

WINTER 2026

LSA SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

Stories, Resources, and Action

Authored by the LSA
Sustainability Faculty and Staff

April 7, 2026

This report is best viewed digitally to take advantage of links and resources throughout. Please message sustainable-lsa@umich.edu if you have any questions.

View the other [LSA Sustainability Updates](#).

Learn more about the broader [Planet Blue initiative](#).

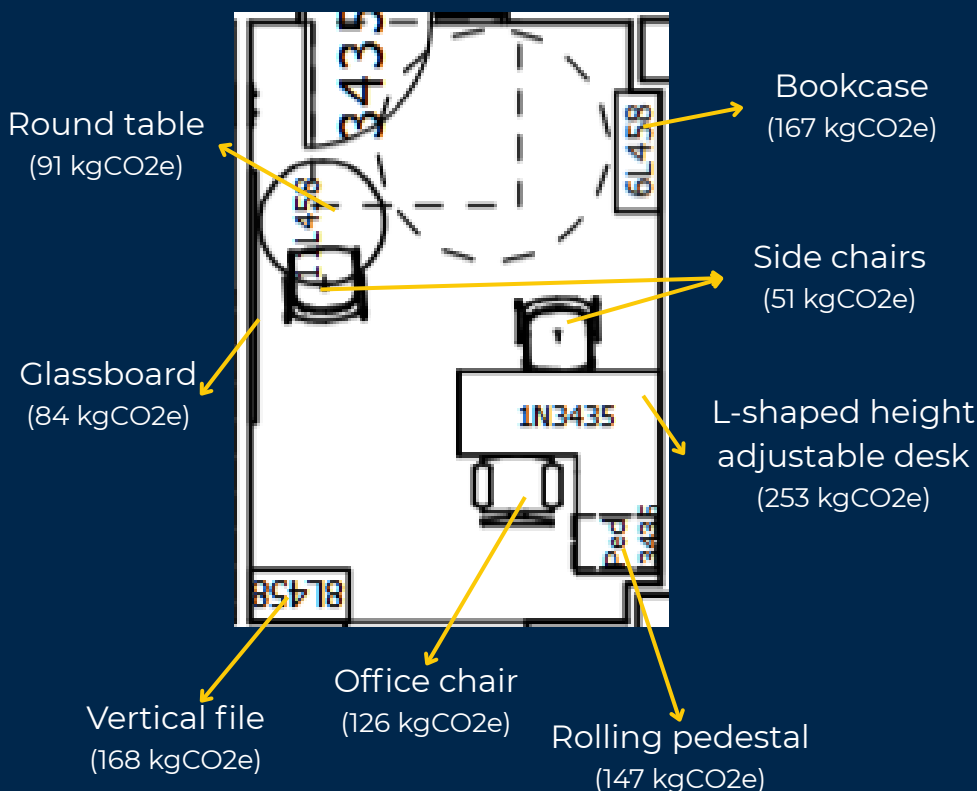


Furniture Reuse Case Study

Before renovations began to make Lorch Hall an all-electric and carbon-neutral-ready building, LSA took meaningful steps to make the building occupants' moves to other campus locations sustainable. These steps included:

- Inventorying all the furniture in Lorch Hall.
- Reusing waste bins in new locations.
- Organizing Green cleaning days to collect and redistribute extra office supplies.
- Offering leftover furniture to the LSA and U-M community.
- Separating landfill, recycling, and reuse for each room

We conservatively estimate that this **saved \$1.1M in procurement costs and 133 tons of CO₂e**, when compared to buying new. These numbers only represent a portion of the overall effort; further analysis will be done when moves are complete.



Lisa Reiher
LSA Capital Projects Manager



Trey Garant
Lorch Building Manager



Olivia Wood
LSA Interior Design Intern

How We Measured Impact...

The dollars saved are based on the average cost of renovating an office with new furniture. Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) is measured using supply chain emissions factors from the EPA. Factors use the unit of kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent per U.S. Dollar.

LSA Energy Conservation

Over the past nine years, **Kim Seifert** (LSA's first Energy Manager) led the college's efforts to reduce building-level energy and water consumption. LSA came in under our allocated energy budget every single year under Kim's leadership – a win for the college and our environmental goals. Kim retired in March 2026, but her work will benefit LSA for years to come. Congrats to Kim!

You will meet LSA's next Energy Manager in our Summer update.



Help us shrink our energy footprint!

What Energy Managers do

Adjust HVAC systems to respond to occupancy, especially on weekends and holidays.

Evaluate work orders, utility data, and major equipment to look for potential issues, energy waste, or leaks.

Oversee long-term energy strategies, control upgrades, renovations, utility trends, LED lighting conversions, annual building “tune-ups” and Revolving Energy Fund projects.

How you can help

Schedule events during a building's normal operating hours when possible; close office windows when you leave.

Submit a work order or let your facility manager know if something seems off in your space.

Look for energy conservation tips specific to your role through Green Lab or Office certification. You can track your building's annual energy and water use.

Lab Safety and Sustainability

In collaboration with LSA Lab Safety and the Office of Campus Sustainability, we have hosted a “Sustainable Lab and Safety Day” once a month in the major lab buildings for LSA. During these days, building occupants can find our teams tabling in the atrium areas, sign up for a sustainable lab and/or safety walkthrough of their labs, and participate in a [Planet Blue Ambassador](#) training.

Research Museums Complex (RMC) is the first building to reach 100% participation in the [Sustainable Labs](#) and [Sustainable Offices](#) programs.

LSA has six lab buildings, which means you’ll see us twice a year! Each day is structured the same, so you can attend which works best for you.

27 labs started the Sustainable Labs certification and 50 people have been trained as Planet Blue Ambassadors.



The Chemistry Department (73%) and the Biophysics Department (83%) have the highest Sustainable Lab certification participation rates in LSA. In FY 25, only 7 labs completed the certification; in FY 26, 23 labs completed the certification!



[Check out the new LSA Lab Safety webpage!](#)

Community, Operations & Arts: Birds!

Twice a year, billions of birds make movements across North America. Michigan lies along the Mississippi Flyway, which supports nearly 40% of North America's shorebirds (such as plovers) and waterfowl (such as ducks). Whether you'd like to volunteer with U-M's seasonal migration inventory, explore galleries, or create art to support bird strike interventions, U-M has opportunities for you.



Institute for the Humanities Gallery - "Flyways"

From March 19 to May 1, the Institute for the Humanities Gallery will feature work by artist Sheida Soleimani. An artist, educator, and licensed wildlife rehabilitator, Soleimani's work examines power, environmental crisis, queerness, migration, and care. Sheida Soleimani is the 2025-26 Paula and Edwin Sidman Fellow in the Arts at the Institute for the Humanities. Visit the Gallery at 202 S. Thayer between 9AM and 5PM on weekdays.

Student Art Competition

In partnership with the Arts Initiative and the Office of Campus Sustainability, Michigan students were invited to submit work for a bird-safe decal design. This will be the first time that the University uses art to break up reflections in windows, instead of the typical dot pattern.

The decals are planned to be installed in September on the catwalk windows between the North University Building and the Weiser high-rise. This area was identified as a high priority following volunteer bird-collision monitoring in 2025.

Bird Protection at U-M

Twice a year, U-M conducts a seasonal inventory via community volunteers. Volunteers are trained to look for injured or downed birds and are assigned to high-priority buildings. All inventory takes place in the morning. You can report a down or injured bird at any time of the year, through this form.

World Water Day

The days leading up to World Water Day (March 22) were filled with opportunities for LSA. In collaboration with partners from the U-M Museum of Natural History, the Planet Blue Ambassadors, and Clean Up Campus, community members learned about microplastics research in the Great Lakes, visited a new museum exhibit, and helped clean up the spaces around campus.

“All the plastic you cannot see”

This [new exhibit](#) opened in the Lower Level Gallery in the U-M Museum of Natural History. The exhibit highlights numerous U-M researchers and shows how microplastics impact our environment and what we can do to reduce their impact. Additionally, curators tested new materials for the exhibit by using rigid cardboard panels and projection instead of vinyl wall graphics. Almost all elements in the exhibit are from second-hand sources.

How You Can Get Involved

For Students

Join [Clean Up Campus!](#) This student organization hosts regular clean-ups to restore and maintain public areas.

For Staff/Faculty

Volunteer with the [Huron River Watershed Council!](#) There are many ways to get involved, such as adopting a storm drain, joining a clean-up, or an insect ID day.



Grand Challenges Curriculum Proposal

After two years of planning and design, the LSA Curriculum Committee has launched an alternative pathway for LSA students to meet their breadth requirements. Grand Challenge courses are inherently interdisciplinary, problem-based, and applied - making it a wonderful framework to support the next generation of sustainability leadership graduating from LSA.

Current Area Distribution Requirements

21 credits in Natural Science, Social Science, & Humanities
(7 credits per area)



9 additional credits from Creative Expression, Mathematical and Symbolic Analysis, Natural Science, Social Science, or Humanities (3 credits each from at least 3 areas)

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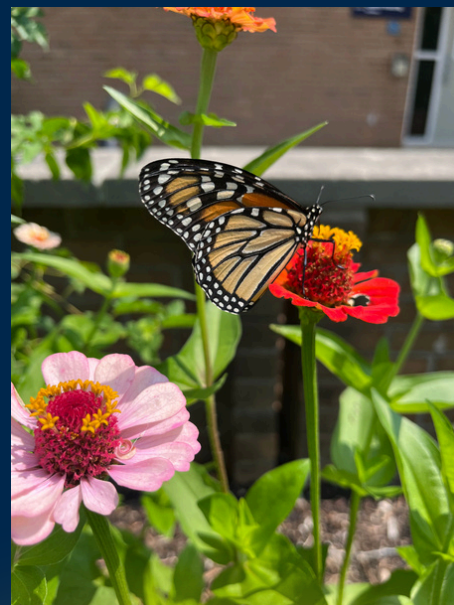


9 additional credits from Creative Expression, Mathematical and Symbolic Analysis, Natural Science, Social Science, or Humanities (3 credits each from at least 3 areas)

OR +

Grand Challenges: 2 courses totalling at least 6 credits

Monarch butterfly resting in a garden planted as part of the *Campus as Sustainability Lab* course



Learn more about the Grand Challenges proposal and process [here](#)

Get Involved with Academic Sustainability

If you teach...

Apply for the 2026 **Embedding Climate Change in the Curriculum Retreat (EC3)** for support incorporating sustainability content into new or existing courses. This two-day (May 26 & 28) experience provides resources, time to collaborate and build community for interested U-M faculty and instructors.

co-sponsored by CRLT, LSA UGED and PITE

Accepting applications through April 21, or until we reach capacity.



If you are a student...

Did you come up with an innovative sustainability solution for campus as part of an LSA course? Bring your class project to life! **Apply for funding.** Project funds made possible through the support of the Campus of the Future Initiative.

co-sponsored by LSA UGED & LSA Sustainability

Accepting & reviewing applications on a rolling basis.



Do you love the Campus Squirrels?

Across LSA Sustainability programming and engagement, the campus squirrels frequently come up as an important connection to the environment. On March 19, over 700 students gathered in the LSA Atrium for LSA@Play's Squirrel Jam. If you missed out on the fun, don't fret – we'll share some of our favorite squirrel facts from the event!



The most common squirrels on campus are **Fox Squirrels**. These are the largest tree squirrels in North America.

U-M students, faculty, and staff have loved the squirrels for a **long time**. See more [about the history](#).

A squirrel's teeth **never stop growing**. If you want to give a squirrel a treat, consider nuts in the shell – it's good for them!

Michigan is home to **9 different species of squirrels** – including flying squirrels and ground squirrels like chipmunks.

If you ever notice a campus squirrel missing fur, **you can help!** Email [Corey Seeman](#), a fellow U-M staff member and squirrel expert, who can help treat them. You can also find Corey's amazing squirrel [photography](#).

In Ojibwe culture, there are stories about how resourceful squirrels helped people discover **maple syrup**. You can read one version of the story [from Nimkii Brad Howie](#). This graphic was made by [Heron Hill Designs](#) for the Squirrel Jam.



Find more [Squirrel Trivia](#) in this fun presentation.





2/24/2026 | Observatory Tour & Galaxy Painting



3/19/2026 | World Water Day Lunch & Learn



3/20/2026 | World Water Day Clean Up



3/31/2026 | Gallery Tour & Campus Bird Walk

