

Sustainability Perspectives, Practices, Engagement and Outcomes

Results of 2023 Surveys of Students, Faculty and Staff
With Comparisons to 2018 and 2019 Survey Results

Introduction

Dickinson students and employees were surveyed in spring 2023 to learn about their sustainability perspectives, practices, and engagement.

A sample of 1000 students, which included 250 students from each class year, were invited by email to participate in the student survey. The student sample represents 47% of matriculated students. 273 responses were received from students, for a response rate of 27%. Responses were received from 39 First Year students, 94 sophomores, 66 juniors, and 73 seniors.

All 1000 Dickinson employees were invited to participate in an employee survey. 402 responses were received, for a response rate of 40%. Responses were received from 262 hourly and salaried staff and 140 faculty members.

Students and employees were offered the incentive of being entered in drawings to win \$35 gift cards, 4 for student respondents and 4 for employee respondents. Winners had the choice of gift cards from the Carlisle farmers' market, REI, and Amazon.

The surveys were administered by Dickinson's Center for Sustainability Education with support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The surveys were administered online using Qualtrics.

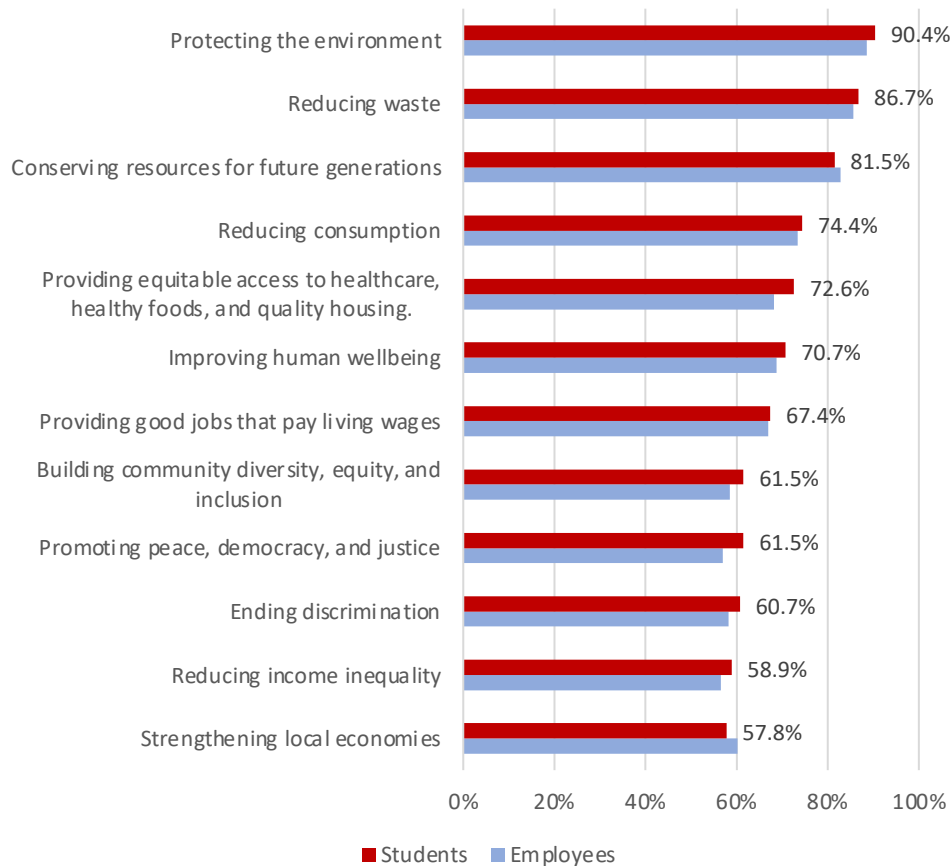
This report provides a summary of responses to both the student and employee surveys. The responses provide insights about how the Dickinson community perceives and engages with sustainability issues, as well as self-assessed outcomes for development of skills, knowledge and motivation for advancing sustainability.

Similar surveys were administered in 2018 and 2019. Many of the questions are the same or are very similar to questions in the 2023 surveys. For questions that are the same or very similar, comparisons are made across the three years.

Responses to the surveys show high percentages of Dickinson students and employees practicing sustainable behaviors and engaging in sustainability in impactful ways. Percentages declined from 2019 to 2023 for practicing some sustainable behaviors, engagement activities, and outcomes but are still at relatively strong levels.

Perspectives

Which issues do you closely associate with creating a sustainable society?



The issues associated with sustainability are very similar among students and employees. They demonstrate wide recognition that sustainability encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions.

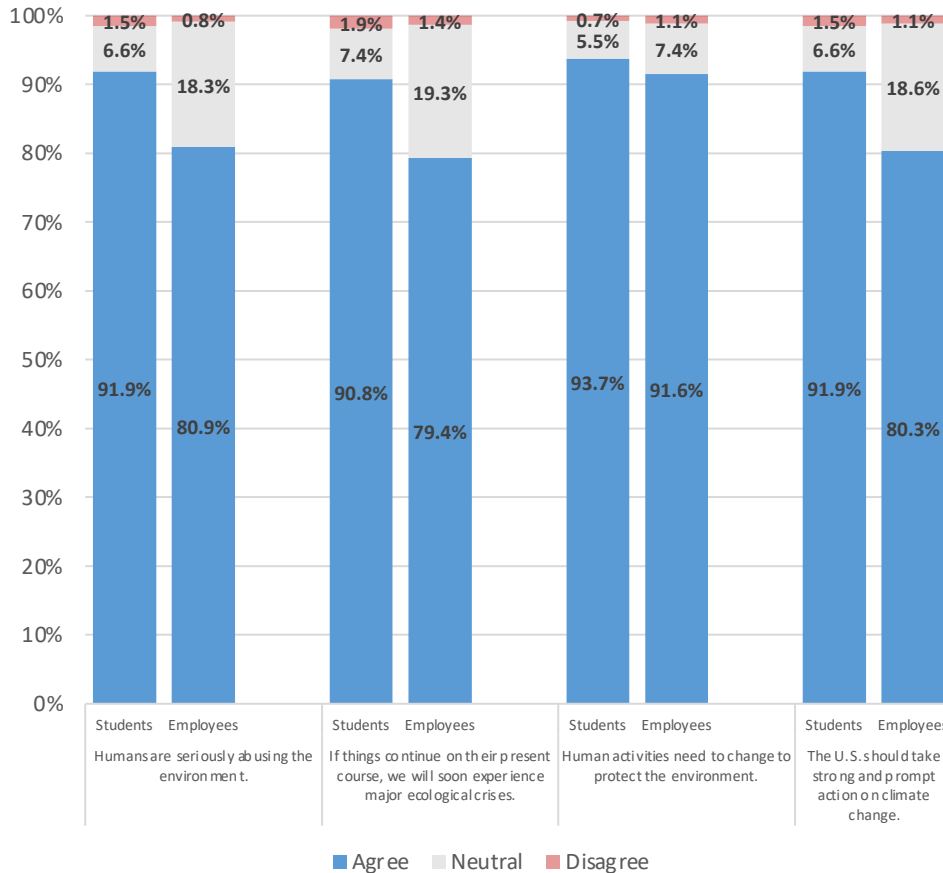
Very high percentages of students and employees associate environmental issues with sustainability.

More than two-thirds of students and employees associate issues of human wellbeing, access to basic services, and living wages with sustainability.

Lesser but significant percentages of students and employees associate issues of equity, justice, discrimination, inequality, peace, and local economies with sustainability.

Perspectives: Environmental Sustainability

Do you agree with the following statements?



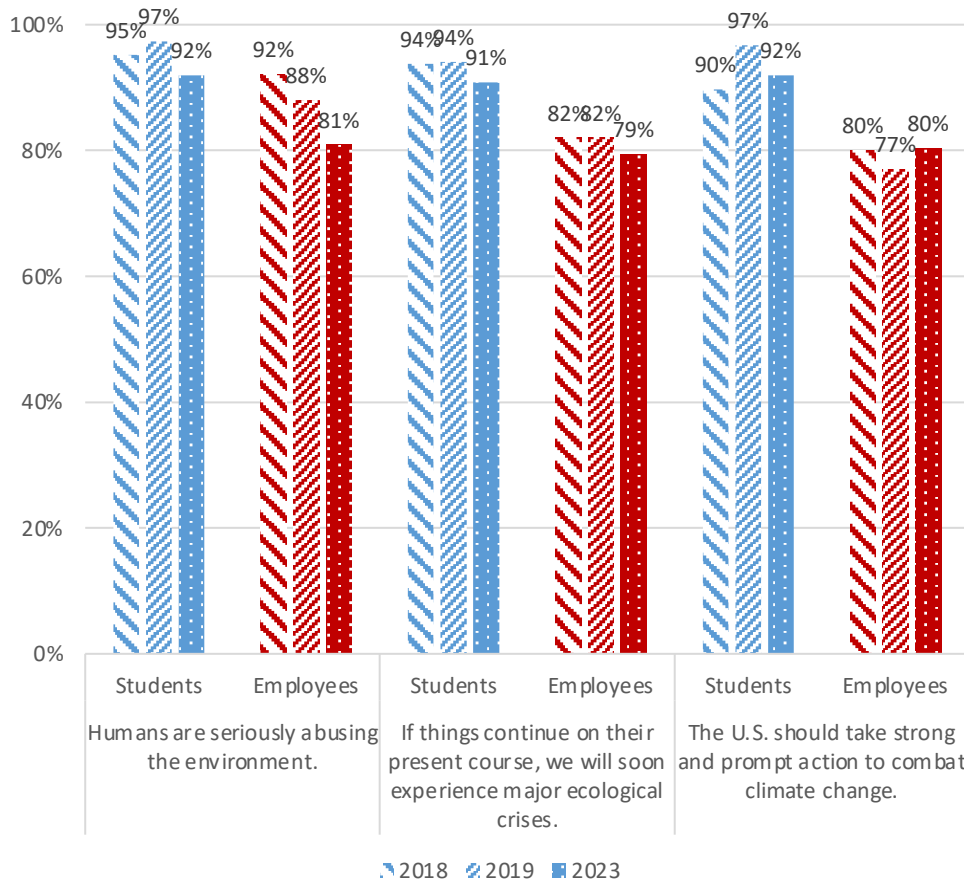
Very high percentages, 79% to 94%, agree with statements that are associated with environmental sustainability worldviews.

Higher percentages of students than employees agree that humans are seriously abusing the environment, continuing current trends would soon result in major ecological crises, and the US should take strong action on climate change.

Very similar percentages of students and employees agree that human actions need to change to protect the environment.

Perspectives: Environmental Sustainability

Do you agree with the following statements?

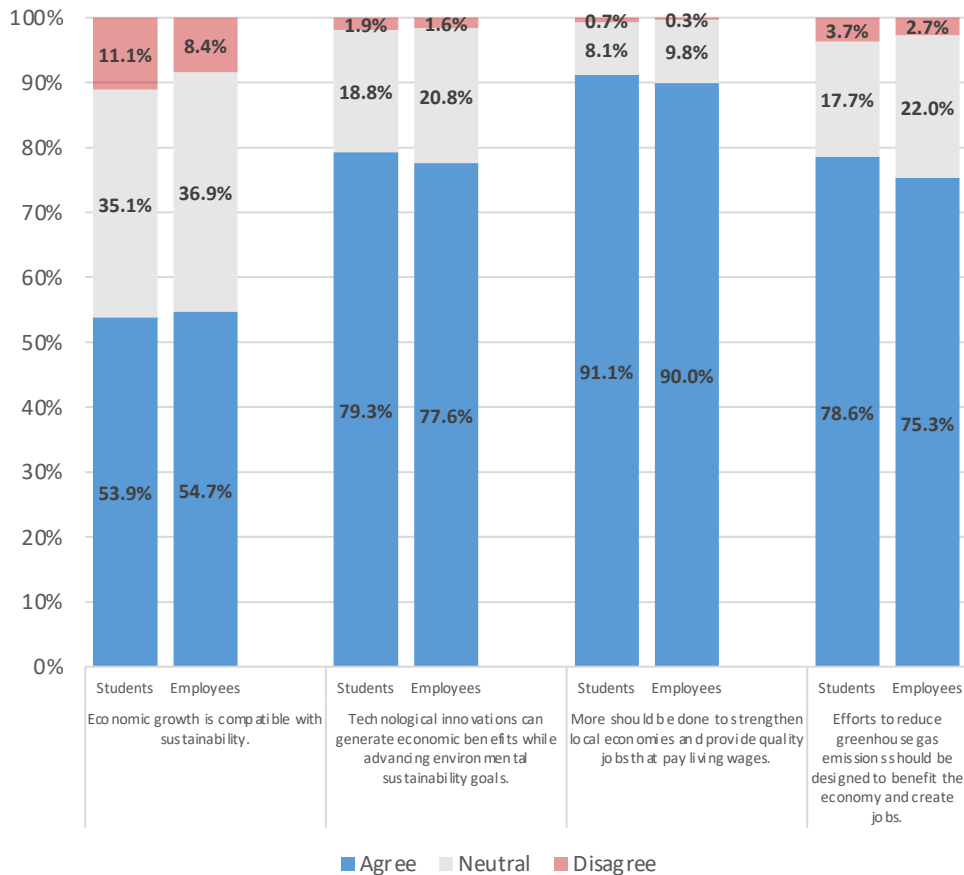


Perspectives on the consequences of continuing current trends and the need for strong climate action have been relatively stable across 2018, 2019 and 2023.

Employees' agreement that humans are seriously abusing the environment declined from 92% in 2018 to 81% in 2023.

Perspectives: Economic Sustainability

Do you agree with the following statements?



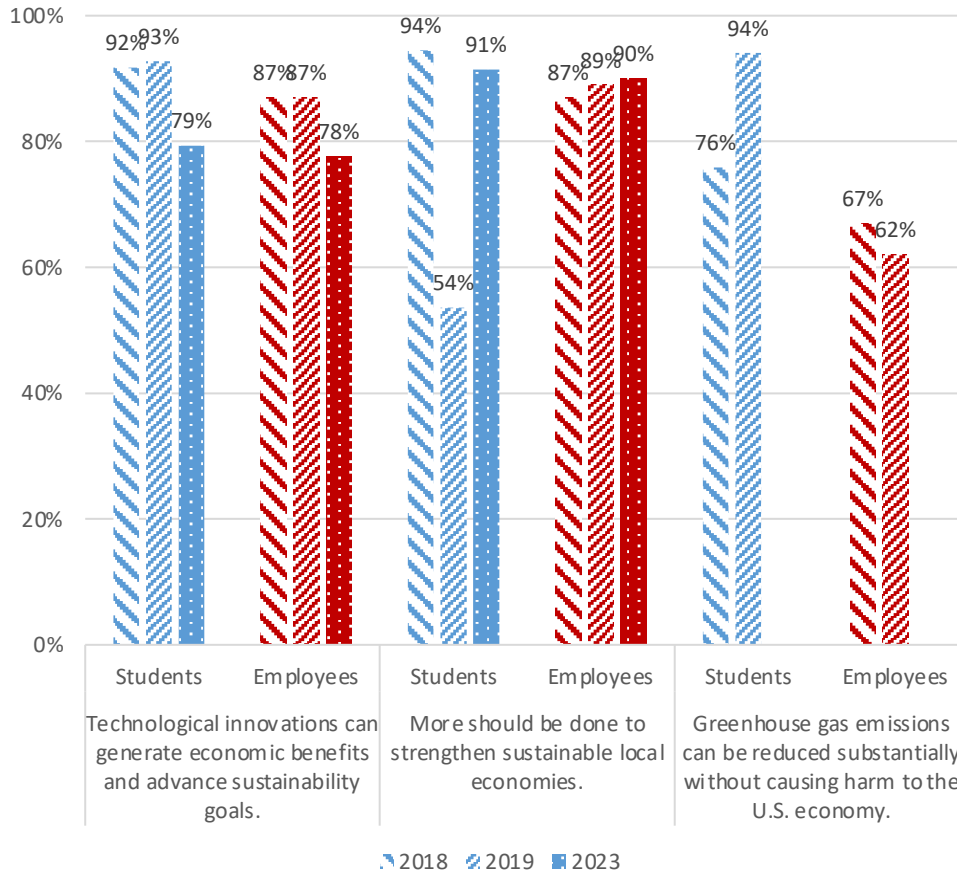
91% and 90% of students and employees, respectively, agree that more should be done to strengthen local economies and provide quality jobs that pay living wages.

Roughly three-quarters of students and employees agree that technological innovations can generate both economic and sustainability benefits and that efforts to reduce GHGs should be designed to benefit the economy and create jobs.

Slightly more than 50% of students and employees agree that economic growth is compatible with sustainability.

Perspectives: Economic Sustainability

Do you agree with the following statements?



Perspectives on economic sustainability issues are broadly consistent but have varied across 2018, 2019 and 2023.

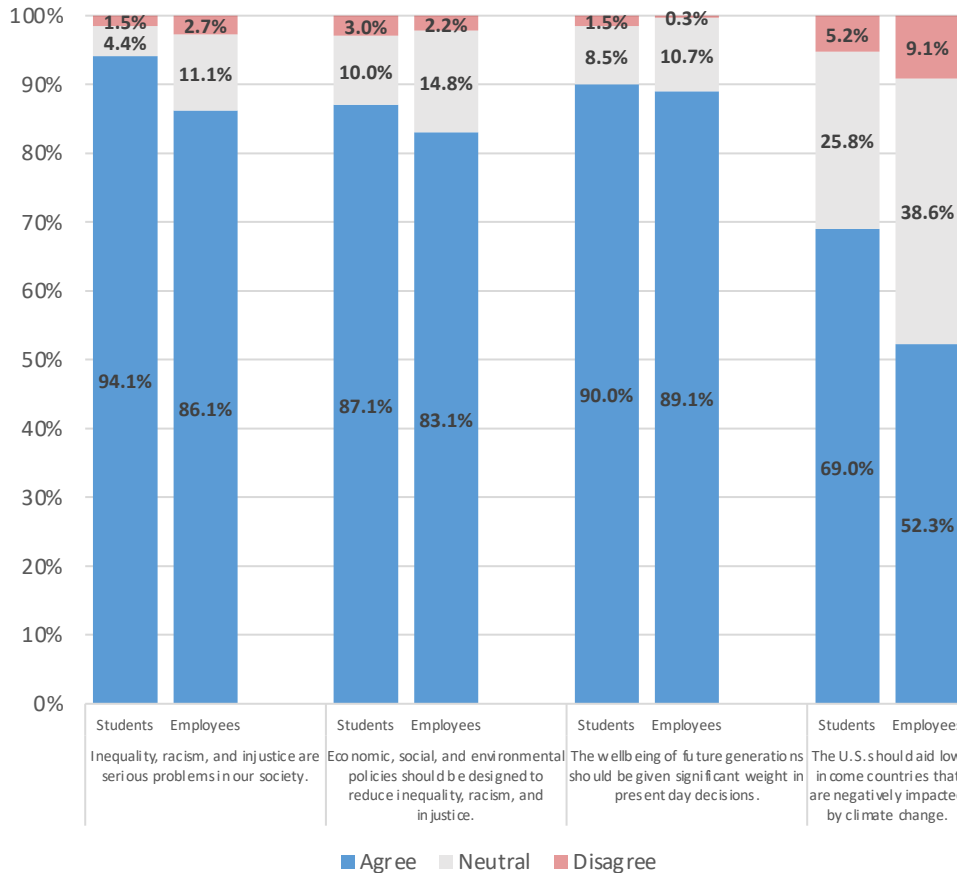
Agreement that technological innovation can generate economic and sustainability benefits declined for both students and employees.

Students agreement that GHG emissions can be reduced without causing economic harm rose substantially from 2018 to 2019 and is significantly greater than for employees. This question was not asked in 2023.

Questions on the compatibility of economic growth with sustainability and designing GHG reduction actions to benefit the economy are new questions in 2023 and were not asked in the 2018 and 2019 surveys.

Perspectives: Social Sustainability

Do you agree with the following statements?

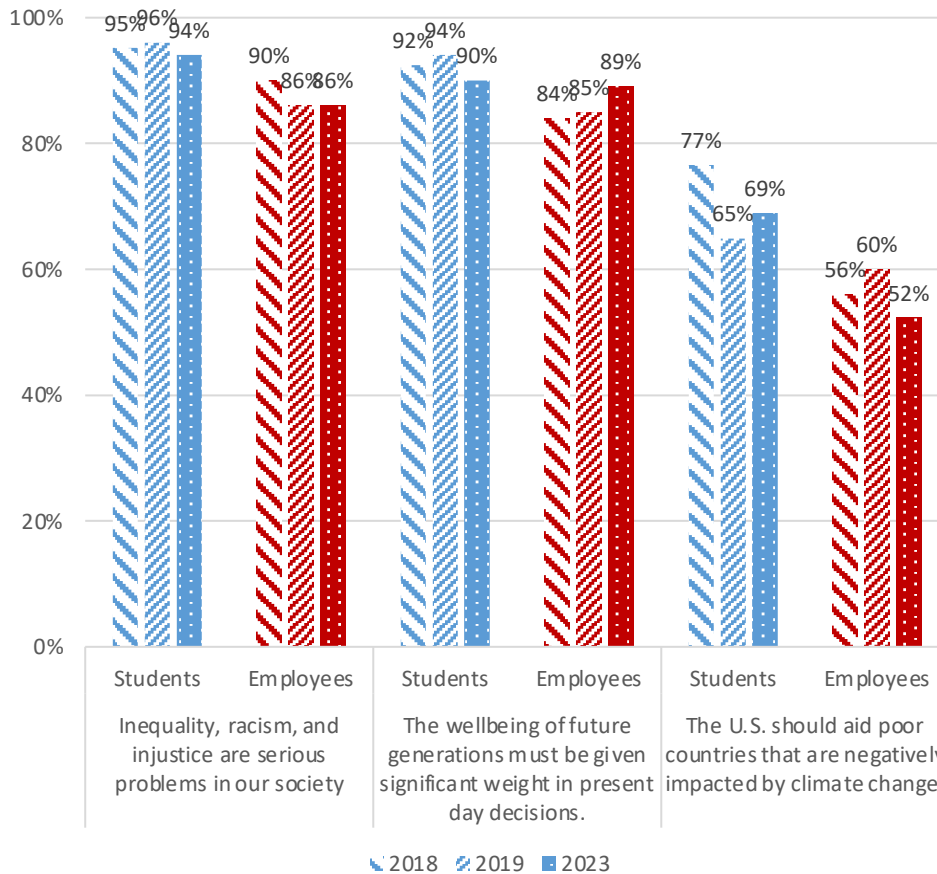


Over 80% of students and employees agree that inequality, racism and injustice are serious problems, policies should be designed to reduce inequality, racism, and injustice, and the wellbeing of future generations should be given significant weight today.

However, smaller percentages of students and employees agree that the U.S. should aid low-income countries negatively impacted by climate change.

Perspectives: Social Sustainability

Do you agree with the following statements?



Perspectives on the seriousness of problems of inequality, racism, and injustice and giving weight to the wellbeing of future generations have been relatively stable across 2018, 2019 and 2023.

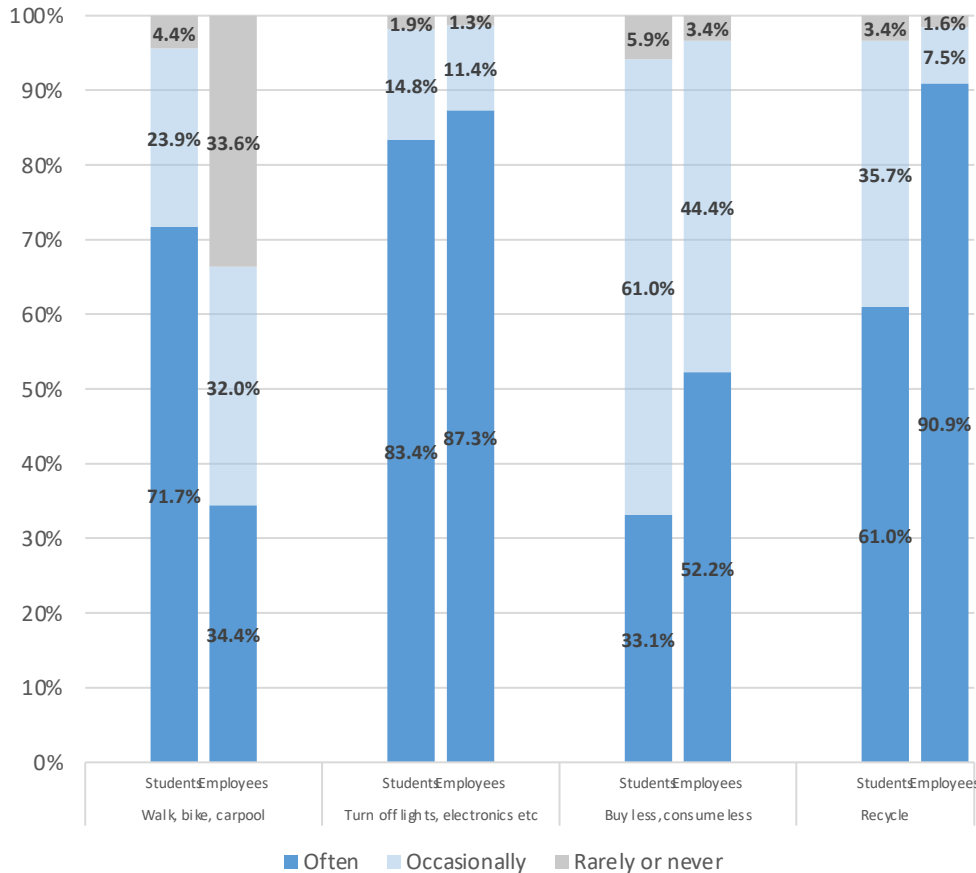
Students' support for aiding poor countries impacted by climate change declined from 77% in 2018 to 65% in 2019 and then increased to 69% in 2023.

Employees support for aiding poor countries has varied between 52% and 60%.

The question on designing policies to reduce inequality, racism and injustice was new in the 2023 survey and was not asked in the 2018 and 2019 surveys.

Practices

How often do you practice the following behaviors in your personal life?



Over 94% of students walk, bike or carpool, turn off lights and other electronics, buy less & consume less, and recycle “occasionally” or “often”.

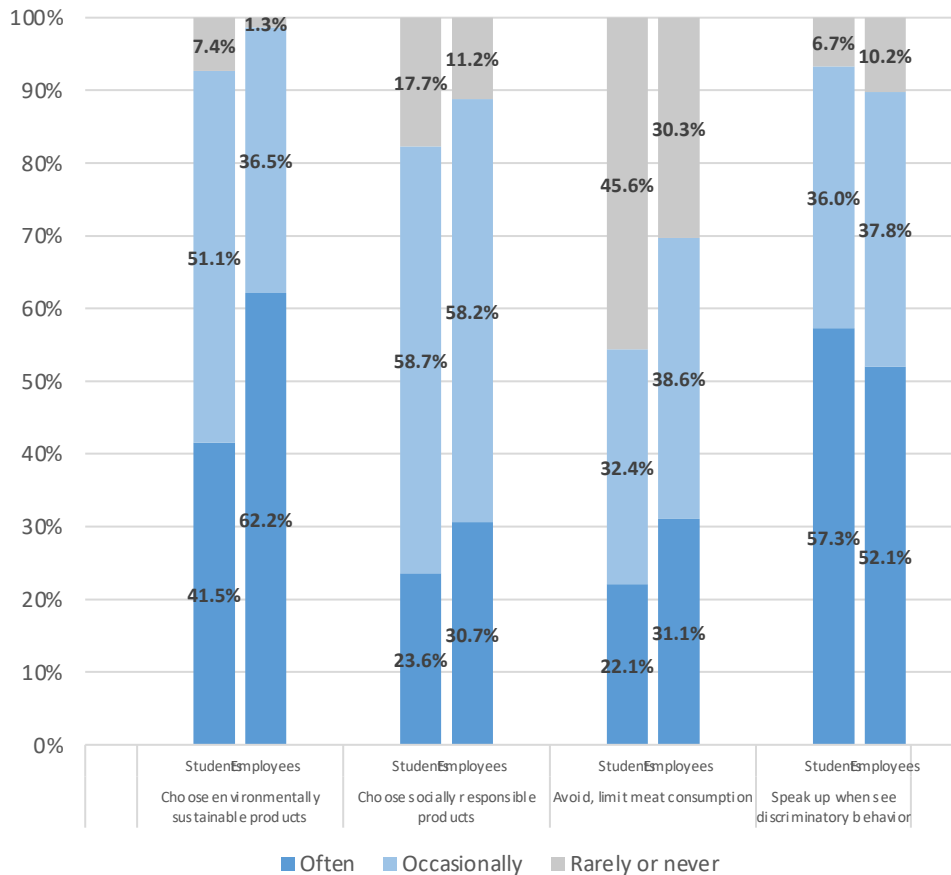
Behaviors practiced “often” by students are walking, biking and carpooling (72%), turning off lights and other electronics (83%), and recycling (61%).

Over 96% of employees turn off lights and other electronics, buy less & consume less, and recycle “occasionally” or “often”, while 66% of employees walk, bike or carpool “occasionally” or “often”.

Behaviors practiced “often” by employees are turning off lights and other electronics (87%), and recycling (91%).

Practices

How often do you practice the following behaviors in your personal life?



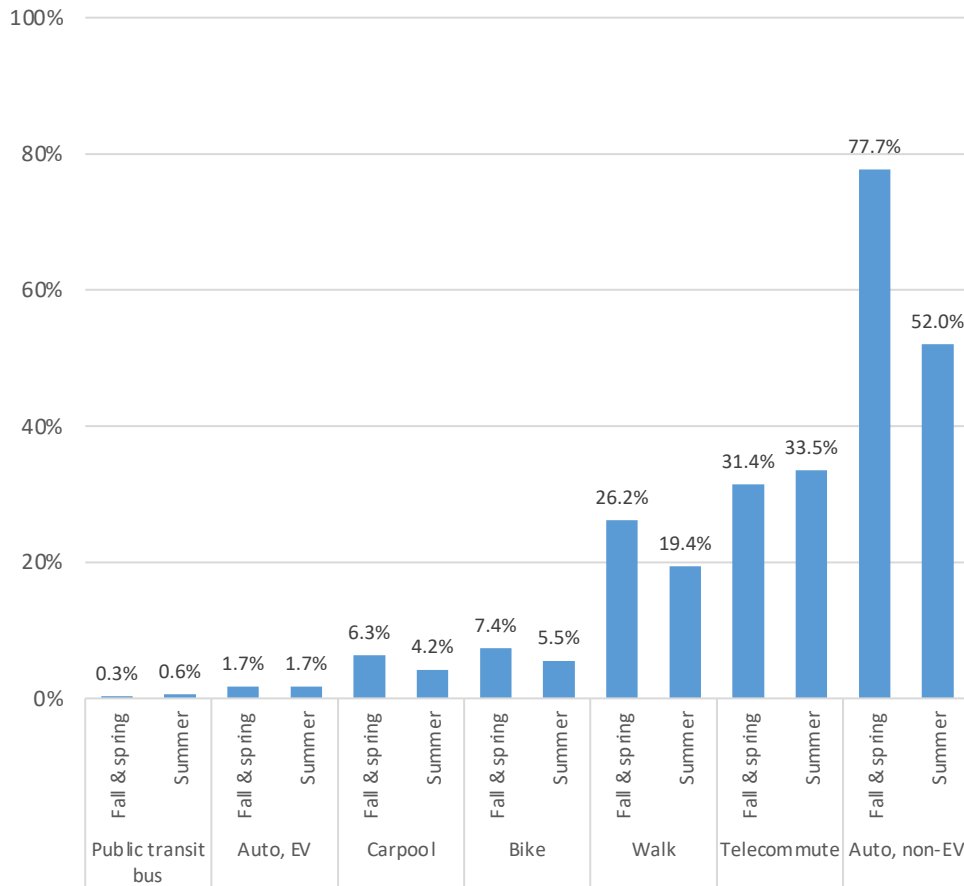
42% of students and 62% of employees “often” choose products that are environmentally sustainable, while 24% of students and 31% of employees “often” choose socially responsible products. An additional 37% to 59% make these choices “occasionally.”

22% of students and 31% of employees “often” avoid or limit meat consumption and another 32% to 39% do so “occasionally.”

More than half of students and employees speak up “often” when they see discriminatory behavior and over 90% speak up “occasionally” or more.

Practices

Employee commuting: percentage using mode one or more days per week



78% of employees commute one or more day per week by driving alone in a non-electric auto during fall & spring semesters; 52% do this in the summer too.

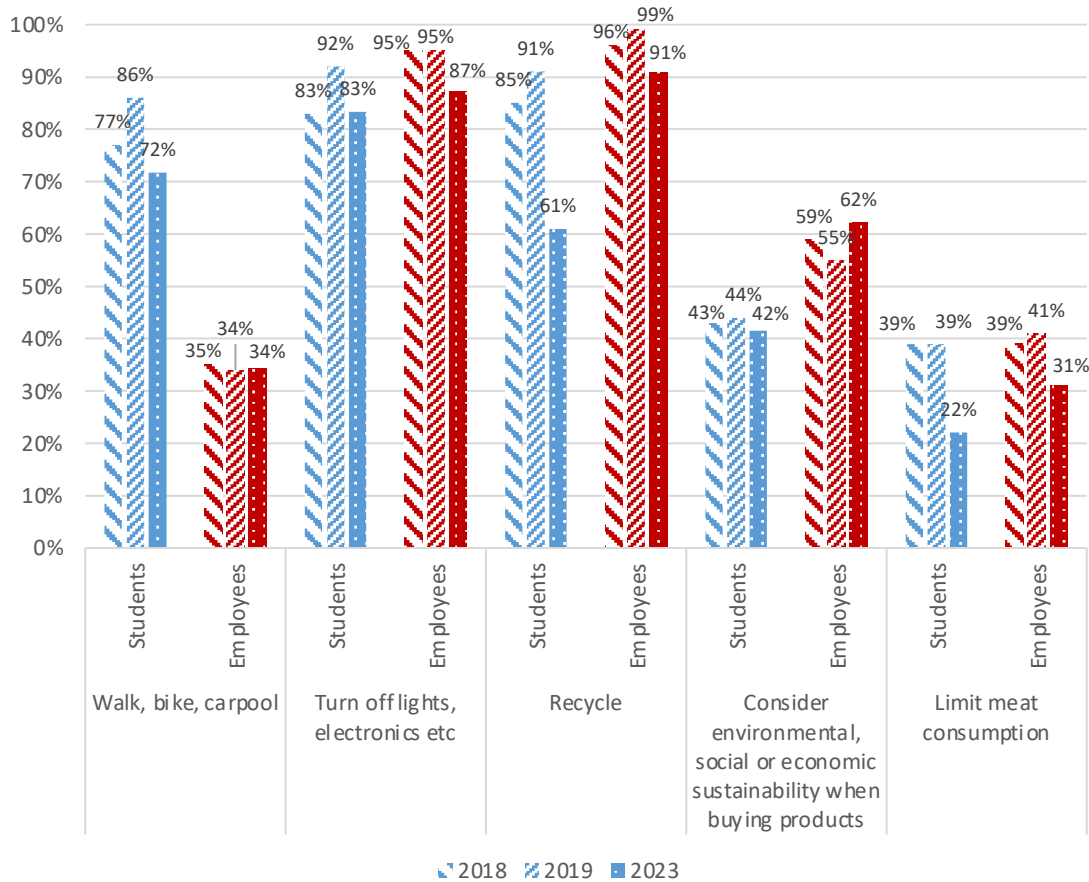
Over 30% telecommute at least one day per week in fall, spring and summer. This is likely an increase from pre-pandemic period but data on telecommuting from before 2023 is lacking.

26% walk one day per week in fall & spring and 19% walk one day per week in summer.

7% bike and 6% carpool one day per week in fall & spring while 5% bike and 4% carpool in summer.

Practices

Practices that are engaged in “often”

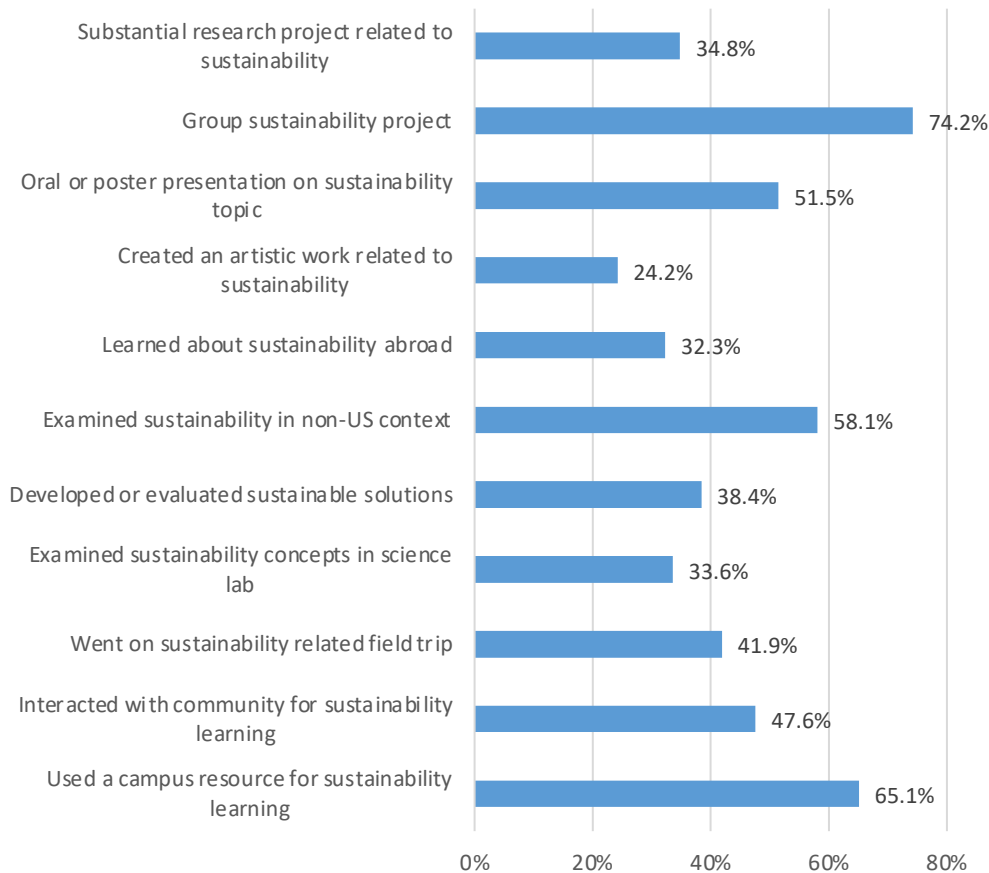


Percentages of students who “often” practice sustainable behaviors declined from 2019 to 2023 for several behaviors: walking, biking & carpooling, turning off lights and other electronics, recycling, and limiting meat consumption.

Employee practices also show declines for turning off lights and other electronics, recycling, and limiting meat consumption.

Engagement

Students: What activities have you engaged in as part of academic courses within the past year?



High percentages of students engaged in sustainability learning activities as part of academic courses within the past year.

74% worked on group sustainability projects, 65% used a campus resource, e.g. the farm, to learn about sustainability, 58% examined sustainability in a non-U.S. context, 52% gave an oral or poster presentation.

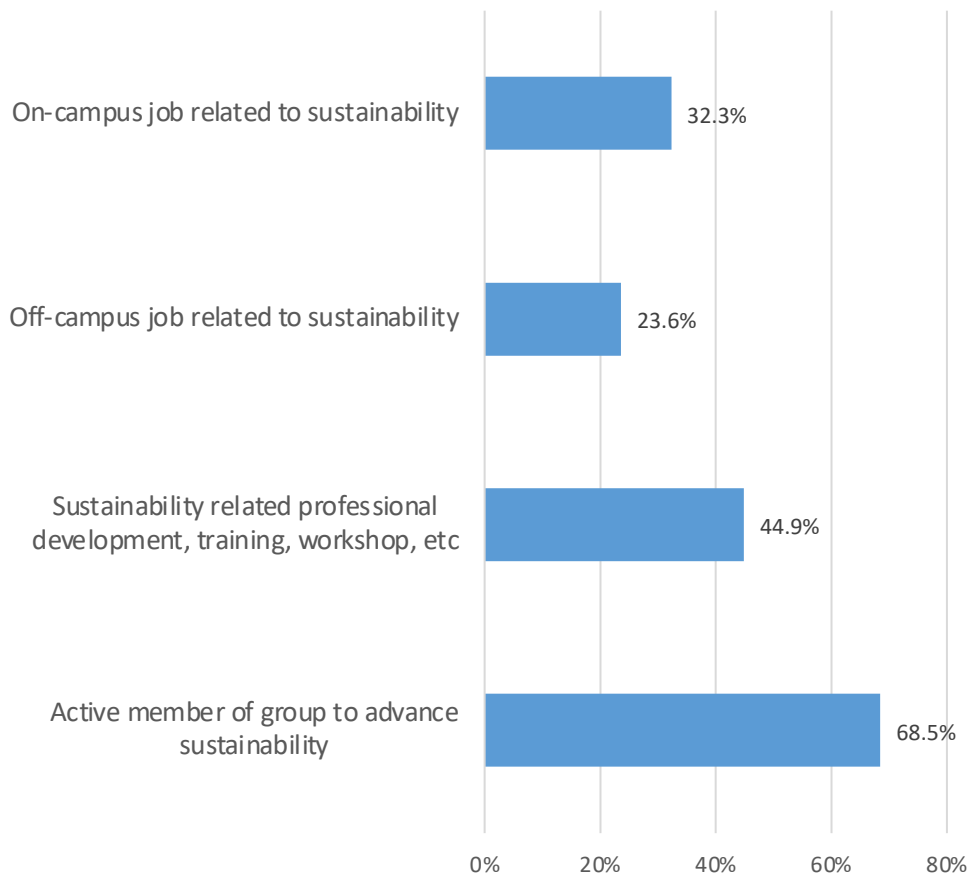
38% developed or evaluated sustainable solutions.

35% did a substantial research project related to sustainability.

24% created or performed an artistic work related to sustainability.

Engagement

Students: What activities have you engaged outside of academic courses within the past year?



High percentages of students also engaged in sustainability within the past year through extra-curricular activities.

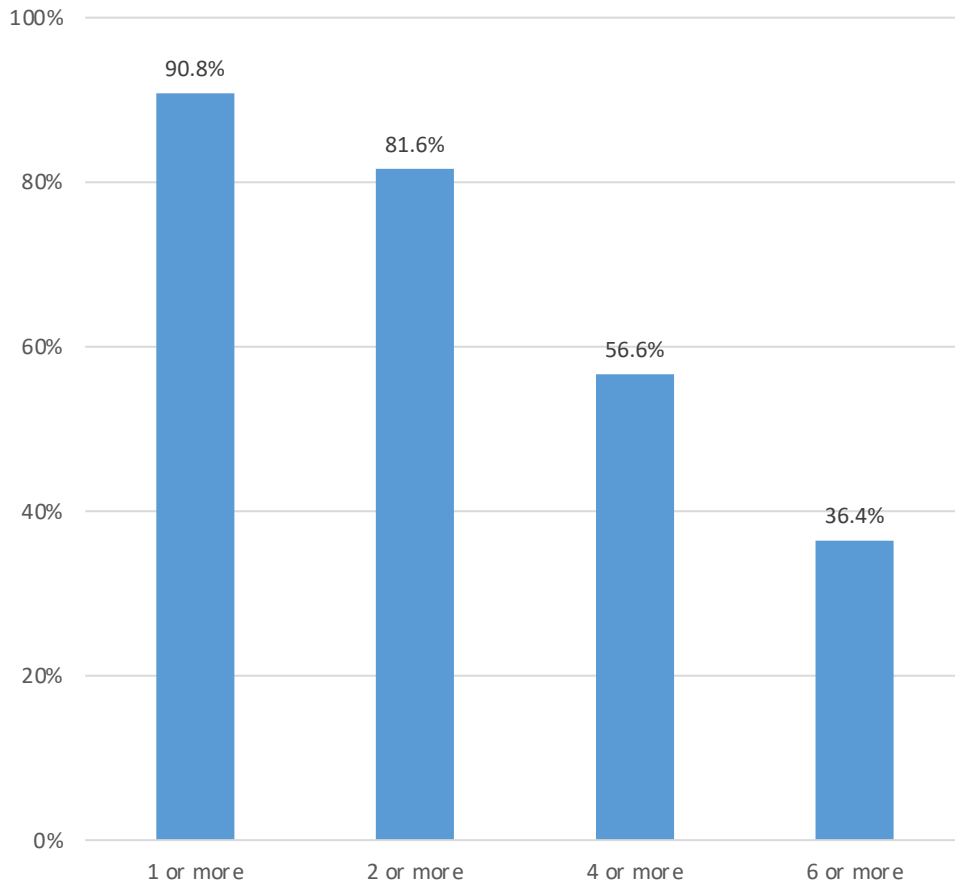
56% worked in an on-campus or off-campus job related to sustainability.

45% participated in a sustainability workshop, training, or other professional development opportunity.

69% were active members of an on-campus or off-campus group that works to advance sustainability goals.

Engagement

Number of high impact practices students engaged in within the past year (academic + extra-curricular)



Adding it all together: over 90% of Dickinson students engage in one or more high impact practice for sustainability within the past year.

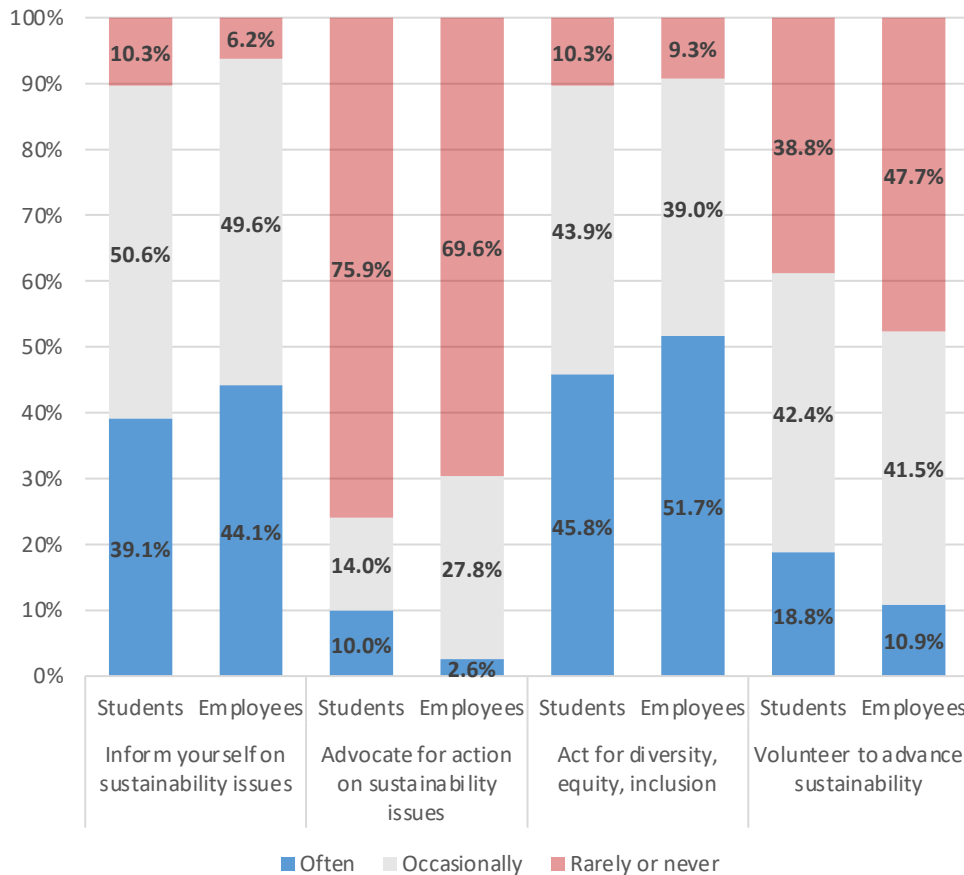
82% engaged in two or more.

57% engaged in 4 or more.

36% engage in 6 or more.

Engagement

How often do you engage in the following activities?



Significant percentages of students and employees engage in sustainability in their personal lives.

90% of students and 94% of employees inform themselves about sustainability issues “occasionally” or more.

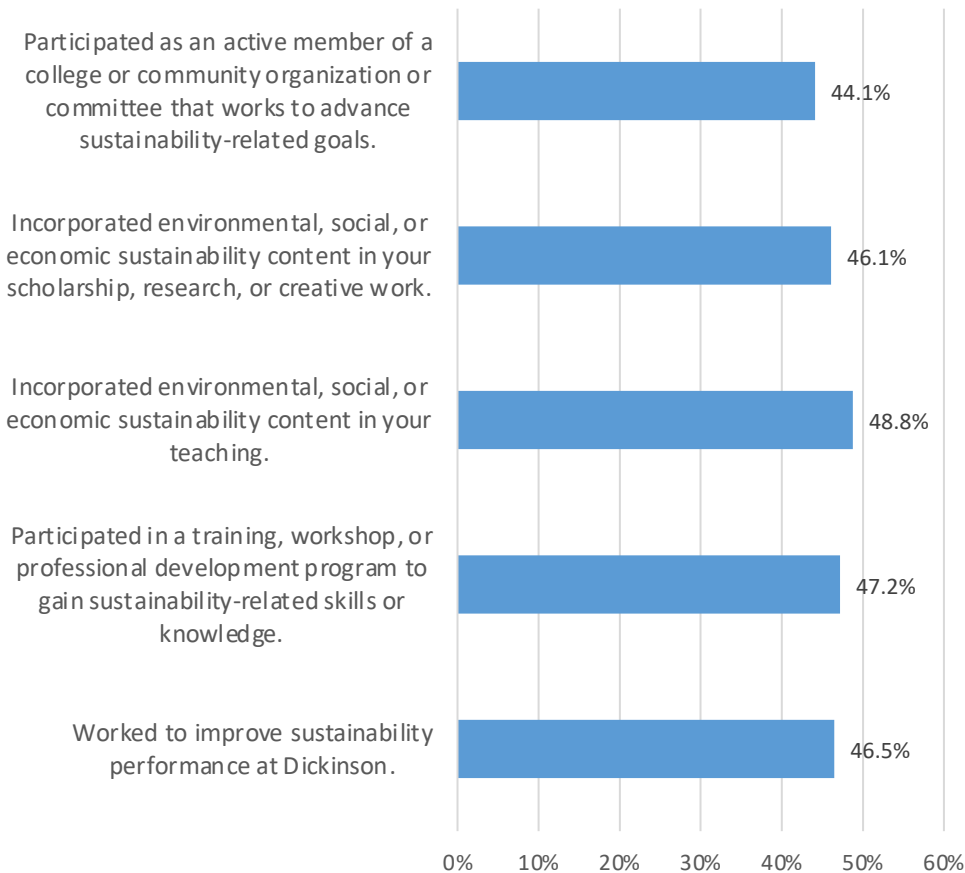
90% of students and employees act “occasionally” or more to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community.

Lesser but significant percentages volunteer “occasionally” or more with organizations to advance sustainability: 61% of students and 52% of employees.

Percentages who advocate action by public officials on sustainability issues “occasionally” or more are 24% for students and 30% for employees.

Engagement

Employees: What activities have you engaged in within the past year?

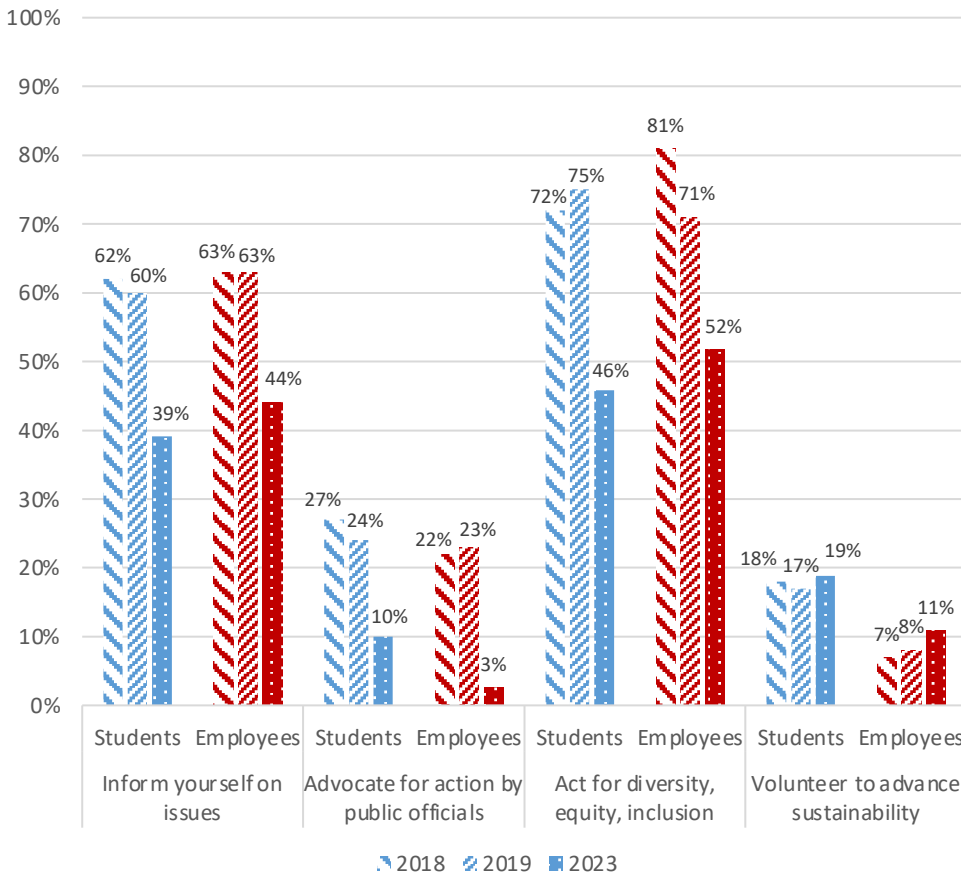


Within the past year, between 44% and 49% of employees have:

- Participated in an organization or committee to advance sustainability related goals,
- Incorporated sustainability in scholarship, research, creative work, and teaching,
- Participated in a training, workshop or other professional development program to gain sustainability-related skills, and
- Worked to improve sustainability performance at Dickinson.

Engagement

Activities engaged in “often” within the past year?



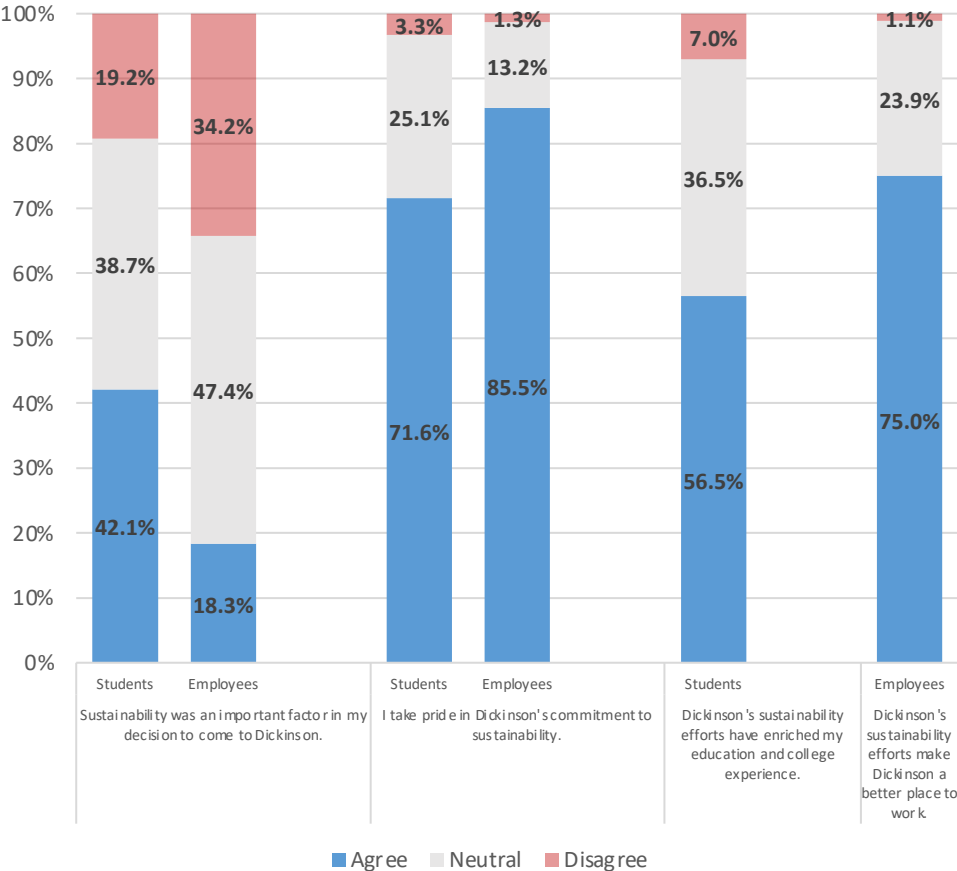
The percentages of students and employees who engage “often” fell sharply from 2019 to 2023 for:

- Informing yourself on sustainability issues
- Advocating for action by public officials on sustainability issues
- Acting to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community

Volunteering was relative stable.

Attitudes about Sustainability at Dickinson

Do you agree with the following statements?



Sustainability was an important factor in deciding to come to Dickinson for 42% of students and 18% of employees.

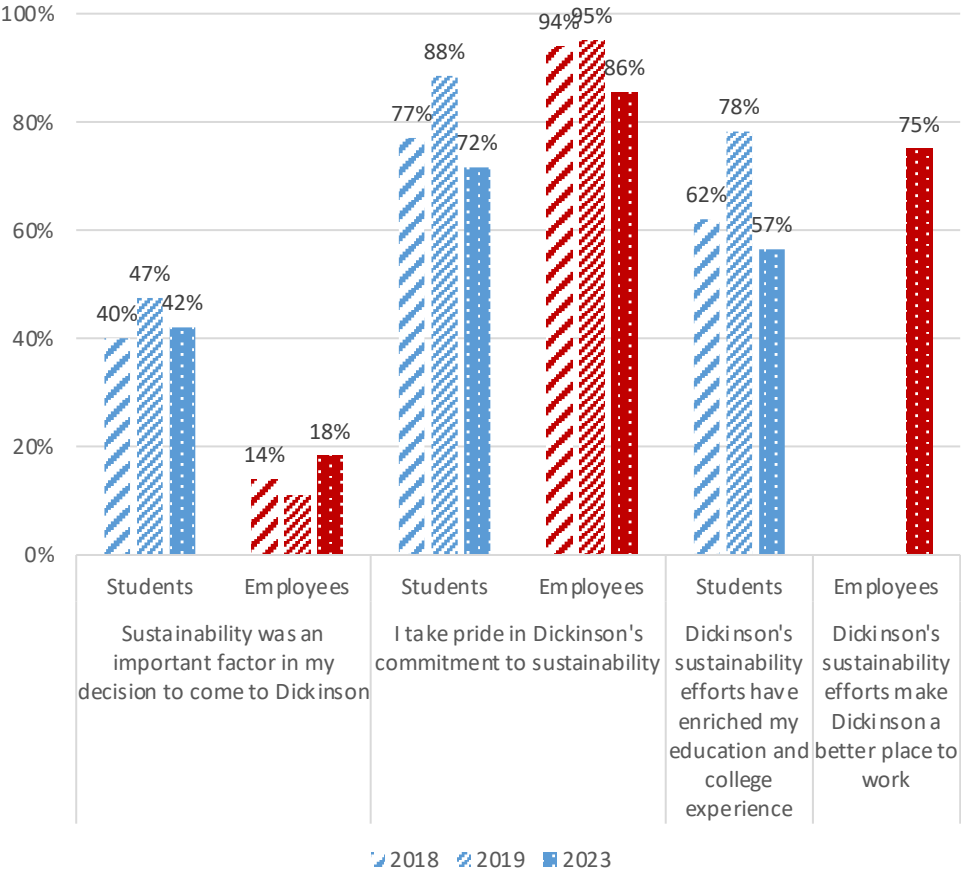
72% of students and 86% of employees take pride in Dickinson's commitment to sustainability.

57% of students agree sustainability has enriched their education and college experience.

75% of employees say sustainability efforts make Dickinson a better place to work.

Attitudes about Sustainability at Dickinson

Do you agree with the following statements?



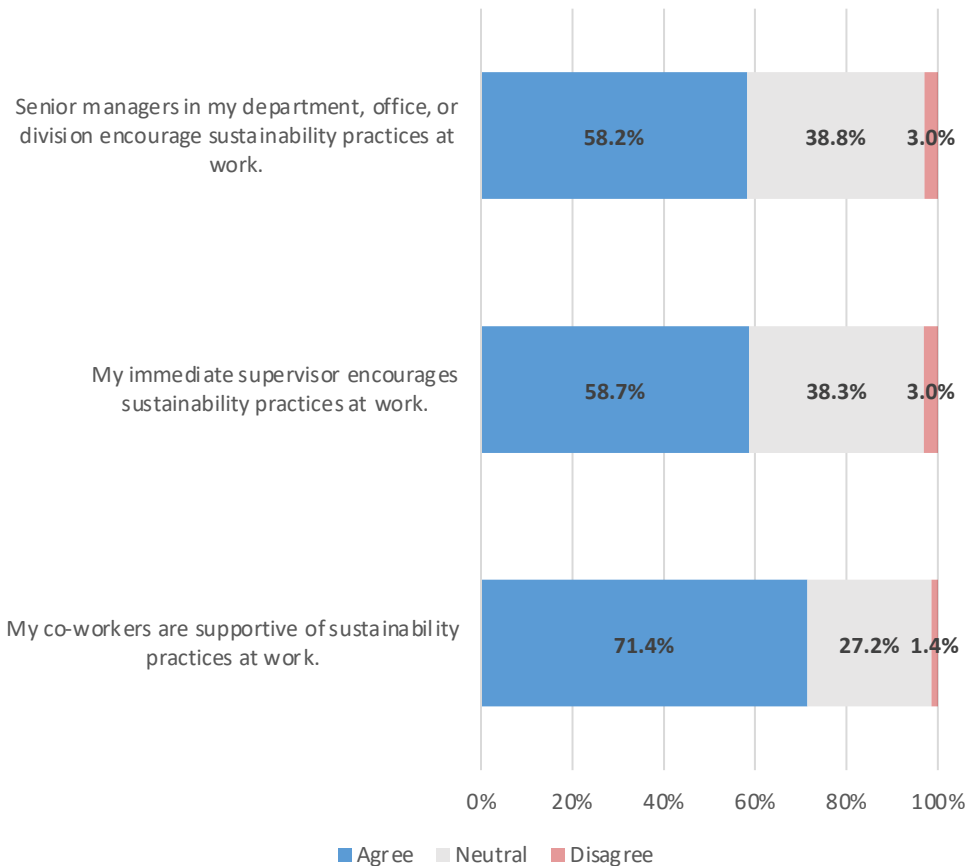
The importance of sustainability for decisions to come to Dickinson has been relatively stable for students over the period 2018 – 2023 and increased slightly for employees.

Pride in Dickinson’s commitment to sustainability declined from 2019 to 2023 but is still high.

The percentage of students who agree sustainability has enriched their education and college experience declined significantly from 2019 to 2023.

Employee Work Environment

Do you agree with the following statements?



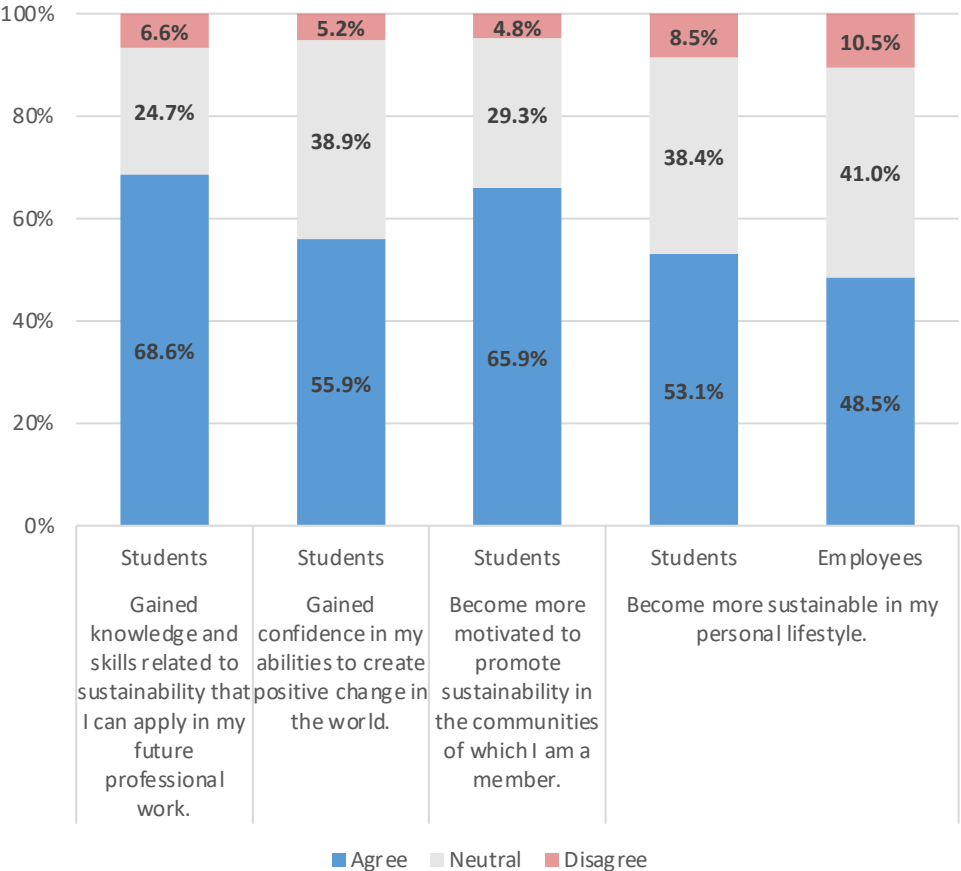
58% to 59% of employees agree that their immediate supervisor and senior managers encourage sustainability practices at work.

But 40% are not getting clear messages from supervisors and senior managers that encourage sustainability practices.

71% agree that their co-workers are supportive of sustainability practices.

Outcomes

Do you agree with the following statements? Since coming to Dickinson, I have . . .



Significant percentages of students and employees experience positive outcomes since coming to Dickinson.

69% of students agree they have gained sustainability knowledge and skills they can apply in future professional work

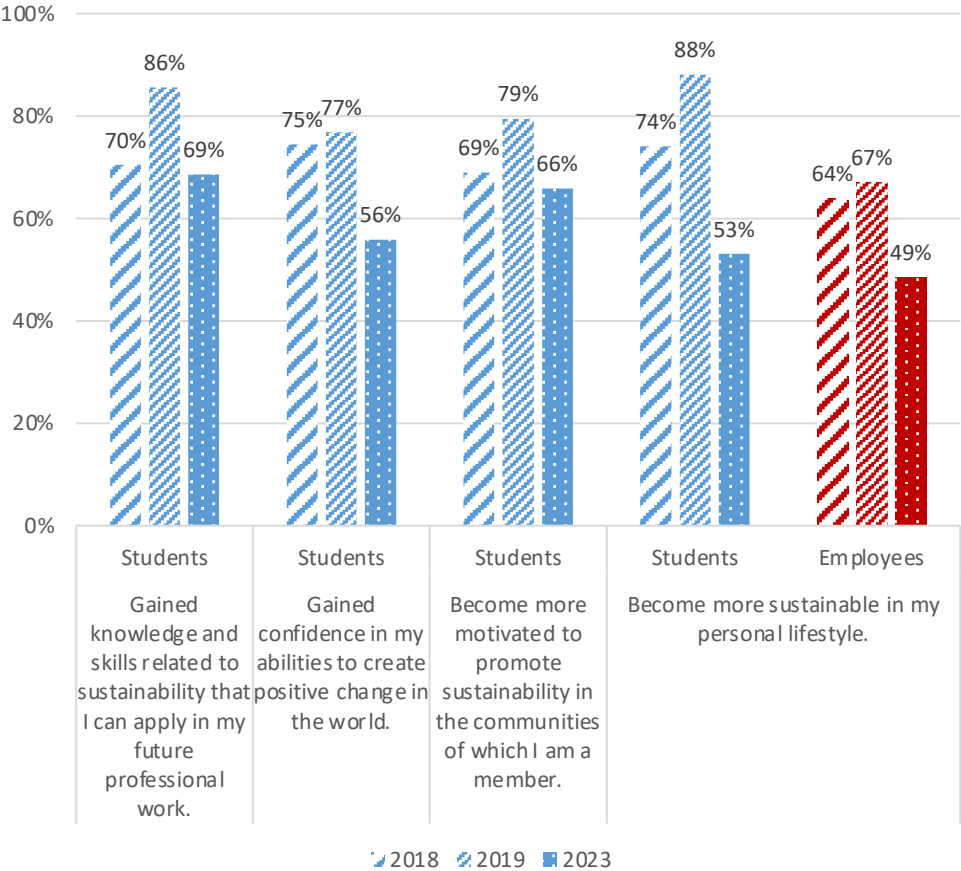
59% of students agree they have gained confidence to create positive change in the world.

66% of students agree they have become more motivated to promote sustainability in their communities.

53% of students and 49% of employees agree that they have become more sustainable in their personal lifestyles.

Outcomes

Do you agree with the following statements? Since coming to Dickinson, I have . . .



Positive reported outcomes have declined significantly from 2019 to 2023 but are still strong.