The Sustainability Office’s Living Laboratory program connects students and faculty with real-world learning projects to promote education for sustainability using the campus as a teaching tool. Living Lab projects provide tangible opportunities for students on campus, while offering faculty a way to engage students, connect to sustainability education and simultaneously practice active pedagogy. Additionally, these projects help Macalester further our sustainability goals. As Suzanne Savanick Hansen, Sustainability Manager, has a specific interest in using the campus as a living laboratory, one of the focuses of the Sustainability Office has been supporting the use of the campus as a living laboratory.

By the Numbers

- 24 classes or student academic projects used the campus as a sustainability living laboratory
- 5 regularly offered classes used the campus as a living laboratory
- 9 environmental studies Living Laboratory classes Sustainability Manager taught or co-taught, including the regularly offered Sustainability and the Campus class
- 8 Macalester departments and two other school departments used the campus as a living laboratory
Living Laboratory Website - The Sustainability Office hosts a website to connect students looking for projects with potential projects, resources, and support. https://www.macalester.edu/sustainability/education/livinglab/

Campus Tours - The Sustainability Manager and student workers organize campus sustainability tours and Markim Hall tours during reunion, student orientation, family fest, and for outside groups, and classes.

Sustainability Tour Map - Two alumnae in their 50th reunion wanted to have a sustainability tour of the campus in 2008. As a result, the Sustainability Office developed a Sustainability Tour map that has been an outreach tool ever since. GIS student workers also created a complementary GIS Sustainability Tour map of campus.

EcoHouse - The EcoHouse is a residential living option for Macalester students who are interested in green-living lifestyles and willing to test the effectiveness of new green technologies, offering the opportunity of a 'live-in' laboratory. The house has been a source of numerous student independent study courses.

Faculty Outreach - The Sustainability Office offers a coffee break for new faculty to learn about sustainability education opportunities, including the Living Laboratory. Prior to each term, the Sustainability Manager also sends out a Campus Hidden Data Sets and Field Trip Sites list to the Sustainability Employee Network to assist faculty. She also offers support for faculty with interests in urban sustainability.

Macalester’s Living Laboratory has been the source of the following academic publications:


