

# Awards and certifications

Version 32

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## Seneca receives gold rating from STARS

**2024-27**



Seneca Polytechnic has earned a **Gold rating** from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of its sustainability achievements. STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, recognizes Seneca's commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic sustainability.

AASHE's STARS program is the most widely recognized framework for publicly reporting comprehensive information on a post-secondary institution's sustainability performance. Institutions are measured on more than 60 credits, providing data on their academics, engagement, campus operations, planning and innovation.

Seneca set a path toward sustainability years ago, marked by a Silver rating of 50 out of 100 in its 2020 inaugural submission. The culmination of dedication from students, faculty, staff, and administration is reflected in the achievement of the Gold rating, scoring 67, which exemplifies the enduring commitment to sustainable excellence.

Key achievements representing each of the pillars of the Institution:

### Academics

- Administered a sustainability literacy assessment for the first time to gauge students' knowledge of sustainability topics and challenges.
- Focused on programs that encourage faculty and staff to engage in sustainability research. This has led to an increase to 34 employees, or 44.7% of all employees

who conduct research, who are engaged in sustainability research.

- Increased the inventory of sustainability courses, with initiatives such as the PRME certification and the Teaching & Learning projects. Currently, 36.67% of courses at Seneca are identified as sustainability-focused or sustainability-focused.

## **Engagement**

- Conducted an institution-wide sustainability survey that assessed Seneca's awareness, behaviours, and values regarding sustainability, including areas of interest such as engagement, transportation, and waste.

## **Operations**

- We have diversified and invested in carbon sinks, going from 0 metric tons in our 2020 submission to 83.84 metric tons of CO2 equivalent in our 2024 submission.
- Implemented OSCAR AI sorting and the Friendlier reusable container program at the cafeterias to improve our sustainable dining and diversion rates while decreasing our single-use waste.

## **Planning and Administration**

- A published sustainability plan and sustainability principles have been integrated into The Next, our highest guiding document.
- Established the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Reconciliation and Inclusion.
- Formalized Seneca's commitment to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

## **Innovation points**

- Highlighted programs and initiatives, including HELIX, Career Threads, the beehives, and The Jane Fund.

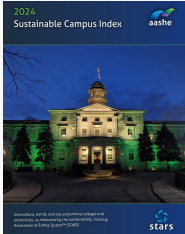
The Office of Sustainability wants to thank the hundreds of stakeholders involved in providing data, including faculty, academic leads, managers, and directors. It was an institutional effort to increase Seneca's rating from silver to gold for the first time.

## **Looking Ahead**

The following steps will be for the Office of Sustainability to speak to the department's leads about the ratings and how we can continue collaborating and moving forward.

## AASHE Sustainability Campus Index

**2024 2025**



For the first time, Seneca has been recognized as a top performer on the **Sustainable Campus Index**, ranking third in overall performance for Associate and Short-Cycle Institutions. The report highlights the top-performing colleges and universities as measured through the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). This achievement underscores Seneca's commitment to sustainability and leadership in fostering a thriving future.

## Seneca is now a WWF Living Campus

**2024**

For the first time, Seneca has earned the **Living Campus certification from WWF-Canada** for its commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. A key initiative is the "No Mow Inventory and Expansion Project," which enhances biodiversity by creating semi-maintained zones.

## Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Excellence Awards

**2021 2022**

Seneca's sustainability initiatives were recognized by the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Awards of Excellence.

Seneca received a bronze medal in the **CICan Excellence in Sustainable Development category** in 2021, which acknowledged Seneca's commitment to sustainability as guided by the principles of the **United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals**.

In **2022**, for the second year in a row, Seneca received a bronze medal in the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) Excellence category.

## The Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges

**2026**

Seneca was included in *The Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges*, a free resource published annually for prospective college, polytechnic and university applicants. Among a total of 388 postsecondary institutions from around the world profiled in 2026, Seneca was one of only 33 Canadian postsecondary institutions and received a **Green rating of 93/99**.