Planetary Health Report Card (Nutrition & Dietetics) 2026:

Rush University Medical Center

2025-2026 Contributing Team:

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Land acknowledgement: We recognize that 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	B-

Curriculum	C+

- The Rush University Clinical Nutrition program introduces its graduate (MS program) and graduate-dietetic internship (MS/DI program) students to sustainability and planetary health components within several core areas, including community and organizational food systems, procurement, public health determinants, interprofessional teamwork, and practicum opportunities.
- Planetary health content within the curriculum is currently fragmented, appearing in isolated courses rather than reinforced throughout the program, which may limit students' ability to recognize its necessity. Additionally, the curriculum lacks a cohesive, overarching framework that showcases the relationship between nutrition knowledge, professional practice, and planetary health. This challenge is fueled by CN faculty's inconsistent use of key terminology, such as "planetary health" and "sustainability", often assuming students will make connections between content and planetary health on their own. Furthermore, student exposure to these topics varies significantly by program (MS vs. MSDI) and within the MSDI program, by supervised practice placement, resulting in differing exposure opportunities. Despite these gaps, analysis has shown a hopeful future of planetary health integration led by a passionate faculty body driven by evidence-based practice.

- **Recommendations**
  - Integrate planetary health and sustainable healthcare concepts into existing lesson plans in accordance to the CN faculty focus group findings; looking at the MS and MSDI programs individually.
  - Report out to CN faculty, ACEND accreditation program indicators related to sustainability.
  - Standardize hands-on experiential learning opportunities across programs and site-placements, capitalizing on food system management and community practicum.
  - Utilize seminar to share CN program sustainability efforts/research and discuss relevant current events.

Interdisciplinary Research	B-

- Rush University has faculty actively engaged in planetary health and healthcare sustainability research, particularly focused on operating room environmental impact, life cycle assessments, and sustainability leadership. The institution also engages community voices in broader health research through established structures such as CAPriCORN, the Institute for Translational Medicine, and the ALIVE Faith Network.
- Despite strong individual research efforts, Rush lacks a dedicated interdisciplinary planetary health research institute or centralized platform to coordinate and showcase this work. Community members advise research broadly but do not directly influence a focused planetary health research agenda.

- **Recommendations**:
  - Establish a formal interdisciplinary planetary health research initiative or institute.
  - Develop a centralized planetary health research hub to highlight faculty expertise projects, faculty/student opportunities, and community input into research priorities.

Community Outreach and Advocacy — B

- Rush demonstrates strong engagement in community partnerships related to planetary health, including urban gardening programs, food waste diversion/composting and food insecurity initiatives, heat mapping efforts, decreasing carbon footprint with local outsourcing, and sustainability-focused conferences and events such as the Rush Supplier Summit. Planetary health topics are also consistently featured in institutional communications.
- While diagnosis-specific environmental health materials are available for patients, Rush does not yet provide comprehensive climate-focused health education resources or ongoing professional education opportunities in planetary health for post-graduate providers.

- **Recommendations**:
  - Develop accessible patient-facing resources addressing climate-related health risks and resilience strategies.
  - Expand professional education offerings related to planetary health and sustainable healthcare.
  - Continue to increase direct community partnerships with a planetary health focus.

Support for Student-Led Initiatives — C

- Students have access to funding, sustainability research opportunities, volunteer programs, and co-curricular planetary health initiatives through university programs, the Office of Student Life and Engagement, and the Office of Environmental Sustainability. Students actively contribute to community engagement and applied sustainability projects.
- However, planetary health engagement remains decentralized and largely student-driven, with no formal faculty-supported student organization, centralized mentorship system, or structured pathway for long-term student leadership.

- **Recommendations**:
  - Establish a faculty-supported planetary health student organization.
  - Create a centralized platform connecting students to mentors, grants, projects, and research opportunities.

Campus Sustainability — B-

- Rush University Medical Center demonstrates strong institutional commitment to sustainability through a dedicated Office of Environmental Sustainability and memberships in a growing number of national sustainability networks and initiatives. Advances are being made in sustainable procurement, food systems reform, composting and recycling programs, green building practices, transportation initiatives, and laboratory sustainability improvements.
- While renewable energy adoption and sustainability policy development are progressing, Rush's carbon neutrality timeline remains less ambitious than peer institutions globally but is aligned with peer institutions in the United States. Formal sustainability requirements for institutional events and full fossil fuel divestment have not yet been achieved.

- **Recommendations**:
  - Accelerate renewable energy expansion via community solar and strengthen long-term carbon reduction targets.

- Finalize sustainability policies for procurement and campus events.
- Implement a campus-wide staff/student composting program.
- Use investment emissions data to support progress toward fossil fuel divestment.

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 health professional 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 health professional training. It is imperative that we hold our institutions accountable for educating health professional 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) 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 health professional 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.

- **Nutrition and Dietetics School/Department vs. Institution:** When "Nutrition and Dietetics School" (or similar derivative therefore) is specified in the report card, this only refers to curriculum and resources offered by the School/Department of Nutrition and Dietetics 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 nutrition and dietetics students, no matter where in the institution the resource comes from or if it is specifically targeted for these students, can meet this metric.

- **Environmental history (Curriculum Section):** 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 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.

- **Extractivisim:** 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).

Scoring Matrix

- Elective coursework (1 point): This score applies to material that is actively selected by the students such as a module choice, or additional lecture series. By implication, only a given proportion of the cohort will receive this taught material.
- Brief coverage in the core curriculum (2 points): This score applies where a topic is covered only briefly in a core curriculum session. This implies that the entire cohort receives the same material. At minimum brief inclusion would qualify as inclusion in a single lecture slide in a single year.
- In depth coverage in the core curriculum (3 points): This score applies where a topic is taught in significant detail or where a topic is repeatedly brought up in different years. This might look like several dedicated lecture slides, or inclusion of the same topic in different lectures and teaching formats.

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.

Updated in 2025, a complete literature review by metric is available for the 2024/25 Medicine Report Card Template. This largely translates across disciplines although we are hoping to expand this process across all of our covered disciplines. A link to the 2025 literature review by metric is available here.

Planetary Health Curriculum

Section Overview: ***This section evaluates the integration of relevant planetary health topics into the nutrition and dietetics school curriculum.*** *Today's students will be on the frontlines of tackling the health effects of climate and other environmental changes. Therefore, it is critical that nutrition and dietetics students are trained to understand the health effects of these changes, as well as planetary health issues and principles more broadly. Topics like the changing geography of vector-borne diseases, the health consequences of air pollution, environmental health inequities, and disaster response principles must be part of every health professional school's core curriculum.*

Curriculum: General

1.1. Does the school within your university responsible for nutrition and/or dietetics offer opportunities to learn about sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or Planetary Health?	
Yes, the nutrition and dietetics school offers two or more core courses which focus primarily on sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health. (3 points)	
Yes, the nutrition and dietetics school offers one core course which focuses primarily on sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health. (2 points)	
The nutrition and dietetics school does not have any core courses whose primary focus is sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health. However, they offer one or more electives on these topics in addition to core courses that include a lecture on planetary health. (1 point)	
No, the nutrition and dietetics school does not offer any core or elective courses on sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that offer opportunities to learn about sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems, and/or planetary health:

IPE-502-BV-1 Interprofessional Person Centered (MS + MSDI): *Module "Diversity, Uniqueness, and Planetary Health"; Module "Roles and Responsibilities Case Studies"; and engagement through articles, videos, discussion boards, case studies, knowledge checks, and practice telehealth events over three consecutive semesters.*

NTR - 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease (MS only)*: Discussing the planetary health and GI system health connection (ex. clean water) during a special topic series.*

NTR-629-BT-1 Food Systems Management (MSDI only): *Touches on sustainability in regards to building design in "Product Flow and Kitchen design" lecture.*

NTR - 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only): *Discussed through a policy lens in the following lectures: "Agricultural Policy", "Food Manufacturing Policy", "Food Labeling", and "Sustainability".*

Under the guidance of College of Nursing and College of Health Sciences Representatives, the university offered a ***PH Faculty development course*** *this past spring (2025) to increase interest in planetary health and to encourage integration within the different programs/curricula across the university. ~10 faculty members participated in this training (CN represented).*

Curriculum: Health Effects of Climate Change

1.2. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the relationship between climate change and social determinants of health (e.g. reduced access to nutritional and/or traditional food, inequities in food distribution)?	
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)	
This topic was covered in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the relationship between climate change and social determinants of health:

IPE-502-BV-1 Interprofessional Person Centered (MS + MSDI): *Module "Culture of Safety-Social Determinants of Health versus Ecological Determinants of Health"; Module "Roles and Responsibilities Case Studies"; and explored through articles, videos, discussion boards, case studies, knowledge checks, and practice telehealth events over three consecutive semesters.*

NTR - 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease (MS only): *Special series: "Climate Change and Gut Health," including a lecture introducing climate change and GI health and a lecture on planetary health and cancer risk. These lectures are followed by student reflection assignments and discussion forums. Students then examine cancer disparities, food insecurity, and cancer outcomes through discussion posts that define food insecurity and connect individual-level experiences to the broader local, national, and international context, as well as how they will apply this knowledge in their future professional roles.*

NTR 600 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Obesity (MS only): *Objectives "Distinguish between endogenous (genetics/epigenetics), nutrigenomic factors (gene-nutrient interactions) and other environmental factors involved in the susceptibility and development of cancer and*

gastrointestinal disease" and "Critically evaluate research evidence focused on approaches to prevent and treat cancer and gastrointestinal diseases".
NTR - 628P Practice in Community Nutrition (MSDI Only): *Addressed through "Sustainability" lecture.*

1.3. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalised populations (e.g. low socioeconomic groups, women, communities of colour, Indigenous communities, children, people experiencing homelessness, and older adults)?

This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)	
This topic was covered in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalised populations:

IPE-502-BV-1 Interprofessional Person Centered (MS + MSDI): *Module "Culture of Safety- Social Determinants of Health versus Ecological Determinants of Health"; Module "Roles and Responsibilities Case Studies"; and examined through articles, videos, discussion boards, case studies, knowledge checks, and practice telehealth events over three consecutive semesters.*

NTR - 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only): *Addressed through"Agriculture" lecture (ie. discussion on farmers).*

NTR 660 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Obesity (MS only): *Module titled: "Obesogenic Environment, Health & Racial Disparities" including required reading on the Obesogenic Environment Framework and its four major categories: physical environment, macro - economic framework, social environment (Networks), and individual factors (personal). Students examine cancer disparities, food insecurity and cancer outcomes with discussion.*

1.4. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the impacts of environmental degradation from climate change on food production, food supply, and quality (e.g. crop yields, nutritional values, etc)?

This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)

This topic was explored in depth in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)
This topic was not covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the impacts of environmental degradation from climate change on food production, food supply, and quality:

NTR - 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only): *Addressed through"Sustainability" and "Agriculture" Lectures.*

1.5. To what extent does your nutrition and dietetics school emphasise the importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems to inform planetary health solutions?

The importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems is emphasised throughout the nutrition and dietetics school's planetary health education. (3 points)
The importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems is briefly addressed (e.g. in one course or lecture) in the core curriculum. (2 points)
The importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems is emphasised (comprehensively or briefly) in elective coursework but not in the core curriculum. (1 point)
This topic was not covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	0

Score explanation: This topic is not covered in CN curriculum.

1.6. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems?

This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)
This topic was covered in two or more courses within the core curriculum, including specific strategies for healthcare professionals to reduce the carbon footprint. (3 points)
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum, including basic awareness of the carbon footprint of healthcare systems. (2 points)

This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems:

NTR - 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease (MS only): *During "Climate Change and Gut Health" special series through a "Climate Change and GI Health" lecture where students are introduced to the concept of carbon footprint and information on the carbon footprint of healthcare systems.*

Recommendation: *A focus group discussion indicated that this could be explicitly expanded upon in NTR-629P Practice in Food Systems Management, within the sustainability component of the rotation in healthcare systems. This topic is addressed at the university level, but not specifically within the CN program.*

1.7. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address global issues that impact the sustainability of our food system? (1 point each, provided the topic is offered in 1 or more courses)	**Score**
Impact of the increasing global population on food supply and food security. (1 point)	1
Impact of declining biodiversity on access to a variety of nutritious foods. (1 point)	1
Impact of urbanisation on demand for less environmentally sustainable dietary patterns. (1 point)	1
Impact of colonisation on food system practices and long-term food supply and food security. (1 point)	0
Impact of socio-political instability, caused by pandemics, natural disasters, war and conflict on food supply and food security. (1 point)	1

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address:

The impact of increasing global population on food supply/security is presented in ***NTR - 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only)*** *through a"Sustainability" lecture that discusses the growing population's environmental impact, how we can make sure there is enough food, and how we measure the amount of food needed.*

The impact of declining biodiversity on access to a variety of nutritious foods is presented in ***NTR - 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only)*** *through a "Sustainability" lecture that discusses the reduction of genetic diversity in crops, crop failure, and the International Treaty on Planet Genetic Resource for Food and Agriculture. (Note: The impact of food supply/insecurity from a political standpoint will be added to CN curriculum next year.)*

*The impact of urbanization on demand for less environmentally sustainable dietary patterns is Presented in **NTR- 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease-(MS only)** through the special series "Climate Change and Gut Health" highlighting the effects of various agricultural and animal-derived foods on climate change and the benefits of eating a plant-based diet on reducing greenhouse gasses.*

*The impact of socio-political instability, caused by pandemics, natural disasters, war and conflict on food supply and food security is presented in **NTR - 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease (MS only)** through a "Climate Change and Gut Health" special series highlighting the effects that climate change related events have on food yield/supply, food security, and loss of livelihood/displacement.*

1.8. Does your nutrition and dietetics school address the environmental and human impact of food transport on planetary health and food quality?	
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)	
This topic was explored in depth in two or more courses within the core curriculum, including critical analysis of both imported and locally-sourced foods (i.e. food sold and consumed within its region of production), considering factors such as environmental impact, nutritional value, and economic implications. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the environmental and human impact of food transport on planetary health and food quality:

***NTR 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only):** Addressed through "Sustainability", "Manufacturing", "Food Retail", and "Agriculture" lectures.*

***Recommendation:** Increase the hands-on experience and the connection students have to food transport/retail procurement in NTR - 629P (food service management rotation).*

1.9. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the environmental impact of food waste and examine solutions to minimise food waste in various settings (e.g. institutions

such as hospitals, schools, prisons, small and large retail shops, the food industry and food manufacturing companies, and households)?	
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)	
This topic was explored in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score explanation: Following course(s) offered at our university that address the environmental impact of food waste and examine solutions to minimize food waste in various settings:

NTR-629-BT-1 Food Systems Management (MSDI only): *In this course, all MSDI students learn strategies for decreasing food waste using methods like Plate Waste Studies which are applicable to various food service settings.*

NTR - 629P Practice in Food Systems Management (MSDI only)- *In the food service setting, all MSDI students complete a Plate Waste Study with a written strategic plan to decrease waste observed. The following opportunities depend on student site placement:*

- *Exposure to LeanPath, the food waste composting program; with select students training food service employees on use of the system.*
- *Exposure to site-specific community food pantries donating; including the Surplus Project supported by Rush Hospital central kitchens.*

The Rush University system does address the environmental impact of food waste within various settings, but the depth and variety of exposure varies by student rotation site placement.

Recommendation*: Standardize student exposure to the environmental impact of food waste during the food system management rotation. Increase the number of food system settings students participate within.*

1.10. Does your nutrition and dietetics school explore the global, regional, national and local regulations that govern food systems, and the factors that drive changes in these regulatory systems?
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)
This topic was explored in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the global, regional, national and local regulations that govern food systems, and the factors that drive changes in these regulatory systems:

NTR 628 Community Nutrition and NTR & 629P Practice in Food Systems Management (MSDI only): *Addressed through "Agriculture", "Sustainability", "Manufacturing", "Food Retail", "Dietary Guidance","Food Labels" lectures, and following discussions.*

1.11. Does your nutrition and dietetics school address the role of food marketing and commercial interests in shaping dietary patterns and food systems?	
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)	
This topic was explored in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the role of food marketing and commercial interests in shaping dietary patterns and food systems:

NTR 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI only): *Addressed through "Food Labeling" and "Advertising" lecture, and through discussion of governmental systems and guidelines (ex. The Dietary Guidelines).*

NTR-660 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Obesity (MS only):*"Obesogenic Environment, Health & Racial Disparities" module, where students are required to read Verde L. et al., "Obesogenic environments as major determinants of a disease: It is time to re-shape our cities" followed by a discussion forum examining the different aspects of the obesogenic environment and associated health and racial disparities. Students are then assigned the following videos: "Beyond Eating and Exercise: Implementing Trauma-Informed Obesity Care in School-Based Health Clinics", "Food Marketing Environments as Influences on Obesity and Diabetes Prevention and*

Control in Black Americans", "How the Other Half Eats: the Untold Story of Food and Inequality in America" or "Obesity and Corporate Greed" and complete a reflection.

***NTR-605 Sports Nutrition (MS only)**: "Supplements" lecture discusses the cost of supplements and the influence of food marketing on dietary patterns such as body image and eating disorders.*

1.12. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum cover these topics in the core curriculum? (1 point each, provided the topic is offered in 1 or more courses)	**Score**
The health and environmental co-benefits of innovations in novel and emerging food ingredients with a specific focus on their positive impact on planetary health. (1 point)	0
The benefits of applying a sustainability lens when learning about food labelling, product development and other food-industry practices. (1 point)	0
The environmental and health co-benefits of outdoor activities, human-powered transport and immersion in nature. (1 point)	1
Responsible prescription practices for oral nutrition supplements and tube feeding in healthcare. (1 point)	0

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the environmental and health co-benefits of outdoor activities, human-powered transport and immersion in nature:

***NTR-660 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Obesity (MS only)**: Module "Obesogenic Environment, Health & Racial Disparities" requires students to read content on the Obesogenic Environment including the physical environment. A required reading by Verde L. et al., "Obesogenic environments as major determinants of a disease: It is time to re-shape our cities" is followed by a discussion forum examining different aspects of the built environment and their associated health and racial disparities. This article emphasizes the benefits of green spaces that promote pedestrian/bicycle paths, friendlier walking environments, and more.*

***NTR- 605 Sports Nutrition (MS only)-** "Oral Supplements" lecture discusses quality and safety in an elective course.*

***Recommendations:** Responsible prescription practices should be discussed in parenteral/enteral nutrition lectures/practice (within the core curriculum).*

Curriculum: Environmental Impacts of Dietary Patterns

1.13. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet?
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)

This topic was explored in depth in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet:

NTR - 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI)*:Addressed in"Agriculture", "Sustainability", and "Dietary Guidance" lectures.*
NTR - 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease (MS)*:"Climate Change and Gut Health" series includes a lecture highlighting the effects of various agricultural and animal-derived foods on climate change and the benefits of eating a plant-based diet on reducing greenhouse gases (i.e., CO2).*
NTR - 661 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition (MS)*: "Metabolic Diseases" topic in the module "Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Diseases", examines the similarities and differences between plant-based diets, MIND Diet, DASH diet and the Mediterranean Diet. This exposure includes required readings, pre-recorded videos, website links to screeners assessing student diet in concordance with the Mediterranean and MIND diets, and discussion forums/reflections on the information. Students are also asked to make connections between plant-based diets and SDOH.*

NTR- 625 Fundamentals of Nutrition Care (MSDI)*: Addresses the health benefits of a plant based diet, but not yet environmental co-benefits.*

Recommendations: *When NTR-625 discusses health benefits of a plant based diet, environmental co-benefits should be presented.*

1.14. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the environmental impact of dietary patterns high in animal-derived foods (particularly red and processed meats) on planetary health?
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)
This topic was explored in depth in two or more courses within the core curriculum. (3 points)
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)
This topic was not covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	3

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the environmental impact of dietary patterns high in animal-derived foods on planetary health:

NTR 628 Community Health (MSDI only)*: Explored in "Sustainability", "Agriculture", and "Dietary Guidance" lectures from a greenhouse gas emissions standpoint.*
NTR 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease (MS)*: Series titled, "Climate Change and Gut Health" highlights the effects of various agricultural and animal-derived foods on climate change and the how eating a plant-based diet can reduce greenhouse gases (i.e., CO2).*
NTR - 661 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Metabolic Diseases (MS): *Module "Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Diseases", examines the similarities and differences between plant-based diets, MIND Diet, DASH diet and the Mediterranean Diet. This exposure includes required readings, pre-recorded videos, website links to screeners assessing student diet in concordance with the Mediterranean and MIND diets, and discussion forums/reflections on the information. Further discussion is had on the health benefits of these diets for CVD risk prevention and reduction.*

1.15. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum address the impact of dietary patterns high in unhealthy ultra-processed foods on planetary health? (e.g. environmental burden of food processing, excessive food packaging)	
This topic was explored in depth in several courses, either in the classroom, hands-on practical experiences (e.g. practicums, community projects), and/or student research opportunities. (4 points)	
This topic was explored in depth in two or more courses within the core curriculum, exploring current challenges and solutions regarding food processing and packaging practices. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered (e.g. in one course or a lecture) within the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic is addressed in elective coursework but not the core curriculum. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address the impact of dietary patterns high in unhealthy ultra-processed foods on planetary health:

NTR 628 Community Nutrition (MSDI)*: Addressed through "Sustainability", "Food manufacturing", and "Food Retail" lectures.*

1.16. Does your nutrition and dietetics school curriculum provide opportunities for students to develop the following skills to promote sustainable healthcare, sustainable	**Score**

food systems and/or planetary health? (1 point each, provided the topic is offered in 1 or more courses)	
Advocacy (a strategic and evidence-based approach or action aiming to disrupt the status quo, influence policies, practices and behaviours in sustainable food system relevant contexts) for sustainable food systems in the context of both the food industry and within a broader multidisciplinary context. (1 point)	1
Systems-thinking (understanding the interconnections and interdependence in complex systems (e.g.natural, social, health, economic, and political)) in sustainable food system relevant contexts. (1 point)	1
Leadership (to think innovatively, and inspire others to advocate for transformative changes) in food systems that prioritise health and sustainability. (1 point)	0
Knowledge and research translation (to apply high quality evidence-based research in communication to inform decision-making to individuals and groups). (1 point)	1
Score explanation: *Following are the course(s) offered at our university that address Advocacy & Systems-thinking for sustainable food systems: In* ***NTR 629P- Practice in Food Systems Management (MSDI only),*** *Students learn about policy, grants/funding, and action of sustainable food systems through the Food Is Medicine program creation presentation and through volunteering with the Food Is Medicine program. This program has been implemented with patients screened at risk for food insecurity throughout Rush Medical Centers.* *Following are the course and application opportunities offered at our university that address Knowledge and research translation: In* ***NTR - 682 Research Methods Application and Special Topics in Clinical Nutrition (MS & MSDI)****, all first-year CN students begin master's research projects. This year, two student authors conducted research to evaluate planetary health implementation within the CN curriculum – for Rush University Medical Center's 2025-2026 PHRC.*	

Curriculum: Skills and Practical Applications

1.17. Does your nutrition and dietetics school offer students an opportunity to critically analyse existing interventions or practices that aim to promote sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health?
There are multiple opportunities for students to critically analyse these interventions within core courses (e.g. case studies, research projects, or practical assignments) in various settings. (3 points)
There are 2 or more opportunities for students to critically analyse these interventions within core courses. (2 points)

There is only 1 opportunity for students to critically analyse these interventions within a core course or lecture. (1 point)
There are no opportunities for students to critically analyse these interventions throughout their degree. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Following are the course(s) offered at our university to critically analyse existing interventions or practices that aim to promote sustainable health care and food systems:

*During **NTR - 629P Practice in Food Systems Management (MSDI)**, first-year students complete a 3-month dietetic internship in a foodservice location. All students complete a Plate Waste Study at their various sites. This is an opportunity for students to critically analyse existing practices while promoting sustainable healthcare and sustainable food systems. Additionally, select students created and presented an inservice covering central kitchen staff's use of the LeanPath food waste prevention system. Students are also exposed to the Surplus Project, a food "recycling" program which diverts surplus hospital food to local community organization food pantries instead of to landfills.*

1.18. Do students from your nutrition and dietetics school have the opportunity to gain real-world experience volunteering or working within projects or organisations that promote sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health?
There are multiple opportunities for students to gain real-world experience in various settings throughout the degree. (3 points)
There are 2 or more opportunities for students throughout the degree. (2 points)
There is 1 opportunity for students throughout the degree. (1 point)
There are no opportunities for students throughout the degree. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: 1st year MSDI CN students are required to complete master's research projects- involving real-world opportunities within community food systems, sustainable health care, etc. During the 2025-2026 PHRC cycle, two CN first-year students completed the Planetary Health Report Card for the Rush University CN program. Additionally, second-year MSDI CN students request an externship site in a dietetic/nutrition sector of their choosing. This gives second-year students the opportunity to request a rotation site that addresses sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems or planetary health. Relevant past externship sites include research and development at food companies, marketing and advertising, and community sites.

Curriculum: Leadership and Administrative Support

1.19. Does your nutrition and dietetics school demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement in the quality and quantity of education to promote sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health?	
There have been significant efforts made to integrate more content on these topics over the past 3 years, with strong evidence of an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. It is therefore likely that next year's PHRC will reveal an increased score against the metrics in this curriculum domain. (3 points)	
There have been significant efforts made to integrate more content on these topics over the past 3 years, with some evidence of an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. It is therefore likely that next year's PHRC will reveal an increased score against the metrics in this curriculum domain. (2 points)	
There has been minimal effort made to integrate more content on these topics over the past 3 years. It is therefore unlikely, but possible, that next year's PHRC will reveal an increased score against the metrics in this curriculum domain. (1 point)	
There has been little or no investment in curriculum updates to integrate more content on these topics over the past 3 years, and no evidence of a commitment to do so in the near future. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score explanation: Following are the courses offered at our university that demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement in the quality and quantity of education to promote sustainable healthcare, food systems, and planetary health: *Planetary health integration into **IPE-502-BV-1 Interprofessional Person Centered (MS & MSDI)**, was a direct result from the 2024-2025 Rush University HSM Planetary Health Report Card. This 2 semester course now integrates planetary health through articles, videos, discussion boards, case studies, knowledge checks, and interdisciplinary practice telehealth sessions. Each implementation of planetary health education is notated with a green leaf icon in the Canvas course modules. This is evidence of deliberate tracking of implementation improvement. However, as the first Nutrition and Dietetic PHRC completed at Rush University, program-specific courses have not had the opportunity to build on previous efforts.*	

1.20. Does your nutrition and dietetics school employ a faculty member to specifically oversee and take responsibility for curricula to promote sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health as a theme throughout the degree(s)?
Yes, the nutrition and dietetics school has at least one dedicated faculty or staff member (e.g. curriculum champions with clearly and formally defined responsibilities for overseeing and advancing sustainability and planetary health curricula across the degree(s)). (3 points)
Yes, the nutrition and dietetics school has at least one faculty or staff member (e.g. curriculum champions) responsible for overseeing and advancing sustainability and planetary health curricula across the degree(s), however this is a voluntary, undefined and informal role. (2 points)

No, the nutrition and dietetics school does not have any dedicated faculty or staff members responsible for advancing sustainability and planetary health curricula, however there is evidence of a consistent and coordinated approach to this work. (1 point)
No, the nutrition and dietetics school does not have any designated faculty or staff members responsible for advancing sustainability and planetary health curricula. There is no evidence of a consistent or coordinated approach to this work. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	1

Score explanation: The CN program does not employ a faculty member to promote sustainable healthcare, sustainable food systems and/or planetary health as a theme throughout the degree. However, there is a consistent approach taken on by CN faculty Sandra L. Gomez, PhD, RD, LDN and Program Director Mark McInerney, DHSc, RD, LDN.

Gomez is responsible for organizing the initiation of the Nutrition and Dietetic PHRC at Rush University and also includes planetary health topics/lectures/readings within the 3 courses she teaches: NTR 660 Applied Evidence in CN: Obesity, NTR 661 Applied Evidence in CN: Cardiometabolic Diseases, and NTR 662 Applied Evidence in CN: Cancer and GI. Each spring since 2022, Gomez conducts an organic waste project with undergraduate student researchers, collecting and delivering organic waste to an anaerobic digester. This CN research experience, as part of the course HSC-462 Practicum, is a requirement for the Bachelor of Health Sciences program. Furthermore, Gomez completed Planetary Health Faculty Development in Spring 2025 and completed a Climate Ambassador training in May 2025. As a member of the Rush Green Employee Resource Group (ERG) and a member of the Illinois Clinicians for Climate Action (ICCA), she is a resource and point of contact for the CN program in regards to ongoing sustainability efforts.

McInerney is responsible for the extensive incorporation of sustainability education within the Clinical Nutrition/Dietetics Integrated track through topics, lectures, readings, and internship projects in his courses: NTR 629 Food Systems Management, NTR 629-P Practice in Food Systems Management, NTR 628 Community Nutrition, and NTR 628-P Practice in Community Nutrition. Furthermore, as director of the MSDI program, McInerney maintains ACEND program accreditation by upholding program performance indicators related to sustainability and food waste.

1.21. Does your health professional curriculum include teaching on civic engagement/advocacy to address the environmental and structural determinants of 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

Score explanation: Following are the courses offered at our university that has teachings on civic engagement/advocacy to address the environmental and structural determinants of health:

NTR - 661 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Metabolic Diseases, NTR - 662 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Cancer and GI Disease, and NTR-660 Applied Evidence in Clinical Nutrition: Obesity (MS) *ask students to consider how they can advocate for patients in the context of SDOH and in the presence of environmental barriers. For example, in NTR-662, students examine cancer disparities, food insecurity and cancer outcomes. In discussion, students are asked to define food insecurity and connect relevant information about food insecurity at the individual level with the broader context of food insecurity at the local, national and international level. Students reflect on how they will use this information in their future professional roles.*

Section Total (44 out of 78)	**56.41%**

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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

Score explanation:
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.

Dr. Ami Shah and Dr. Brian Gulack have appointments within Rush Medical College and have primary research focuses in healthcare sustainability. Their research is primarily focused on improving the environmental impact of the operating room.
Here are recent publications from these authors:

- *A Life Cycle Assessment of Reusable and Disposable Surgical Caps*
- *Surgeon Perspectives on Preference Cards and Environmental Stewardship*
- *Sustainable Surgery: Merging Health Care and Environmental Impact*

Rush researchers also partner with the Alliance for the Great Lakes leading efforts to identify the effects of plastic particles from surgical implants on our bodies and the environment.

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 point)	
There is **no** dedicated department or institute. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
Score explanation: There is not currently a department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research at Rush.	

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 point)	
There is **no** process, and **no** efforts to create such a process. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: Rush University Medical Center is one of 10 local research institutions that make up the Chicago Area Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Network (CAPriCORN), with the mission to to develop, test, and implement clinical research in order to improve health care quality, health outcomes, and health equity for the diverse populations of Chicagoland. CAPriCORN initiatives are driven by the Patient Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) and the Health & Medicine Research Policy Group (HMPRG) composed of patients, community members, caregivers, advocates, and healthcare providers. These groups allow community voices to shape the research priorities of CAPriCORN. *Rush University is a co-leader of the Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM). The ITM is a NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) program dedicated to improving health in*	

Chicago and around the world. Rush Medical College faculty member James Mulshine, MD is the ITM Community and Collaboration Core Leader, overseeing city-wide research collaborations between community members, organizations, industry, and researchers.

Linda O'Kelley, PhD, MS, RNC-NIC, a recent graduate of Rush University, founded the nonprofit Illinois Clinicians for Climate Action. The organization works to incorporate input from marginalized communities to address local health disparities and to educate lawmakers, healthcare professionals, and researchers. It was featured during an Earth Day event hosted by Rush in April 2024. Although this partnership is developing, there is not yet a clearly established pathway connecting input from marginalized communities to the current research agenda at Rush.

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
Score Explanation: There is not a centralized or publicly available website describing current or past research in environmental sustainability at Rush. Rush does have an Office of Environmental Sustainability webpage that describes current sustainability efforts and provides general resources related to health and the environment; however, it is not comprehensive and does not include research opportunities.	

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

Score Explanation: 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 routinely participate in and present at the summit.

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.
Planetary Health Leaders in the University hosted a two-day, interdisciplinary faculty development summit in Summer of 2025. In addition, the University has hosted a series of watch parties for related national conferences such as the One Health: One Planet and CleanMed.

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.

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

Score Assigned:	1

Score explanation: Rush is a member of Practice Greenhealth and the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH), both of which are involved in healthcare sustainability research and advocacy nationally and internationally. Rush also partners with Healthcare Without Harm.

Section Total (11 out of 17)	**64.71%**

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Community Outreach and Advocacy

Section Overview: ***This section evaluates a school's 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 participates in community focused events relating to planetary health. (1 point)	
No, there is **no** such meaningful community partnership. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score explanation: Rush Medical College supports community engagement and sustainability through several partnerships. Through the Rush Community Services Initiative Program, it collaborates with Healthy Hood Chicago and BEET Chicago to maintain community gardens with student and faculty involvement. Student organizations also host clothing drives benefiting groups such as Brave Alliance and Phillips High School. Rush contributes to the Cool Chi program by collecting neighborhood heat data and supports Green Era Chicago by diverting organic waste to its biodigester and community programs. Additional efforts include a food recovery partnership with Franciscan Outreach to reduce food waste and support food access, and the Department of Orthopedics' collaboration with Alliance for the Great Lakes illuminating the effects of plastic particles on our bodies and the environment. *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** has not offered such community-facing courses or events. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score explanation: Rush University hosted the Academy of Management conference, inviting participants to learn about sustainability initiatives at Rush University and Erasmus, share strategies, and explore opportunities for healthcare management research aimed at furthering ecological sustainability. *Our institution led Rush Supplier Summit 2025 in October 2025 with over 100 attendees from local businesses/vendors. Attendees were given the opportunity to partner with Rush for commercial activities and to celebrate their diverse, local, and sustainable made products and 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
Score Explanation: The Office of Environmental Sustainability regularly contributes articles about sustainable healthcare and planetary health to Rush News, University News, and Student Life communications. Recent articles include information about community solar opportunities, bike to work challenges, and a campus-wide waste audit that took place to help establish a recycling program. The Rush "Green" Employee Resource Group also has an internal page where volunteer opportunities and additional information can be found and posts 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 providers. (1 point)	
There are **no** such accessible courses for post-graduate providers. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
Score explanation: To the research team's knowledge, Rush University has not offered courses related to planetary health and sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers from February 2025-February 2026.	

3.5. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about environmental health exposures?	
Yes, the **institution** 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
Score explanation: Rush University Health Systems utilize PatientPass- an education library linked to the electronic medical records system. Providers (both staff and students) are able to link relevant environmental education to a patient's Mychart (electronic patient portal) which is added as part of a patient's "After Visit Summary" for those discharged from the Emergency Department and ambulatory clinic sites. These supplemental materials describe specific environmental factors that can exacerbate existing conditions. Through MyChart patients are able to access diagnosis-specific educational materials, but this is not always accessible for all patients.	

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 **institution** 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
Score explanation: The website for RUSH University System for Health, representing the medical college and all affiliated hospitals, has a patient and community-facing environmental sustainability webpage. The website explains the relationship between human and planetary health, acknowledges the impact of the healthcare sector, and addresses RUSH's sustainability efforts. However, it does not provide specific resources to patients for protecting their health in the face of the climate crisis.	

Section Total (10 out of 14)	**71.43%**

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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 fulfill 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, the institution does not offer opportunities or support for sustainability initiatives or QI projects. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1

Score explanation: Rush University and Medical Center's involvement in the Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC) has expanded over the past cycle to include the Clinical Nutrition program in addition to previously involved College of Nursing, School of Medicine, and Health Systems Management programs. Faculty provide student researchers a platform within their education to engage in planetary health research through the PHRC. The goal of this initiative is to share current findings and recommendations with program leaders and university/system-level members to expand the integration of planetary health across RUMC.

Rush Medical College offers the Dean's Fellowship in the summer between the M1 and M2 years. To be eligible, students must find and develop a research project which is either self-directed (with advising from faculty) or as part of an existing research project. Students receive a stipend and are able to pursue a topic that interests them. While this is a legitimate avenue to pursue a sustainability initiative/QI project, it is not a protected or guaranteed avenue to do so. Several barriers exist: availability of sustainability/QI projects, availability of faculty advisors, the self-directed nature, and contingency upon acceptance into the Dean's Fellowship. A previous student who received this fellowship supported a project concerning the impact of the operating room on the environment.

The Health Systems Management Program allocates funding for students interested in planetary health research/initiatives through philanthropic funds. Regarding other avenues, the Office of Student Life and Engagement at Rush University provides support and coordination to student organizations.

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 them 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
Score explanation: Students within the College of Medicine, College of Nursing, Health Systems Management, and Clinical Nutrition are involved in the PHRC student-led research assessment of their specific college/school/program, and the assessment of Rush as an institution/system. *Rush offers opportunities for the annual Trainee Research Day highlighting trainee accomplishments and cutting-edge research happening at Rush. A Health Equity Award is granted to the student whose poster demonstrates innovation and impact in reducing health care disparities.* *Rush Medical College offers a Dean's Fellowship in the summer between the M1 and M2 that supports the financing of a self-directed research project. This avenue requires significant student initiative and also requires acceptance into the fellowship.* *This past school year, two students in the Health Systems Management program were able to present research on planetary health education at the Climate, Health, and Sustainable Care Symposium at the University of Toronto after seeking out funding through the program.*	

4.3. Does the institution 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.
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)
There is an institution webpage that features some information on projects and mentors within planetary health and sustainable healthcare within the institution, but it lacks key information. (1 point)

There is **no institution** specific webpage for locating planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare projects or mentors. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score explanation: There is a public facing webpage 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."This webpage includes a calendar of upcoming events and details about volunteer opportunities. The site also provides internal resources, such as a sustainability guide for Rush employees, instructions for creating an account with Practice Greenhealth, and a local vendor guide with publicly stated sustainability initiatives. In addition, it offers links to educational articles on topics like public health and climate change. It does not provide information about potential mentors. The platform is available to students and faculty within the Rush system, but is not accessible to the general public. *There is also a website dedicated to Rush Medical Center's Green Team, a program within the Anesthesia department, dedicated to reducing Rush's environmental impact with various recycling programs throughout operating rooms. This website outlines current and ongoing projects and provides information on the current Green Committee members.*	

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 institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (2 points)	
Yes, there is a student organisation at my institution 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
Score explanation: There is no student organization exclusively dedicated to planetary health; however, several student organizations incorporate planetary health principles within their mission including: Rush Students for Global Health, Food is Medicine (student volunteering opportunity), and Rush Wilderness Medicine Society. *The Office of Student Life supports Rush Students for Global Health and provides funding as requested. The OSL also works with other Student Groups to help them enact sustainability initiatives within their programming (e.g they can request compost bins and.or compostable forks, etc) and provides the sustainability guide in their training to all registered student groups.*	

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 who serves on a department or institutional decision-making council/committee. (1 point)	
No, there is no such student representative. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score explanation: Student leaders from the College of Nursing, Health Systems Management, School of Medicine, and Clinical Nutrition participate in assessing their programs' engagement in planetary health through the Planetary Health Report Card and aim to share findings and recommendations to strengthen education and sustainability efforts. However, these students do not hold roles on departmental or institutional decision-making councils.	

4.6. In the past year, has the institution had one or more co-curricular planetary health programs or initiatives in the following categories? (1 point each)	**Score**
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.	0
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
Score explanation: *1. 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. The central kitchen also donates excess food waste to a local organization called Franciscan Outreach.*	

2. The Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) has provided multiple presentations and overviews of planetary health/healthcare impacts/human health implications for students and employees alike. The Office of Global Health held their annual week-long Global Health Symposium with this year's presentations focusing on climate change. The intended audience was students and faculty. Speakers focused on public health threats of climate change and how healthcare professionals can care for patients during climate disasters, as well as the global and local impacts on health equity.

3. There has not been an event for students to learn from members of a local environmental justice committee in the past year.

4. There are no visual or performing art events at Rush with themes of planetary health.

5. The OES provides multiple volunteer opportunities, information can be found on their internal site. Additionally, during Earth Month, the Rush Office of Environmental Sustainability has hosted volunteer opportunities, such as a Tree Planting Day etc, which They also did the previous year.

6. There is a Rush Wilderness Medicine group on campus that provides educational lectures for students. In the past year, they held a Wilderness Medicine Simulation Day in a local park with simulated patients for students to both enjoy a walk outside and work on clinical skills. The group has also held hiking outings and rock-climbing events at a local gym in past years. The Rush Office of Environmental Sustainability runs a bi-yearly volunteer program where individuals can take part in migratory bird collision monitoring efforts every spring and fall migration. Individuals are given instructions and tools on how to safely and humanely capture stunned and injured birds, who are then picked up by Chicago Bird Collision Monitors and transported to local wildlife centers to heal and eventually continue on their journeys.

Section Total (8 out of 15)	**53.33%**

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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 institutions, clinics, and hospitals must set the standard for sustainable practices, and show other sectors what is possible when it comes to minimising environmental impact.*

5.1. Does your institution have an Office of Sustainability?	
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 **at least one designated staff member** 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 **no specific staff member** in charge of hospital sustainability. (2 points)	
There are **no salaried sustainability staff,** but there is a sustainability task force or committee. (1 point)	
There are **no** staff members **or** task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score explanation: The Rush Office of Environmental Sustainability was established in March of 2020. Information can be found externally and internally. OES has a full-time staff of 3 (Director, Manager, Coordinator) and 3 part-time interns from the Health Systems Management graduate program at Rush.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.	

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 does **not** meet any of the requirements listed above (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
Score explanation: 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. However, these goals do not meet the above criteria.	

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:	1
Score explanation: Rush University is approximately 30% powered by renewable energy, via community solar projects. The initial project went online in 2024, producing clean electricity for the entire 2025 calendar year. There are additional contracts signed with community solar partners that will be online in 2027 to continue increasing renewable energy consumption at Rush.	

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:	3
Score explanation: Rush University Medical Center currently supports sustainable building practices for new buildings with the three most recently constructed buildings on RUMC's campus achieving or currently seeking LEED certification. The recent Joan and Paul Rubschlager Building used more than 30% recycled materials to build, with 46% of materials being manufactured and harvested within 500 miles of RUSH - resulting in LEED-gold certification. Three buildings on campus are now LEED-certified. Rush Specialty Hospital became the first hospital in Chicago to earn Three Globes designation from the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes certification program. Green Globes designation from the Green Building Initiative (GBI). The majority of buildings on campus have retrofitting; however, older buildings do not meet the standards for LEED certification. Additionally, in 2022 Rush University Medical Center actively participated in ComEd's (our local utility) energy efficiency program to pursue the following projects: installation of more efficient HVAC equipment, upgrading to LED lighting, and monitoring based commissioning (MBCx). Last year was the 3rd year in a row that Rush was awarded the highest MBCx energy savings in ComEd territory, and the campus was also recognized by Peoples Gas as their Energy Efficiency Partner of the Year for natural gas efficiency initiatives.	

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
Score explanation: Rush University Medical Center offers multiple options for students to reduce the environmental impact of commuting. Students are offered a discounted Ventra UPass which provides use of Chicago CTA Buses and Transit each semester while school is in session. RUMC is also a Divvy bikeshare campus with three stations on or adjacent to campus. Students and staff are offered a discounted annual membership. In addition to these services, RUMC has shuttle services from Union Station, Ogilvie Station, and Millennium Station to campus and back. Ride sharing/carpooling is also encouraged through LUUM commuting. In 2025, Rush once again won	

the Chicago Bike Commute competition for its size and non-profit category, thanks in large part to student participation in the challenge.

The OES also created a partnership with Resource Innovations to expand 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.

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 institution. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score explanation: Rush as extensive compost and recycling programs.

Composting:
Rush University Medical Center West Side Food Hall utilizes back-of-house food composting program Kitchen Organic Waste (KOW), as well as the food waste tracking system Leanpath. In addition, Room 500 catering kitchen is now piloting a back of house composting program. Organic waste is collected through partnership with Collective Resource and is transported to Green Era's anaerobic digester facility. There is no composting program available to students or staff for their individual,home organic waste.
Composting program short video
Composting article about Rush

Recycling:
Single-stream recycling bins are available in and around university buildings. Additionally, the Rush University system includes programs that repurpose pulse oximeters and recycle styrofoam, masks, batteries, textiles, scrubs, office supplies, lab equipment, and furniture.
Mask Recycling Program throughout Rush buildings (2023 article)
Student Support Collective- Scrub Exchange Program
Green Exchange Open House- In house Rush recycling program (through the Rush internal Sharepoint page)
Rheaply-

- *Article: Rush as case study diverting 53,000lbs of furniture*
- *Youtube video about Rush*
- *Rheaply Asset Exchange Manager (AxM) - Laboratory Equipment- To repurpose/donate equipment, materials and furniture no longer needed*

Rush also diverts food waste through the Surplus Project- "recycling" the surplus of food from the cafeterias to community food pantries through partnerships with Franciscan Outreach (RUMC) & UIC Food Recovery Network and Beyond Hunger (ROPH). These community programs provide meals for the houseless and marginalized.

- *CBS News on partnership*

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 a**dequate s**ustainability 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:	3

Score Explanation: In alignment with Dr. Lateef's signing of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Sector Climate Pledge in 2022; RUSH's signing of the Healthcare Anchor Network's Impact Purchasing Commitment; and the RUSH Environmental Sustainability Team's mission to measure, manage and minimize our environmental footprint; the Food and Nutrition team is actively working to decrease the environmental impact associated with the ordering, delivery, preparing and disposing of food across the RUSH health system. Specifically, RUSH strives to:

- *Ensure that sustainability criteria are included in requirements for potential suppliers or distributors and are considered in the award of contracts.*
- *Seek out and develop relationships with local farmers and producers to shorten the food supply chain and support local food ecosystems.*
- *Collect and track data on the sustainability and emissions associated with food procurement.*
- *Uphold commitments to the Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN) Impact Purchasing Commitment (IPC), Good Food Purchasing Project, and Health Care Without Harm's Cool Food Pledge.*
- *Reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with food purchases year over year.*
- *Reduce the organization's use of animal proteins where possible, focusing instead on plant-based options.*
- *Reduce food waste being sent to landfill through targeted interventions.*

In order to achieve these goals, RUSH will take the following actions, broken down by category:

Vendor Relationships:

- *Communicate to vendors our commitment to the Good Food Purchasing Project and Cool Food Pledge and our expectations for their support of these programs.*

- *Communicate to vendors our expectations for clear, transparent data on the weight, spend, and third party certifications of our itemized purchases, as well as the identification of any items grown or produced within a 250 mile radius for produce and 500 miles for animal products of RUSH.*
- *Include vendor and product sustainability questions in future RFPs and clear partnership expectations in contract language. Consider the corporate sustainability practices and data tracking capabilities of suppliers when reviewing and/or renewing contracts.*

Data:

- *Report accurate data as expected to support the following annual sustainability initiatives that RUSH participates in:*
  a. *Practice Greenhealth's annual Environmental Excellence Awards*
  b. *Healthcare Anchor Network's Impact Purchasing Commitment (RUMC reached its target of 20% Sustainable food spend which was originally targeted for 2025 and, as of early 2025, has reached 56% of total spending going to businesses within Healthcare Anchor Network and other local, minority-owned and women owned businesses)*
  c. *Good Food Purchasing Project (a metric based framework that encourages large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare and nutrition)*
  d. *Following Health Care Without Harm's sustainability guidelines and signed its Coolfood Pledge (addresses greenhouse gas emissions associated with food procurement)*
- *Use the data generated by these initiatives to set year over year targets to measure and track successes including, but not limited to:*
  a. *Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions associated with spend on animal products.*
  b. *Increase of spend on items that have third-party sustainability certifications*
  c. *Increase of spend on items that are grown or produced within a 250 mile radius of RUSH.*
  d. *Increase of spend on meat that is produced within a 500 mile radius of RUSH.*

Rush has also reduced plastic packaging by switching to World Centric for compostable containers and utensils.

Additionally,Food and Nutrition Staff have partnered with "Greener by Default", an organization that guides institutions to provide plant-based food solutions in order to meet carbon reduction goals, save on food costs, and improve overall health and wellness.

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

Score explanation: In 2024, the Office of Environmental Sustainability was moved under the VP of Supply Chain, streamlining connection to procurement and strategic sourcing teams. They have established a working group that is in the process of developing a sustainable procurement policy which will act as a guideline for products and vendors in the future. They also have a new working group that meets weekly and drives data tracking, analysis and insights to identify new sustainable procurement opportunities. Through participation in the Healthcare Anchor Network's Impact Purchasing Agreement (HAN-IPC), Rush has made significant progress in eliminating PVC and DEHP from priority medical products in categories such as breast pumps and accessories, gloves, and enteral tubes. Additionally, the Office of Environmental Sustainability and Supply Chain teams are collaborating on a formal set of sustainable procurement guidelines to further standardize these efforts.

- *Healthcare Anchor Network's Impact Purchasing Agreement (HAN-IPC)*
- *Rush Anchor Mission Strategy: Go Local*

Sustainable Guidelines within the Rush Sustainable Food Policy:

- *Communicate to vendors our expectations for clear, transparent data on the weight, spend, and third party certifications of our itemized purchases, as well as the identification of any items grown or produced within a 250 mile radius for produce and 500 miles for animal products of RUSH.*
- *Include vendor and product sustainability questions in future RFPs and clear partnership expectations in contract language.*
- *Consider the corporate sustainability practices and data tracking capabilities of suppliers when reviewing and/or renewing contracts.*

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

Score explanation: The OES has put together a Sustainable Events Guide that is published on their website. OES is not at the point of requiring sustainable events on campus, but they do have resources for people to do so. The student affairs programs and Room 500 (restaurant) have taken stride in this initiative, but many events on campus are still not following these guidelines.

The Rush Sustainability Food policy also includes policies for vendors:

- *Communicate to vendors our commitment to the Good Food Purchasing Project and Cool Food Pledge and our expectations for their support of these programs.*
- *Communicate to vendors our expectations for clear, transparent data on the weight, spend, and third party certifications of our itemized purchases, as well as the identification of any*

items grown or produced within a 250 mile radius for produce and 500 miles for animal products of RUSH.

- *Include vendor and product sustainability questions in future RFPs and clear partnership expectations in contract language. Consider the corporate sustainability practices and data tracking capabilities of suppliers when reviewing and/or renewing contracts.*

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

Score explanation: The Office of Environmental Sustainability has begun offering My Green Lab Certification sponsorships in an effort to improve the sustainability of research by reducing energy, water, waste, and money used in the lab. At the moment, five labs on campus have registered to become My Green Lab Certified. Rush doesn't currently have any new My Green Lab certifications, but is perpetually open to engaging with lab staff and supporting their pursuit of this certification. The OES also sits in on the Research Lab Open Forum monthly meeting to support lab managers/leaders with sustainability needs and to act as administrators of the Rheaply Reuse platform (Aleks).

The Rush University Medical Center human anatomy lab has replaced all overhead fluorescent lights with low energy LED bulbs on dimmable switches with movement sensors. They have also converted to a high efficiency ventilation system and are investing in a higher efficiency air handler to power the system. Additionally, donors studied in the lab have been non-formalin embalmed for the past three years.

The histology teaching lab at Rush University Medical Center has moved from the use of microscopes and glass slides to virtual histology, decreasing the waste of materials and the use of chemicals.

5.11. Does your institution's endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?

The institution is **entirely divested** from fossil fuels **and** has made a **commitment to reinvest divested funds** into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)

The institution is **entirely divested** from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has **partially divested** from fossil fuel companies **or** has made a **commitment to fully divest**, but **currently** still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has **not divested** from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are **conducting organised advocacy** for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been **no efforts** to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score explanation: Rush University Medical Center currently has investments in fossil fuel companies. The Office of Environmental Sustainability, in collaboration with the investment committee, oversees the institution's endowment portfolio and has conducted a Scope 3 emissions analysis of these investments. The findings will be used to inform and educate students, faculty, and staff, and to support future advocacy efforts to separate from fossil fuel companies.	

Section Total (20 out of 32)	**62.50%**

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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%

**Within each grade bracket, a score in the top 5% (_5 to_9%), receives a "+", and a score in the bottom 5% (_0-_4%) receives a "--". For example, a percentage score of 78% would be a B+.*

Planetary Health Grades for the Rush University and Medical Center School of Nutrition and Dietetics. The following table presents the individual section grades and overall institutional grade for the Rush University and Medical Center School of Nutrition and Dietetics on this Planetary Health Report Card.

Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)	(44/78) x 100 = **56.41%**	**C+**
Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)	(11/17) x 100 = **64.71%**	**B-**
Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)	(10/14) x 100 = **71.43%**	**B**
Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)	(8/15) x 100= **53.33%**	**C**
Campus Sustainability (17.5%)	(20/32) x 100 = **62.50**%	**B-**
Institutional Grade	**(Ax0.3 + Bx0.175 + Cx0.175 + Dx0.175 + Ex0.175) = 61.02%**	**B-**