

Climate and Sustainability Annual Report

2026

Western Sustainability

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that Western University is located in Dish With One Spoon Treaty Territory, and the ancestral territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee and Lūnaapéewak Nations. We honour the deep and enduring relationships Indigenous Peoples have with these lands and waters, and their role as stewards of the environment since time immemorial.

The stories, knowledges, and teachings that come from this place remind us that our relationship with the land is reciprocal; we all have a responsibility to care for it. As we share the progress in this first annual report, we also reflect on the importance of learning from Indigenous perspectives and fostering meaningful relationships rooted in respect, reciprocity, and reconciliation.

We are grateful to be part of this community and remain committed to working toward a future where people, communities, and the natural world can thrive together.

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Medway Creek

A message from the Director of Sustainability

Western's Climate and Sustainability Strategy represents an important step forward in advancing a more sustainable future for our campus and broader community. Approved by the Board of Governors on February 5, 2026, and developed by the President's Advisory Committee on the Environment and Sustainability (PACES), the Strategy guides collective action toward a healthy, resilient, and regenerative future.

Addressing complex sustainability challenges requires collaboration across our campus community. By bringing together diverse perspectives, expertise, and ideas, we can drive meaningful action and equip future generations with the knowledge and opportunities needed to build a more resilient future.

It is my pleasure to share this inaugural Climate and Sustainability Annual Report, released six months after the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan (2026–2031). This report highlights progress toward the Strategy's goals and celebrates the recent contributions of individuals and teams across Western. While there is much to celebrate, this is only the beginning. Sustainability is an ongoing commitment, and through the creativity and dedication of our community, Western is well positioned to advance lasting positive change and help lead the transition to a sustainable, resilient, and regenerative future.

Heather Hyde
Director, Sustainability



Strategic Focus

Sustainability is identified as an imperative in Western's strategic plan, *Towards Western at 150*, integrated across teaching, research, operations, and community partnerships. In 2026, Western launched its Climate and Sustainability Strategy, outlining a shared vision for a regenerative future that supports environmental and community well-being.

Developed through extensive consultation led by PACES, the Strategy reflects input from more than 4,000 students, faculty, and staff. It is organized around three priority areas: Education & Research, Regenerative Campus, and Healthy & Connected Community, supported by ten Big Moves that guide sustainability action across the university.

A five-year Action Plan accompanies the Strategy, translating priorities into specific actions, responsibilities, and timelines. Together, these documents provide a roadmap for advancing Western's climate and sustainability goals.

This inaugural Annual Report highlights progress and initiatives underway across campus in support of these priorities.



Campus engagement sessions helped inform the Climate and Sustainability Strategy.

Education & Research

Advancing climate and sustainability knowledge, skills, and research to prepare future changemakers and support a regenerative future.

2,700
courses related to the SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals

Across the university, our campus community is advancing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in meaningful ways. Learn more about the SDGs at Western.

Animal Migration Research for Conservation

The Centre for Animals on the Move conducts critical research on animal migration that helps inform conservation measures, providing solutions to biodiversity loss.

Partnerships Advancing Waste Diversion

The Institute for Chemicals and Fuels from Alternative Resources and Goodwill are advancing two projects: converting clothing waste into plant-growth materials and using AI to divert landfill waste.

Leadership in Indigenous Planetary Health

Dr. Nicole Redvers is helping shape global conversations on planetary health. Her scholarship and policy leadership span international platforms and is helping to bridge Indigenous knowledge and scientific research to address some of the most pressing environmental and health challenges of our time.

Accelerating Regenerative Entrepreneurship

A partnership between the Morrissette Institute for Entrepreneurship and the Ivey Centre for Building Sustainable Value, the Regenerator helps entrepreneurs build companies that regenerate rather than deplete.

Advancing Severe Storm Research

The Canadian Severe Storms Laboratory (CSSL) marked its first year advancing storm research and resilience. CSSL brings together scientists and engineers to better understand severe storms and improve Canada's resilience to extreme weather.

Leading the Way in Sustainable Curating

The Centre for Sustainable Curating, led by Dr. Kirsty Robertson, is helping museums reduce their environmental impact through innovative sustainability solutions and an open access resource guide.

Campus as a Living Lab



Cultivating Community and Connection

Health Sciences students completed an Independent Research Project with faculty supervisor Dr. Lesley Gittings to explore community and connectedness at the Western Community Garden.

Healing Land, Building Responsibility

The first Campus as a Living Lab project continues to impact change on campus. Since 2022, A Field Course in Land Healing and Responsibility, co-taught by Dr. Desmond Moser and Clint Jacobs, Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, teaches students about Indigenous land stewardship.

Students participate in active land healing on campus to develop ongoing connections and responsibility to land.

"The garden is a therapeutic space and a social ecosystem."

Project Based Learning

The Careers & Experience Project-Based Learning annual report has identified the top three SDGs addressed through project-based learning.







What's Next...

CAMPUS AS A LIVING LAB

Expand the program to reach more members of our campus community.

GET OUR MESSAGE OUT

Strengthen the awareness of sustainability-focused research and learning opportunities.

Regenerative Campus

Western continues to advance sustainable operations, building a campus that has a positive impact each day.

Biodiversity Inventory

The Biodiversity Inventory at Western has been ongoing since 2022. Explore the inventory on iNaturalist, and follow @uwobiodiversity to join a monthly walk.

Invasive Species Management

Since 2023, Master's of Environment and Sustainability students have been removing invasive species on campus with an annual Buckthorn Bust.

Clean and Green

In April, our campus community participated in the City of London's Clean and Green, cleaning up over 100 kg of litter on campus.



21,000+
observations in the Biodiversity inventory

← Annual Masters of Environment and Sustainability Buckthorn Bust

Advancing Circularity in Campus Life

Student-Led Circularity

Last year, the student-led Fashion & Food Drive in Residence donated 146 kg to Ark Aid Mission. The Anabada Circular Economy Market, led by Master's of Environment and Sustainability students, swaps items instead of buying new.

Western Free Store

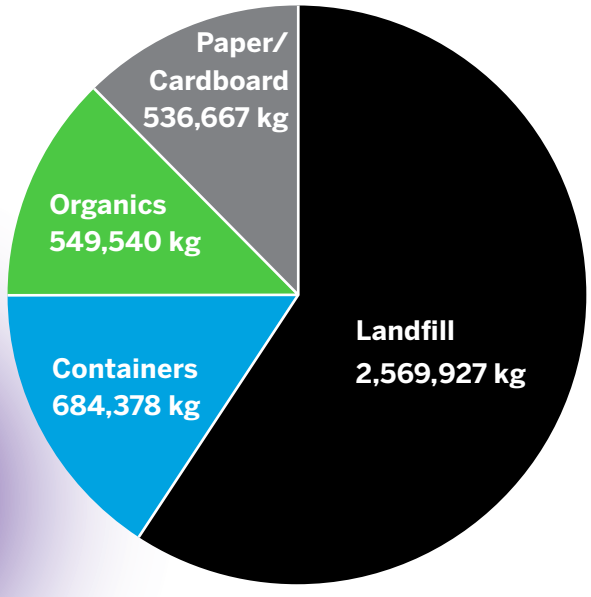
The Western Free Store opened its doors in 2025 and has seen 1,400+ visits and nearly 300 donations so far, keeping approximately 1,500 kg in circulation within the Western community.

Furniture Reuse

The Campus Furniture Reuse Teams Site gives new life to university-owned furniture, keeping useful items on campus. The platform currently has more than 200 participants.

Reducing Food Waste

Through a partnership with Second Harvest and MealCare, Hospitality Services recovers salvageable food from across campus and redistributes it to organizations in the London community. From September 2025 to April 2026, Western has donated about 11,800 meals to 14 non-profit agencies. Explore more sustainability initiatives in Hospitality Services.



41%
Waste Diversion Rate (2025)

Western Free Store (left);
Campus Clean and Green (right)





Advancing Campus Decarbonization

Energy Loop

Western's year-round energy loop captures and reuses heat across campus, reducing energy demand and improving efficiency. By connecting building systems and recovering otherwise wasted heat, like heat from the Power Plant boiler exhaust, the university can transfer energy where it's needed most.

Sustainable Procurement

Procurement Services received the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council's 2025 Leadership Award, recognizing Western's exceptional dedication in integrating sustainability into core procurement practices.

Deep Energy Retrofit Projects

Western has completed six deep energy retrofits that improve building efficiency and reduce emissions through equipment, systems, and control upgrades. By connecting buildings to the Energy Loop, excess heat can be recovered and shared across campus. The most recent retrofit at the Siebens Drake Research Institute (SDRI) achieved a 66% reduction in carbon emissions.

Responsible Investing Policy

In 2026, Western released a new Responsible Investing Policy and published its fifth Annual report, marking five years of dedicated efforts to advance sustainability through its investment practices.

A More Efficient Power Plant

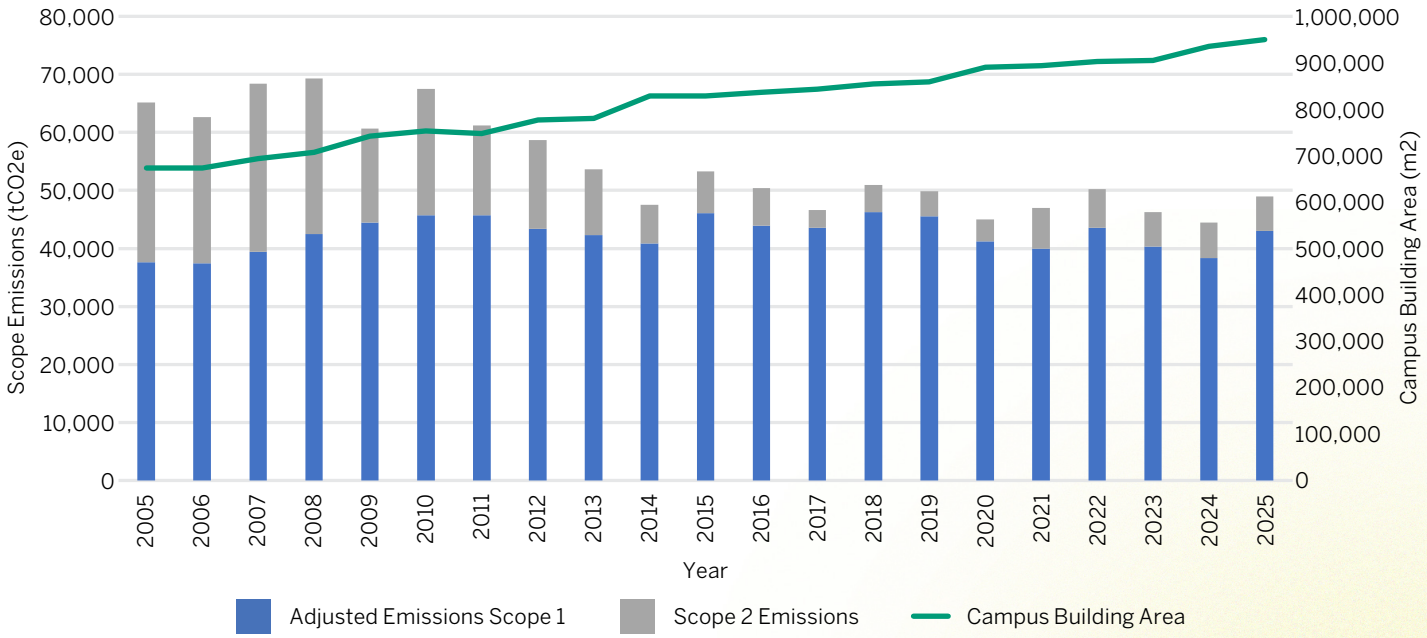
Western is installing electric boilers at the Power Plant to enhance the resiliency and sustainability of the campus heating infrastructure. Once fully commissioned, the boilers are expected to reduce the university's carbon emissions by 20–30%, a significant step toward Western's emissions reduction goals.

Sustainable Design Guidelines

In 2026, Western updated its Sustainable Design Guidelines to strengthen requirements for major renovations and new construction, including low-carbon buildings, improved energy performance, climate-resilient landscaping, and bird-friendly design.

Western's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

↓ Since 2005, campus carbon emissions have decreased by 25% while campus building area has expanded by 41%.



Note: Adjusted Scope 1 Emissions refer to GHG emissions directly related to fuel combustion for Western operations. Notably excluded are emissions attributed to steam consumption at London Health Science Centre's University Hospital (UH).



Ronald D. Schmeichel Building for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (SEI)

Certified LEED® Gold in 2026, SEI is Western's 14th LEED-certified building. Its closed-loop geothermal system, triple-pane and bird friendly windows, and high-performance building envelope uses 51% less energy than the Amit Chakma Engineering Building and requires no steam or natural gas for heating.

Active Mobility

Two bike repair stations were installed on campus with funding from the Western Sustainable Impact Fund. The project was a collaborative initiative led by the Western Active Transportation Society and the Western Community for Active Transport.



← Annual Bike to Campus Day

What's Next...

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

Advance the measurement and benchmarking of Scope 3 emissions to identify the most significant opportunities for reduction.

ASSESS

Conduct an ecological assessment of priority natural areas on campus along the riparian corridors and Medway Valley Heritage Forest.

Healthy & Connected Community

Fostering a healthy, connected community through nature, belonging, and shared environmental responsibility.

80
community gardeners in 2026

30
student groups in the Western Environment & Sustainability Network

Nature Prescriptions (Nature Rx)

Nature Prescriptions are gaining popularity because of the many mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health benefits. The Nature Rx Toolkit was co-created with adolescents and providers at the London Children's Hospital and researchers at Western.



Engaging with Nature

There are countless ways to engage with nature on Western's campus. Anyone can request a Green Campus Tour to learn more about sustainability at Western. Take some time to enjoy the natural environment or explore the green spaces in the core during lunch and study breaks.

Riverfest

Since 2022, Riverfest has been an annual tradition each September on campus. Co-hosted by the Indigenous Student Centre, Indigenous Students' Association, and Western Sustainability, Riverfest features events and activities designed to help our community connect with Deshkan Ziibi (Thames River) and understand the importance of water protection.



← Anishinaabe Water Walk, Riverfest

6 years
of the Western Sustainable Leaders Program (WSLP)

300+ members

Decolonizing Land-Based Relations

In a Geography and Environment/ Indigenous Studies course taught by Sâkihitowin Awâsis (Dr. Cortney Golkar-Dakin), students use the Wampum Garden to explore land-based learning and develop decolonization strategies grounded in reciprocal relationships with the land.

Pollinator Garden

Led by Friends of the Gardens, the pollinator garden behind Middlesex College has become a vibrant hub for learning, research, and creativity. The garden supports interdisciplinary initiatives, including citizen science, a Native Seed Library, and the RhizomeMind project.

Post-Homecoming Clean-up

Since 2022, the Western Sustainable Leaders Program has hosted an annual Post-Homecoming Clean-up that promotes environmental stewardship by encouraging student leaders to care for the land and strengthen their connection to campus.

Western Environment & Sustainability Network (WESN)

30 student clubs and groups form the WESN, coming together each October for an annual Sustainability Fair showcasing student-led action and opportunities to get involved.



↑ **Live Stake Planting:** In 2023, a collaborative climate resiliency project, led by students in partnership with Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and local Indigenous knowledge keepers, included cutting 100 branches ("stakes") from native trees and planting them directly into the creek bank, along with 200 native shrubs and perennials, to enhance the health of Medway Creek on campus. This project can be viewed as a timelapse as the trees and shrubs continue to fill in along the creek's bank.

What's Next...

EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

Expanding across campus to celebrate biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Expanding opportunities for student leadership on climate and sustainability priorities.

Western
Sustainability

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