

Carbon Commitment Committee

Annual Report 2023-2024

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I. Background

In 2007 OSU President Ed Ray signed the [Carbon Commitment](#), as developed by the Second Nature consortium, establishing OSU as a charter signatory. The Commitment is intended to reduce net carbon emissions by institutions of higher education in order to mitigate global climate change.

In 2008 and 2009, the OSU Sustainability Office facilitated a community process to develop the first OSU Climate Plan, a strategic plan for climate neutrality that was based on the OSU Strategic Plan. Community input and a review of goals set by the State of Oregon and the Oregon University System helped shape OSU's ambitious goal to be carbon neutral by 2025. From 2008-2023, OSU achieved greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 22% with modest financial investment and a suite of systemic changes. When accounting for growth, that equates to a 51% reduction in emissions per FTE and 48% reduction in emissions per 1000 square foot of building space. Figures 1 and 2 summarize changes since 2014, when emissions data are available. Reductions from 2014 to 2023 are modest and carbon neutrality will not be reached by 2025 (the goal in the path to carbon neutrality) or reached in the near future without major changes to action levels. The current emission sources for OSU during 2023 are summarized in Figure 3. Addressing climate change has been integrated into the OSU mission, as outlined in [Strategic Plan 4.0: Transformation, Excellence and Impact](#).

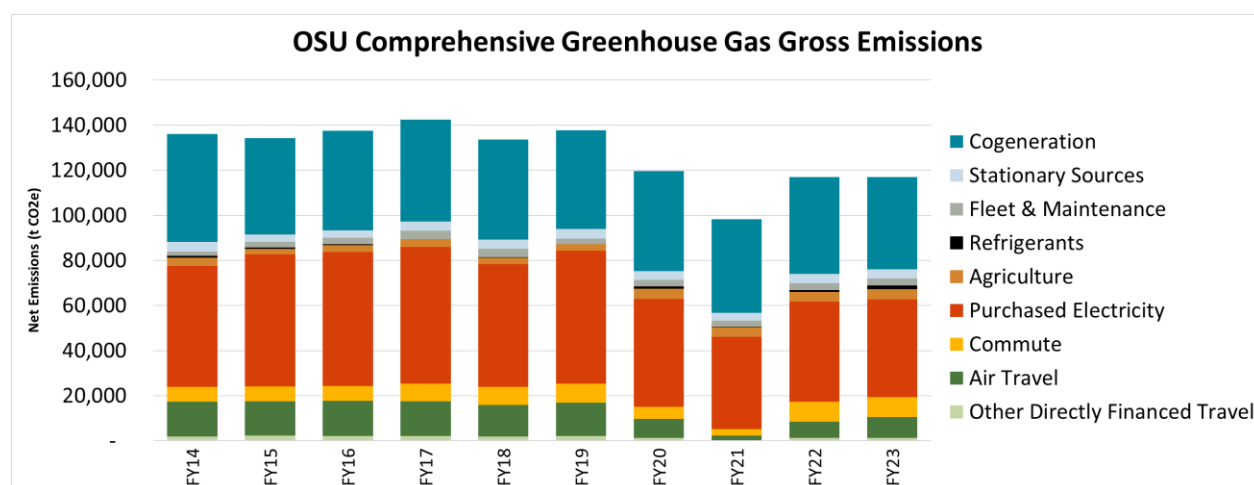


Figure 2. OSU Comprehensive Greenhouse Gas Gross Emissions by Year

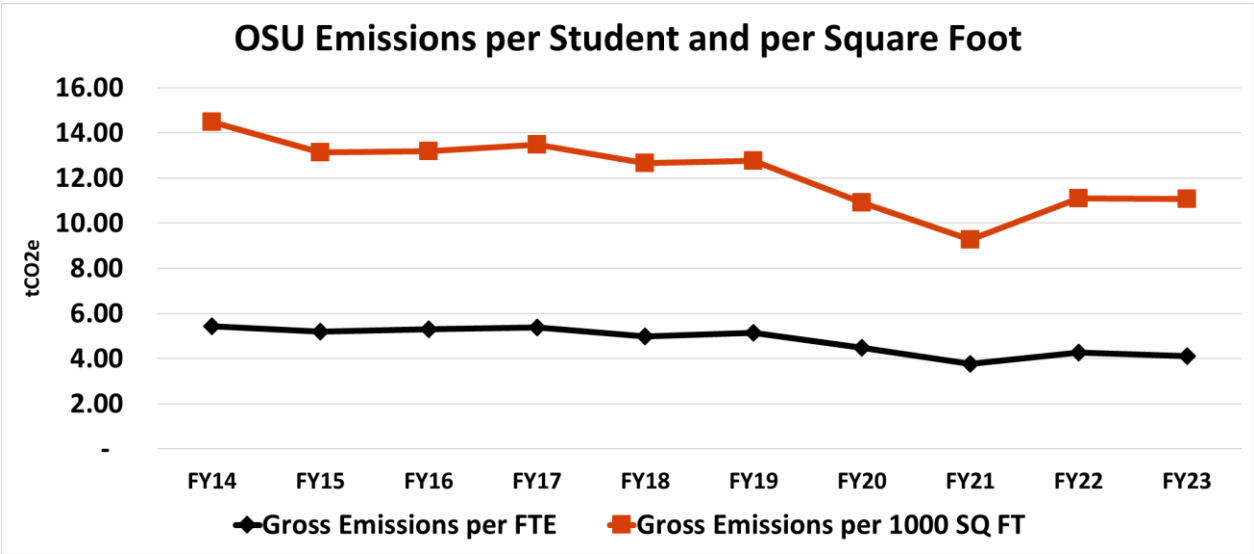


Figure 3. OSU Emissions per Student and per Square Foot

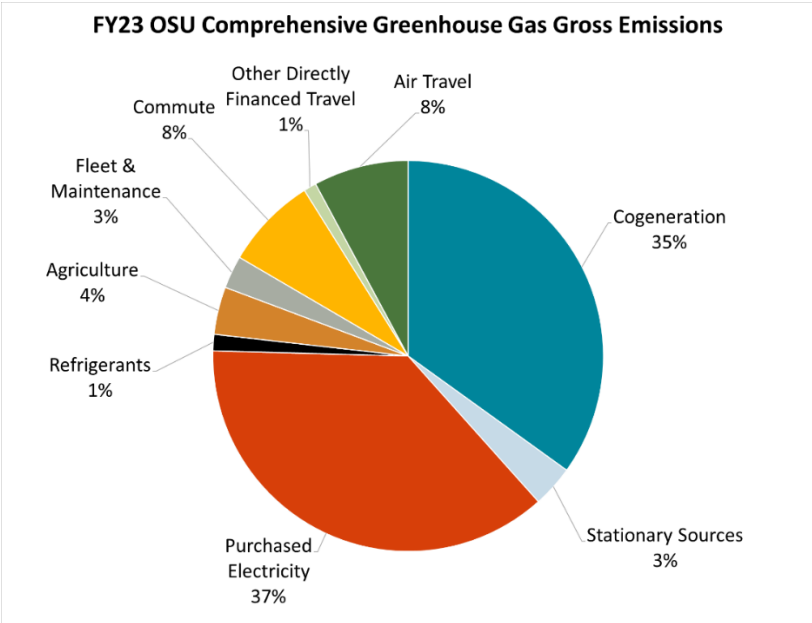


Figure 1. OSU Comprehensive Greenhouse Gas Gross Emissions by Source for 2023.

The intention of OSU’s leadership and the Faculty Senate is to change the historical trends of greenhouse gas emissions in order to attain a steady reduction of emissions across the OSU enterprise. Emissions reduction was given new impetus by adopting the Path To Carbon Neutrality (outlining work in nine areas) in June 2022. OSU is making sizable investments in solar panel installations, district utility systems, energy efficient buildings and temperature controls.

In order to support OSU’s carbon reduction ongoing efforts, the OSU Faculty Senate passed a resolution to create the [Ad Hoc Committee on the OSU Carbon Commitment](#) in 2018. In 2021, Faculty Senate voted to convert the group to a standing committee, known as the [Carbon Commitment Committee](#).

The Faculty Senate Carbon Commitment Committee is charged with promoting policies and activities that facilitate carbon reduction (see the charge in Part II below). This report addresses the standing Carbon Commitment Committee activity in FY23.

II. Committee Charge and Activities

The Committee, composed of members from each of the Faculty Senate apportionment units, plus some other OSU groups, developed objectives for the overall effort. The primary objective of the Committee is to support the OSU Sustainability Office in advancing carbon emissions reduction work throughout the university. A key to this support will be enabling Committee members to create action within their home units. This approach is predicated upon the principle that effective carbon reduction at an institutional level requires cultural change in the behaviors of the majority of the people who make up OSU. Reaching an equilibrium between culture and carbon levels requires a combination of institutional policy revision and change in collective behavior.

Given the need for collective action in support of carbon reduction at OSU, the Committee formed work groups to address projects in the following areas: Communication and Advocacy.

III. Work Groups

Communication and Education Work Group

Description

Facilitate, produce and distribute information and active engagement opportunities for the OSU Community and beyond. This working group is exploring tools to engage the OSU community and promote carbon-reduction.

Objectives

- Dissemination of Committee's actions through existing newsletters and blogs.
- Submissions of feature stories in existing vehicles such as Life@OSU, OSU Today, College and Departmental newsletters, etc.
- Planning of talks/forums on carbon reduction.
- Creation of information packets for students and faculty.

Advocacy Work Group

Description

The Advocacy Work Group is dedicated to promoting policies, practices and initiatives that support carbon reduction at OSU. This group works to influence decision-making processes and garner support for climate emission reduction efforts within the university community and beyond.

Objectives

- Advocate for the adoption and implementation of climate emission reduction policies at OSU.
- Engage with university leadership, faculty, staff and students to raise awareness and support for carbon reduction initiatives.
- Develop and support partnerships to enhance and expand carbon reduction efforts.

IV. Carbon Commitment Committee Major Activities in FY2023-24

- Participated in reoccurring meetings with the provost and other senior leaders of the Division of Finance and Administration to discuss and suggest carbon reduction activities at OSU.

- Helped establish college level carbon reduction contacts to increase, identify and prioritize college level carbon reduction activities.
- Proposed a Resolution to Accelerate Climate Change Emission Reductions at Oregon State University (see below for full resolution) Faculty Senate. This involved submitting a draft to the President of the Associated Students of Oregon State University, submitting a draft to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (EC), several meetings with the EC, a presentation on carbon reduction work and future needs to the full Faculty Senate on May 9, and attendance at the June 13 meeting where the resolution was passed on a vote of 76-10.

Resolution to Accelerate Climate Change Emission Reductions at Oregon State University

This document contains both a clean version of proposed revisions to the resolution as well as a strike-through version indicating the specific revisions.

Whereas, Oregon State University (OSU) has committed to becoming a leader in sustainability and carbon neutrality; and

Whereas, the Faculty Senate Carbon Commitment Committee has highlighted the need for urgent action and innovative solutions to achieve OSU's climate goals; and

Whereas, achieving carbon neutrality by OSU will require concerted action at all levels of the university; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the OSU Faculty Senate and ASOSU Senate call upon central university leadership, Deans, other unit leaders, faculty, staff and students to prioritize the objectives of the approved OSU Path to Carbon Neutrality:

1. Increase explicit investments in decarbonization:

- Allocate significant resources towards improving energy efficiency in existing facilities and investing in low- or no-carbon energy systems.
- Create a dedicated fund to finance carbon reduction projects initiated by students, staff, and faculty, incentivizing innovation and engagement by colleges, units, and individuals who take significant actions towards carbon reduction.

2. Establish policies, structures, and support for rapid implementation:

- Develop and enforce policies and structures that promote rapid decarbonization across all university operations, including at the college-, unit-, and individual-level.
- Empower decarbonization work and provide consistent support to enact meaningful change.

3. Engage the entire university community to create a culture of climate action:

- Call on all faculty, staff, and students to prioritize carbon reduction in their daily activities.
- Create opportunities for education and training to support climate action.

Resolved, That this resolution be communicated by the Faculty Senate President to the OSU Board of Trustees, the OSU President, the OSU Provost and Executive Vice President, the Associate Vice President of University Facilities, Infrastructure and Operations, the Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer, and deans and other unit leaders, urging them to strengthen and reconfirm OSU's carbon commitment and act swiftly in adopting these measures to ensure that OSU meets its carbon neutrality goals.

V. FY 2024-25 Objectives – Looking Forward

- Advancing the projects already started in 2023/2024
 - Continue to promote and support implementation of "Path to Carbon Neutrality."
- Explore and support new and developing carbon reduction opportunities from the Sustainability Office.

- Collaborate with new College carbon contacts to enhance carbon reduction opportunities.
- Workgroups will:
 - Educate about carbon reduction activities at OSU, including being available for meetings with Colleges, Departments, and other Units
 - Promote carbon offset program
 - Advocate for climate change information in OSU education

VI. Membership at the End of FY 2023-2024

Keith Jayawickrama, Co-Chair '24	College of Forestry
Perry Hystad, Co-Chair '25	College of Health
Lindsay Andrews '24	College of Education
Tess Collins '24	College of Veterinary Medicine
Laurie Houston '24	College of Health
Grant Jacobsen '24	College of Liberal Arts
Leela Magdaleno '24	Ecampus
Brandon Trelstad '24	Sustainability Office
Desiree Tullos '24	College of Agricultural Sciences
Jason Weiss '24	College of Engineering
Maricruz Gomez '25	OSU-Cascades
Cinamon Moffett '25	Hatfield Marine Science Center
Laura Rees '25	College of Business
Andres Schmidt '25	College of Agricultural Sciences
Erika Wolters '25	College of Liberal Arts
TBA (v. Anderson) '25	Student Affairs
TBA (v. Walton) '25	Associated Faculty
Nick Andrews '26	Extension & Engagement
Hannah Brachfeld '26	ROTC
Rebecca Lemons '26	College of Forestry
Adam Lindsley '26	University Libraries
Tara Massad '26	College of Earth, Ocean, & Atmospheric Sciences
Norm Rush '26	College of Business
TBA '26	College of Pharmacy
TBA '26	College of Science

Student Members:

- TBA (undergrad)
- TBA (grad)

Ex-Officio Member: OSU Foundation – TBA

Executive Committee Liaison – Jennifer Alix-Garcia