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GREEN LOOKS GOOD ON CAPTAINS!

CNU SCORES A SUSTAINABILITY AWARD FOR CAMPUS-WIDE CONSERVATION EFFORTS.

by [Kelley McGee](#) | April 24, 2025*Read time: about 2 min*

Big changes often start with simple, consistent choices, such as turning off the lights in residence halls, replacing disposable take-out boxes with Green2Go reusable containers, and donating gently used items through the Give It Up end-of-year move-out program.

As part of the [Going Greener Campaign](#), Captains have been embracing these small, sustainable habits and it's all added up to something big: Christopher Newport has been awarded a Bronze STARS rating (Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System) by the [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education \(AASHE\)](#).

"Achieving a Bronze rating is a significant milestone for Christopher Newport University. It shows that we've made measurable progress toward integrating sustainability into the fabric of campus life—from the classroom to campus operations," said Dr. Linda Manning, Associate Professor of [Communication](#) and Director of the [Center for Sustainability in Education](#). "This rating affirms the work we've already done while also helping us identify pathways for future growth and innovation in sustainability."

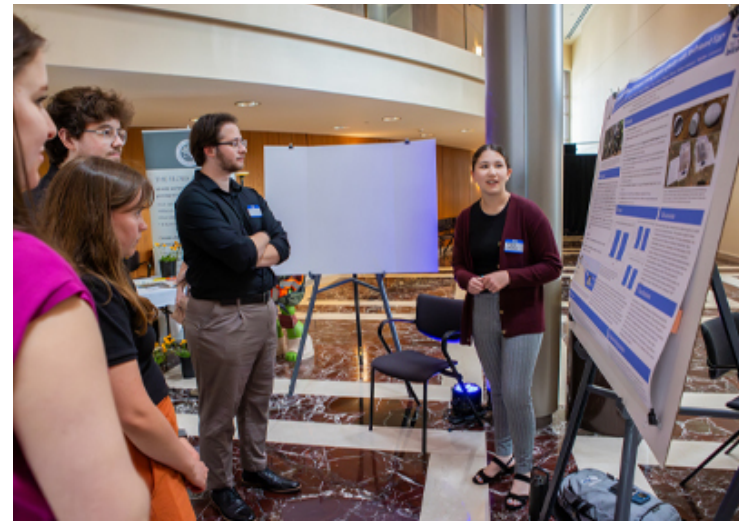
The STARS framework allows universities to measure their sustainability performance across a range of categories, including

Students present climate research at the 4th Annual Fear to Hope Symposium at Christopher



academics, engagement, operations and planning. Manning believes several impactful initiatives helped Christopher Newport earn this rating:

- Sustainability is woven into courses across campus and faculty are engaging in research focused on environmental issues.
- CNU has made sustainability a part of everyday campus life, from waste sorting to “greener” landscaping practices.
- Significant involvement has grown in programs such as the Sustainability Fellows, the Student Sustainability Commission, Fear to Hope public science research, and community engagement opportunities.



Newport, which brings together local environmental professionals, CNU faculty and students, and high school researchers to share ideas and inspire action.

While all these initiatives reflected well on the University during the evaluation process, Manning believes “students are really at the heart of our sustainability success.”

“All the small changes students continue to make—like turning off lights, bringing a reusable water bottle, or attending a sustainability event—are contributing to our collective impact. Whether you're majoring in science, business, the arts or leadership, there are opportunities to make a difference. Sustainability is woven into courses, clubs, and campus life,” Manning said. “CNU is a place where your ideas matter—and we welcome students who want to be part of building a better, greener future. Prospective students can be proud to join a community where sustainability is an active and growing part of our identity.”

“Our students have shown remarkable resilience in adapting to sustainability efforts and taking on the responsibility of creating a greener place to live and learn,” said CNU Sustainability Ambassador Rachel Freeman, ‘25 [Political Science](#) and [Environmental Studies](#). “Small changes are only small until they develop into something greater. Consistency makes culture change happen, and I believe the Bronze rating is an amazing way to give us the motivation to achieve even more in the future.”

The Bronze STARS rating directly supports Christopher Newport’s [Strategic Compass](#) goal of “Building a Foundation to Thrive” by making sustainability a core institutional value through water reduction, eco-conscious planning for new buildings, energy and water efficiency, and campus wide participation.

“Sustainability at CNU is a whole University effort. The STARS framework not only benchmarks our progress, but encourages inclusive, transparent practices to drive continuous improvement,” said Brian Kelley, CNU Sustainability Specialist. Kelley predicts the bronze recognition is just the start for CNU’s sustainability progress, and the silver-level benchmark could be achieved by focusing on:

- Energy use, along with commuting and purchasing practices.
- Expanding sustainability-focused academic programs and community partnerships.
- Continuing to invest in green infrastructure, such as more efficient buildings and stormwater management systems.
- Expanding access to resources, such as training programs and improved outreach of sustainability initiatives and events to students, faculty and staff.

“With continued collaboration across campus, we believe a Silver rating is well within reach. We are motivated, and looking forward to increasing our sustainable practices and education,” said Abigail Domingue, ‘25 [Organismal and Environmental Biology](#), Sustainability Fellow, and CSE Marketing Lead Intern.