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University of Florida highlighted in 2017 Sustainable Campus Index

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – The University of Florida has been highlighted in the 2017 Sustainable Campus Index in the Air and Climate section for its efforts in advancing sustainability in higher education. The 2017 Sustainable Campus Index, a publication of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), highlights innovative and high-impact initiatives from colleges and universities that submitted a Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) report in the 12 months prior to July 1, 2016.

UF was recognized for its development and implementation of the [Neutral UF Coalition](#), a program that allows faculty and staff employees to voluntarily offset the carbon impact of their commutes to and from campus. Commuting employees may enroll in voluntary post-tax payroll deductions to offset their commute through a local non-profit offset partner, We Are Neutral. 100% of the voluntary deduction amount goes toward offsets, which fund tree plantings on local conservation land and provide energy retrofits in low-income housing in the local community. Just one dollar per pay period (\$26 a year for 12-month employees) can completely offset the average UF employee's commute.

"University of Florida's feature in this report shows its significant leadership and commitment to advance sustainability," said AASHE's Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser. "We are excited to recognize UF for working to secure a thriving, equitable and ecologically healthy world through its comprehensive sustainability efforts."

The Neutral UF Coalition is one way the university is working toward its goal of carbon neutrality. Other recent efforts include a goal to transition ten percent of the campus's fleet vehicles to electric vehicles within ten years. [This challenge](#) was presented to the campus community in 2015 by Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Charlie Lane. In October 2017, Lane announced [an incentive program](#) that would offset the cost difference between a traditional gas-powered vehicle and an electric vehicle for departments or units looking to make the switch. UF currently has a fleet of about 1,600 vehicles.

University of Florida's STARS report is publicly available on the STARS website:
<https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/university-of-florida-fl/report/2017-06-30/>

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About STARS

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. STARS was developed by AASHE with broad participation from the higher education community. The credits included in STARS span the breadth of higher education sustainability and are organized into four categories: Academics, Engagement, Operations, and Planning & Administration. All reports are publicly accessible on the STARS website. For more information, visit stars.aashe.org.

About the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)

AASHE empowers higher education faculty, staff and students to be effective change agents and drivers of sustainability innovation. AASHE enables members to translate information into action by offering essential resources and professional development to a diverse, engaged community of sustainability leaders. We work with and for higher education to ensure that our world's future leaders are motivated and equipped to solve sustainability challenges. For more information, visit www.aashe.org.

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