



NURSING

---

# Planetary Health Report Card (Nursing):

*Rush University College of Nursing*

---



2024-2025 Contributing Team:

- Students: Regina Piper, BSN, RN, IBCLC; Madison Spellman, BSN, RN
- Faculty Mentors: Heide Cygan, DNP, RN

\*Primary Contact: Heide Cygan, [Heide\\_Cygan@rush.edu](mailto:Heide_Cygan@rush.edu)

Land acknowledgment: Rush University is on the land of the Peoria, Miami, Kickapoo, and Potawatomi Nations. [Mission DEI](#) | [Family & Preventive Medicine](#) | [RUSH University](#)

## Summary of Findings

Overall Grade	C+
Curriculum	C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rush University College of Nursing's curriculum consistently incorporates modules, lectures, and readings related to planetary health, environmental degradation, and its impact on human health. Curriculum does not teach Indigenous Knowledge to improve planetary health, nor does it consistently emphasize the benefits of a plant-based diet, or the impacts of food and water insecurity related to climate degradation.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> The College of Nursing's curriculum could incorporate readings and lectures from Indigenous Nurse researchers such as Dr. Melissa Vera <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH9C_Sjjopk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH9C_Sjjopk</a>, Darlene Sanderson, and De-Ann Shepard. Additionally, classes could begin providing content on the growing scarcity of resources related to climate change and its impacts on patients and communities.</li> </ul>	
Interdisciplinary Research	C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rush University College of Nursing is leading the way in bringing universities together to address climate change at multiple symposiums throughout the year. The College of Nursing lacks a process for incorporating surrounding community voices into research, and it lacks a website showcasing broader planetary health concepts and research beyond sustainability. Additionally, the College of Nursing does not provide structure or faculty support for planetary health research at this time.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> The College of Nursing could partner with the surrounding community to establish a process to incorporate community concerns into research initiatives for PhD students. This could be accomplished by partnering PhD students with local DNP students who have already conducted assessments of the local communities for their DNP projects. PhD researchers could include the assessments and considerations of the DNP student's assessment into their research.</li> </ul>	
Community Outreach and Advocacy	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rush University College of Nursing has a strong partnership with the medical center, who partners with several community organizations for planetary health initiatives and education. Communication on organization-wide planetary health education and opportunities to engage staff and students remains strong. Information available to patients about the health effects of environmental exposures is available.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> The College of Nursing could increase the amount of direct community partnerships with a planetary health focus. This could be done by strengthening already existing relationships that the medical center has with community partners or creating new partnerships to maximize student exposure and opportunity. Although digital patient education is widely available on environmental factors' role in certain disease processes; it does not contain verbiage that specifies health impacts of climate change. The College of Nursing could also increase postgraduate professional education opportunities directed towards CON students and staff. Additionally, the College of Nursing could increase public awareness of planetary health initiatives through public facing mediums such as websites and publications.</li> </ul>	
Support for Student-Led Initiatives	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are numerous planetary health/environmental sustainability based research/QI opportunities and events for students to engage in that are supported by faculty. However, these opportunities must be sought out or initiated by the student. There is information available on digital platforms regarding initiatives,</li> </ul>	

contacts, and education for the wider institution.

- **Recommendations:** Although many students are involved in initiatives throughout the institution within organizations, they are not explicitly “student-focused” groups. It would be recommended to establish a student-led (or College of Nursing funded) organization centered around planetary health/environmental sustainability. The CON should consider establishing planetary health/environmentally sustainable projects in core curriculum classes or providing funding opportunities for CON students wishing to engage in research or projects with a planetary health/environmental sustainability focus. The CON may also consider hosting a webpage specific to environmental sustainability/planetary health initiatives pertaining to students.

## Campus Sustainability

C

- With partnerships through organizations like “Practice Greenhealth” and the expansion of their Office of Environmental Sustainability, Rush University Medical Center is making strides towards their goal of minimizing their environmental footprint locally and globally. The institution has increased their options for environmentally sustainable transportation (increased EV charging stations, discounted public transit/Divvy bike programs, etc.). Some recycling opportunities are available through the Office of Environmental Sustainability (Styrofoam, batteries, etc); and repurposing opportunities remain strong (i.e. Rheaply, Stryker pulse ox probes). Minimal sustainability criteria around food/beverage options and medical supply procurement are available, but plans for improvement are ongoing.
- **Recommendations:** The institution must increase their utilization of renewable energy within their buildings/infrastructure and complete a written plan for carbon neutrality by 2040 (that is also approved by leadership). Increasing current recycling initiatives and expansion of the composting programs would also benefit the institution greatly. The institution should consider disinvestment in fossil fuel companies and commit to investment in renewable energy companies.

# Statement of Purpose

*Planetary health is human health.*

The Planetary Health Alliance describes planetary health as “a solutions-oriented, transdisciplinary field and social movement focused on analysing and addressing the impacts of human disruptions to Earth’s natural systems on human health and all life on Earth.” This definition is intentionally broad, intended to encompass the multitude of ways that the environment can affect health, including water scarcity, changing food systems, urbanisation, biodiversity shifts, natural disasters, climate change, changing land use and land cover, global pollution, and changing biogeochemical flows. The health of humanity is dependent on our environment, and our environment is changing rapidly and in disastrous ways. Although the World Health Organization has called climate change “the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century,” many medical school’s institutional priorities do not reflect the urgency of this danger to human health.

As future health professionals, we must be prepared to address the impacts of human-caused environmental changes on our patients’ health. This preparation is in the hands of the institutions providing our medical training. It is imperative that we hold our institutions accountable for educating medical students about the health impacts of climate change and other anthropogenic environmental changes, generating research to better understand health impacts and solutions, supporting related student initiatives, embracing sustainable practices as much as possible, and engaging with surrounding communities that are most affected by environmental threats. Because climate change and environmental threats disproportionately affect vulnerable populations (for example, communities of colour, older adults sensitive to health threats, and individuals in low-resource settings), these issues are inherently ones of equity and justice.

With the purpose of increasing planetary health awareness and accountability among health professional schools, we have created a Planetary Health Report Card that students internationally can use to grade and compare their institutions on an annual basis. This student-driven initiative aims to compare health professional schools nationally and internationally on the basis of discrete metrics in five main category areas: 1) planetary health curriculum, 2) interdisciplinary research in health and environment, 3) university support for student planetary health initiatives, and 4) community outreach centred on environmental health impacts 5) medical school campus sustainability.

# Definitions & Other Considerations

## Definitions:

- **Planetary Health:** is described by the Planetary Health Alliance as “the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends.” For example, topics such as climate change, declining biodiversity, shortages of arable land and freshwater, and pollution would all fall under the realm of planetary health. Both planetary health and traditional ‘environmental health’ examine the relationship between human health and the external environment, including extreme temperatures, chemicals, vector-borne diseases, etc. Planetary health explicitly concerns itself with the potential health harms associated with human-caused perturbations of natural systems. Therefore, the human health focus of planetary health makes the field well-adapted for the context of medical school education. Throughout this report card, we use the term planetary health to refer to this broad swath of topics, but resources do not need to explicitly include the term “planetary health” to satisfy the metric.
- **Sustainable Healthcare:** As defined by the Academy of Royal Colleges, sustainable healthcare involves ensuring the ability to provide good quality care for future generations by balancing the economic, environmental, and social constraints and demands within health care settings. A sustainable healthcare system maintains population health, reduces disease burden and minimises use of healthcare services.
- **Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH):** is defined as the process of equipping current and future health professionals with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and capacity to provide environmentally sustainable services through health professional education, thus working to decrease the enormous environmental impact of the healthcare industry. Planetary Health Education is an integral part of this education rather than an end in itself. This is because knowledge on Planetary Health is required to be able to fully understand the necessity of sustainable healthcare as well as being part of the broader knowledge needed to fully protect and promote health. In summary, ESH is covered by the three Priority Learning Outcomes of the Centre of Sustainable Healthcare below, and Planetary Health Education is embraced in the first learning objective and is a fundamental requirement to achieve learning outcomes 2 and 3:
  1. Describe how the environment and human health interact at different levels.
  2. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to improve the environmental sustainability of health systems.
  3. Discuss how the duty of a doctor to protect and promote health is shaped by the dependence of human health on the local and global environment.
- **Nursing School/Department vs. Institution:** When “nursing school” is specified in the report card, this only refers to curriculum and resources offered by the School/department of nursing and does not include offerings from other parts of the university (e.g. undergraduate departments (USA), other related departments (e.g. Public Health, Population Health departments). In contrast, when “institution” is specified in the report card, we are referring to the university more broadly including all of its campuses. Any resource reasonably accessible by nursing students, no matter where in the institution the resource comes from or if it is

specifically targeted for medical students, can meet this metric.

- **Environmental history:** This is a series of questions students are taught to ask during medical encounters that elicits patients' exposures and environmental risk factors. Historically, this has included consideration of exposures like pesticides, asbestos, and lead, though in the modern era shaped by climate change, it can be expanded to include things like wildfire smoke exposure, air pollution and mould after flooding. Key components include place of residence over the lifecourse, occupational history, food and water sources (e.g. meat from industrial feeding operations, regular fishing in contaminated water, access to clean drinking water), and exposure to air pollution. Please be as specific as possible when providing evidence for this metric.
- **Elective:** The word "elective" refers to an optional course or lecture series that a medical student can opt to take part in but is not a requirement in the core curriculum. Generally, these elective courses take place in the preclinical curriculum but vary by school.
- **Core Curriculum:** This refers to taught material that is delivered to the entire cohort of students in one year.
- **Clerkship / Outreach:** This is a term used in the USA to refer to placements that medical students go on e.g. Pediatrics, General medicine, Psychiatry. In the UK these are referred to as rotations, outreach or placements. This is a relatively short (approximately 4-8 weeks) period of study and patient-centred clinical experience that takes place as part of the undergraduate programme.
- **Clinical rotation:** This is a term used to refer to placements that students go on (e.g., ophthalmology, surgery, cardiology).
- **Physiotherapy vs Physical Therapy:** For the purposes of this report card these terms are considered interchangeable. However, physiotherapy will be used primarily.
- **Community organisations:** For most institutions, there are existing groups that are not directly affiliated with the university and exist as a product of what the community the institution exists in cares about or needs. These specific community organisations relevant to this report include those that are focused around some aspect of climate and health preservation. These community organisations can include but are not limited to local mutual aid initiatives, underserved-resource distribution groups, clean-up and nature conservation groups, community gardeners, and other environmental-related organisations. If your institution does not have access to local volunteerships with community groups, please report any community organisations your institution or school has collaborated with.
- **Climate justice:** The idea that certain population groups and geographical locations which are disproportionately more impacted by climate change are already economically and socially disadvantaged. This double vulnerability sits alongside pre-existing social justice concerns and should therefore shift policy and practice to mitigate the inequitable effects of the climate crisis.
- **Extractivism:** The removal of natural resources typically in large quantities. Within anthropology this term is often used in the context of colonialism to refer to

the historic seizing of natural resources, a practice which has developed business models tied to ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity.

- **Global South:** Nations that often have less economic and industrial development and are typically in the southern hemisphere. These nations have been found to be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis.
- **Low socioeconomic status (SES):** An individual or geographical area that across a variety of socioeconomic factors (e.g., income, education, race/ethnicity) is considered vulnerable. This vulnerability has been correlated to more adverse health outcomes often as a consequence of encountering more barriers in accessing and receiving healthcare.
- **Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC):** Countries that have lower degrees of economic affluence.
- **Anthropogenic:** Created through human activity
- **Marginalized communities:** Groups excluded from mainstream economic, educational, social, and/or cultural experiences due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status (Sevelius et al., 2020).

**Other considerations:**

- If there are more than one “tracks” at your institution with two different curricula (for example, Harvard Medical School has a Pathways and HST curriculum track), you can choose to fill out a report card for each track, or fill out just one report card and average the scores received by each track in cases where the scores are different (see the 2021 Harvard or Oxford report cards as examples). Where possible please indicate the proportion of students that are on each track.

Completed in 2022 a [Literature Review by Metric](#) is available for the 2022 medicine report card metrics. We are in the process of updating this review and making it more applicable to all the disciplines. However the review serves as a rough collection of references for further learning and a resource for those advocating for increased planetary health engagement at their institutions.

# Planetary Health Curriculum

***Section Overview:*** This section evaluates the integration of relevant planetary health topics into the nursing school curriculum. The curriculum for nursing programs around the world shares many core topics regarding health and the medical system. In order to create a truly holistic education that includes the implications of our changing climate, the subject must be integrated into the nursing curriculum. As future frontline workers, nurses will experience the dire consequences of climate change firsthand and must be equipped to not only care for afflicted patients but to encourage preventative change. We are already seeing the impacts on human health that climate change can bring, and the nursing curriculum must reflect these realities.

Questions with a “\*” next to them signify questions that are unique to the Nursing Planetary Health Report Card.

<b>1.1. Does your nursing school offer courses regarding the relationships between extreme weather events, health effects, and climate change?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p>Rush University multidisciplinary student group <u>Students for Social Responsibility</u> “is dedicated to promoting a healthier Chicago and improving public health worldwide through advocacy and education about the effects of climate change, environmental toxins, and other environmental threats to human health.”</p> <p>The CON offers one Environmental Health (NSG568) course, which is required for all Advanced Public Health Nursing and Transformative Leadership: Population Health DNP students . While the course does not exclusively cover climate change and extreme weather, the NSG568 syllabus includes content related to the impact of extreme weather events, pollution, or environmental degradation on physical and mental health, socioeconomic and racial disparities in extreme weather exposure, environmental toxins, and climate and environmental health challenges, impacts of climate change on changing patterns of infectious diseases or the impacts of extreme weather events on healthcare systems, relationships between climate change, food and water security, and the impact on health, and relationships between ecosystem health and climate change</p> <p>Public Health Nursing (NSG505), part of the core Rush Generalist Direct-Entry Masters in Nursing (GEM) curriculum, consistently includes one lecture which addresses relationships between climate change, worsening natural disasters, and health/healthcare.</p> <p>Several other Rush College of Nursing (CON) courses, discussed throughout the remainder of this report card, routinely include mention of climate change, extreme weather events, and the relationship between climate and health in course content without dedicated lectures, readings, or assignments on the matter.</p>	



**1.2. Does your nursing program provide education regarding the impacts of extreme weather events (e.g. storm, flooding, heat, drought, air pollution) on individual health?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Some clinical instructors for Mental Health Nursing Practicum (NSG503P) discuss the impact of a changing environment and increased extreme weather on unhoused persons, including on the mental health of persons in this population.*

*Pathophysiology (NSG510) includes wildfire smoke as an example of air pollution which can lead to pulmonary cell injury.*

*Readings for Principles of Case Management (NSG536) include "On Racism: A New Standard For Publishing On Racial Health Inequities," which discusses the association between extreme weather events such as heat exposure and racially-disparate negative health outcomes related to birth.*

*Public Health Nursing (NSG505) includes content regarding extreme weather in the context of disaster nursing and discussion of the impact of climate change on human health.*

**1.3. Does your nursing curriculum address the impacts of climate change on the changing patterns of infectious diseases?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*Applied Epidemiology Biostatistics (NSG522) course content mentions increased human exposure to agents of disease due to changes in environment and habits, as a part of discussion of the Epidemiologic Triad.*

*A Public Health Nursing (NSG505) lecture on Environmental Health and Safety makes a clear connection between the relationships between climate change, environmental degradation, extreme weather, and mental and physical health.*

*Pharmacotherapeutics (NSG 570B) discusses the role of climate change and health systems'*

*impacts on antibiotic resistance and human health.*

*In Environmental Health (NSG 568), there is a module with readings, videos, and lecture notes that addresses the impacts of climate change on infectious diseases.*

**1.4. Does your nursing curriculum address pathophysiological health effects resulting from environmental degradation and climate change, including effects such as air, soil and water pollution, extreme heat, human-animal interactions, and emerging pathogens?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*Women's Health Across the Lifespan (NSG504) lectures on trends/current issues and infertility discuss the impact of pollution and climate change on reproductive health.*

*Readings for Principles of Case Management (NSG536) include "On Racism: A New Standard For Publishing On Racial Health Inequities," which discusses the association between extreme weather events such as heat exposure and racially-disparate negative health outcomes related to birth.*

*A Public Health Nursing (NSG505) lecture on Environmental Health and Safety makes clear the impact of climate change on the development of disease, including discussion of how climate change on water quality, increasing allergens, air pollution, changes in vector ecology, water and food supply impacts, extreme heat contribute to disease development.*

*Materials for Fundamentals of Nursing (NSG501), Nursing Management of Common Health Alterations Across the Lifespan (NSG502), and Pathophysiology (NSG510) courses include discussion of air pollution contributing to development of pulmonary diseases such as asthma and COPD, and that air pollution can affect oxygenation, particularly for those with existing pulmonary illness. Textbook readings for NSG501 also explain that air and water pollution can cause disease, and that disasters (including natural) can increase pollutant exposure. However, these courses do not explicitly connect increased pollution and climate change (Potter, P., Perry, A., Stockert, P., & Hall, A., (Eds) (2019) Essentials for Nursing Practice (9th Ed), St. Louis: Elsevier).*

*Course content for Health Assessment (NSG252) and NSG501 include instruction to assess a patient's home and community environmental hazards, including pollution exposure.*

*In introducing pharmacology to manage poisoning, textbook readings for Pharmacology (NSG511) name environmental pollutants as a source of poisoning. The same text attributes failure of degradation of Lewy Bodies to environmental toxins, when outlining the pathophysiology of Lewy Body Dementia (Burchum, J.R., and Rosenthal, L.D. (2021). Lehne's Pharmacology for Nursing Care (11th Ed.). Elsevier Saunders. St. Louis, Missouri).*

**1.5. Does your nursing curriculum address mental health issues and well-being effects resulting from environmental degradation and climate change?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*The effects of climate change are mentioned as examples of trauma in a lecture in Nursing Management of Complex Health Alterations Across the Lifespan (NSG506).*

*Mental Health Nursing (NSG503) course includes extreme weather events and the resulting required coping as examples of crises, as a part of course teaching regarding crisis development and related mental health effects.*

*Some clinical instructors for Mental Health Nursing Practicum (NSG503P) discuss the impact of a changing environment and increased extreme weather on unhoused persons, including on the mental health of persons in this population.*

*A Public Health Nursing (NSG505) lecture on Environmental Health and Safety makes a clear connection between the relationships between climate change, environmental degradation, extreme weather, and mental and physical health.*

*A Public Health Nursing (NSG505) lecture on Environmental Health and Safety makes a clear connection between the relationships between climate change, extreme weather, and mental and physical health, including discussion of the impact of environmental degradation on forced migration and civil conflict, and related mental health impacts.*

**1.6. Does your nursing curriculum address relationships between climate change, food and water security, and the impact on health?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*Multiple courses include content related to food/water security, environmental degradation, and health in the contexts of Social Determinants of Health. Courses which include climate change in this framing including Health Promotion in Clinical Populations (NSG524) and some Mental Health Nursing Practicum (NSG505P) clinical groups in the GEM curriculum, and the DNP courses Health Care Economics, Policy and Finance (NSG602), and The Leader and Policy,*

*Politics, Power and Ethics (NSG 614).*

*The GEM Public Health Nursing (NSG505) includes discussion of the overlap between social determinants of health and environmental degradation, using air quality indexing as an example of assessment of physical environment.*

**1.7. Does your nursing program address the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*Rush University does not have a curriculum to address the health co-benefits of a plant-based diet at this time.*

**1.8. Does your nursing school curriculum address relationships between ecosystem health, human health, and climate change?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*In Women's Health Across the Lifespan (504) has added lectures to its curriculum to highlight the relationships between ecosystem health/climate change and their effect on women's health.*

*The Public Health Nursing (NSG505) curriculum includes a lecture (and associated readings) which addresses ecology and the impact of changing ecosystems on climate health.*

*In Pediatric Health (NSG 551B) a new chapter has been added on the impacts of climate change and endocrine disruptors such as BPA and pesticides on pediatric health.*

**1.9. Does your nursing curriculum address the reproductive health effects of industry-related environmental toxins (e.g. air pollution, pesticides)?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>In a lecture on Congenital Heart Diseases, Nursing Management of Complex Health Across the Lifespan (NSG506) names exposure to environmental toxins as risk factors for fetal cardiac alterations.</i></p> <p><i>Women's Health Across the Lifespan (NSG504) highlights environmental teratogens as affecting fetal development, a lecture on prenatal care.</i></p>	

<b>1.10. Does your nursing program emphasize the importance of Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems as essential components of planetary health solutions?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<p><i>There are no courses in Rush University's College of Nursing that address the importance of Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems at this Time.</i></p>	

<b>1.11. Does your nursing curriculum address important human-caused environmental threats that are relevant to the university or program's surrounding community?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>The Applied Organizational Analysis and the Management of Human Resources (NSG 612) curriculum includes content related to the healthcare industry's social responsibility for sustainability as a means of reducing the healthcare's negative impact on pollution and, in turn, the climate.</i></p> <p><i>Public Health Nursing (NSG 505) discusses the relationship between physical environment, health,</i></p>	

and life expectancy in Chicago, utilizing an Air Quality and Health Index as an exemplar.

A lecture on respiratory alterations in Nursing Management of Common Health Alterations Across the Lifespan (NSG502) specifically discusses Chicago's high asthma rates and environmental pollutants, and their impact on respiratory health.

**1.12. Does your nursing curriculum address socioeconomic/racial disparities in extreme weather and climate change exposure?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

Coursework for Public Health Nursing Practicum (505P) includes a module which examines the disparate impacts of Hurricane Maria on different populations in Puerto Rico, including through a socioeconomic lens.

In Women's Health Across the Lifespan (504), lectures have been added to address the socioeconomic/racial disparities faced by women related to climate exposure and the impacts on women's health.

Readings for Principles of Case Management (NSG36) include an article, "[On Racism: A New Standard For Publishing On Racial Health Inequities](#)" which discusses racial disparities in health, including the racial disparities in the impact of heat exposure.

In covering the impacts of extreme weather as a part of lectures on Environmental Health and Safety and Disaster Nursing, the Public Health Nursing (NSG505) curriculum integrates discussion of how racism and Social Determinants of Health interplay with the impacts of extreme weather exposure.

Some clinical faculty for Mental Health Nursing Practicum (NSG503P) and Public Health Nursing Practicum (NSG505P) discuss disparities in the impacts of extreme weather exposure on unhoused populations and low-income, primarily Black & brown, communities in Chicago, as well as the associated disparate response to the impacts of extreme weather in these communities.

In Anti Racism in Organizational leadership (NSG521)- which is now core curriculum for the APHN-DNP program- there is a module with discussions and readings on how severe weather events and climate change disproportionately affect marginalized populations - with required readings on: "[Climate Change, Human Rights and Social Justice](#)"; as well as education on how structural racism worsens effects of natural disasters like Hurricanes Ian and Katrina.

In Environmental Health (NSG 568) there is a module with readings, videos, and lecture notes that discuss the socioeconomic/racial disparities that exist during extreme weather events. Additionally, Environmental Health includes a shared Climate Change Resources folder that provides additional climate related content for students to reference, including readings on the effects of climate change on [marginalized populations](#) and those who are [socially vulnerable](#).

**1.13. Does your nursing curriculum address inequitable health impacts of climate change globally?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*Per Public Health Nursing Practicum (NSG505P) clinical faculty, the varying health impacts that climate change has across the globe is also discussed as part of the clinical experience, including how the global effects of climate change may affect human migration.*

*Public Health Nursing (NSG505) includes an assigned chapter for reading on Environmental Health and Safety, which discusses how environments differ for those who live in high-income countries and communities versus those in low-income communities, people of color, and indigenous communities.*

*Health inequity related to climate change is also discussed in the DNP Global Health Independent Study (NSG900).*

**1.14. Does your nursing curriculum address climate and environmental health challenges that impact marginalized populations and communities?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*Public Health Nursing (NSG505) addresses how environmental health challenges impact marginalized populations in the Environmental Health and Safety reading and lecture. Particular emphasis is placed on asthma and lead poisoning and how these health issues are more prevalent in low-income communities.*

*Mental Health Nursing (NSG503) also includes content explaining how marginalized communities are at greater risk for inappropriate coping mechanisms in the face of climate disaster.*

*Principles of Case Management (NSG536) features a reading that discusses the racial disparities that correlate with increased risk of adverse birth outcomes, respiratory health, and heat exposure.*

*Disparities concerning the impact of climate and environmental health challenges are also alluded*



to in Socialization into Nursing (NSG500) and in the CNL Competencies which are required reading material for Clinical Leadership & Project Development (NSG512).

*Anti Racism in Organizational leadership (NSG521)- addresses how natural disasters and environmental hazards disproportionately affect marginalized populations with increasing frequency. There are required readings on flooding and clean water crises in [Jackson, Mississippi](#); and [Flint, Michigan](#); as well as natural and human-caused environmental hazards resulting from Hurricane [Ian](#) and Hurricane [Katrina](#).*

*Environmental Health (NSG 568) has a two week long module that addresses environmental racism and its impact on marginalized communities. Students then complete a discussion post assignment related to these topics. Additionally, Environmental Health includes a shared Climate Change Resources folder that provides additional climate related content for students to reference, including readings on the effects of climate change on [marginalized populations](#) and those who are [socially vulnerable](#).*

**1.15. Does your nursing curriculum address the impact of environmental degradation due to climate change on marginalized populations and communities?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*Public Health Nursing (NSG505) includes the concept of environmental justice and how environmental degradation has an inequitable effect on communities of color. In particular, there is an emphasis on how children are at increased risk for adverse health outcomes when exposed to environmental hazards in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods throughout their childhood. In the textbook, chapter 23: Working With Vulnerable People, pays special attention to how poverty is correlated to air pollution exposure and other environmental toxins.*

*Environmental degradation with respect to marginalized communities is also addressed in the Principles of Case Management (NSG536) reading "On Racism: A New Standard For Publishing On Racial Health Inequities".*

*Anti Racism in Organizational Leadership (NSG521)- addresses how effects of environmental degradation due to climate change (increasing extreme weather events, changing ecosystems, ability to find safe drinking water, etc) affect marginalized populations with increasing frequency. There are required readings on [climate change causing increased flooding events affecting utility infrastructure](#); clean water crises in [Jackson, Mississippi](#); and [Flint, Michigan](#); as well as natural and human-caused environmental hazards resulting from Hurricane [Ian](#) and Hurricane [Katrina](#).*

*Environmental Health (NSG 568) includes a module on the impacts of environmental degradation due to climate change on marginalized communities. The module includes readings and a lecture about the importance of the nurse's role of advocacy for marginalized communities facing*



*disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation. Additionally, Environmental Health includes a shared Climate Change Resources folder that provides additional climate related content for students to reference, including readings on the effects of climate change on [marginalized populations](#) and those who are [socially vulnerable](#).*

**1.16. Does your nursing curriculum address the outsized impacts of anthropogenic environmental toxins on marginalized populations and communities?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*Chapter 23 and the Working With Vulnerable People lecture in Public Health Nursing (NSG505) discuss the association between poor respiratory health (caused by air pollution), lead exposure, and socioeconomic status.*

*These same associations are also mentioned in the Principles of Case Management (NSG536) required reading "On Racism: A New Standard For Publishing On Racial Health Inequities.*

*Anti Racism in Organizational leadership (NSG521)- addresses how human-caused toxin pollution disproportionately affects marginalized populations including lead in drinking water in [Flint, Michigan](#) and other impacts of lead pipes in the [United States](#). There is also required readings on how air pollution (especially PM 2.5) has an [impact on asthma in marginalized communities](#)*

*Environmental Health (NSG 568) addresses how anthropogenic mediated toxin pollution disproportionately affects marginalized communities. The Planetary Health module addresses inequities and the outsized impacts of environmental toxins on marginalized communities. Additionally, Environmental Health includes a shared Climate Change Resources folder that provides additional climate related content for students to reference, including readings on the effects of climate change on [marginalized populations](#) and those who are [socially vulnerable](#).*

**1.17. Does your nursing curriculum address the impacts of extreme weather events on healthcare systems?**

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	1
<i>The impacts of extreme weather events on healthcare systems are as part of a Public Health Nursing (NSG505) lecture on disaster nursing, which discussed the logistical, medical, and ethical effects of Hurricane Katrina on healthcare in and around New Orleans after the storm.</i>	

<b>1.18. Does your nursing program address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Public Health Nursing (NSG 505) briefly discusses greenhouse gas emissions as a direct result of healthcare systems in a module.</i>	

<b>1.19*. Does your nursing program curriculum or coursework highlight the waste generated by healthcare provision?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Public Health Nursing (NSG 505) briefly discusses greenhouse gas emissions as a direct result of healthcare systems in a module.</i>	

<b>1.20*. Does your nursing program cover the contributions of pharmaceuticals to environmental degradation and climate change (e.g., anesthetic gases, inhalers, antibiotic resistance, etc.)?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	

Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>In Pharmacotherapeutics (NSG 570B), readings and lectures discuss the contribution of pharmaceuticals to antibiotic resistance and environmental degradation.</i></p> <p><i>Anti Racism in Organizational leadership (NSG521) has some required readings on <a href="#">chlorofluorocarbons</a> (&amp; hydroflorocarbons), their impact on the environment, <a href="#">policies</a> undertaken to reduce/eliminate their use; and the mention that the chemical is found in pharmaceuticals like inhalers.</i></p>	

<b>1.21. Does your nursing school's curriculum introduce strategies for having conversations with patients, nursing home residents, visitors, and other health professionals about the health effects of climate change and other environmental disruptions?</b>	
Yes, the <b>core</b> curriculum includes strategies for conversing with patients and other health professionals regarding climate change and environmental disruptions. (2 points)	
There are <b>elective</b> courses that include strategies for conversing with patients and other health professionals regarding climate change and environmental disruptions. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Rush University College of Nursing's curriculum does not currently introduce strategies for having conversations with patients and others about the impacts of climate change and environmental disruptions.</i>	

<b>1.22. Does your school have an appointed faculty or staff responsible for planetary health and environmental nursing?</b>	
Yes, the nursing program has <b>at least one</b> appointed faculty or staff responsible for planetary health and environmental nursing. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<i>Rush University has appointed a College and University Liaison for the Rush Commitment Collective, a system-wide initiative to address sustainability in health care. This person also provides faculty development for planetary health education. The Rush Commitment Collective has also hired an intern to help with these efforts.</i>	

<b>1.23*. Does your program offer Interdisciplinary Education (IPE) simulations or experiences regarding the health risks of climate change and other environmental disruptions?</b>	
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Yes, the school of nursing has been involved with IPE simulations or experiences in the <b>past year</b> . (2 points)	
Yes, the school of nursing has been involved with IPE simulations or experiences in the <b>past three years</b> . (1 point)	
No, the school of nursing has not been involved with IPE simulations in the past three year. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>While Rush University does not currently incorporate planetary health into its IPE course, there are plans to incorporate planetary health and climate change concepts into the coursework.</i>	
Section Total (37 out of 65)	
57%	

Back to Summary Page [here](#)

# Interdisciplinary Research

**Section Overview:** *This section evaluates the quality and quantity of interdisciplinary planetary health research at the broader institution. Interactions between health and the environment are complex and multifactorial. While climate change has been extensively studied from an environmental science perspective, planetary health is an emerging field. As leading health institutions with talented researchers and research resources, institutions should fund research studying the health effects of climate change and anthropogenic environmental toxins. This obligation is particularly strong because the public and policymakers are more attentive to climate change when its implications for human health are emphasised.*

## 2.1. Are there researchers engaged in planetary health research and healthcare sustainability research at your **institution**?

Yes, there are faculty members at the **institution** who have a **primary** research focus in planetary health **or** sustainable healthcare/vetcare. (3 points)

Yes, there are individual faculty members at the **institution** who are conducting research **related** to planetary health or healthcare sustainability, OR are part of a national/international sustainability working group, but it is not their primary research focus. (2 points)

There are sustainability researchers at the **institution**, but not specifically associated with healthcare/vetcare. (1 point)

No, there are **no** planetary health and/or sustainability researchers at the **institution** at this time. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*Heide Cygan, DNP, RN, Andy Garman, PsyD, and Santosh Basapur, PhD have completed interdisciplinary research related to planetary health education as part of their [2022 President's Collaborative Research Award from the University](#). Funding was extended through June 2025.*

*Shawna Hebert DNP, RNC-MNN, PHNA-BC was part of a Climate Lab health professional education cohort regarding climate change advocacy.*

*Linda O'Kelley PhD, RN studies the effects of ethylene oxide gas exposure on human health related to neurocognitive deficits.*

*Other CON faculty and PhD students have published and presented research related to planetary health and sustainability in healthcare.*

*In 2022, the university President's Collaborative Research Award was given to an interdisciplinary group of faculty, including one from the CON, to support work on planetary health. There is currently one Nursing Science PhD student pursuing research related to planetary health.*

*Examples of planetary health-related research from faculty and researchers in the CON includes:*

Garman, A., Basapur, S., Cygan, H., Hampshire, K., & Anderson, M. (in press). Assessing Planetary Health Curricular Needs across College of Health Sciences Programs. *Journal of Allied Health*.

Cygan, H., Garman, A., Basapur, S., & Bejster, M. (in press). Turning Concern into Confidence: Planetary Health Needs in Nursing Education. *Journal of Nursing Education*.

Cygan, H., Garman, A., Basapus, S., Bejster, M. & Hughs, I. *A Year of Climate Change Funding: What We Learned & What's Next*. American Public Health Association 2023 Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 14, 2023.

Cygan, H., Alexander, G., Brooks, V., & Williams, T. *Challenge Accepted: Developing Nurses as Planetary Health Leaders*. Association of Community Health Nurse Educators and Association of Public Health Nurses Joint Conference in San Diego, California, June 7, 2023.

Cygan, H., Bejster, M., & Hebert, S. *Integrating Planetary Health into Pre- and Post-licensure Nursing Curricula*. Roundtable presentation at the American Public Health Association 2022 Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 7, 2022.

Cygan, H. & Sullivan, W. Hot Topics: Self Care, Wellness, and Climate Change. Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nurses Midwest Annual Meeting. Lisle, Illinois, October 27, 2022.

O'Kelley, L., Swanson, B., & Bishop-Royse, J. C. (2023). Integrative literature review: Ethylene oxide exposure signs and symptoms. *Public Health Nursing*, 1–20.

## 2.2. Is there a dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research at your institution?

There is **at least one** dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research. (3 points)

There is **not currently** a department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research, but there are **plans** to open one in the next 3 years. (2 points)

There is an **Occupational and Environmental Health department**, but no interdisciplinary department or institute for planetary health research. (1 points)

There is **no** dedicated department or institute. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*Rush University does not offer a department or institute dedicated to planetary health research at this time.*

**2.3. Is there a process by which communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental injustice give input or make decisions about the research agenda at your institution?**

Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice have **decision-making power** in the climate + environmental research agenda. (3 points)

Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice **advise** the climate + environmental research agenda. (2 points)

**No**, but there are **current efforts** to establish a process for community members to advise or make decisions on the research agenda. (1 points)

There is **no** process, and **no** efforts to create such a process. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*While all CON researchers are ethically obligated to include community and patient voices in their research plans, there is no formal process in place for input into the research agenda at the CON.*

*Linda O'Kelley PhD, MS, RNC-NIC and recent graduate of Rush University, is starting a non-profit called Illinois Clinicians for Climate Action. The non-profit's work will focus on incorporating marginalized communities' input to educate lawmakers, healthcare professionals, and researchers to address the health disparities of the surrounding community. This may be incorporated at Rush University in the future, but for now, this non-profit is not collaborating with Rush University.*

**2.4. Does your institution have a planetary health website that centralises ongoing and past research related to health and the environment?**

There is an **easy-to-use, adequately comprehensive** website that **centralises** various campus resources related to health and the environment including all of the following: upcoming events, leaders in planetary health at your institution, and relevant funding opportunities. (3 points)

There is a website that **attempts to centralise** various campus resources related to health and the environment, but it is hard-to-use, not updated, or not adequately comprehensive. (2 points)

The **institution** has an **Office of Sustainability website** that includes **some** resources related to health and the environment. (1 point)

There is **no** website. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*The university does have a planetary health-related website. The website addresses planetary health, sustainability, and the importance of human action to address climate-health impacts. The website does not show any research at the University related to climate and health and does not go into depth about the relationship between human and climate health.*

<https://www.rush.edu/about-us/environmental-sustainability>

**2.5. Has your institution recently hosted a conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health?**

Yes, the **institution** has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health in the past year. (4 points)

Yes, the **institution** has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past year. (3 points)

Yes, the **institution** has hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health / sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past three years. (2 points)

The **institution** has not hosted any conferences directly, but they have provided financial support for a local planetary health event. (1 point)

No, the **institution** has not hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health in the past three years. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

4

*Rush University has hosted an interdisciplinary student-led Earth Day Summit annually since 2022. The conference seeks to showcase planetary health research and educate interested students and staff on climate change. Students from the CON routinely participate in and present at the summit.*

*Cygan, H., Garman, A., Basapur, S. PCRA: Empowering Health Professionals to become Planetary Health Leaders. Rush Earth Day Student Summit. Rush University, virtual, April 21, 2023.*

*In July 2024, Rush University hosted a Planetary Health Report Card workshop symposium for other universities to attend. This was meant to bring other academic institutions together to understand the importance of evaluating their institutions' planetary health commitments and provide action steps to incorporate planetary health concepts into their universities. The next symposium is planned for August 2025 and will be held annually going forward.*

*The Global Health Symposium - an annual symposium related to global health at Rush University, has multiple speakers who have covered topics related to planetary health:*

***Cygan, H.** A Prescription for Climate Awareness: Effective Communication Strategies for Health Professionals. Rush University Global Health Symposium. Rush University, March 28, 2024.*

***Cygan, H.** Integrating Planetary Health in Nursing Education. Rush College of Nursing Faculty Development Committee Webinar. Rush University College of Nursing, virtual, October 31, 2023.*

***Cygan, H., Garman, A., Basapur, S.** PCRA: Empowering Health Professionals to become Planetary Health Leaders. Rush Earth Day Student Summit. Rush University, virtual, April 21, 2023.*



**2.6. Is your institution a member of a national or international planetary health or ESH/ESV organisation?**

Yes, the institution is a member of a national or international planetary health **or** ESH/ESV organisation. (1 points)

No, the institution is **not** a member of such an organisation. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*Rush University College of Nursing is a part of the Nursing Climate Challenge.*

*Rush University Medical Center is partnered with [Practice Green Health](#) to provide education and connections for students, staff, and faculty at the University and the Medical Center.*

**Section Total (9 out of 17)**

**53%**

Back to Summary Page [here](#)

## Community Outreach and Advocacy

***Section Overview:*** This section evaluates medical school engagement in community outreach and advocacy efforts associated with planetary health. Researching and teaching planetary health is necessary but not sufficient. It is critical that institutions also directly engage with communities most affected by environmental health harms. Although climate change is a problem largely created by those with power and resources, its impacts fall disproportionately on under-resourced populations and communities of colour. Institutions should partner with local communities affected by climate change and pollution to share information about environmental health threats, advocate together for change, and provide opportunities for students to be a part of this work.

### 3.1. Does your **institution** partner with community organisations to promote planetary and health?

Yes, the **institution** meaningfully partners with **multiple** community organisations to promote planetary and environmental health. (3 points)

Yes, the **institution** meaningfully partners with **one** community organisation to promote planetary and environmental health. (2 points)

The **institution** does not partner with community organisations, but has participating in community focused events relating to planetary health. (1 point)

No, there is **no** such meaningful community partnership. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

*The College of Nursing itself does not specifically partner with any community organizations to promote planetary and environmental health, however students and staff are involved with various opportunities available at an institution level.*

*Rush University Medical Center partners with Practice Greenhealth (an organization that provides information, resources, and networking opportunities to improve environmental sustainability in healthcare) as well as several community organizations (i.e. West Side United) that may offer planetary/environmental health initiatives and events, but whose sole mission is not planetary/environmental health focused. All Rush students/staff/faculty have access to education opportunities through Practice Greenhealth membership.*

*The Rush University Medical Center's Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) has partnered with several community organizations on environmental health initiatives, programing, and or networking:*

[\*Alt Space Chicago\*](#)

[\*Center for Hard to Recycle Materials \(CHaRM\)\*](#)

[\*Cool Chi Program\*](#) (through the City of Chicago; Chicago Department of Public Health)

[\*Francisan Outreach\*](#)

[\*Green Era Chicago\*](#)

*University of Illinois Chicago Campus: Food recovery/diversion program*

[\*WastedFood Action Alliance\*](#)

*Westside Environmental Justice Alliance*

*The Rush “Green” Employee Resource Group is an organization at Rush whose mission is “To champion environmental sustainability efforts across RUSH by empowering employees with knowledge and awareness, fostering a diverse community that enhances workplace belonging through sustainability initiatives at work and at home.” Although geared towards employees, students are welcome to join and attend community focused events (e.g. Campus cleanup events, Plant swaps, speakers on environmental health topics)*

### 3.2. Does your institution offer community-facing courses or events regarding planetary health?

The **institution** offers community-facing courses or events at least once every year. (3 points)

The **institution** offers courses or events open to the community at least once per year, but they are not primarily created for a community audience. (2 points)

The **institution** has promoted community-facing courses or events, but was not involved in planning those courses or events. (1 point)

The **institution/medical school** have not offered such community-facing courses or events. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*In 2024, Rush University Medical Center hosted a professional development workshop through the “Academy of Management Conference” focusing on “Advancing sustainability through healthcare management.” It was led by environmental sustainability experts from Rush, Stanford University, and Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management and included participants from around the United States and other countries.*

*In October 2024, Rush University Medical Center hosted the “Rush Supplier Summit” that was focused on businesses/vendors in the local community to learn how to do business with Rush (with an emphasis on those with sustainable made products/services).*

### 3.3. Does your institution have regular coverage of issues related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare in university update communications?

Yes, all students **regularly** receive communication updates dedicated to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare. (2 points)

Yes, planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare topics are regularly included in communication updates to **some courses**. (1 point)

Students **do not** receive communications about planetary health or sustainable healthcare. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*The CON website, newsletters, and social media platforms occasionally cover planetary health issues. These articles and posts include mentions of funding for planetary health education and what Rush faculty are doing to address climate change across the university and medical center.*

*College-distributed email newsletters also occasionally include articles about planetary health and sustainability. The Office of Environmental Sustainability contributed to University News multiple times over the past year for both events and generalized planetary/climate health education. These contributions included updates about Earth month activities, waste diversion opportunities (office supply/furniture swaps), clothing/textile drives, employee sustainability guides, and the effect that operating rooms and anesthesia use have on planetary health.*

*Rush University's social media occasionally discusses university planetary health efforts.*

*The Rush "Green" Employee Resource group has a dedicated subgroup to post environmental sustainability/planetary health education on a monthly basis. This information is distributed throughout the medical center and university media outlets (i.e. "Rush News" emails, intranet homepage, etc).*

### **3.4. Does the institution or main affiliated hospital trust engage in professional education activities targeting individuals post graduation with the aim of ensuring their knowledge and skills in planetary health and sustainable healthcare remain up to date during their professional career?**

Yes, the **institution** or **main affiliated hospital trust** offers multiple in-person or online courses relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers, including at least one with a primary focus of planetary health. (2 points)

Yes, the **institution** or **main affiliated hospital trust** offers one course relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate provider. (1 point)

There are **no** such accessible courses for post-graduate providers. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*The CON has offered continuing education activities for CE/CEU credit though a handful of lectures covering topics related to planetary health:*

**Cygan, H.** *A Prescription for Climate Awareness: Effective Communication Strategies for Health Professionals.* Rush University Global Health Symposium. Rush University, March 28, 2024.

**Cygan, H.** *Integrating Planetary Health in Nursing Education.* Rush College of Nursing Faculty Development Committee Webinar. Rush University College of Nursing, virtual, October 31, 2023.

**Cygan, H.,** Garman, A., Basapur, S. *PCRA: Empowering Health Professionals to become Planetary Health Leaders.* Rush Earth Day Student Summit. Rush University, virtual, April 21, 2023.

*The CON offers an Environmental Health course for DNP students (NSG 568) and several courses mentioned in previous sections have various lessons related to planetary health/climate change and*

*sustainability in healthcare.*

*Dr.Heide Cygan is currently hoping to increase faculty engagement in these topics, but does not have finalized plans. The goal is to implement professional education activities in the future through the Piedmont/Ponderosa project.*

*The CON website and social media occasionally cover planetary health issues and education. These articles and posts include mentions of funding for planetary health education and what Rush faculty are doing to address climate change across the university and medical center.*

*College-distributed email newsletters also occasionally include articles about or mentioned of planetary health and sustainability. The Rush Office of Environmental Sustainability contributed to University News multiple times over the past year for both events and generalized planetary/climate health education. These contributions included updates about Earth month activities, Open House office supply/furniture swaps, clothing/textile drives, employee sustainability guides, and the effect that operating rooms and anesthesia use have on planetary health. Rush University's social media occasionally discusses university planetary health efforts.*

**3.5. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about environmental health exposures?**

Yes, the **medical school** or **all affiliated hospitals** have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)

**Some** affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)

**No** affiliated medical centres have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Rush University Health Systems utilize PatientPass- an education library linked to the electronic medical records system. All providers (both staff and students) are able to link relevant environmental education in relation to the patient's demographics or illness to their Mychart (electronic patient portal) or have the ability to print this education for the patient if needed. Although extensive, topics covered include environmental hazard prevention education (i.e. Lead, radon, pesticides, etc.) and education on climate change related illnesses (heat exposure, waterborne illness management, etc).*

**3.6. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about the health impacts of climate change?**

Yes, the **medical school** or **all affiliated hospitals** have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)

**Some** affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)

**No** affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*Rush University Medical Center does have a public [webpage](#) dedicated to Rush's efforts on environmental sustainability and their five pillars of impact. However, they do not have any patient education materials about the health impacts of climate change.*

**Section Total (10 out of 14)**

**71%**

Back to Summary Page [here](#)

# Support for Student-Led Planetary Health Initiatives

**Section Overview:** *This section evaluates institutional support for student-led planetary health initiatives, such as funding, fellowships, programming, and student groups. Planetary health is a young field and, as young people facing a future deeply shaped by climate change, students are often some of the first at an institution to engage with it. Institutions should provide support for students to engage in sustainability quality improvement (QI) initiatives, discover mentors in their area of interest, and receive funding for planetary health projects.*

## 4.1. Does your **institution** offer support for students interested in enacting a sustainability initiative/QI project?

Yes, the **institution** *either* offers grants for students to enact sustainability initiatives/QI projects *or* sustainability QI projects are part of the core curriculum. (2 points)

The **institution** encourages sustainability QI projects (to fulfil clerkship or longitudinal requirements) and offers resources to help students succeed in these projects, **but** there is no student funding available and there is no requirement to participate. (1 point)

No, **neither** the medical school or the institution offer opportunities or support for sustainability initiatives or QI projects. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*Two College of Nursing (CON) DNP students are involved in assessment of CON engagement in planetary health via this Planetary Health Report Card, with intention to send these findings and recommendations for increased planetary health education and involvement to the CON.*

*The Office of Student Life and Engagement and the Center for Clinical Research and Scholarship at Rush University provides support and coordination to students .*

*Although it would not be student specific, the Rush “Green” Employee Resource Group is attempting to obtain funding for an initiative to provide seed grants for employees interested in enacting sustainability initiatives/QI projects. Students of the college, who are also employees of the medical center would qualify for these grants.*

## 4.2. Does your **institution** offer opportunities for students to do research related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare?

The **institution** has a **specific** research program or fellowship for students interested in doing planetary health/sustainable healthcare/vetcare research. (2 points)

There are research opportunities for students to perform research related to planetary health/sustainable healthcare, but these **require student initiative** to seek these out and carry them out in their spare time. (1 point)

There are **no opportunities** for students to engage in planetary health/sustainable healthcare research. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>As mentioned above, two College of Nursing (CON) DNP students are involved in assessment of CON engagement in planetary health via this Planetary Health Report Card, with intention to send these findings and recommendations for increased planetary health education and involvement to the CON.</i></p> <p><i>In 2024, one PhD student completed dissertation work involving examining the community-level effects of ethylene oxide gas exposure, an air pollutant.</i></p> <p><i>Currently, there is one APHN-DNP student completing a DNP project on prenatal education interventions and behavior modification to reduce adverse health outcome risks related to air hazard exposure.</i></p> <p><i>Pajor, M., Billups, L., Carson-Nelson, N., &amp; Cygan, H. Students Leading Change: Completing the Planetary Health Report Card for a College of Nursing. Association of Community Health Nurse Educators Annual Institute, Northbrook, IL, June 7, 2024.</i></p> <p><i>Carson, N., Billups, L., Pajor, M.*, &amp; Cygan, H. Students Leading Change: Completing the Planetary Health Report Card for a College of Nursing. (accepted). Journal of Nursing Education.</i></p>	

<p><b>4.3. Does the <u>institution</u> have a webpage where students can find specific information related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare activities and mentors within the institution? For example, projects achieved, current initiatives underway at the medical school and/or contact of information of potential mentors.</b></p>	
<p>The institution has a webpage with specific information related to planetary health or sustainable healthcare/vetcare that includes up-to-date information on relevant initiatives and contact information of potential mentors. (2 points)</p>	
<p>There is an institution webpage that features some information on projects and mentors within planetary health and sustainable healthcare within the medical school, but it lacks key information. (1 point)</p>	
<p>There is <b>no institution</b> specific webpage for locating planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare projects or mentors. (0 points)</p>	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>There is a public facing <a href="#">webpage</a> for Rush University Medical Center specific to the Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) which reviews goals and initiatives related to environmental sustainability through their “Five Pillars of Impact.”</i></p> <p><i>The Office of Environmental Sustainability also hosts an internal Sharepoint site which includes OES news/updates, education, volunteer opportunities, and resources(i.e. Employee Resource guide, “green” vendor lists; Rheaply &amp; Practice Greenhealth information, etc.). There is also information on contacts within the Rush University Medical Center Office of Environmental Sustainability that any student/staff member can reach out to for guidance.</i></p>	



*The Rush “Green” Employee Resource Group has information on upcoming events and details on upcoming/past initiatives. Information is available via Microsoft Teams, and only available to members. Although it is employee focused, students are allowed to join.*

*Rush also has a “Greening the Operating Room” subcommittee, which is a multidisciplinary team dedicated to waste reduction/diversion, education, and environmentally sustainable patient care. They have a [website](#) dedicated to their efforts and education on the role that anesthesia and the operating room has on improving planetary health.*

#### 4.4. Does your **institution** have registered student groups dedicated towards fostering a culture of planetary health engagement, scholarship, and advocacy on campus, supported by faculty advisors?

Yes, there is a student organisation **with faculty support** at my medical school dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (2 points)

Yes, there is a student organisation at my medical school dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare but it **lacks faculty support**. (1 point)

No, there is **not** a student organisation at my institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*The Rush “Green” Employee Resource Group is an organisation at Rush whose mission is “To champion environmental sustainability efforts across RUSH by empowering employees with knowledge and awareness, fostering a diverse community that enhances workplace belonging through sustainability initiatives at work and at home.” Although created with medical center employees in mind, students are welcome to become members and participate in all meetings and events. There are a number of hospital staff that are university students. Faculty have referred multiple students interested in environmental sustainability and planetary health to this group. Furthermore, one of the current co-chairs of the group is a College of Nursing DNP student.*

*Although, there is not a student organization solely focused on planetary health, there are some student organizations that have certain aspects of their mission/vision/goals with a planetary health focus.*

*Rush Students for Global Health*

*<https://www.rushu.rush.edu/student-life/student-affairs/student-life-engagement/getting-involved/rush-students-global-health>*

*Food as Medicine (Co-Chairs: Mohan Bhadriaju, Riana Schleicher; Faculty Advisor: Elizabeth Simkus) promote importance of plant-based diet*

*<https://www.rushu.rush.edu/student-life/student-affairs/student-life-engagement/getting-involved/food-medicine>*

*Rush Wilderness Medicine Society (Co-Presidents: Isabel Hartner, Samantha Schneider*

Advisor: Dr. Scott Heinrich) encourages, fosters, supports knowledge of human health activities in a wilderness environment  
<https://www.rushu.rush.edu/student-life/student-affairs/student-life-engagement/getting-involved/rush-wilderness-society-rws>

**4.5. Is there a student liaison representing sustainability interests who serves on a department or institutional decision-making council to advocate for curriculum reform and/or sustainability best practices?**

Yes, there is a student representative that serves on a department or institutional decision-making council/committee. (1 points)

No, there is no such student representative. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*There is currently a College of Nursing DNP student completing a practicum with the Rush University Medical Center Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES). This student liaison works with the OES on various sustainability best practice initiatives (i.e. PVC/DEHP elimination in medical products) and campus events/opportunities (i.e. landfill/waste diversion initiatives). This same student is also a co-chair of the "Green" Employee Resource group mentioned previously providing opportunities for environmental sustainability initiatives.*

*All CON curriculum review committees have student representation. These representatives could also advocate for planetary health in curricula.*

*As mentioned above, two College of Nursing (CON) DNP students are involved in assessment of CON engagement in planetary health via this Planetary Health Report Card, with intention to send these findings and recommendations for increased planetary health education and involvement to the CON.*

<b>4.6. In the past year, has the <u>institution</u> had one or more co-curricular planetary health programs or initiatives in the following categories? (1 point each)</b>	<b>Score</b>
Projects where students are able to gain experience in organic agriculture and sustainable food systems, such as gardens, farms, community supported agriculture (CSA), fishery programs, or urban agriculture projects.	1
Panels, speaker series, or similar events related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	1
Events in which students learn directly from members of a local environmental justice community about the climate and environmental challenges they face, and how health professionals can partner with their community to address these exposures and impacts.	1

Cultural arts events, installations or performances related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	0
Local volunteer opportunities related to building community resilience to anthropogenic environmental impacts.	1
Wilderness or outdoors programs (e.g., that organise hiking, backpacking, kayaking, or other outings for students)	1
<p><i>Rush University students and faculty participate in city gardening at two Healthy Hood garden locations and the BEET Chicago North Lawndale garden. In addition to this, the Rush Central Kitchen has adopted a Kitchen Organic Waste program that was started by a student initiative in efforts to divert kitchen organic waste from landfill to composting.</i></p> <p><i>The Office of Environmental Sustainability also hosts a yearly event with the Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago to <u>give 120 free trees</u> away to students, faculty and staff. CRTI staff are on site to give tips/resources on how to care for the trees.</i></p> <p><i>The Green Employee Resource group (ERG) also hosted a “plant swap giveaway” for all students and staff in April, 2024; which provided a space for attendees to exchange &amp;/or exchange plants and education related to gardening/native species. Attendance of staff, students and faculty was encouraged and promoted through digital communication platforms across campus.</i></p> <p><i>Rush University hosts an annual Global Health Symposium, with the most recent year which included the following speakers/topics:</i></p> <p><i>“Climate Change in Our Backyard: A Global Challenge Impacting Health at the Local Level”</i>  <i>Elena Grossman, MPH Community Benefits Program Manager at GTI Energy</i></p> <p><i>“Climate Change Impacts on Human Health in Vulnerable Communities”</i>  <i>Amruta Nori-Sarma, PhD, MPH Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Public Health Department of Environmental Health</i></p> <p><i>“Virtual Climate Change - an Ecological and Global Health Equity Crisis”</i>  <i>Gaurab Basu, MD, MPH Director of Education and Policy, Harvard Chan C-CHANGE Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School</i></p> <p><i>“ A Prescription for Climate Awareness: Effective Communication Strategies for Health Professionals”</i>  <i>Heide Cygan, DNP, RN, PHNA-BC Associate Professor, Department of Community, Systems and Mental Health, Rush College of Nursing</i></p> <p><i>Numerous speaker series events have occurred throughout the last year that focus on planetary health and sustainability with the Rush Employee Resource Group (</i></p> <p><i>The annual “Bike to Work Challenge” occurred in late spring/early summer. Anyone in the RUSH community (including students, faculty and staff) could register and log their commuting miles to earn points and prizes.</i></p> <p><i>Not directly hosted, but ERG members (which do include Rush University students) were sent information regarding attendance at a meeting and campus collaboration with the “Westside Environmental Justice Alliance”</i></p>	

Section Total (10 out of 15)	67%
------------------------------	-----

Back to Summary Page [here](#)

# Campus Sustainability

***Section Overview:*** This section evaluates the support and engagement in sustainability initiatives by the institution. The healthcare industry is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions as well as pollution that harms local, regional, and global ecosystems. While healthcare is, by nature, a resource-intensive endeavour, the healthcare sector is well poised to lead the world to a more sustainable future. This will involve scrutinising every aspect of how our systems operate, from where we source our energy, to how we build our infrastructure, to what companies we invest in. Our medical schools, clinics, and hospitals must set the standard for sustainable practices, and show other sectors what is possible when it comes to minimising environmental impact.

<b>5.1. Does your <u>institution</u> have an Office of Sustainability?</b>	
Yes, there is an Office of Sustainability with multiple full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability. If the Office of Sustainability serves the entire campus, there is <b>at least one designated staff member</b> for sustainability at the hospital. (3 points)	
There is an Office of Sustainability with one or more full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability, but <b>no specific staff member</b> in charge of hospital sustainability. (2 points)	
There are <b>no salaried sustainability staff</b> , but there is a sustainability task force or committee. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> staff members <b>or</b> task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Rush has an Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES), consisting of a core Sustainability Department with currently three full time employees (OES Director, Manager and Coordinator), as well as a Health Systems Management Student Intern working part time and a College of Nursing-Advanced Public Health Nursing DNP student involved in program planning and intervention implementation. These staff members are dedicated to advocating for environmentally sustainable practices throughout the Rush University campus, which includes both the Armour Academic Center and the connected main hospital campus. There is also one Professional Nursing Staff leader who dedicates a portion of time to the environmental sustainability efforts at the institution. The Environmental Sustainability Office serves to oversee and implement Sustainable efforts at the hospital with the support of Sustainability Champions from clinical and non-clinical areas, several working groups (including an employee resource group), and the Rush Commitment Collective. The mission of OES is to actively measure, manage, and minimize our environmental footprint to enhance Rush's overarching mission to improve human and community health. They focus on five pillars: climate, resources, waste, purchasing, and people</i></p>	

**5.2. How ambitious is your institution's plan to reduce its own carbon footprint?**

The institution has a **written and approved plan** to achieve carbon neutrality by **2030** (5 points)

The institution has a **written and approved plan** to achieve carbon neutrality by **2040** (3 points)

The institution has a stated goal of carbon neutrality by **2040** but has **not created a plan** to reach that goal or the **plan is inadequate** (1 point)

The institution/medical school does **not** meet any of the requirements listed above (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*Rush University System for Health has [committed to the HHS Health Sector Climate Pledge](#), demonstrating a commitment to reduce scope 1 & 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve net zero across all scopes by 2050.*

**5.3. Do buildings/infrastructure used by the institution for teaching (not including the hospital) utilize renewable energy?**

Yes institution buildings are **100%** powered by renewable energy. (3 points)

Institution buildings source **>80%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (2 points)

Institution buildings source **>20%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (1 point)

Institution buildings source **<20%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*Although Rush University Medical Center currently purchases all brown power from Constellation, there is a 25% renewable energy goal by 2025 through the Healthcare Anchor Network Impact Purchasing Commitment (HAN-IPC). With Rush's commitment to meet the HHS pledge to reduce Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas by 50% by 2030, an additional goal to procure 100% renewable electricity for the academic center buildings by 2030 has been made. There are plans to install solar panels on the university buildings in the future, but the project has been placed on hold as further funding is required.*

**5.4. Are sustainable building practices utilised for new and old buildings on the institution's campus, with design and construction of new buildings and remodelling of old buildings conforming to a published sustainability rating system or building code/guideline?**

Yes, sustainable building practices are utilised for new buildings on the institution's campus and the **majority** of old buildings **have been retrofitted** to be more sustainable. (3 points)

Sustainable building practices are utilised for new buildings on the institution's campus, but most old buildings have **not been retrofitted**. (2 points)

Sustainable building practices are **inadequately or incompletely** implemented for new buildings. (1 point)

Sustainability is **not considered** in the construction of new buildings. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Rush University Medical Center currently supports sustainable building practices for new buildings as the three most recently constructed buildings on RUMC's campus have been or are currently seeking LEED certification. The recent Joan and Paul Rubschlager Building used more than 30% recycled materials to build, with 46% manufactured and harvested within 500 miles of RUSH. This helped earn the building a LEED-gold certification, as the third building on the RUSH campus to be LEED-certified.*

*The majority of buildings have some form of retrofitting, however, it is not sufficient to meet standards for LEED certification in older buildings. Additionally, in 2022 Rush University Medical Center opted into ComEd's energy efficiency program to pursue the following projects: installation of more efficient HVAC equipment, upgraded LED light fixtures, and monitoring-based commissioning (MBCx).*

**5.5. Has the institution implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options for students and reduce the environmental impact of commuting?**

Yes, the institution has implemented strategies to encourage and provide **environmentally-friendly transportation options** such as safe active transport, public transport, or carpooling and these options are well-utilised by students. Alternatively, the campus location is not amenable to unsustainable forms of transportation by default. (2 points)

The institution has implemented **some** strategies to provide environmentally-friendly transportation options, but the options are **unsatisfactorily** accessible or advertised. (1 point)

The institution has **not** implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Rush University Medical Center offers multiple options for students to reduce the environmental impact of commuting. Students are offered to opt in for a discounted a Ventra UPass which provides use of Chicago CTA Buses and Transit each semester while school is in session. RUMC is also a Divvy bike campus where students are offered a discounted annual membership. In addition*



to these services, RUMC has shuttle services from Union Station to campus and back. Ride sharing/carpooling is also encouraged through the use of LUUM for commuting. In 2024, a student-led initiative to bike to work was started by a current M3 student which was encouraged by administrators through email and social media postings.

In 2024, Rush University Medical Center (along with the OES department) developed a pilot plan to provide infrastructure to maximize the amount of electric vehicle usage on/around the campus. This program significantly expanded the number of electric vehicle charging stations available on campus (from 4 charging ports in one parking garage to 29 in two parking garages). These stations are available to all students, faculty, medical center staff, patients and visitors.

Current College of Nursing staff, students and Rush University Medical Center employees have submitted a proposal to increase bicycling opportunities on campus via a grant opportunity. The Nursing Wellness Grant Proposal (Cycling to Work: Decreasing Eco-Anxiety and Increasing Wellness for Bedside Nurses) contains the following goals/objectives

- Social marketing campaign to raise awareness about eco-anxiety and the benefits of cycling.
- Incentives to encourage commuting to work and other places by bicycle such as free Divvy Bike memberships, free app for tracking progress, installation of bike racks at Rush facilities and cycle-related raffles for pilot group members.
- Social activities such as guest speakers.
- Measurement of impact through validated survey.

#### 5.6. Does your institution have an organics recycling program (compost) and a conventional recycling program (aluminium/paper/plastic/glass)?

Yes, the institution has **both** compost **and** recycling programs accessible to students and faculty. (2 points)

The institution has **either** recycling **or** compost programs accessible to students and faculty, but not both. (1 point)

There is **no** compost or recycling program at the medical school. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

Single-stream recycling bins are available in and around university buildings including within the College of Nursing. Composting bins are available on campus in secure areas, but not available to the general staff and students. The Environmental Sustainability Office recently started a composting initiative with the food preparation side of the cafeteria with hopes to eventually expand. The university-affiliated medical center includes some other recycling and repurposing programs including the reprocessing of pulse oximeters, and recycling of Styrofoam, masks, batteries, and textiles. Although there is no recycling program specific to the nursing program, all faculty, students (and medical staff) have access to the Rheaply online platform which provides a way to freely exchange used furniture/office supplies/etc. on campus thereby diverting these items from the landfill and reducing upstream carbon emissions that would have been expended in the manufacturing/purchasing a new product. .

Student led initiatives (through the Student Support Collective) include a scrub recycling/exchange initiative. This initiative collects used scrubs from students via collection bins placed throughout the Rush University campus. Routine, distribution events are then held and all students are encouraged to come take what they need. This program was intended to reduce usable scrubs from



*being sent to a landfill, and reduce the purchasing of new clothing, thereby reducing carbon emissions required in the purchasing of a new product. Efforts to expand this initiative are ongoing and are now including students from all colleges on campus as well as employees/staff in the medical center and “Green” Employee Resource Group.*

**5.7. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about the campus food and beverage selections (e.g. local sourcing, reduced meat, decreased plastic packaging)?**

Yes, the institution has **adequate** sustainability requirements for food and beverages, including meat-free days or no red-meat, and **is engaged** in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (3 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution **is engaged** in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (2 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution is **not** engaged in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (1 point)

There are **no** sustainability guidelines for food and beverages. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Rush University Medical Center has a “preferred list” of local food vendors which utilize catering services for an event, but the list is optional. There are food sustainability purchasing guidelines (adapted from Healthcare without Harm) and efforts through the Healthcare Anchor Network- Impact Purchasing Commitment which aims to target sustainable food spend. Rush achieved its goal of 20% sustainability food spend earlier than the 2025 deadline, and is now attempting to increase it’s target to a 25% sustainable food spend.*

*Rush has also previously signed the “Cool Food Pledge” (addresses greenhouse gas emissions related to food procurement) and the “Good Food Purchasing Project” which encourages buying power towards specific values including (i.e local economies, environmentally sustainable).*

*There are also efforts underway to provide increased “meat alternative” menu items within the “Fooda” managed areas on campus.*

*The College of Nursing has multiple leaders who attempt to reduce waste when hosting events (ex. ordering trays of sandwiches instead of individually boxed lunches, encouraging reusable water bottles instead of single use)*

*Previously mentioned future initiatives include involvement with the Piedmont/Ponderosa project which will focus on promoting sustainable practices/products.*

**5.8. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply procurement?**

Yes, the institution has **adequate** sustainability requirements for supply procurement **and** is **engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (3 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution is **engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (2 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution is **not engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (1 point)

There are **no** sustainability guidelines for supply procurement. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*The Office of Environmental Sustainability is structured within the Division of Procurement at Rush University Medical Center. Although there are no written RUMC policies related to supply procurement and environmental sustainability; there is a multidisciplinary committee who meets regularly to actively pursue elimination of “chemicals of concern”(including PVC and DEHP) in medical supplies. Goals for 2024/0225 include complete elimination of 3 out of 7 product spend categories (Gloves, lactation supplies, and enteral devices).*

*Rush University Medical Center is a part of Healthcare Anchor Network’s Impact Purchasing Agreement, which includes goals related to sustainable food procurement, renewable electricity, furniture and furnishings procurement, and transition from single-use disposables to reusables where possible.*

**5.9. Are there sustainability requirements or guidelines for events hosted at the institution?**

Every event hosted at the institution **must** abide by sustainability criteria. (2 points)

The institution **strongly recommends or incentivizes** sustainability measures, but they are **not required**. (1 point)

There are **no** sustainability guidelines for institution events. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*The Office of Environmental Sustainability has started to develop a Sustainable Events guide which will offer sustainable event suggestions (i.e. compostable flatware to purchase, and waste sorting guidance). Members of the Philanthropy Office on campus are also currently completing an “Inclusive Events guide” which will have a section on “How to host a sustainable event.”*

*The College of Nursing has multiple leaders who encourage environmentally sustainable practices (ex. ordering trays of sandwiches instead of individually boxed lunches, encouraging reusable water bottles instead of single use)*

*Previously mentioned future initiatives include involvement with the Piedmont/Ponderosa project which will focus on promoting sustainable practices/products.*

**5.10. Does your institution have programs and initiatives to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable?**

Yes, the institution has **programs** and **initiatives** to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable. (2 points)

There are **guidelines** on how to make lab spaces more environmentally sustainable, but not programs or initiatives. (1 point)

There are **no** efforts at the institution to make lab spaces more sustainable. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Rush University has multiple lab spaces that are "My Green Lab" certified (considered the gold standard for laboratory sustainability certification).*

*The Rush University Medical Center human anatomy lab has undergone numerous environmentally sustainable upgrades (ex. overhead fluorescent lights changed to low energy LED bulbs on dimmable switches with movement sensors, higher efficiency ventilation system improvements, etc.)*

*This ventilation system will have the ability to lower its energy use during times when there is no one in the laboratory, such as during the overnight hours.*

*Rush utilizes non-formalin embalmed donors in cadaver labs (donors embalmed with an ethanol-based solution rather than formalin-based).*

*Although not necessarily pertaining to CON students, the histology teaching lab at Rush University Medical Center has moved from the use of microscopes and glass slides to virtual histology which decreases the waste of materials and the use of chemicals. The virtual histology effort has also decreased the need for transportation of students to the lab in order to access materials.*

<b>5.11. Does your <u>institution's</u> endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?</b>	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels <b>and</b> has made a <b>commitment to reinvest divested funds</b> into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has <b>partially divested</b> from fossil fuel companies <b>or</b> has made a <b>commitment to fully divest</b> , but <b>currently</b> still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has <b>not divested</b> from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are <b>conducting organised advocacy</b> for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been <b>no efforts</b> to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Rush University Medical Center's investment portfolio currently includes fossil-fuel companies. Although there are no current student/faculty-led organized efforts for divestment, OES staff is currently collecting the institution's scope 3 baseline data to educate and inform students/faculty/staff and fuel advocacy efforts for divestment in fossil fuels.</i>	
<b>Section Total (15 out of 32)</b>	
<b>47%</b>	

Back to Summary Page [here](#)

# Grading

## Section Overview

This section focuses on the grading of the report card. The institution received a grade for each of the individual sections as well as an overall institutional grade. Section point totals were tallied, divided by the total points available for the section, and converted to a percentage. The overall institutional grade is a weighted average of the section grades, with curriculum receiving a higher weight owing to its larger number of metrics. Letter grades for each section and the institution overall were then assigned according to the table below.

Letter Grade*	Percentage
A	80% - 100%
B	60% - 79%
C	40% - 59%
D	20% - 39%
F	0% - 19%

## Planetary Health Grades for the Rush University School of Nursing

The following table presents the individual section grades and overall institutional grade for the Rush University School of Nursing on this nursing-school-specific Planetary Health Report Card.

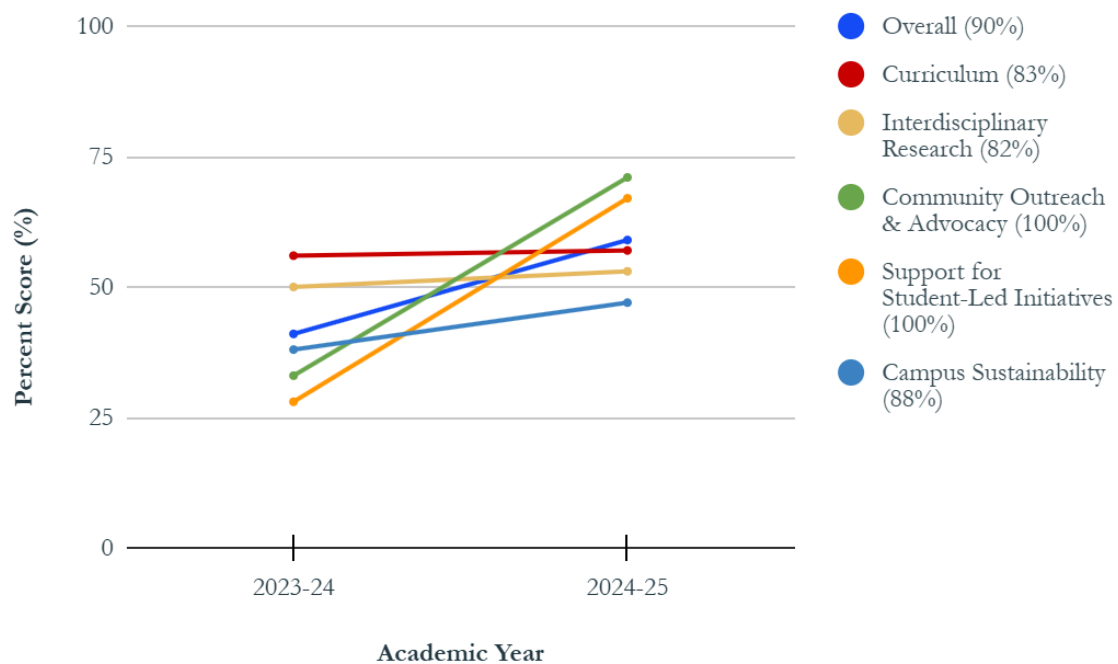
Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
<b>Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)</b>	$(37/65) \times 100 = 57\%$	C+
<b>Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)</b>	$(9/17) \times 100 = 53\%$	C
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)</b>	$(10/14) \times 100 = 71\%$	B
<b>Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)</b>	$(10/15) \times 100 = 67\%$	B
<b>Campus Sustainability (17.5%)</b>	$(15/32) \times 100 = 47\%$	C
<b>Institutional Grade</b>	$(A \times 0.3 + B \times 0.175 + C \times 0.175 + D \times 0.175 + E \times 0.175) = 59\%$	C+

# Report Card Trends

## Section Overview

This graph demonstrates trends in overall and section grades for the years in which Rush University has participated in the Planetary Health Report Card initiative.

## Planetary Health Report Card Trends for Rush University College of Nursing



[Here](#) is the link for the Rush University College of Nursing's Yearly Trends Spreadsheet and Graph.