

**Bemidji State University, Minnesota**  
**Post-Secondary Nominee Presentation Form**

**ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS**

**College or University Certifications**

The signature of college or university President (or equivalent) on the next page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the institution's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university is providing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a compliance review.
3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the college or university concluding that the nominated college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
5. There are no findings by Federal Student Aid of violations in respect to the administration of Title IV student aid funds.
6. The college or university is in good standing with its regional or national accreditor.
7. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

**U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Postsecondary 2015-2018**

**Public 4-Year**     Public 2-Year     Private Non-Profit

Name of President/Chancellor: **Dr. Faith Hensrud**

Official College or University Name: **Bemidji State University**

Mailing Address:    **1500 Birchmont Drive NE**  
                              **Bemidji, MN 56602**

County: **Beltrami**    IPEDS Number\*: 173124

Telephone: **218-755-2011** Fax: **218-755-2749**

Web site/URL: **http://www.bemidjistate.edu**    E-mail: **president@bemidjistate.edu**

\*Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.



Provost and Vice President, Academic & Student Affairs

Date:

January 27, 2017

(Signed on behalf of President/Chancellor Signature)

### **Nominating Authority's Certifications**

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the college or university's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: **Minnesota Office of Higher Education**

Name of Nominating Authority: **Dr. Lawrence Pogemiller**

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.



Date: 1/30/17

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

### **SUMMARY AND DOCUMENTATION OF NOMINEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

Provide a coherent summary that describes how your college or university is representative of your jurisdiction's highest achieving green school efforts. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments in all three Pillars and their underlying Elements. Then, include concrete examples for work in every Pillar and Element. Only institutions that document progress in every Pillar and Element can be considered for this award.

### **SUBMISSION**

The nomination package, including the signed certifications and documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to [green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov](mailto:green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov) according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2018

## Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

### Summary Narrative

#### BSU Mission

“We create an innovative, interdisciplinary, and highly accessible learning environment committed to student success and a sustainable future of our communities, state, and planet. Through the transformative power of the liberal arts, education in the professions, and robust engagement of our students, we instill and promote service to others, preservation of the Earth, and respect and appreciation for the diverse peoples of our region and world.”

Bemidji State University (BSU) is a four-year, public, liberal arts institution that is part of a broader Bemidji community of more than 60,000 residents. Founded in 1919 to meet an urgent demand for teachers, Bemidji State University was a major pathway to public higher education for northern Minnesotans throughout most of the 20th century. Bemidji State now has a broader reach, serving about 4,500 undergraduate and 500 graduate students from across Minnesota, surrounding states, and around the world. BSU offers high-quality, affordable higher education, providing the academic guidance and personal encouragement students need in order to exceed their own expectations and achieve at the highest levels. BSU is blessed with a beautiful lakeside campus in Bemidji, the thriving capital of Minnesota’s celebrated north woods. Here, instructional excellence is complemented by opportunities for connecting with the Earth and to the region’s cultural roots. By leveraging these advantages, the university seeks to graduate conscientious citizens who have both deep knowledge in their chosen fields and the self-awareness, critical-thinking ability, and experience to apply that knowledge as they lead inspired lives. Students, through the sum of their educational experience at Bemidji State, will have multiple opportunities to learn about, experience, and reflect on the university’s Shared Fundamental Values: environmental stewardship, civic engagement and leadership, international and multicultural understanding, and the belief in the power of the liberal arts. The themes represent core values that guide curriculum and services.

Reducing environmental impacts and costs not only make sense financially, but also speaks to the dedication of faculty, staff, and students to be good role models and stewards of Earth’s resources. BSU is a signatory of the American College and University President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), pledging to become a carbon neutral institution. A Campus

Sustainability Director was hired in 2008 to help support and promote the goals of the ACUPCC, as well as coordinate the Green Fee, a \$5-per-semester student fee to promote campus environmental projects. In 2015, students agreed to increase the Green Fee to \$7.50 in order to support more environmental projects and initiatives. The Sustainability Office has been heavily involved in energy, water, and waste reduction strategies and has become a regional leader in the campus sustainability movement.

BSU surpassed the ACUPCC interim carbon reduction goal of 2 percent by 2015, reducing emissions by 3 percent from a 2010 baseline. Green building design has been a factor; BSU constructed one Energy Star and one LEED-certified building within the past two years. Most recently, the Sustainability Office managed a project with several partners including Leech Lake Tribal College, Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, and Northwest Technical College to build a fossil fuel-free fish house, the first of its kind in the nation. BSU has also made considerable progress to reduce waste and increase recycling through innovative programs such as Donate, Don't Dumpster and the FreeStore.

Many BSU programs and initiatives are dedicated to improving the health and wellness of students, faculty and staff. BSU has a broad-reaching student wellness initiative, The Best You @ BSU, and a very active Living Well, Working Well committee. The on-campus Gillett Wellness Center and the popular Outdoor Program Center (OPC) provide a plethora of opportunities to promote physical and mental wellness. Wellness is even a focus of the Sustainability Office, whose staff and students created a distinctive sustainability model that includes a wellness component and is in use elsewhere across the nation. An organic community garden, a bike-share program, and classes that teach traditional skills are just some examples of programs offered by the Sustainability Office.

BSU has an enduring commitment to environmental sustainability education, which includes one of the oldest Environmental Studies programs in the nation. A required liberal education course called People and the Environment and an active sustainability-focused student organization, Students for the Environment, also help lead the way to a more environmentally literate citizenry. In 2005, BSU signed the Talloires Declaration, a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations, and outreach at colleges and universities. In 2016, an academic minor in Sustainability was initiated and an EcoCamp for youth was created to further promote sustainability education.

The lake, tall evergreens, and culture of the campus create a fluid connection to the Earth for Bemidji State University students and make Bemidji a wonderful place to work, live, and learn.

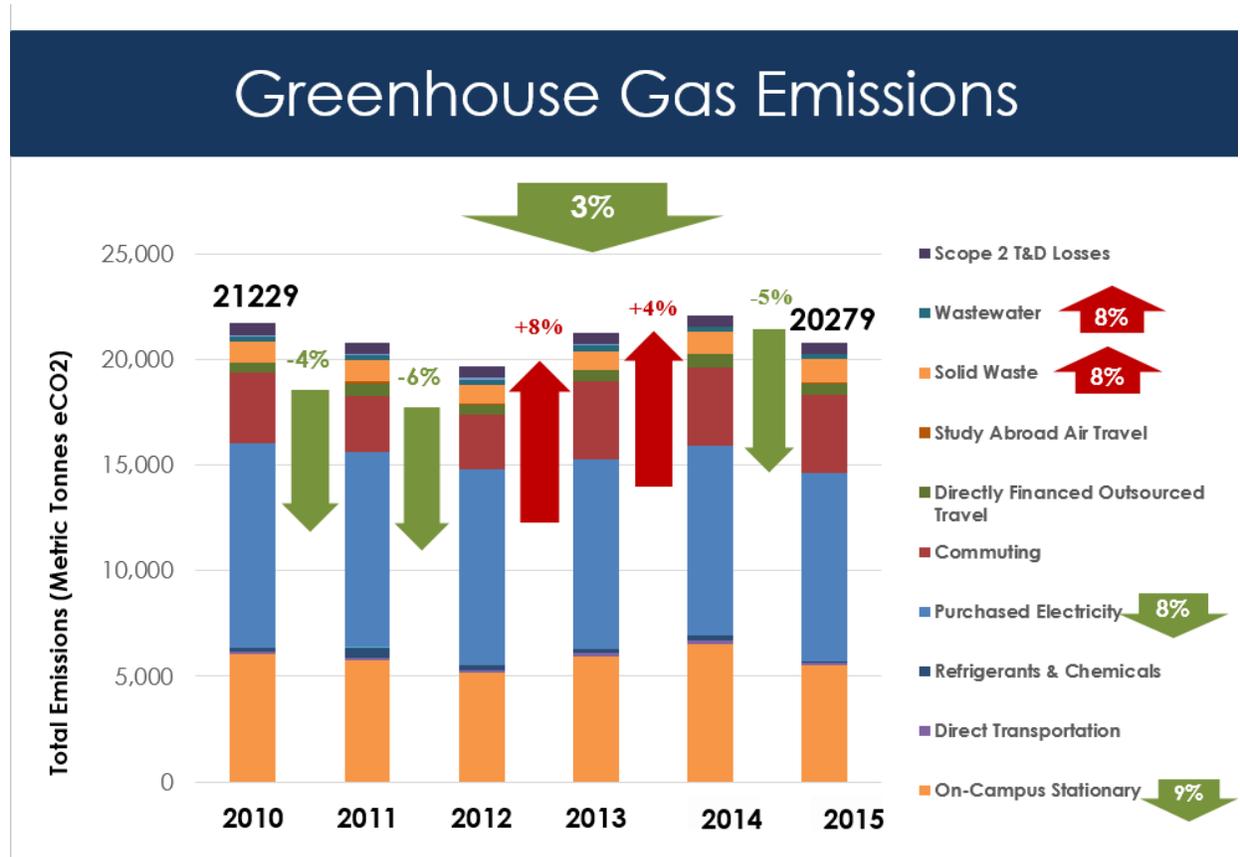
## Documentation Narrative

**Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs. Describe and provide evidence of how your institution is reducing environmental impact and cost by:**

**Element A: Reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions, including using energy audits, energy-efficient facilities and practices, and use of renewable energy.**

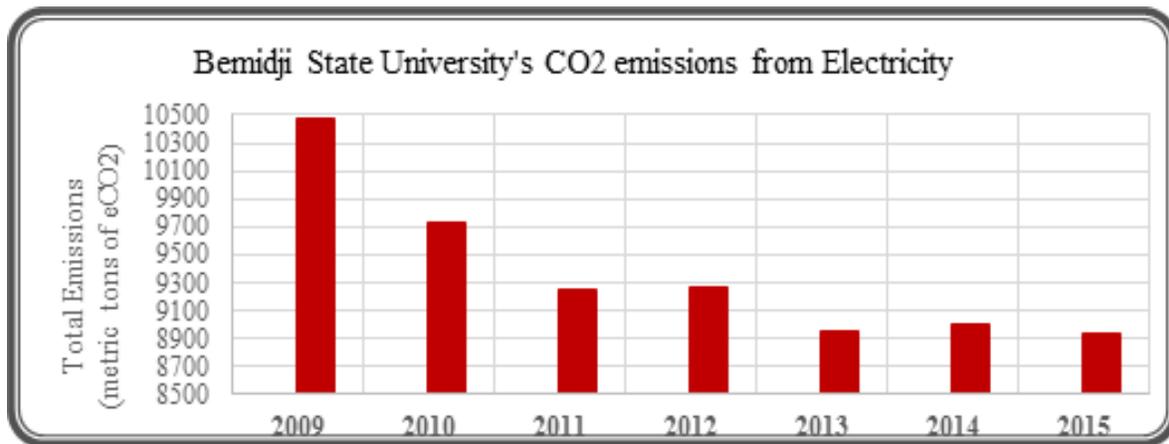
Bemidji State University has been a leader in environmental stewardship in higher education for more than 40 years. In 2004, the university officially established environmental stewardship as one of its Signature Themes and today recognizes it as a Shared Fundamental Value. BSU's commitment was strengthened in 2008 when the university becoming a signatory to the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). By signing on to the ACUPCC, BSU set a course to reduce its environmental impact by establishing a baseline for its carbon emissions, creating a comprehensive measurement and tracking system for annual emissions contributions, and reducing its carbon footprint over a number of years to eventually become carbon neutral by the year 2050.

The first ACUPCC interim greenhouse gas emissions goal was reached this past year, with a 3 percent reduction from a 2010 baseline. Significant reductions have been made in the areas of purchased electricity and on-campus use of printed paper, two of the largest contributors



(see chart below). BSU has made significant progress toward that goal by cutting its emissions from electricity use nearly 15 percent since 2009 (see chart on next page). Reasons for this success include lessons from a comprehensive energy audit the university contracted in 2012 through the state's Public Buildings Enhanced Energy Efficiency Program (PBEEEP). The audit

identified a number of efficiency improvement projects such as retrofitting to LED lighting across campus.



Another factor contributing to the success of BSU's electricity consumption reduction is its own outreach and education effort. The university's environmental student organization, Students for the Environment, hosts an annual residence hall energy challenge in which each residence hall competes to see who can reduce the most energy per resident. Since 2008, the "Do it in the Dark" competition has saved BSU 66,657 kWh, or nearly \$6,000. The results of that competition are communicated on campus through three real-time energy dashboards. Through those dashboards, students, faculty, and staff can see approximately how much energy a given building is consuming, as well as learning about various steps taken to achieve greater efficiency.

New construction and building retrofits also have been intentionally designed with energy efficiency and carbon reduction in mind. The newest construction on campus was a residence for honors students called the Laurel House. Through innovative building techniques such as use of structurally insulated paneling, high-efficiency windows and doors as well as implementation of energy-efficient appliances, the Laurel House is now Energy Star Certified. The newest comprehensive retrofit on campus is of Memorial Hall, which when completed in September 2015 gave BSU its first LEED- (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building. The renovated building was designed to use 21 percent less energy and 41 percent less water than a conventional building. It was recognized as one of three finalists for "Best of B3 Design" in the 2016 State of Minnesota Best of B3 Recognition event.

BSU has also integrated renewable energy into its energy mix, both through its participation in a Green Power Purchase program and its installation of solar technology on campus. Since 2006, BSU has purchased 740 100kwh blocks of wind energy through Ottertail Power's Tailwinds program. This purchase was a student-initiated effort designed to offset the entire electricity consumption of the Hobson student union. As a result of this purchase, BSU is recognized as one of EPA's Green Power Partners.

Several renewable energy installations have occurred on campus in the past six years. In 2010, the Sustainability Office partnered with Paul Bunyan Transit and the BSU Student Senate to install two bus stop shelters, one with a battery-tied solar photovoltaic panel to run LED lights in the shelter. A solar-powered emergency call station was installed in the same location. In 2013, BSU installed a solar transpired air collector on the Student Union. The 786-square-foot, dark metal-clad installation covers the building's air intake valve, creating a space in which air entering the building is preheated, reducing use of energy for heating. It delivers an estimated

129 mmBTUs of energy each year, saving the university 10.7 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and \$1,983. Just recently, BSU finished a Fossil Fuel-Free Fish House that includes a solar-powered furnace, solar photovoltaic panel, and a small back-up wood stove.

Looking ahead to its carbon neutrality goal, the university engaged with Evergreen Energy and LHB consultants to conduct a biomass feasibility study in 2013. The results of the study indicate that it would be economically and technically feasible to convert the current natural gas boiler to biomass, which would cut emissions from on-campus generation by 97 percent and its overall carbon footprint by 32 percent. The university has a long-range plan to further explore this option.

Finally, as signatories of the ACUPCC, BSU has created a Climate Action Plan that puts in motion a number of different strategies to help reduce carbon emission by 10 percent by 2020 and to eventually reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

### **Element B: Improving quality, efficiency, and conservation of water.**

Nestled in the north woods of Minnesota on the shores of Lake Bemidji, BSU has an intimate relationship with its water resources. The university has worked hard to preserve the quality of the water supply and improve the efficiency and conservation of various water features on campus. BSU has cooperated with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Beltrami County over many years to restore and stabilize the Lake Bemidji shoreline with native plants. To date, more than 850 feet of shoreline has been restored. The Students for the Environment club hosts a lakeshore cleanup twice a year (Homecoming and Earth Day) to help keep the shoreline free of litter. Several thousand BSU students have participated in this event over the past two decades.

Shoreline restoration and other water-conserving landscaping features are part of BSU's Sustainable Landscape Master Plan. BSU maintains several native planting beds on its campus that comprise nearly 8,855 square feet, reducing the need for water and energy maintenance and providing needed habitat for bees and other pollinators. They also help support water quality by not requiring synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. The most recent native planting was installed in summer 2015 at the newly remodeled Laurel House, a residence for four BSU honors students. The house's entire landscape incorporates native and edible plants and features a 200-square-foot rain garden that attracts many pollinators. At the Laurel House, the university also is piloting a permeable sidewalk material called Porous Pave, a LEED-certified material made from recycled tires. Across the street from the house, rain barrels are utilized as a conservation measure in the campus community garden called *Gitigaan*, which is the Ojibwe word for "garden."



BSU made the decision in spring 2016 not to spray for pesticides on campus for three years. For the past 11 years, BSU had been contracting a company to spray for spiders. The chemical used was extremely toxic to aquatic systems, as well as birds and bees.

In 2009, BSU assessed on-site indoor water consumption in a majority of its high-use campus buildings. Water use from sink faucets, showers, kitchen sprayers, and toilet facilities was measured. Water conservation devices such as low-flow showerheads and faucets were installed in 2010, and they continue to reduce water consumption by approximately 3 million

gallons per year below pre-installation usage. Since their installation, more than 15 million gallons of water have been saved.

In 2015, the BSU Student Senate unanimously passed a bill calling for the elimination of the sale of bottled water on campus and promotion of refillable water bottles. Although that ban has not been implemented, the university has moved forward with its plan to maintain one Elkay water bottle refilling station in each of campus building, thereby reducing demand for bottled water. To date, the refilling stations have saved more than 50,000 gallons of bottled water, reducing the high energy-consuming packaging, transportation, and water demands of the bottled water industry. In addition, the student-supported Green Fee is drawn on each year for purchase of stainless steel water bottles that are distributed at no cost to all new incoming and transfer students at BSU.



**Element C: Reducing solid and hazardous waste through recycling and composting, reduced consumption, and improved management.**

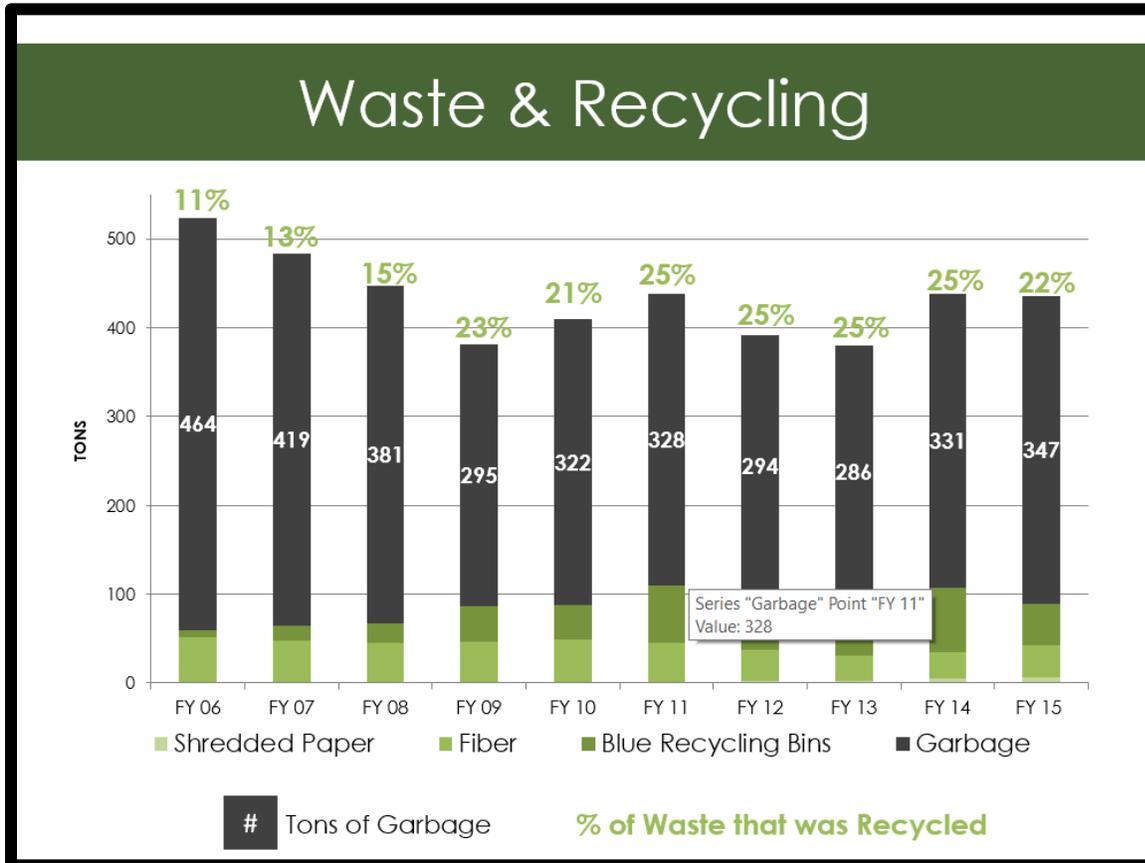
BSU has worked diligently to reduce its overall waste generation and increase recycling on campus. The Sustainability Office has initiated a number of widely successful programs such as “Donate, Don’t Dumpster,” which encourages students to donate gently used items that would have otherwise gone in the dumpster when they move out of campus housing at the end of the spring semester. Donated items go into BSU’s FreeStore, which has been open to all students and operated by the Sustainability Office since 2010. The FreeStore has a wide variety of items such as office and kitchen supplies, clothes, televisions, radios, bedding, and more. To date, the FreeStore has kept more than 10,000 items out of the landfill. Also located in the FreeStore is an e-waste collection site, from which the Sustainability Office operates a “Green Disk” recycling center and a “Call to Recycle” program that encourages students to recycle their cell phones and other electronic waste.



The BSU Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) office coordinates management of chemical and biological hazardous wastes generated on the university campus. This includes

collection, central storage, manifesting, and shipping of wastes. EHS will also provide waste management information, advice, and other assistance to campus waste producers.

The university has also worked very hard at expanding and streamlining recycling efforts on campus. These waste management efforts have led to a 30 percent reduction in waste production and a doubling of campus recycling since 2006 (see chart below).



BSU is committed to ongoing education to promote the reduction of waste generation and conducts annual waste audits of its largest classroom building to identify progress in recycling rates. The campus dining service provides reduced price incentives for customers who bring their own beverage mugs and is also offering reusable “green to-go” containers. BSU has also conducted a “Weigh-the Waste” campaign the past two years by auditing how much post-consumer food waste is being produced in the main food court and then engaging in campus collaborations to reduce the amount of post-consumer waste that enters the waste stream. Food waste was reduced by 5 percent in BSU’s largest dining hall (Wally’s) and by 36 percent in the food court (Lakeside).

	Pre-Audit	Post Audit	% Decrease
Wally’s	97 lbs.	92 lbs.	5%
Lakeside	84 lbs.	54 lbs.	36%

Composting has always been an interest among the student population, yet a comprehensive study found there are no haulers in our area. The Sustainability Office is considering partnering with Beltrami County to pilot a composting operation in the near future. The university's *Gitigaan* garden recently expanded its onsite compost facility, where yard and garden waste are converted into fertilizer that enriches the soil.

Three additional BSU programs make a notably significant statement towards reducing waste on campus. First, BSU has initiated a "Paper-Cut" program that tracks how much printing is done by each individual. Second, the university administration has adopted a comprehensive set of Sustainable Procurement Guidelines that directs all campus purchasing. One result is a new contract with Georgia-Pacific to purchase EcoSmart products that reduce waste over 24% compared with standard products. Lastly, BSU was awarded funding this past year to investigate open textbook resources, which would eventually help eliminate the waste from the production, distribution, and disposal of traditional paper textbooks.

**Element D: Expanded use of alternative transportation through active promotion of locally available transportation, energy-efficient options, and implementation of alternative transportation supportive projects and policies.**

Several strategies exist to reduce use of gasoline-powered transportation. Encouraging students to live in campus housing significantly reduces their commuter emissions. Approximately 30 percent of all BSU students live in one of six on-campus residence halls, and beginning in 2014-15, all first-year students were required to live on campus. BSU purchases vehicles under a contract with the State of Minnesota. The university purchased two hybrid security vehicles to reduce their environmental impact. All of the vans and other fleet vehicles are reused through the maintenance departments on campus.

Expanding use of alternative transportation is another focus of campus efforts. For several years, the Bemidji-area mass transit organization, Paul Bunyan Transit, has offered rides to faculty, staff, and students. To encourage ridership, BSU has offered bus passes to students at a free or reduced rate. In spring 2016, BSU passed a policy that permits use of in-line skates, non-motorized scooters, skateboards/longboards, and bicycles/unicycles outside of buildings on university property.

The bike culture on campus and in the community is very strong. The City of Bemidji achieved a bronze level from the American League of Bicyclists for its commitment to bike infrastructure and education. The city and region have dedicated resources to the creation of an extensive network of trails and bike lanes. One trail follows Lake Bemidji through the BSU campus, from a city park to downtown Bemidji. In 2015, BSU received an "honorable mention" from the Bicycle-Friendly University organization.



In fall 2010, Bemidji State's Sustainability Office and Outdoor Program Center started a rental program called Bucky's Bikes and began to rent refurbished bicycles to students for \$20 per semester. The program expanded annually as demand increased. In 2014, Nice Ride and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota selected Bemidji as the site to pilot a small scale bike-share program. As part of this project, BSU received 100 Nice Ride bikes. Nice Ride's extension into Bemidji serves as a test program for expanding its vision to greater Minnesota. The BSU Outdoor Program Center and Sustainability Office partner to provide Nice Ride bikes for hourly rental, semester-long lease, and class use.

Several other strategies exist to reduce transportation impact. A new parking fee structure implemented for fall 2015 will also encourage walking and biking versus motorized travel. The new fee plan includes increased rates and changes in lot designation that provide a disincentive for students to drive across campus. The campus installed an electric car charging station this fall. The BSU Sustainability Office has also investigated various rideshare systems and car-sharing programs in an effort to reduce single-person commutes.

*Pillar 2: Improve the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff. Describe and provide evidence of how your institution is improving the health and wellness of students and staff by use of:*

**Element A: An integrated campus environmental health program, including pest management, contaminant controls, asthma control, indoor air quality, moisture control and chemical management.**

BSU is committed to the overall health and safety of its campus and runs an integrated campus environmental health program through the office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). The types of actions listed in Element A are tasks that are integrated into the day-to-day operations of several departments. The Environmental Health and Safety Coordinator's responsibilities are for safety training and regulatory compliance, environmental regulatory compliance, and emergency management. Preventative maintenance performed by BSU's staff serves to mitigate problems in most of the listed areas.

As reported in the EHS Office's Pollution Prevention Report, the BSU Department of Chemistry incorporates microscale laboratory techniques into its courses. This reduces both the amount of hazardous wastes generated and the amount of new chemicals needed. The department also conducted an extensive cleanout of outdated and/or unused chemical stocks. The chemicals were removed through the University of Minnesota's Chemical Safety Day Program. The chemicals will be redistributed or properly disposed of by the University of Minnesota's waste management services. The project has reduced the potential for spills and the associated liabilities as well as improving safety. In addition, several campus buildings utilize a cleaning dispenser system that limits how much product is used.

Being located on the shores of Lake Bemidji, the university has become increasingly aware of the risks of pesticides on aquatic life. Therefore, this past year BSU agreed to stop spraying pesticides on its academic buildings. Using non-toxic, plant-based pest control alternatives will have both positive effects on the environmental health as well as the human health of the campus community. BSU has also installed holding ponds to reduce the amount of contaminants reaching the watershed from storm water run-off.

BSU has taken an important step to improve the health of our campus community by becoming a tobacco-free institution. At the impetus of students, BSU banned all use of tobacco products on campus grounds. Use of air-purifying plans has improved the indoor environmental health. For the past several years, the Sustainability Office has given away more than 100 house plants for use in offices across campus.

**Element B: health and wellness programs.**

Many BSU programs and initiatives are dedicated to improving the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff.

Bemidji State University has a broad-reaching student wellness initiative, The Best You @ BSU, which aims to align a student's college experience with six dimensions of personal

wellness – career, environmental, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social. The Best You @ BSU program was launched for students during Orientation week prior to the Fall 2016 semester. During its first year, the program will focus on first-year students and their families and expand to include all students. Students will receive a wellness self-assessment that will help them identify areas in which they might wish to improve and help them find services to support their efforts. Community assistants in the Office of Housing & Residence Life are preparing to assist residential students with taking positive steps in their own lives. These supportive resources will be available through the student union for non-resident students. For example, BSU’s food service provider, Aramark, will have a certified dietician on staff to help students have access to more information about dietary choices.

BSU also maintains an active academic Department of Human Performance, Sport and Health, which declares in its mission statement that students graduating from its programs “will be recognized as competent and prepared professionals, empowered lifelong learners, responsible citizens, participants in regular physical activity, and advocates for programs in physical education, health, and sport.” During each fall semester, a department faculty member offers interested members of the campus community an opportunity to have a personal trainer from his senior-level course called Advanced Fitness Testing and Prescription: Aerobic. The approximately 33 students in the course learn to complete fitness assessments and basic principles for planning exercise programs and work with employee clients to individualize fitness plans. Students work with the employees for a total of three to five hours from November through early December. The sessions include an initial meeting to complete clearance forms, determine goals, assess fitness, and plan appropriate programs, followed by implementation of an exercise program.

The BSU Student Center for Health and Counseling is a comprehensive and integrated health care facility that includes both health and counseling services. Its staff provide students with access to primary health care, ongoing health maintenance, information about health care and disease prevention, individualized personal counseling, group therapy, and a host of outreach services in health education. Every year, the center holds a series of public activities on campus in conjunction with the City of Bemidji and Beltrami County programming for National Suicide Prevention Week. The Suicide Prevention Program provides education to youth, adults, agencies, and businesses and assists organizations and schools with implementing suicide-prevention strategies. The 10th Annual Run/Walk/Skate for suicide prevention was held on Sept. 10, 2016 at the Sanford Event Center in Bemidji.

The mission of the Living Well, Working Well committee at BSU is to create “a workplace that encourages, empowers, and supports employees as they strive to live well and work well.” The goals of the committee are to establish a healthy workplace, empower and encourage employees to be well, and support and facilitate healthy choices. The committee coordinates activities such as distribution of informational newsletters, Mindful Mondays, meditative doodling, and walking wellness routes. They recently organized an all-campus health fair that was attended by more than 400 students, faculty, and staff.

The on-campus Gillett Wellness Center offers state-of-the-art equipment and facilities for students, faculty, staff, and the public. BSU students have free access to the cardio equipment, weight room, jogging track, activity courts, and racquetball courts. Students can sign up in the wellness center for a variety of competitive and recreation intramural leagues.

Located within the center is the popular Outdoor Program Center (OPC). Students can try out climbing on an indoor wall, learn about sailing on Lake Bemidji, or check out top-notch camping and canoeing gear for their own adventure in the Boundary Waters or elsewhere. The OPC is dedicated to “providing the university community with outdoor experiential learning opportunities which allow us to enjoy the outdoors, explore our personal potential, and develop a respect and understanding of the Earth’s natural systems and our responsibilities within them.” Recognized for offering “transformative programming,” the OPC has one of the highest participation rates in the nation.

BSU's Sustainability Office created a unique sustainability model that includes wellness.



The office engages in work that recognizes a healthy society, healthy economy, and healthy people cannot exist without a healthy environment. The Sustainability Director keeps the staff focused on eating well, getting sufficient sleep, and exercising, as well as reducing stress and finding outlets for anxiety. This expanded understanding of sustainability that includes individual wellness has led the Sustainability Office to engage a bit differently with

campus issues. For example, the office supports use of stand-up desks and encourages participation in such anxiety-reducing activities as painting, listening to music, and attending American Indian powwows. The Sustainability Director has shared the model at national and regional conferences, and it is now in use at several other North American universities

Many other projects coordinated by the BSU Sustainability Office improve campus wellness. The 5,000-square-foot community garden contains 28 plots rented to students, faculty, staff, and community members to grow food organically. Farmers’ market events are regularly held on campus to encourage healthy food and support the local economy. The Sustainability Office partners with BSU’s American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) to promote edible and culturally significant plants for landscaping. The AIRC maintains seven raised beds that contain plants such as sage and heritage corn. Chokecherry bushes and raspberry plants were planted around the perimeter of the building, with long-term plans for cedar trees and sugar maples. Apples trees have been planted in many areas of campus to encourage students to eat healthy, locally grown food. Aramark, the dining service provider, strives to procure local foods such as Red Lake walleye and wild rice. Aramark also labels meals with nutrition facts so students can make more informed decisions, and in fall 2016 it opened a new EcoGrounds coffee shop, selling only USDA-certified organic coffee. Two other noteworthy Sustainability Office programs are the Traditional Skills workshops and BSU Nice Ride. Traditional Skills workshops educate students on ways to be more personally resilient and self-sufficient. Such skills as making bread and apple sauce, sewing, and canning tomatoes are taught by knowledgeable experts (which are often students) once per month during the academic year. The BSU Nice Ride

program rents bikes to students for \$20 for the academic year (this program is more fully described under the “Alternative Transportation” section).

*Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education. Describe and provide evidence of your environmental and sustainability education by use of:*

**Element A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key dynamic relationships between environmental, energy and human systems.**

BSU has boasted an environmental ethic for several decades. Creation of one of the nation’s first Environmental Studies academic programs in 1972 provided a solid foundation from which to instill students with a sense of passion for the well-being of the environment, the planet, and future generations. For nearly two decades, BSU has required that all undergraduates complete a three-credit course entitled “People and the Environment” that not only educates students on the ecosystem on which humans depend but also integrates understanding of the social systems needed to address complex global problems. The course also facilitates an opportunity for students to interact with the community through a service learning assignment.

The on-campus portion of the course consists of a large and small group. Students sign up for an individual perspective or “small group” and attend this portion once a week with their individual instructor. There are 30 students in a small group section, and approximately 300 students take this class per semester. The large group is staffed by three to five faculty members, who coordinate one session per week. The teams intentionally have consisted of at least one faculty member from the natural sciences, one from the social sciences, and one from the humanities and other areas. Upon the completion of the People and the Environment course, students are expected to be able to:

- A. Explain the basic structure and function of various natural ecosystems and of human adaptive strategies within those systems;
- B. Discern patterns and interrelationships of biophysical and sociocultural systems;
- C. Describe the basic institutional arrangements (social, legal, political, economic, and religious) that are evolving to deal with environmental and natural resource challenges;
- D. Evaluate critical environmental and natural resource issues in light of understanding about interrelationships, ecosystems, and institutions;
- E. Propose and assess alternative solutions to environmental problems;
- F. Articulate and defend the actions they would take on various environmental issues.

Section 1B of the Master Academic Plan (MAP) lists People and the Environment as an example of interdisciplinary teaching. The multiple connections to civic engagement and service learning in the MAP are also addressed by the People and the Environment course, whose have for several years been required to complete a service learning component. In fall 2016, students assisted with the on-campus Weigh the Waste campaign and helped harvest produce at the Bemidji Community Food Shelf Farm.

BSU students can now also complete a minor in Sustainability. The minor requires students taking a wide variety of courses such as Environmental Justice and Sustainability and Environmental Economics. They also work with a faculty member to assist with teaching the People and the Environment course and are placed with a community organization to assist in achieving sustainability goals.

As a signatory of the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, BSU is committed to integrating sustainability into the curriculum and making it part of the educational experience. BSU’s vision for educational, research, and community outreach efforts

is to establish a campus and program in which students and staff are educated on climate impacts and sustainability and support the university's efforts to move toward sustainability and carbon neutrality. BSU recognizes the need to weave these topics into all facets of education, research, and community outreach. To support these goals, the Sustainability Director has been trained to facilitate workshops called Sustainability Across the Curriculum and has co-coordinated several workshops elsewhere in the Bemidji region.

**Element B: Environment and sustainability curriculum and programs to develop STEM content knowledge and thinking skills to prepare graduates for the 21st-century, technology-driven economy.**

BSU provides an eclectic mix of academic programs that will help train students to solve critical environmental problems such as climate change. For example, BSU's Department of Geography challenges its students to learn about, and more importantly, experience the human-environment geographic connection. The department provides a range of emphases useful to climate-change related professions, including Geographic Information Systems, Physical Geography, and Planning. The Department of Biology offers a range of academic specializations that provide the necessary academic preparation and skills to solve climate-change problems related to fisheries biology, conservation, wetland preservation, and invasive species. Current Biology department climate change-related research focuses on examining altered diversity and abundance of small animals in different habitats, changes in the migratory behavior of songbirds, and the influence of anthropogenic factors on population dynamics of fish and zooplankton in lakes and rivers. BSU is the only Minnesota institution to offer a four-year degree in Aquatic Biology, and its programs take full advantage of BSU's pristine setting and high-tech lakeside facilities while offering ample opportunities for a truly hands-on education. Finally, the university's Environmental Studies programs housed in the Center for Environmental, Economic, Earth, and Space Studies offer interdisciplinary flexibility that permits students to gain the skills required to tackle important climate change-related problems, including specializations in ecosystems studies, environmental policy and planning, environmental toxicology, environmental management, and geohydrology. Current research by BSU Environmental Studies faculty includes examining potential changes in forest composition under anticipated future regional climate change and developing adaptive environmental management strategies to harvest natural resources sustainably.

BSU faculty have considerable experience working and conducting research on complex problems such as climate change. This work includes a recent NSF-funded Local Knowledge and Climate Change Adaptation Project (LKCCAP) in Kenya that researched the local dynamics of forest knowledge, perceptions, and conservation practices. Another recent project culminated in a Fulbright Fellowship that investigated utilizing spatial technologies for monitoring large-scale change and desertification risk in Namibia. Other BSU research has explored the cultural ecology, ethnographic issues of leadership capacity, indigenous environmental knowledge, the environmental consequences of changing relationships between rural women's health and work patterns and land tenure issues in ecologically at-risk regions facing increased immigration and export cash cropping. BSU researchers have also investigated the important implications of climate change on vulnerable savanna and woodland communities in southern Africa and the impacts on the livelihoods of the people. Faculty maintain strong strategic working partnerships with staff from the U.S. Agency for International Development Climate Smart Agriculture Program and the Global Carbon Project.

Bemidji State University received nearly \$623,000 from the National Science Foundation in 2014 that will fund scholarships for BSU students majoring in programs related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The grant creates a program that will provide recurring \$9,200 annual scholarships for a minimum of 22 students over a five-year period. The scholarships will benefit students with interests and abilities in STEM fields who have demonstrable financial need and are traditionally under-represented in STEM-related programs. BSU also hopes the scholarships will encourage an increase in the number of students in STEM-related majors. The scholarships will help spearhead the creation of support programs specifically targeting students in STEM majors. The university plans to create a STEM Scholars Learning Community that includes peer-to-peer networking and more direct mentoring opportunities with BSU faculty.

The Minnesota State system expanded its math and science programs and its eight “centers of excellence” that focus on workforce development in specialized areas and incorporate STEM disciplines in their degree programs. The 360 Manufacturing and Applied Engineering ATE Regional Center of Excellence, headquartered at BSU, is a collaborative of 15 Minnesota State institutions working on improving manufacturing education throughout the state. One of its goals is developing employees who are adept in “advanced manufacturing,” which incorporates high-tech machinery such as robotics and micromachining equipment.

**Element C: The development of civic engagement knowledge and skills and students’ application of such knowledge and skills to address sustainability issues in their community.**

In 2004, Bemidji State University outlined three Signature Themes that guide all of our efforts on campus: Civic Engagement, Multicultural Understanding and Environmental Stewardship. Now these efforts are called Shared Fundamental Values, with one additional value of “belief in the power of the liberal arts.” The university is engaged in many efforts to weave these values together in order to strengthen students’ knowledge and skills related to sustainability issues, along with establishing conduits for application and engagement in their community.

One distinct way this occurs is through an innovative partnership between the University, Minnesota GreenCorps and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). BSU for three years hosted a MN GreenCorps member who worked on several different community projects, one of which was to collaborate between the university and IEN and provide free weekly sustainability programming for community members. This effort, originally called “Sustainable Tuesdays,” allowed BSU students and community members to engage directly with sustainability issues and covered topics from bee keeping to seed saving, producing maple syrup, and identifying wild edibles.

Just this past year, BSU initiated an EcoCamp for first- and second-graders. Several BSU students were involved in the planning, coordination, and facilitation of activities to teach local youth about the Earth. The camp will expand to include a third- and fourth-grade EcoCamp in summer 2017.

Another way in which BSU has prepared students with the appropriate knowledge and skills to address sustainability issues is through its “People and the Environment” liberal education requirement. All incoming students are required to take this introductory environmentally focused class, which has incorporated a service learning component to allow students to put their knowledge and skills to work in the community. Likewise, BSU’s newly

created Sustainability minor will draw on the importance of service learning and allow students to learn through hands-on work in the community how to effectively address sustainability issues in the wider world.

The BSU Sustainability Office has also created longstanding partnerships with key community partners who have offered students additional hands-on learning experiences and ways to get involved in local sustainability efforts. The City of Bemidji's Sustainability Committee, which was co-founded by BSU's Sustainability Director more than seven years ago, continues to be a place where students, staff, and citizens come together each month to educate individuals and organizations on sustainability best practices and policies. They also collaborate with the Clean Energy Resource Teams of Minnesota and have offered internships working with the MN Greenstep Cities program as well as through the Headwaters Regional Development Commission to address financial barriers that might otherwise prevent community members from participating in energy-efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Just this fall, BSU administration created a Civic Engagement Task Force whose goal is to develop and implement an integrated approach to engaged teaching, scholarship, partnerships, and institutional action.

Finally, at BSU, our particular brand of sustainability truly has always been student driven and student led. Members of the campus community take pride in that and strive to ensure that the campus' longstanding Students for the Environment club remains a hub of active engagement in both campus and community sustainability initiatives.