



Letter of Nomination – NACUBO Excellence in Sustainability Award

Chandler-Gilbert Community College is one of the ten separately-accredited colleges of the Maricopa County Community College District, serving nearly 20,000 students annually, with two comprehensive campuses, two education centers, and nineteen partner high schools in the Southeast Valley of the Phoenix metropolitan area. A charter signatory of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, Chandler-Gilbert has a long history of embracing sustainability in operations and the curriculum. Besides working to create the District's first Certificate in Sustainability, Chandler-Gilbert has found ways to weave sustainability-related themes and experiences into a diverse array of courses, from history to business to early childhood education, and into service-learning projects. This commitment to sustainability education was reflected in the college's partnership with Salt River Project, the local electric utility, to build a solar-powered outdoor classroom in the college's Environmental Technology Center.

Beyond the academic commitment to sustainability, Chandler-Gilbert has planned and invested to align business practices with the college's institutional values. Chandler-Gilbert's current institutional vision – "Our students are prepared to lead us into a promising and sustainable future" – was developed in 2016 in order to more formally reflect the college's emphasis in providing educational experiences. Chandler-Gilbert built upon a solid foundation of environmental consciousness by moving forward with bold plans to reduce the environmental impact of its energy production, energy use, and water use. In 2016, Chandler-Gilbert brought a 1.24 mW solar panel installation online, shifting 24% of electricity demands to locally produced renewable energy and reducing utility costs by an estimated \$45,000 during its first year of operation. Since 2013, the college has converted a majority of internal and external light fixtures to LED technology, including construction of the first two all-LED buildings, reducing energy consumption and maintenance costs. The college has installed desert-adapted landscaping on its properties, including a 34-acre desert restoration effort, to reduce the need for irrigation and support the natural ecosystem. Further, irrigation systems have been converted to reclaimed water sources and, in 2017, Chandler-Gilbert converted its air conditioning chiller system to reclaimed water, saving upwards of 20 million gallons of domestic water and \$88,000 in expense each year. In 2018-19, those HVAC systems will be reengineered to increase energy efficiency and reduce costs even further.

These, as well as many other sustainability-minded projects, were implemented as part of planned maintenance and replacement cycles where resiliency goals and sustainability outcomes were included as key considerations, not a massive investment for its own sake. These steady and calculated investments have resulted in a 29% reduction in emissions per square foot and a 28% reduction per student, with 73% of the college's domestic water demands and 24% of the college's electricity demands shifted to renewable sources over a five-year period, with continued progress on the horizon.