# 2021 Sustainability Plan

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Education is the first step toward living and inspiring a more sustainable lifestyle. Staying up to date with reliable news and research sources, engaging in local initiatives, and finding a supportive community are all wonderful ways to develop your sustainability foundation.

**let's brainstorm ways to support education:**

- read informative articles
- research the brand before product purchase
- send interesting articles / sources to family and friends
- subscribe to a reliable newsletter
- inspire a friend to research an interesting topic
- post / repost educational materials on your social account
- attend a seminar or event focused on sustainability

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**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AUSTIN SOURCES:**

- **Office of Sustainability:**
  - newsletter: subscribe
  - instagram: @TexasSustainability
  - twitter: @KeepTexasGreen

- **Sustainability Master Plan**
- **Zero Waste Program**
- **Campus Environmental Center**
- **BEEVO Beekeeping Society**
- **UT Learning & Development**
- **UT Austin Facilities**
- **UT Surplus Property**
- **Coloring Environmentalism**
- **Students Fighting Climate Change**

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want to learn more? check out the Student Guide to Sustainable Living:

**HOW TO BE AN ECO-FRIENDLY LONGHORN**
EDUCATION

WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

- read informative articles
- research the brand before product purchase
- send interesting articles / sources to family and friends

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

- subscribe to a reliable newsletter
- inspire a friend to research an interesting topic

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:

- post / repost educational materials on your social account
- attend a seminar or event focused on sustainability
WHAT I CAN DO **DAILY**: 

WHAT I CAN DO **WEEKLY**: 

WHAT I CAN DO **MONTHLY**: 

EDUCATION
CONSUMPTION + WASTE

2021 SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

According to the EPA, the US produced 267.8 million tons of municipal solid waste in 2017. Production & disposal of goods are both causes of greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing emissions begins with minimizing the amount of waste produced. Recycling, reducing, reusing, repurposing and refusing goods all contribute to lowering the amount of waste that is produced each year.

let's brainstorm ways to consume consciously + reduce waste:

**CONSUMPTION:**
- opt for long-lasting products
- search for ethically, sustainably produced products
- support local production
- explore second-hand and borrowing options
- avoid expedited shipping and unnecessary plastic packaging

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE A PURCHASE:**
Where were the materials in this product sourced?
Is there a human cost involved in this product's production?
What do I know about the company producing this product?
Do I need it? Will I use it for a long time? Is my use worth the resources put into it?
When it reaches its end of use, what can I do with it? Can I put it to other uses or recycle it?

**WASTE:**
- choose products you can reuse (avoid single-use plastics)
- fully use products you purchase + work to extend their life
- understand what can be recycled in your area + avoid contamination issues
- look into composting to convert organic waste
- find places to donate items that no longer serve you

want to learn more? check out the Student Guide to Sustainable Living:
[HOW TO BE AN ECO-FRIENDLY LONGHORN](#)
WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

- make coffee at home so I don’t use a to-go coffee cup
- save my food scraps for compost
- thoroughly clean my recycling to dispose correctly

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

- bring reusable bags to the grocery store
- research ethical production methods / companies
- talk to a friend / family member about recycling

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:

- write a letter to a government official / influential company explaining importance of environmental impact monitoring
- purchase birthday gifts from sustainable companies
- donate clothes or unused items
WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:
According to the EPA, transportation causes nearly 30% of greenhouse gases emitted in the United States. Sustainable transportation options (walk, bike, bus) are an effective way to reduce negative environmental impact and save money. Your UT ID card gets you on any city bus or train for free. Biking is a great way to get to class and to downtown.

let's brainstorm ways to engage in sustainable transportation...

**TAKING THE BUS:**

Buses emit 33% less greenhouse gases per passenger than private automobiles.

Austin's bus service routes run throughout the city - stopping directly by campus.

- use your ID to get unlimited free rides on Capital Metro buses and trains!
- you can plan your route in Apple or Google Maps
- more info [HERE](#)

**RIDING A BIKE:**

Biking is said to be the most energy-efficient mode of transportation.

With bike lanes and racks throughout the city, Austin is ranked as one of the most bikeable cities. Check out info on biking around campus [HERE](#).

Also consider...

**Walking!**

With campus located next to downtown, many destinations are easily accessible by foot.

**Carpooling!**

Consider planning a grocery trip or other outing with friends in a single vehicle.

want to learn more? check out the Student Guide to Sustainable Living:

[HOW TO BE AN ECO-FRIENDLY LONGHORN](#)
**WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:**

- walk or bike to/from class

**WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:**

- encourage my friends to walk with me to our destination
- plan a car-pool grocery outing

**WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:**

- research energy efficient forms of transportation and understand how I can make a broader impact
WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:
Energy conservation is essential for carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emission reduction. With the hot Austin climate and tendency for periods of drought, it's especially important to conserve water. Small changes in your energy and water consumption patterns can make an impactful difference - even as university students.

**let's brainstorm ways to conserve energy and water...**

Check to make sure appliances and other household fixtures are working properly. Leaks and breaks often use more energy than necessary. A leaky faucet can waste more than 3,000 gallons of water per year.

For campus building maintenance, call the UT Facilities Service Center (512-471-2020). For off-campus needs, contact your landlord or property manager.

**ENERGY & WATER CONSERVATION:**

- turn off all lights and appliances before you head out - unplug gadgets not in use
- use a power strip with an on/off switch to simplify the unplug/turn-off process
- when you need new light bulbs, switch to LED - they will last longer and be much more energy efficient
- use the cold water setting on the washing machine and only wash full loads
- hang dry clothes instead of running the dryer

**learn more about what UT Austin is doing to conserve energy and water:**

Facilities Services
University Housing and Dining
Office of Sustainability
Texas Athletics
Utilities and Energy Management

want to learn more? check out the Student Guide to Sustainable Living:

[HOW TO BE AN ECO-FRIENDLY LONGHORN](#)
WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

- turn off and unplug lights and gadgets when not in use
- save pasta water (or other cooking water) to water plants
- turn off the faucet when brushing teeth

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

- wash laundry on cold and hang dry
- check to make sure your appliances and fixtures are working properly
- wait to do laundry until I have a full load

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:

- replace conventional light bulbs with LED bulbs
- adjust thermostat to heat/cool efficiently in line with weather changes
WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:
Food consumption intersects energy, water, waste, ecology, climate, and social equity issues. When food sustainability is maximized, a great impact can be made. Food production, transportation, packaging, and disposal all offer room for continual improvement. Understanding your food patterns on and off campus is the first step to more conscious consumption.

let's brainstorm ways to consume more consciously...

- **Incorporate Plant-Based Options** - An estimated 23% of greenhouse gas emissions come from animal agriculture. UT Dining offers vegan/vegetarian options at all locations.

- **Buy Local** at the UT Farm Stand - Production and transportation of produce from corporate farms produces large amounts of emissions and waste. Support the localized, equitable economy through purchasing at UT or local farmer's markets.

- **Grow Your Own Food** - You can do so at the CEC Microfarm! This is UT's first student-run, organic urban farm with a mission to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation and a sustainable community that grows together. Volunteer or rent your own garden!

- **Dispose and Compost Properly** - Over 30% of all food in the US (1.3 billion tons) is wasted, ending up in landfills. The methane produced as the food breaks down accounts for 11% of greenhouse gases in the food production lifecycle. Look for designated compost bins on campus - then your organic materials will be properly used for soil enrichment.

- **Understand Food Insecurity** - On UT's campus, 1 in 4 students do not have reliable access to nutritious food. The UT Outpost provides UT students with food, including fresh produce from the Microfarm. There are many other Austin organizations that accept donations and provide aid.

- **Reduce Packaging Waste** - 45% of landfill waste is food packaging. Reduce individual impact through bringing your own produce bags, purchasing in bulk with your own containers, opting for produce without packaging and snacks in paper packaging. Keep reusable utensils, straws, and cups in your car/bag. Choose foil over plastic wrap.
**WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:**

- eat at least one plant-based meal
- bring a reusable cup and utensils if picking up to-go food
- compost waste correctly
- save vegetable scraps to make homemade broth

**WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:**

- shop at the UT Farm Stand or other local farmer's market
- bring reusable bags and jars to the grocery store
- purchase in-season produce
- save coffee grounds throughout the week to make a body scrub

**WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:**

- volunteer at or donate to a food insecurity relief organization
- plant a personal garden or small indoor herb pots
- learn what produce is in season that month and brainstorm fun recipes
- get friends together for an eco-friendly plant-based pot-luck
WHAT I CAN DO DAILY:

WHAT I CAN DO WEEKLY:

WHAT I CAN DO MONTHLY:
The individuals most marginalized in society are those that suffer most from the consequences of environmental degradation. Therefore, social equity and environmental justice are critical for understanding and promoting sustainable living.

**What is ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?**

The fair treatment & involvement of all people in the development & enforcement of environmental regulations & policies regardless of race, color, income, or gender.

Environmental justice efforts focus on people and communities that have been disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards or experience the consequences of environmental damages.

An environmental movement that focuses intentionally on marginalized communities is growing. Supported causes include climate justice, food justice, air and water pollution, indigenous land rights, and many others.

**let's brainstorm ways to promote equity and social justice...**

- Educate yourself about key issues through trustworthy sources
- Be an ally - amplify voices of those affected and advocate for change
- Volunteer with supportive organizations
- Avoid being a sustainability "gatekeeper" - eco-friendly efforts are inclusive

**Engagement at UT Austin:**

- [Environmental Justice Collective](#)
- [Multicultural Engagement Center](#)
- [Gender & Sexuality Center](#)
- [Racial Geography Tour of UT Austin](#)
- [Alternative Breaks](#)

Want to learn more? Check out the Student Guide to Sustainable Living:

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WHAT I CAN DO **DAILY**:

WHAT I CAN DO **WEEKLY**:

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**EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE**