



**BENTLEY UNIVERSITY**

Office of Sustainability

# SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS REPORT

# Sustainability Progress Report

July 1, 2018—June 30, 2021

The Bentley University Office of Sustainability is pleased to present this progress report highlighting the university's key efforts in sustainability over the past three years, a time that has been transformative across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic, a reckoning on racial justice and the destruction of communities by wildfires, floods and more frequent major storms have made the university think more deeply about its role in climate action and environmental justice. The Office of Sustainability supports the university's mission of offering a transformative business education by modeling innovative thinking in addressing the organization's carbon footprint, providing opportunities for students to learn and act upon the urgency of climate change and environmental justice and preparing them for work in a carbon-constrained marketplace.

Over the past three years, the university completed the implementation of its 2010 Climate Action Plan, grew the university's Green Revolving Fund and expanded sustainability impact in areas like transportation and social justice. The university also submitted its third Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS) report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), subsequently receiving a Silver rating for campus-wide sustainability initiatives.

During the 2020/2021 academic year, the office led a campus-wide collaborative effort to update the university's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (SCAP). The SCAP's goals provide the university with a five-year roadmap to addressing climate change and sustainability issues, looking towards the university's 2030 carbon neutrality date. Further, the plan emphasizes the institution's commitment to address climate change in an inclusive and equitable way.

We hope this report is informative and inspiring to you. The Office of Sustainability looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the campus community to advance the university's sustainability and climate action goals.



---

**Amanda King**

Chief of Staff and Executive  
Director of Sustainability

---

# Contents



## Progress Overview

Operational Goals	5
Racial Justice Commitments	6



## Strategic Action

Personnel Changes	7
Campus Sustainability Assessment	7
Sustainability and Climate Action Planning	8



## Climate Action and Energy

Greenhouse Gas Reductions	9
Green Revolving Fund	11
Community Engagement	12



## Transportation

13



## Education and Engagement

Academics	17
Co-curricular Education	19





# Progress Overview\*

Bentley's first Climate Action Plan (CAP), written in 2010, set ten-year operational goals for the university to advance sustainability and progress towards its 2030 carbon neutrality date. The 2010 CAP outlined four goals to be achieved by 2020 relating to greenhouse gas emissions, waste diversion, water use and commuting. With the conclusion of the 2010 CAP in 2020, the Office of Sustainability is proud to report Bentley's achievements.

## Operational Goals

70%

### Carbon Footprint

- **Goal:** 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 (baseline year: 2008).
- **Update:** Bentley University achieved a 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2019, reaching its 2020 goal one year early.

42%

### Waste Diversion

- **Goal:** Divert 60% of the university's waste through recycling and composting by 2020.
- **Update:** Bentley achieved a 42% waste diversion rate in 2019.

0%

### Water Usage

- **Goal:** Reduce water use by 5% (baseline year: 2013).
- **Update:** Bentley maintained a 0% increase in water use.

20%

### Drive Alone Commutes

- **Goal:** 25% of employees and commuting students using low-carbon commuting methods (public transportation, carpooling, etc.)
- **Update:** 20% of all Bentley University employees and commuting students use low-carbon transportation options for some of their commutes.

\* Please note data is from fiscal year 2019, as fiscal year 2020 was not a representative year due to COVID-19.

# Racial Justice Commitments

The Office of Sustainability set three strategic initiatives for racial justice at the beginning of the 2021 fiscal year. Progress on those initiatives is reported below.

## **Initiative 1: Continue to Develop our Social Justice Internship**

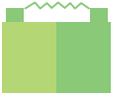
The Office of Sustainability completed a successful year of integrating and institutionalizing the Social Justice Coordinator into the Student Sustainability Leadership program. The Social Justice Coordinator's main accomplishments in the position this year were: (1) working with the Office of Sustainability to improve equity in the student leader hiring process, (2) creating a "Crash Course on Environmental Racism" and presenting it to the Bentley community and (3) consulting the office on all social media posts to ensure that intersectionality of sustainability and racial justice was properly communicated.

## **Initiative 2: Develop a Strategic Plan for Sustainability that Includes a Focus on Anti-Racism**

During the spring of 2021, the Office of Sustainability convened over 60 faculty, staff, and students to serve on four focus area committees to develop five-year sustainability goals for the university. Further, the office engaged over 150 faculty, staff, students, and alumni to provide input and feedback to the plan's draft goals. All goals were reviewed by the committees for their impact on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. As the Office of Sustainability begins its work on implementation plans, the goals, strategies and actions will continue to be reviewed for their impact on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.

## **Initiative 3: Create Programming focused on Environmental Racism**

Over the past year, the office's Student Sustainability Leaders worked to incorporate the intersectionality of racial justice and sustainability into the office's education and engagement programming. Notable highlights include: (1) A week-long immersive environmental racism educational program for the entire campus where attendees were able to learn about various aspects of environmental racism through signage and art installations placed throughout the Student Center, (2) A program designed to celebrate the university's 70% carbon footprint reduction, while engaging students in discussions of how Bentley should address climate change and climate justice by 2025 and (3) Online educational engagement through Instagram posts and Instagram live events.



# Strategic Action

## Personnel Changes

The past three years have brought exciting changes to the staffing in the Office of Sustainability. Amanda King, Executive Director of the Office of Sustainability, was again promoted to the President's Office to do the critical work of supporting the president while also continuing in her leadership role within the Office of Sustainability. Natalie Hayes was promoted to Associate Director of Sustainability, taking a more active leadership role in the office. Sophie Rodgers, a graduate of Bentley's class of 2020, joined the team to lead daily operations and to lend her expertise in sustainable business and marketing.

Student sustainability leaders and summer interns are also an essential part of the Office of Sustainability's staff. In the fall of 2020, the Student Sustainability Leadership program expanded, welcoming a new position focused on social justice. The program now employs 6 students for full academic year internships.

## Campus Sustainability Assessment

Bentley submitted a third sustainability report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in 2020. The sustainability tracking, assessment, and rating system (STARS) is a globally recognized assessment of sustainability achievements at higher education institutions. Bentley received a Silver rating in its most recent assessment, which is a downgrade from the university's 2017 gold rating. This change in rating reflects a rapid advancement in expectations for universities to present a comprehensive approach to sustainability—reflected in the new rating system (STARS 2.2) which is more rigorous than previous assessments.



---

**Read Bentley's  
STARS report:**



# Sustainability and Climate Action Planning

The conclusion of Bentley's 2010 Climate Action Plan offered the university an opportunity to renew its commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. From September 2020 through June 2021, the university embarked on a community-wide planning process to develop a set of goals and associated strategies to advance the university on its path to carbon neutrality. The process engaged 60 faculty, staff and students in dedicated committee work and 150 more in community engagement sessions.

The 2021 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (SCAP) builds on the 2010 Climate Action Plan by broadening Bentley's climate commitment to comprehensively integrate equity and climate resilience. Climate resilience and diversity, equity and inclusion were key criteria for the plan, ensuring a focus on just and equitable solutions to climate change and climate resiliency efforts.





# Climate Action and Energy

## Greenhouse Gas Reductions

In fiscal year 2019, Bentley met its 70% carbon footprint reduction goal (baseline year: 2008) one year early. This goal was met despite a 3.49% growth in building square footage and a 4% growth in population over the same period.

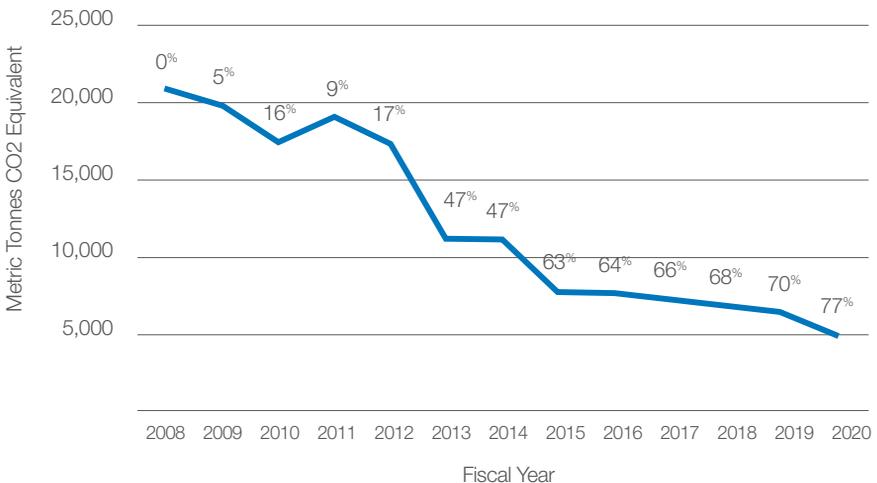
The campus' carbon footprint reduction success thus far is the result of a four-pronged approach:

- 1 Continuous campus-wide energy efficiency upgrades to reduce fossil fuel use.
- 2 Investment in onsite renewable energy—a 500KW solar array on The Bentley Arena.
- 3 Investment in offsite renewable energy via Green-e certified Renewable Energy Certificates.
- 4 Investment in Verified Emissions Reductions Credits (VERCs) to offset emissions from air travel.

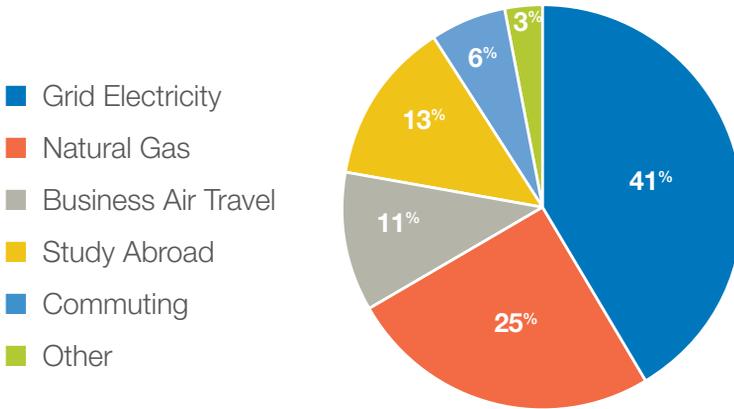
The university will continue to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities in its quest for carbon neutrality by 2030.

---

### Carbon Footprint Reduction



## Bentley University's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile (Fiscal Year 2020)



## Green Revolving Fund

Bentley's Green Revolving Fund (GRF) was established in 2017 with a generous gift from trustee Nick Stavropoulos '79. The fund provides financing for implementing energy efficiency, renewable energy and other sustainability projects that generate cost-savings and reduce the campus' environmental impact. Cost-savings from completed projects are reinvested in the fund and the fund currently boasts a 41% return on investment. The GRF is a valuable tool for the university to employ in its efforts to reduce energy intensity and greenhouse gas emissions.

The past four years have been fruitful for the GRF. The GRF Committee of faculty, staff and students chose to invest in 13 projects since the fund's inception and the fund has grown to approximately \$700,000 revolving. This growth is the result of smart investing by the committee and additional donations from donors.

### Residence Hall Lighting Upgrade

In 2020, the GRF and Facilities Management equally invested in upgrading lighting to LED technology in the common areas of twelve Bentley residence halls.

Check out this project by the numbers:

**\$243,020**

Total Cost

**\$40,338**

Annual Financial  
Savings

**6 years**

Simple payback  
period

**286,920** kWh Annual Electricity Savings

**114.2** Metric Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> Equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>)

Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Abated

# Community Engagement

## Resiliency Planning

In fiscal years 2018 and 2019, the university actively supported the City of Waltham's application to the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program as a means to collaborate on addressing the climate resiliency issues faced by the city. The program includes two parts:

### MVP Planning

- Define climate hazards
- Identify community vulnerabilities and strengths
- Develop and prioritize adaptation actions
- Write a final report
- Receive MVP designation

### MVP Action Grants

- Implement priority adaptation actions identified during the planning process

In 2019, the City of Waltham received an MVP Planning Grant, which it used to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). The HMP identifies the city's risks and vulnerabilities associated with natural disasters and identifies long-term strategies for protecting people and property from future hazard events. The city subsequently received an MVP Action Grant funding to implement the strategies identified in the HMP and focused on stormwater and flooding management throughout the city.

## Partnership on Climate Action Plan

The City of Waltham's Director of Planning was invited to sit on the Advisory Board for Bentley's 2021 Sustainability and Climate Action Planning process. This partnership sets the stage for increased collaboration between the university and the City of Waltham on climate action and climate resiliency work.



# Transportation

## Transportation Demand Management Study

In fiscal year 2019, the Office of Sustainability conducted a Transportation Demand Management study with the assistance of Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates—mobility, accessibility and sustainability experts. The findings from the study allowed Bentley to make critical adjustments to transportation services, allowing for efficiency in resource use. The study also identified opportunities for alternative commuting incentives like providing discounted MBTA passes for commuting students—a program that Bentley has since implemented.

## MBTA Semester Pass

In fiscal year 2020 Bentley initiated the MBTA Semester pass program to support full-time commuting students. This program provides students with discounted MBTA passes each semester. The Semester Pass program is gaining momentum and is mostly utilized by Bentley's graduate students.



# Waste Minimization

## Overview

The Office of Sustainability has a continued focus on waste minimization as a key performance indicator. The Waste Minimization Task Force meets regularly to work strategically on the campus’ waste reduction programs. Table 1.0 shows annual tonnage from fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2021, for trash, recycling and compost. The “diversion” percentage shown at the bottom of the table indicates the amount of waste diverted from the trash stream through recycling and composting.

The sharp decrease in the diversion rate in fiscal year 2021 is indicative of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on waste generation on Bentley’s campus. Virus mitigation efforts included a switch from “dine in” to “take out” at all dining locations, greatly increasing the number of takeout containers procured, used and disposed of. To address this issue, Bentley Dining purchased compostable, “to-go” materials whenever possible and the Office of Sustainability worked to expand the university’s postconsumer compost program. Despite these efforts, the university’s compost numbers dipped significantly in fiscal year 2021. This change in volume is likely due to the lack of post-consumer compost collected in The 921 dining hall due to a shift to takeout meals. Though the post-consumer compost program was expanded, compost collection containers were only provided in the dining areas (rather than in residence halls or other areas of campus). At the conclusion of the 2020/2021 academic year it was clear that most students chose to eat their meals in locations other than the dining halls and thus were unable to compost leftover food or compostable containers.

Total waste numbers are low in both fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021 due to campus dedensification efforts. Fewer students lived on campus and many faculty and staff members worked from home.

---

**Table 1.0**

	<b>FY2019 (tons)</b>	<b>FY2020 (tons)</b>	<b>FY2021 (tons)</b>
Trash	741.23	546.00	523.28
Recycling	373.65	220.00	163.26
Compost	196.45	121.55	54.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,311.33</b>	<b>766.00</b>	<b>741.48</b>
Diversion Rate	43.47%	44.59%	29.43%

## Give 'N Go

With the help of volunteers, each year the Office of Sustainability organizes “Give ‘N Go” a sustainable move out program for Bentley’s residential students. This program encourages students to donate unwanted belongings as they move out of residence halls at the end of the academic year. The collected goods are donated to Goodwill Northern New England. In fiscal year 2019, the Office of Sustainability held Bentley’s ninth Give N’ Go program diverting 13.23 tons of reusable items and food from the waste stream and into the hands of those in need. Give ‘N Go was suspended for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Food for Free

In 2018, Bentley launched a leftover food donation program in collaboration with *Food for Free*, a local nonprofit food rescue organization. Through this program, Bentley Dining staff collect and freeze leftover prepared food from the campus' 921 Dining Hall. The frozen prepared food is picked up by *Food for Free* and turned into meals for people in need in the Greater Boston Area. Unfortunately, in the spring of 2020, Bentley was forced to put this program on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This program remains on hold, with hope for its safe return in 2022.

**Table 2.0**

Month	Lbs Food Waste Recovered FY 2019*
September	0
October	335
November	350
December	360
<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>1,045</b>

\* Data is only available for Fall 2019 for this program. The Office of Sustainability did not receive data from Spring 2020 and the program was suspended after that time due to COVID-19.





# Education and Engagement

## Academics

### Guest Lectures

Each academic year, the Office of Sustainability provides guest lectures for faculty on various sustainability topics. In fiscal year 2019 the Office of Sustainability collaborated with faculty members to provide 13 guest lectures in both the business and the arts and sciences disciplines. The number of guest lectures increased to 25 per year in both fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021.

### New Academic Offerings

**Undergraduate Focus on ESG Investing.** In 2019 Bentley introduced two new pioneering programs for undergraduates: a concentration in sustainable investing for finance majors and a minor in sustainable investing for non-finance majors. Typically offered at the graduate level, these undergraduate programs are intended to educate students on the connection between sustainability issues and the world of investing. The interdisciplinary approach brings together finance, science and economics courses to provide students with training on assessing corporate action on major environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues and incorporating ESG issues into the investment process.



“The vision is to put Bentley on the map for being an innovative leader in producing graduates who can bring multiple perspectives, understand complex problems and contribute to solving society's pressing problems.”

Otgo Erhemjamts,  
*Professor of Finance*

**Graduate Certificate in Environmental, Social and Corporate**

**Governance.** Investment Management In 2020, Bentley introduced this graduate certificate, which educates students on the fundamentals of investments, including portfolio theory, equity and fixed income securities, security analysis, and portfolio management. In addition, students examine various ESG considerations such as climate change, air and water pollution, waste management, community and employee relations, human rights, human capital management, board composition, disclosure, accounting risk and executive compensation.



## Co-Curricular Education

### Delongchamp Fund

The Delongchamp Family Fund was established in 2015 to support undergraduate professional and co-curricular activities associated with studying sustainability and exploring business' triple-bottom line: people, planet and profit. The fund was designed to allow students to explore experiential learning opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible due to cost. Since 2018, the Delongchamp Fund Committee has awarded 45 students with funding to attend conferences, support entrepreneurial efforts and supplement unpaid internships.



### Bentley Sustainable Investment Group

The Bentley Sustainable Investment Group is a student group that was established in Fall 2019. This group of students manages \$570,000 of Bentley's endowment using sustainable, responsible, and impact investing (SRI) strategies. SRI is an investment discipline that considers environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) criteria to generate long-term competitive financial returns and positive societal impact.

### Awards and National Commitments

- Runner up for Green Building of the year - USGBC (fiscal year 2019)
- Sierra Club - 2019 (Ranked #33), 2020 (Ranked #36)
- Recognized as a sustainability "Top Performer" by AASHE in fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021
- Casella Award - Educator of the Year (fiscal year 2021)
- AASHE STARS Silver (fiscal year 2021)



**BENTLEY UNIVERSITY**

Office of Sustainability

