It was the time of timber wars and fights over spotted owls, and there was a lot of tension around public lands. Weisberg and his friends wanted to find a way to counteract that tension. They wanted to bring people out to really experience the park and learn about it.

  “We had this idea that education was one of the tools that should be used to promote conservation, by taking people outside and giving them experiences in wild places,” Weisberg said. “We just assumed that they would fall in love with it the way we did.” So Weisberg and his friends started a series of adult field seminars. The first classes were in the summer of 1986, and they “took off like crazy,” he said. Weisberg stopped being a climbing ranger and focused on education.

  His vision became the North Cascades Institute, and it celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2016, the same time that the National Park Service celebrates its 100th anniversary. The institute now offers a graduate program in partnership with Western Washington University. This unique professional residency program designed to prepare students in all aspects of environmental education while living among the towering peaks of the North Cascades region in Washington State. Course work emphasizes field science, experiential learning, teaching strategies and nonprofit administration. the Residency is fully integrated into a degree program at Huxley College of the Environment, so the students are simultaneously immersing in the academic and environmental experience.

**New Courses Offered in the 2016-2017 Academic Year**
Western continues to develop new courses that investigate how to sustainably tackle the important social, environmental, and economic challenges of our age. Some of the new courses that Western students are offered in 2016 include:

- **ANTH 479 - People of the Sea and Cedar Internship:** This is an internship at the Whatcom Museum, specifically to prepare students for workshops/tours for a program titled The People of the Sea and Cedar, which focuses on Northwest Coast Native peoples. The student will conduct workshops/tours for third and fourth grade students studying Native American history and culture. Interns will also learn about broader museum topics through readings and demonstrate their understandings through weekly short essays.

- **C/AM 331 - Canada: Society and the Environment:** This course explores relationships between people and the environment in the territory that has come to be known as Canada; emphasis is placed upon the history of such relationships. Topics include: physical geography, Aboriginal geographies, Native-Newcomer interactions, evolving and contested political boundaries, resource use and ecological crisis, and urban development.
- **C/AM 442** - Colonial Landscapes in the Pacific Northwest: This course provides description and analysis of the impact of European imperialism on the development of Pacific Northwest landscapes; the focus is on Indigenous, British, American, and Canadian geographical actions and territorial claims.

- **CHEM 381** – Biofuels: An examination of current and emerging biofuel technologies including an understanding of the processes for biomass conversion to fuel and other factors associated with commercial biofuel production.

- **CHEM 425V** - Chemistry of Renewable Energy: The role of chemistry in energy production, distribution, storage and usage, with a focus on chemical, photochemical, and electrochemical transformations. Applications to existing and emerging energy technologies.

- **COMM 330** - Environmental Rhetoric: This class is an exploration of the way the environment is represented rhetorically and the implications this has for public policy and personal action.

- **ENG 385** - Sustainability Literacy II: Advanced instruction and practice in applying systems thinking to writing projects related to the topic of sustainability.

- **ENVS 491** - Environmental Communication: Critical inquiry into communication theory, research, and practice directed toward environmental concerns in the context of diverse communities. Opportunity to develop skill in techniques such as cultural sensitivity and inclusion, community outreach, environmental interpretation, systemic social change, social marketing, digital and physical media, and/or partnerships.

- **ENVS 492** - Curriculum for Environment and Sustainability: Critical review of existing curricula, learning theory and learning objectives are examined and strategies for attaining these objectives are studied and practiced. The qualities of the ideal environmental education curriculum are identified. Students practice curriculum writing and teaching. Students observe in real world classroom and outdoor teaching settings.

- **ENVS 551** - Natural Resource Policy: The course addresses history, politics, conflicts, and current events (e.g. Malheur NWR) around natural resources, with a particular emphasis on public lands.

- **PLSC 348** - Environmental Justice: Dimensions of social justice as they relate to environmental policies, practices, and movements.

**University-wide Educational Lectures in 2016**
The Huxley College Speaker Series brings guest lecturers to campus to address topics of contemporary environmental concerns in the region and beyond. This past year, the theme for the series was conservation, including research ecology, habitat and population recovery, community resilience, and sustainability consulting. Huxley College Speaker Series talks in 2016 included:

- Keturah Witter, a scientist for Environmental Resources Management on "Working Toward the Triple Bottom Line: Sustainability and Consulting."

- Michael Medler, associate professor of Environmental Studies, on "The Pyrogeography of Wildfires in the Western U.S."

- Dave Bennink, owner of Re-Use Consulting, on "Sustainable Employment, Sustainable Life."

- Bob Dillman, regional vice president for First Financial Healthcare Solutions, on "Economic Empowerment within the Western Student Population."
• Mary Christina Wood, the Philip H. Knight Professor of Law and faculty director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center at the University of Oregon School of Law, on "Nature's Trust: Environmental Law for an Ecological Age."

• Becky Petersen, acquisition project manager for King County's Water and Land Resources Division on "Conservation and Preservation: Saving Lands for Future Generations."

• Timothy Ballew II, chairman of the Lummi Nation, on "Pulling Together in the Salish Sea," the inaugural event in the Salish Sea Speaker Series.

• Joe Scott, international programs director at Conservation Northwest, on "Conservation Across Borders."

• Jeff Hammarlund from Portland State University on "How and Why Energy Policy is Different (Even a Little Weird) In the Pacific Northwest."

• David Wallin, Environmental Science professor at Huxley, on "Conservation and Restoration of Mountain Goat Populations in the Washington Cascades."

• Kevin Schneider, a principal research engineer at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, on "The History and Current Status of the Electricity Infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest."

• Steve Hollenhorst, dean of Huxley College, on "The Race for Renewable Aviation Fuels and Environmentally Preferred Co-Products."

• Leah Bendell, professor of Marine Ecology and Conservation at Simon Fraser University, on "Common Sense Approaches to Environmental Conflicts."

The World Issues Forum at the Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies also brought thought-provoking discussions to Western's campus and the Bellingham community in 2016, supporting an informed and engaged global citizenry. World Issues Forum Speakers included:

• "Upstream Development versus Downstream Risk on Transboundary Watersheds -- The Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers of northwest B.C. and southeast Alaska" by Anne Muter, leader of the Transboundary Watersheds Governance Initiative.

• Mira Mishra, from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal, on "Womanhood in the Making in Nepal: An Intergenerational Perspective."

• Keith Feldman, assistant professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, on "Between June '67 and Global '68: A Shadow History of Civil Rights and Decolonization."

• "Cultural Conflicts: Shifting Paradigms." by Jewell James, director of the Lummi Sovereignty and Treaty Protection Office and totem pole carver.

• Aruna Sury and Melody Yang, pro bono attorneys for Kids in Need of Defense, on "Unaccompanied Children in the United States: Refugees in Need of Protection."

• "Idle No More: Freedom in an Era of Climate Change." by Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum, co-founder of Idle No More and citizen of the Nêhiyaw Nation.
Western strives to be at the forefront of renewable energy use, conservation, and green-building in the Higher Education field. The University’s physical throughput includes energy and water use, CO2 and solid waste production, transportation, green-building, and other aspects that contribute to the university’s physical footprint. 2016 operational highlights of the University’s sustainability efforts in these measures include:

- **Three Western Offices Obtain Sustainability Certification**
  The Office of Sustainability at Western Washington University offers Sustainable Office Certification to reduce costs, protect the environment, conserve resources and promotes fairness, safety and health. The program supports actions and provides a simple way of measuring efforts that happen at the office level. Participating Offices are recognized for their level of achievement, as a way of showing thanks and appreciation for measurement of work well done. Three offices additional were recognized for certification in 2016 at a ceremony in the Underground Coffeehouse in the Viking Union on May 10, for a total of 27 participating offices.

  The Western Associated Student Bookstore, the Underground Coffeehouse, and Dining Services Viking Commons Administration all won awards based on their involvement with sustainability. The bookstore recycles all unused boxes, gives students reusable bags when they purchase a number of books and gives students a place to recycle batteries. Dining Services has multiple bins for students to distribute waste properly, among other successes. The Underground Coffeehouse only uses reusable silverware, plates, and glasses, and glass cups are the default for all beverages. The steps these offices have taken make the entire University more sustainable.

- **Western Marks 10 Years on EPA Green Energy List of Top Higher Education Purchasers of Renewable Power in 2016**
  Western Washington University has appeared on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s list of the top green energy purchasers in higher education for the past 10 years. In fact, Western has been on the EPA’s top college list since it was launched in January 2006. In the most recent listing in April, Western was 20th on the EPA’s list of the top 30 green energy purchasers in higher education. Western is also the only college or university in the state of Washington on the EPA list, last updated on April 25.

  “Western’s commitment to sustainability isn’t just about delivering innovative environmental education in the classroom, it’s a comprehensive approach to how our campus community lives, learns and operates in this physical environment,” said former Western President Bruce Shepard. “As is the case with so many aspects of Western’s distinctive excellence, our students deserve special recognition for their leadership and vision. From how we power the campus to what we eat in the dining halls, our students are always looking for ways to make Western a greener, more environmentally responsible campus.”

  Western annually offsets 100 percent of its electrical consumption from green sources via purchases of renewable energy credits. The genesis for Western’s renewable energy program began more than 10 years ago when a small group of Western students set a goal of having Western offset all of its electrical energy from a 100-percent renewable source. To meet that goal, they proposed a student initiative to implement a fee that would offset the cost of purchasing renewable energy. As a result of their visionary efforts and significant research into renewable energy, Western moved to the forefront of the renewable
energy field, becoming the first university in the country to implement a student fee for the purchase of green energy. The student initiative passed in a spring 2004 election with 84.7 percent approval. The Western Board of Trustees approved the student fee, which went into effect in 2005 and which allows the university to offset all of its electricity use with purchases from renewable energy sources.

- **Western Offers Viking Electric Bike Program to Students, Staff, and Faculty for Commuting and University Business**

  Transportation around the University entered a new age in 2016 when a pilot program offering electric bikes to members of the Western community commenced. Thanks to a Sustainable Action Fund grant, the Viking e-bikes are now available for loan to students, staff, and faculty, allowing them to commute, travel on university business, or just experience an environmentally-conscious way to get around Bellingham. Loan periods can range from one hour up to an entire academic quarter, and each loan includes a comprehensive package of cycling accessories to facilitate a successful, safe journey. Ultimately, the program’s goal is to convert routine car trips made by faculty, staff and students to bike trips, decreasing carbon emissions and increasing campus community members’ overall health and fitness. The program also includes an electric cargo tricycle that is used by the Associated Students Publicity Center for deliveries around Western’s campus, entirely replacing a polluting gas-powered truck.

- **Western Washington University Increases its Commitment to Serve "Real Food" on Campus in 2016**

  On Friday, April 1, 2016, then-Western President Bruce Shepard signed the Real Food Challenge petition brought forth by the Students for Sustainable Foods. The Real Food Challenge is a national campaign motivated to change the standard for university food. The primary goal of the challenge is to shift one billion dollars of university food budgets away from industrial farms towards local, community-based farms by 2020, said sophomore Environmental Studies major Rosa Rice-Pelepko, vice president of Students for Sustainable Foods. Rice-Pelepko defines "real food" as sustainable, fair, and local, with a focus on consumers, community, producers and the Earth.

  The Western Real Food Initiative states that the University is committed to the goal of allocating 25 percent of campus dining hall purchasing dollars to “real food” by 2020, as defined by the 2015 standard of the Real Food Calculator. Western spent 18.34 percent of its dining hall food budget on "real food" from October 2014 to July 2015, according to the initiative.

  The SSF hopes that the Real Food Challenge will benefit local farmers and build relationships within the community. It’s an environmental and social justice issue, Rice-Pelepko said. The SSF wanted to give more power to the students and hold the university accountable for the food served in the dining halls. Western is the third school in Washington state to sign the Real Food Commitment, after Gonzaga University and The Evergreen State College.
Engagement

Western’s operational and academic sustainability endeavors are initiated and developed through goal-setting, collaboration with administration, and outreach to students, staff, faculty, and the greater Bellingham community. Ultimately, this civic engagement is at the center of all of the University’s conservation efforts. 2016 highlights in this area include:

- **Western Joins Community Partners to Promote Green Energy in Bellingham**
  2016 was Energy Year in Bellingham, as announced Mayor Kelli Linville, at a festive celebration to inaugurate the release of the City’s revised Climate Action Plan in 2016 that updated energy and conservation measures and strengthen our resiliency for the future. Western Washington University chose to participate in the energy prize goal with eight other community partners.

  The University, its partners, and the City support a Green Power Challenge to retain and strengthen Bellingham’s role as a state and national leader in making the conversion to clean power sources. Connected to this challenge, the Solarize Whatcom campaign is actively seeking to increase Bellingham's solar installations and help residents save on energy costs. As all parties involved await the decision of the energy prize committee, they know that the positive steps taken to make our local community greener will have long-term effects.

- **Western Students to Help City of Edmonds Increase its Sustainability Efforts**
  Students at Western Washington University received a valuable real-world experience this year when they joined with the City of Edmonds in order to help find and implement ways for it to become more sustainable. This opportunity exists due to Western's Sustainable Communities Partnership program.

  The program matches coursework on campus with issues facing a local city that is striving to achieve a sustainable future. Eleven projects in Edmonds were tackled by a set of Western resources that includes three student interns (who will thereby fulfill graduation requirements), six student employees, and the collective creativity of students in ten Western courses. The projects represent various aspects of sustainability within a municipal setting, including reduction of storm water impacts upon the Edmonds Marsh, development of a mobile app to make visitors aware of amenities in downtown Edmonds, evaluating available methods of dealing with construction waste and food waste, and analyzing the likely impacts of sea-level rise upon the Edmonds shoreline.

  The program is new in 2016, with Edmonds serving as the inaugural partner. The Association of Washington Cities provided financial and logistical support to Western, assisting in recruitment of a municipal partner. This kind of partnership provides benefits to both a city and the University; students and faculty are able to tackle real-life projects, complementing the theoretical content in a given course,
while the city benefits from thousands of person-hours of attention focused upon its projects, at a relatively low cost. The partnership also advances Western’s institutional goal of applying its academic expertise in ways that strengthen communities beyond the campus. The Sustainable Communities Partnership is a program of the Office of Sustainability.

- **The Resident’s Resource Awareness Program Bring Sustainability to Student Residence Halls and Beyond**
  Western’s Resident’s Resource Awareness Program (ResRAP) aims to create a culture of sustainability that touches every corner of our community through a commitment to advising, training, and assisting students to be peer-to-peer mentors and leaders in the residence halls. The program has grown tremendously since it was instituted eight years ago, and there were a record thirty-five students, known as Eco Reps, in 2016.

  Every winter quarter, ResRAP hosts the annual Go for the Green competition which determines which hall can use the least water, electricity, and natural gas, while creating the least waste. This competition educates Western campus residents on sustainable practices that can be implemented in their living situations. The 2016 competition was a huge success, with over 25 events on campus, and 30 hours of door-to-door pledge collection by the Eco Reps. Practices learned during Go for the Green provide students with the skills and knowledge to live a more sustainable life, which they then take with them and share with others after they graduate from Western.

- **Western Students Take an Earth Ride with Alternative Transportation**
  Sustainability and bicycles go hand-in-hand, and Western’s Alternative Transportation Office makes certain that students have every opportunity to find out how bicycling can fulfill most of their travel needs. The 2016 Earth Ride with Alternative Transportation embarked on a bicycle tour of Bellingham on Earth Day, guided by student coordinators. Up and down the city’s tree-lined boulevards, students were able to discover just how accessible our community can be, while enjoying the camaraderie of fellow cyclists and the sense of freedom that a bicycle can provide.
• **Campus Sustainability Planning Studio Presentations**

Every year, students learn by researching and proposing ways of reducing impacts or making our campus and community more resilient, through the Campus Sustainability Planning Studio. The Studio is a hands-on, problem-based learning program in which participants join together into teams to help Western and the Bellingham community achieve real-world solutions to issues across campus and throughout the city. In 2016, student projects included investigating Wind Farm Ownership, developing a housing sustainability index, creating a social sustainability poster campaign, and researching sustainable investments.

Students enrolled in the Campus Sustainability Planning Studio class presented their projects on a sunny Wednesday morning on June 1 in the Viking Union. The students have been working on projects aimed at advance Western's campus in the area of sustainability for much of the academic year. Some of the highlights from this year's projects included:

- Housing Sustainability Index
- Social Sustainability Poster campaign
- Sustainable Investments
- Zero Food Waste Action for Edmunds

• **Earth Week 2016 Events Celebrated Student’s Community Engagement**

A week of Earth Day celebrations was hosted by the Associated Students Environmental and Sustainability Programs and the Western Office of Sustainability. The annual highlight of the week, the Earth Day Festival, took place on Friday, April 22 in the Performing Arts Center Plaza.

At the event, Western students continued the Earth Day legacy by embracing promoting, and celebrating all aspects of sustainability: the social, economic, and environmental. Events included a talk titled Girl Gone Farmer: Addressing the Gender Gap in Agriculture, a screening of The True Cost, a Documentary and Discussion on the Fashion Industry, a Botanical Medicine Workshop with Wildroot Botanicals, Zero Waste Workshop with Western's Zero Waste Coordinator, a Salish Sea Studies Panel Discussion with Northwest Indian College, and concluded with a clean-up event of Little Squalicum Park in downtown Bellingham.

• **Western Students Present Proposals to City Council for Bellingham Waterfront Artwork**

Bellingham residents have been pondering what the city’s new waterfront would look like ever since the Georgia Pacific mill closed in 2007. This year, a group of 39 Western Washington University students and faculty in the Western Art Department presented their concepts of how the site could transform from a public-art perspective.

In collaboration with the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department, six student teams in Professor Werner Klotz’s History of Site Specific Art class presented their ideas on public art concepts for the future Whatcom Waterway Park on March 10 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. As part of Klotz's course, the students were asked to develop concepts for the future waterfront park that would reflect the history of the former Georgia Pacific site, as well as foster a sense of place in Bellingham’s new waterfront district.
Klotz and Bellingham Parks and Recreation Director Leslie Bryson said that they strongly believe that this project can be an exciting, professional learning opportunity for Klotz’s current students, and for future Western students as well. Klotz is an internationally known installation artist, specializing in public art. He has major permanent installations at the Seattle Tacoma International Airport, Staten Island Ferry in New York City, San Francisco, and commissions in Germany and Italy.

- **Poulsbo Marine Science Center Becomes Part of Western’s Environmental Education Network**

  Poulsbo's Marine Science Center became Western’s SEA Discovery Center with the swipe of a pen and unveiling of a new sign in 2016. The University took over the center's youth programs, floating lab, aquarium, and museum. Western will lease the building from Poulsbo at no cost until the facility can be fully handed over and integrated in the school.

  The facility's new name comes from the location by Liberty Bay that connects to Puget Sound, and is an acronym for the center's three service components: science, education and aquarium. The SEA Discovery Center will provide additional capacity for students at Western, which is in the midst of a long-term expansion program on the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas.

  The University will continue the center's youth programs started by the Marine Science Center Foundation, the nonprofit that runs the center. The foundation always intended to hand over the center and its programs to an organization that could perpetuate educational opportunities, according to Bruce Harlow, the foundation's president. Western also retained every paid employee at the center in an act of continuity for the Center’s community engagement.
SAF Awards in 2016
Western’s Sustainable Action Fund Program was again active in 2016, successfully funding and forwarding student proposals that will make our campus and community more sustainable, inclusive, and just.

Projects

Grants that were awarded or completed in 2016:

Large Grants of over $5,000 were awarded to create these projects:
- PAC Center Concert Hall Lighting - The incandescent lights in the Concert Hall were inefficient, costly, old, and wasteful. They were replaced with LED lights that enhance the performance space, save on maintenance costs and energy costs, and serve as a model for other performance spaces.
- E-Bike Pilot - Electric bicycles were purchased to loan to members of Western’s community in order to explore the utility and commuting applications of electric bicycles on and around campus.
- Lyn Okse – Members of the Vehicle Research Institute are designing and constructing a prototype, off-road capable, Neighborhood Electric Vehicle to support Facilities Management’s need for environmentally friendly vehicles.
- RECYcling Your Power – Stationary bicycles that produce and send electrical power into the Western energy grid were introduced in the Recreation Center, offering a way for students, staff, and faculty to contribute to the University’s renewable energy efforts.

Small Grants, up to $5,000, were awarded to facilitate these activities:
- Western Gallery – Energy-efficient LED lighting was installed throughout the gallery to increase art visibility and decrease the facility’s carbon footprint.
- Dr. Vandana Shiva - Dr. Shiva is an environmental and social activist, author of more than 20 books, and world-renowned environmental leader and ecofeminist from New Delhi, India, who has been internationally recognized for her activism condemning globalization, empowering women, and fighting “Big Agriculture” for farm worker’s rights. Shiva was also the recipient of the 1993 Alternative Nobel Peace prize, the Right Livelihood Award. Shiva visited Western in February of 2016 to speak about women in agriculture, the slow food movement, traditional farming practices, biodiversity, and climate change.
- OHESC Conference – Western students and staff travelled to Eugene, Oregon to share sustainability presentations, roundtable discussions, and brainstorming sessions with members of universities from around the Pacific Northwest.
- See and Be Seen - This week-long event provided free bike lights to the campus community in order to improve safety conditions of all road users, promote bicycling as a feasible form of transportation, and increase cyclists’ confidence.
- Portable Water Refill Stations – As a means to provide clean drinking water to any event at Western, a group of students designed and produced water refill stations that can be borrowed for activities across campus.
- Climatefest – This day-long event, curated by a Western graduate student, celebrated local and global climate-positive action by groups and individuals.
Planning and Administration

- Sustainability Action Plan
  Charged by then-President Bruce Shepherd to promote sustainability throughout the University, the Sustainability Advisory Committee commenced to create Western’s first Sustainability Action Plan in 2014. Currently in development, the Sustainability Action Plan addresses ten content areas, including Built Environment, Campus & Community Engagement, Curriculum & Research, Dining Services, Grounds, Investments, Procurement, Student Life, Transportation, and Waste. Each topic delves in to greater detail about University planning, development, and operations, as well as curricula innovation, research conducted by faculty, staff, and students, and engagement with the greater community. The Sustainability Action Plan will be completed in 2017.

- Western Washington University Wind Farm
  In December of 2016, Western signed on to purchase renewable energy through Puget Sound Energy’s “Green Direct” program. Through this program, Puget Sound Energy will build enough wind power capacity to supply all program participants with carbon-neutral power up to 75 megawatts total. The wind farm is slated to be built in Central Washington. The University’s close-knit partnership between students and administration made involvement in this program possible.

Summary

Western Washington University introduced valuable innovations, developed meaningful programs, and presented its conservation efforts to new audiences in 2016. Through myriad collaborations between staff, faculty, students and the Bellingham community, Western progressed its vision of a more interconnected, resilient, equitable, and sustainable global community. This ongoing effort will continue in 2017 with the immeasurable support and involvement of Western students working toward our common goal.