

4/22/2020 Office of Sustainability Presentation  
*State of Sustainability at Notre Dame*  
Question & Answer Chat Session

**Question:** The St. Joe River in South Bend can get pretty low in the summer; will that affect the hydro-generation?

**Answer:** The river level does vary, but the hydro project accounts for reserved flows to the East Race, West Race, and over the dam with the balance of water going to the hydroelectric plant. Level measuring controls stage the 10 small hydro turbines on line based on head level. Production during lower flow periods is still significant and likely is greater than 50% of the facilities' capacity. The sizing and number of turbines is based on modeling and historical flow data from the river to optimize the project.

**Question:** I would like to hear more about the water/hydro project.

**Answer:** More information pertaining to the hydroelectric project along the St. Joseph river can be found [here](#), and you can track the project progress [here](#).

**Question:** How will increased renewable projects affect electricity generation from gas on campus? Are there plans to install carbon capture facilities or further reduce emissions in that field?

**Answer:** Renewable generation will likely offset electricity we purchase from the grid which is produced by an array of fuel sources. If memory serves, our local provider I&M is currently producing electricity that is sourced as 56% nuclear, 6% renewable, 11% natural gas, and 27% coal. As we move to more geothermal sources, heating and cooling energy, renewable electricity will offset to some degree our use of natural gas. Carbon capture is not yet a perfected technology and not easily implemented on sources of our size. Our long-range planning tracks all such technologies and hopes of them to advance and become viable options in the future.

**Question:** Is the Moreau module for the fall or the spring?

**Answer:** For Academic Year 2019 - 2020, the Sustainability Module was included in the Spring semester curriculum during the week of March 2 - 6. We expect that the Sustainability Module for Academic Year 2020 - 2021 will occur at approximately the same time, continuing the important work of introducing the core concepts of sustainability to all first-year students at Notre Dame.

**Question:** Could paper and dirty cardboard be diverted to the biodigester?

**Answer:** At this point only organic food waste can be diverted to the biodigester.

**Question:** In terms of locally sourced food; will the Campus Garden be available again this year?

**Answer:** The Campus Garden is currently closed until the first week of May, at which time we will revisit how to safely reopen.

**Question:** Regarding water meters, will the use of hot and cold water be measured or just water use in general?

**Answer:** Both the hot and cold, hence 25 buildings, two meters each building.

**Question:** When we use ND Catering, what type of leftover food is forwarded to other organizations for people to eat? What type of food (or preparations) is used to create energy and what type goes straight to landfill?

**Answer:** The University partners closely with Cultivate in the South Bend area to donate consumable food (e.g. untouched pizzas or pans of food from campus events and dining halls) for processing into ready-to-heat meals for those in need. Notre Dame donates over 11 tons of food each year to Cultivate and volunteers frequently to prepare the meals. In addition, the Food Rescue US student group captures consumable food from outlets such as Au Bon Pain and Einstein Bagel as well as Football Fridays at the Eck. The student group continuously runs this food to the Center for the Homeless and Life Treatment Center in South Bend. Food is quite energy dense, so when it sits in the landfill instead of getting consumed it emits methane, which is 28-30 times more potent of a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Many solutions were explored from composting on campus to biodigesters, and the Grind2Energy system paired with an offsite anaerobic digester was implemented. The University installed three systems on campus, and to date, they have captured over 250 tons of non-consumable food waste and converted that waste into 40,000 kilowatt hours of renewable electricity. Our office projects that the Grind2Energy system will divert approximately 400 tons of food waste from entering the landfill on an annual basis.

**Question:** Is there any outreach to alumni? How are they being engaged in these sustainability efforts?

**Answer:** The Office of Sustainability participates in an ongoing partnership with the Alumni Association, ND Energy, and the Minor in Sustainability called ND for the Environment during major in-person Alumni focused events during football, reunions, and conferences. In Fall 2019, this included running a Zero Waste Station at all Football Friday at the Eck events to spread awareness of the new Grind2Energy food waste solution and recycling concerns on our campus. If you are an alumnus and have suggestions for how the Office of Sustainability could better serve you, please contact Caitlin Jacobs at [chodges1@nd.edu](mailto:chodges1@nd.edu).

**Question:** What does the University currently do with electronic waste? Where does it go when it is collected? Is it recycled? Examples of electronic waste are old scientific instruments, damaged motors, flat-screen monitors, etc.

**Answer:** Electronic waste from campus can be scheduled for pick-up using the AiM Work Order system. You can find additional information on this at <https://green.nd.edu/resources/recycling-resource/>