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# HIGHER EDUCATION

## SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

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# SUSTAINABILITY

# R E P O R T

Event Management & Coordination by:



**Social Enterprises**

# OVERVIEW

## Conference Description

The Washington & Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC) is a platform for inspiring change, facilitating action, and promoting collaboration related to sustainability within the region's higher education institutions. Conversation, workshops, and networking opportunities will empower participants to advance environmental performance at Washington and Oregon State institutions of higher education.

## Highlights



**DATE:**  
March 2-4, 2020



**ATTENDEES:**  
453



**LOCATION:**  
Eugene, OR



**VENUE:**  
University of Oregon



**EVENT FEATURES:**  
5 program tracks, 2 keynotes, 3 plenary sessions, 2 receptions, 4 tours

## Attendee Profile

Faculty and staff from higher education institutions with a commitment to implementing sustainable practices at their colleges and universities, and students studying or interested in sustainability. Attendees are primarily from Oregon and Washington.

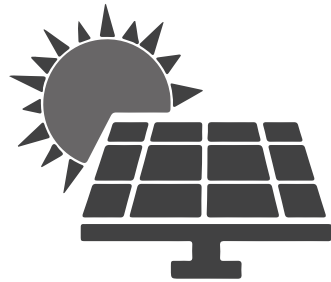
## Client Goals

WOHESC aims to not only present the newest in higher-education environmental sustainability initiatives, but also work with the host university to implement these practices during the event to the greatest ability possible. WOHESC has grown to include not only environmental sustainability, but to encompass social and environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as they relate to higher-education and the environmental sustainability fields.

# SUSTAINABILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

## Venue

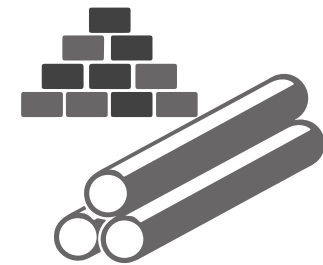
The event was hosted at the Erb Memorial Union building, which is pursuing LEED Platinum certification and is 35% more efficient than Oregon energy code. Sustainable building features include:



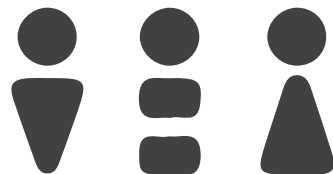
Expandable 250 panel  
16kW photovoltaic array  
installed on the North  
Wing roof



Plumbing fixtures  
reduce potable water  
use by 40%



Building materials  
reclaimed from 1970  
building demolition



Gender neutral  
restrooms available for  
attendees



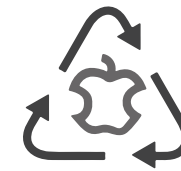
Private room available  
for nursing mothers



Green Power  
purchased to fuel  
building

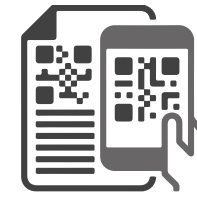
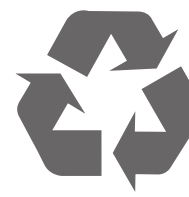
# SUSTAINABILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

## Food and Beverage



- WOHESC worked with the University of Oregon to provide a 100% vegan and vegetarian menu, with an emphasis on local, organic, and sustainably sourced items
- Condiments, creamer, and sugar were served in bulk containers to eliminate plastic waste, and no plastic straws or stir sticks were permitted
- All meals were served on China, and water was served from bulk containers
- University of Oregon composts all food waste back-of-house, including food scraps from plates. This is mandated by the University's waste provider to decrease contamination
- Leftover food was minimal, with no leftovers from either lunch. Any remaining food was made available to students via the University of Oregon's Leftover Textover program, which alerts current UO students via text message when there is leftover, free food available on campus

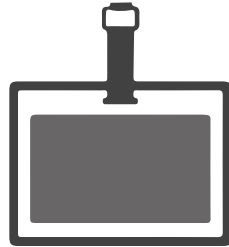
## Printing and Signage



- Dates or year-specific elements are not used on signage that has the potential to be reused
- All year specific signage is printed on 100% recyclable enviroboard or falconboard
- WOHESC eliminated all printed programs and instead offered a PDF program accessed by QR code

# SUSTAINABILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

## Registration



Badges were printed on recyclable paper with no badge covers used



Instead of purchasing event-specific lanyards, lanyards were recycled from past events and collected at the end of WOHESC



Registration process utilizes a 100% paperless ticket system



Badges included attendee-selected pronouns

## Attendee Diversity

- 11% of attendees identified as a category other than White
- 38% of attendees identified as White
- 51% of attendees declined to answer

## Land Acknowledgement

WOHESC program kick-off included a land acknowledgement, a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

# UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The WOHESC program included a wide range of topics, many of which correlate to a UN Sustainable Development goal, in addition to a session on **The UN Sustainable Development Goals: Implementation on Campus and Beyond**

Below are UN Sustainable Development goals and the corresponding WOHESC sustainability action:

## GOAL 2: Zero Hunger

- Donation of leftover food

## GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being

- Plant-based menu with a focus on local and sustainable sourcing

## GOAL 5: Gender Equality

- Over 50% of conference speakers were women

## GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- Venue with sustainable energy practices

## GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

- Recycled lanyard usage
- China service for all meals and beverages
- Signage printing practices
- All beverages and condiments served in bulk

## GOAL 13: Climate Action

- 100% vegan and vegetarian menu

In addition, WOHESC included sessions related to the below UN Sustainable Development Goals. [See our program](#) to learn more.

**GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being**

**GOAL 4: Quality Education**

**GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**

**GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality**

**GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

**GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

**GOAL 13: Climate Action**

**GOAL 14: Life Below Water**

**GOAL 15: Life on Land**

**GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal**

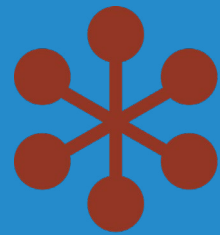
# AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR WOHEC

## Environmental Sustainability

- Further prioritize sourcing/supply chain tracking of menu items
- Increase messaging to attendees on how they can help make the event more sustainable - including bringing their own coffee mugs and water bottles, being mindful to not over-serve themselves, and putting up their Do Not Disturb sign at the hotel to decrease house-keeping services
- Continue to implement sustainability best practices at all future events

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

- Place greater emphasis on the importance of receiving CFP submissions that prioritize inclusivity, with specific recommendations/requirements for submitters
- Request voluntary demographic data during the submission process for speakers to allow for better data tracking of goals
- One on one email outreach to targeted speakers and potential program committee advisory members to invite historically marginalized voices to submit to speak and provide feedback on the WOHEC program
- Conduct a blind review of submissions (no names or demographic information) to avoid any unconscious bias on the part of the review committee
- Increase partnerships with regional and national organizations that serve a diverse audience to promote the event to a wider range of prospective attendees
- Consider elimination of program tracks to avoid siloing conversations on racial equity and diversity and replace them with icons that indicate topic-focus of each session



# Social Enterprises

Social Impact Events

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We do events; high-level, innovative, social cause events committed to enhancing local communities by generating revenue and educating attendees to foster a sustainably minded world. Our ultimate goal is creating memorable collaborative experiences to empower sustainable communities.