



OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

FISCAL YEAR 2025



**Michigan
Technological
University**

mtu.edu/sustainability

YEAR IN REVIEW



This year, Michigan Tech's Office of Sustainability and Resilience (OSR) gained strong momentum, turning collaboration into measurable impact. In just three years, our office has tripled its professional capacity—growing from one staff member and one student coordinator to two staff and six student leaders. By working closely with campus and external partners, we've advanced initiatives that strengthen the university's financial and operational performance while equipping students with the skills to lead sustainability efforts on campus and beyond. From launching new academic programs and leadership opportunities to improving energy efficiency and expanding student-focused resources, our work is reaching every corner of campus. Together, we're building a more sustainable, more resilient Michigan Tech.

Our Mission:

Activating sustainable innovation through transformative student development and strategic campus modernization.

MILESTONES

Launched the Sustainability Studies Minor as one of the inaugural programs in Michigan Tech's new Essential Education curriculum.

Empowered 15 students with professional development funding to build climate change leadership skills for their future careers.

Established a sustainability-focused Residential Learning Community, engaging 24 first-year students in collaborative sustainability initiatives.

Secured \$120,000 in philanthropic support from alumni and corporate partners to advance student learning and leadership development.

Delivered over \$300,000 in utility cost savings through energy efficiency upgrades and rebates, while reducing the campus carbon footprint by 1,100 tons annually—equivalent to taking 140 average U.S. homes off the grid.

Achieved LEED Gold certification for the H-STEM Complex, earning international recognition for sustainable design and operational excellence.

Contributed over 2,000 servings of locally produced food to the HuskyFAN food pantry, including 200+ pounds of fresh produce from the Wadsworth Garden, 500+ pounds of local beef, and 600+ meals recovered from dining services.

ADVANCING INNOVATIVE COURSEWORK

Integrating sustainability across the curriculum

Sustainability education continues to grow at Michigan Tech. This year, OSR helped launch the new Sustainability Studies minor, now fully integrated into the university's Essential Education curriculum. Starting next year, students will also be able to choose from three new climate-focused courses: a foundational course on global climate change, an advanced study on climate impacts of mineral mining systems, and an upper-level course in climate physics. These courses were developed through a collaborative effort by an interdisciplinary faculty team and made possible through generous alumni support for climate change leadership development at Michigan Tech.

This year also marked the revisioning of the TreeHouse Living Learning Community, providing first-year students with an immediate opportunity to build sustainability education into their residential experience. The program welcomed 24 students in its first year and is poised to expand its reach and influence in the coming years.

To enhance hands-on learning opportunities, OSR partnered with Green Campus Enterprise as co-advisors to support course development and provide mentorship for student-led sustainability projects that contribute to a more sustainable Michigan Tech campus and local community.



Dean David Flaspohler leads a discussion on humans' relationship to nature

Sustainability Studies Minor

As part of the Essential Education curriculum launching in fall 2025, the new Sustainability Studies minor will equip students with the knowledge and practical skills to address interconnected environmental, social, and economic challenges and create solutions that make a difference.

Climate Change Curriculum

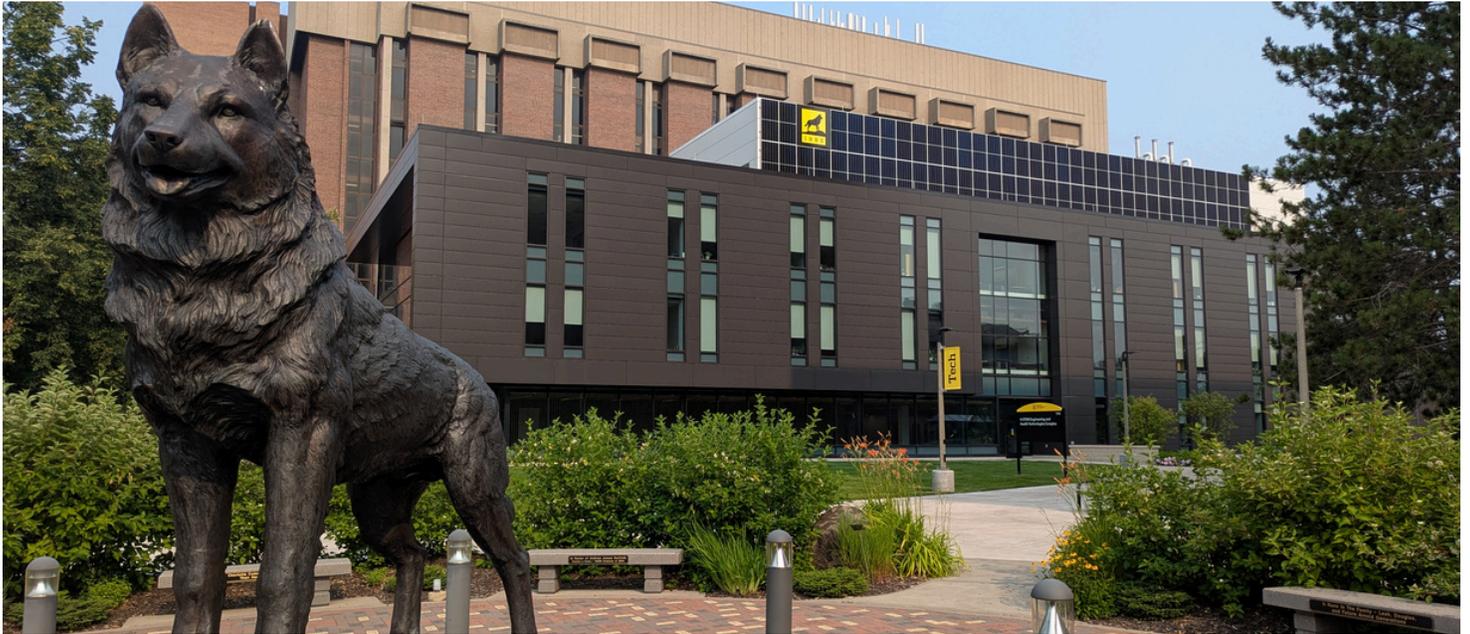
To prepare Tech students to be change-makers ready to address society's most pressing issues, Michigan Tech is developing a new climate change curriculum supported by a generous alumni donation. This suite of courses will allow students to explore climate change from multiple perspectives and prepare them to take informed action in their careers and communities.

TreeHouse Sustainability Learning Community

The TreeHouse Sustainability Learning Community is a living-learning experience for first-year students who want to make a difference. Located on the fifth floor of East Wadsworth Hall, TreeHouse brings together students from diverse majors and personal backgrounds to live and learn collaboratively around the theme of sustainability.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS

Reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and building for the future



The H-STEM complex earned a prestigious LEED Gold ranking for best in class sustainability performance

Michigan Tech's energy management strategy continues to deliver measurable results—reducing emissions, cutting costs, and enhancing the quality of life on campus. OSR supports these efforts by managing the Evergreen Energy Fund, which finances high-impact efficiency projects. In FY25, \$246,000 in completed projects generated \$120,000 in annual utility savings. Combined with \$185,000 in utility rebates processed by OSR and Michigan Tech Facilities Management, energy efficiency projects saved the university over \$300,000 in FY25. These improvements will continue lowering operations and maintenance costs while improving comfort across campus buildings for years to come. The projects also reduce campus greenhouse gas emissions by 1,100 tons annually—equivalent to removing 140 average U.S. homes from the grid.

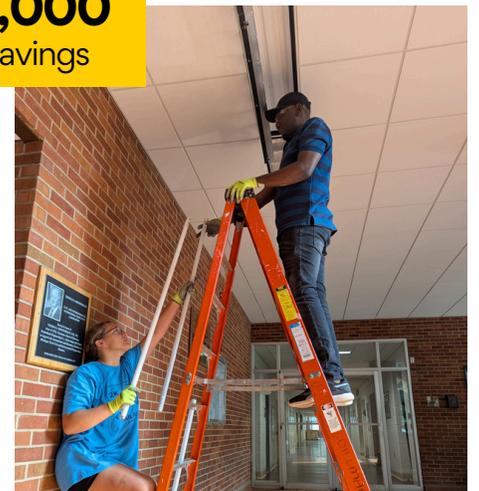
In addition to modernizing existing facilities, Michigan Tech continues to lead in the sustainable design of new buildings. The newly completed H-STEM Complex earned LEED Gold certification, with East Hall actively pursuing the same. Together with Hillside Place, these buildings stand as campus benchmarks for high-performance and environmentally-responsible construction.

\$300,000
in utility savings



A plaque in the H-STEM entrance commemorates the LEED Gold award

LEED Gold
certification for H-STEM



Students install LED lightbulbs

SUPPORTING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Building leadership capacity and supporting our community



MTU students participate in the Midwest Climate Summit in Madison, WI

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OSR launched the *NextGen Climate Leadership Awards* in FY25, expanding professional development opportunities for emerging student climate leaders. Together with the *Chernosky Climate Ambassador Award*, these programs supported 15 students in attending conferences, earning professional certifications, and engaging in mentorship experiences—all aimed at building their skills, networks, and capacity to lead climate solutions in their future careers.

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Campus programming this year helped cultivate a vibrant and growing culture of sustainability at Michigan Tech. Signature events included the university's first-ever *Zero Waste Hockey Game*, the popular *Sustainability Month and Fest*, and a spring *Sustainability Film Series* that attracted over 300 attendees. Expanding outreach beyond the university, OSR also piloted the *Climate Futures Summer Youth Program*, introducing middle school students to climate action, sustainability, and community development through hands-on learning and exploration.



A student volunteer displays a healthy kohlrabi from the Wadsworth Garden

STUDENT SUPPORT INITIATIVES

Food security emerged as a strategic priority this year, with OSR expanding its support for the *HuskyFAN* food pantry through multiple innovative efforts. Contributions included over 200 pounds of fresh produce from the *Wadsworth Campus Garden*, more than 600 ready-made meals prepared from surplus dining hall food through the *Upcycled Food Operations (UFO)* program, and 500 pounds of locally-sourced beef purchased at the county fair.

The *Husky Exchange* green move-in/move-out program also continued to grow its impact—collecting thousands of gently used items during spring move-out and redistributing them to students each fall at little or no cost. The program not only diverts significant waste from landfills but also helps meet essential student needs, reinforcing sustainability through practical, community-driven solutions.

LOOKING AHEAD

Plans for 2025-26 and beyond



Sunset view of the Portage Lift Bridge

Strong partnerships and active student engagement continue to position Michigan Tech as a leader in campus sustainability. In FY26, OSR will focus on three strategic priorities:

- Integrating sustainability themes across the curriculum
- Expanding and formalizing student leadership opportunities in sustainability and climate action
- Advancing energy-efficient and resilient campus infrastructure

Michigan Tech's commitment to sustainability is more than an operational goal—it's a strategic investment in our planet, our community, and the next generation of leaders. Through collaboration and innovation, we are building a more resilient campus and preparing students to lead transformative change in their careers and communities.

We invite you to join us in this important work. Together we can amplify our impact.

To learn more or explore ways to get involved, contact the Office of Sustainability and Resilience.

Go Huskies!

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