



OFPM

Sustainability Annual Report

April 2026

Advancing Sustainable Growth Through Innovation and Design

“SMU’s continued growth remains firmly grounded in a strong and evolving commitment to sustainable centric design and responsible construction practices. As part of this effort, the new Rees-Jones Library of the American West is being designed with a goal of achieving LEED Silver certification, with completion anticipated in early 2027. In parallel, Phase 1 of the East Property development is currently in the planning phase and will feature the Dedman School of Law’s new, forward-thinking high-performance facility, which is targeting LEED Gold certification. Beyond individual projects, SMU’s building standards continue to advance in response to innovations across the design and construction industry. SMU is actively integrating emerging technologies, systems, and materials — including enhanced building controls, more efficient mechanical and electrical equipment, and sustainable interior finishes — all thoughtfully selected to reduce environmental impact and support long-term carbon footprint reduction.”



Michael Molina, AIA, NCARB
Vice President
and
University Architect



SMU

**OFFICE OF FACILITIES
PLANNING & MANAGEMENT**

Dallas Hall LEED Platinum Recertification

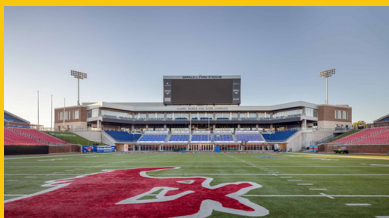
For the first time in SMU's history, Dallas Hall broke another record and is the only building on campus to achieve LEED for Existing Buildings Platinum Certification



The iconic Dallas Hall exemplifies how historic preservation and environmental sustainability can work together. As the first building on SMU's campus, it continues to set benchmarks for sustainable practices in historic structures. Dallas Hall first achieved LEED for Existing Buildings Gold Certification in 2015 during its centennial year, becoming the first building on the National Register of Historic Places to earn LEED certification. It was recertified at the Gold level in 2021, reinforcing SMU's long-term commitment to environmental responsibility while preserving its architectural heritage. To maintain its certification, performance data is submitted to the U.S. Green Building Council every three years. In 2023, Dallas Hall reached another milestone, achieving LEED for Existing Buildings Platinum Certification — the first and only building on campus to hold this distinction. Ongoing initiatives focus on improving operational efficiency, enhancing occupant experience, and meeting contemporary environmental standards while respecting the building's historic significance. An event is planned for Fall 2026 to celebrate this recognition and honor Dallas Hall's continued leadership in sustainable historic preservation.

Seeking LEED Certification in 2026

Garry Weber End Zone Complex



Garry Weber End Zone Complex, currently targeting LEED certification in 2026, is a major athletic facilities enhancement supporting SMU's football program and game-day operations. The project focuses on modernized training, performance, and fan engagement spaces, incorporating energy-efficient systems and sustainable design strategies aligned with campus-wide environmental goals.

David B. Miller Business Quadrangle



David B. Miller Business Quadrangle, LEED certified in 2026 with a pending Silver designation, is a key academic hub for the Cox School of Business. Designed to support collaborative learning, research, and education, the complex emphasizes high-performance building systems, improved occupant comfort, and resource-efficient design consistent with SMU's commitment to a sustainable campus.

Energy Management

Carbon Footprint Reduction

FY2025

SMU saved 3.8M KWh

Avoided 2,188 Metric Tons CO₂e (Carbon)

Avoided enough energy to power
273 Texas homes for one year

Past Seven Years

SMU saved 43.8M KWh

Avoided 30,506 Metric Tons CO₂e (Carbon)

Avoided enough energy to power
3,112 Texas homes for one year



Campus Modernization and Energy Program



Utility Supply Management

Proactive. Utility contract management. Invoice verification. No late fees. Appropriately hedged. Risk management.



Central Plant

Updated equipment and controls. Skilled onsite resources. 24/7/365 management.



Building Performance + Automation

Integrated automation. Minimal comfort issues. Optimized infrastructure. Facility sub-metering



Operations + Maintenance

Targeted O&M. Data and process driven. Active and engaged PM program.



Energy Mgmt. Program

Peer leading program. Long-term automation and savings programs implemented.

Energy Statistics Since FY2017

Energy + Cost Impact

14% utility cost per sq. ft.

33.8% HVAC energy savings (first 5 years)

\$1.4M annual power cost avoidance

0.41 kW/ton chiller plant efficiency (from >1.0 kW/ton)

Operational Performance

65% HVAC issues resolved remotely

\$104K Yearly demand response program savings

26% O+M productivity

Campus Experience + Reliability

Extended equipment lifecycle through predictive maintenance

Improved system reliability and uptime

Enhanced comfort, safety and resilience across campus

Waste Reduction & Recycling

Waste Reduction & Material Reuse

This commitment to sustainability is also reflected in SMU's material and waste systems:

- Construction waste diversion is extremely high: 23,404.20 tons of demolition and construction debris were generated, with 87.43% (20,462.77 tons) recycled.
- In ongoing operations, such as Dallas Hall, 7.47% of waste was identified as recyclable, highlighting continued opportunities for improvement in day-to-day waste streams.
- In new construction projects, 15.98% of materials used were recycled content, representing \$11,432,032.91 in reused building materials.

Together, these efforts show a campus system increasingly designed not just for efficiency, but for circularity—where landscapes reduce environmental load, buildings conserve resources, and materials are actively recovered, reused, and kept out of the waste stream.

Metal & Cardboard Recycling Summary

SMU's Maintenance and Grounds team manages metal and cardboard recycling operations across the Dallas campus. Cardboard is processed using dedicated balers and compactors, allowing for efficient handling and transport, while scrap metal is collected and separated for recycling. Materials are managed through a non-contaminated and safe process.

August 2025 – February 2026
(partial-year dataset)

Total material recycled

- **26.639 tons** (metal + cardboard combined)

By material type

- **Metal recycling: 16.700 tons**
- **Cardboard (OCC) recycling: 9.939 tons**

Material breakdown

- **Metal: 62.7%**
- **Cardboard: 37.3%**



Campus Engagement

The SMU campus move-out partnership with Goodwill Industries continues to demonstrate strong and growing impact. Last year's results reflect both increased participation and improved operational responsiveness across six collection sites in six days.

2025 Donations
32,212 lbs

Previous Year Donations
28,723 lbs

Year-over-Year Increase
+3,489 lbs

2025 Total Donors
1,048





The Evidence: What Better Buildings Actually Do

The case for investing in building quality is no longer anecdotal. A substantial body of research, drawn from tens of thousands of students and workers across multiple countries and decades, now makes the human impact of thoughtful design quantifiable. The numbers are striking.

20-26%

**Faster learning in
math & reading**

*Heschong Mahone
Group, 21,000
students*

8-19%

**Higher student
performance vs.
conventional
buildings**

*Sustainable design
research, 2011*

7.5%

**Reduction in
absenteeism in well-
designed environments**

*Green building
performance
studies*

Behind these numbers are real shifts in how people experience their days. Students who learn in spaces with good air, natural light, and thermal comfort report higher satisfaction with their academic environment, greater sense of belonging on campus, and stronger feelings of overall wellbeing. Faculty and staff in well-designed buildings report better focus, lower stress, and higher job satisfaction. These outcomes compound: a student who feels well is a student who shows up, engages, and performs. A faculty member who thrives in their workspace brings more of themselves to teaching.

“Better understanding of daylighting, ventilation, and indoor environmental quality leads to improved cognitive performance, productivity, and learning outcomes.”

— ScienceDirect, Indoor Environmental Quality and Classroom Performance Review, 2025

Landscaping



Agronomy

To improve soil structure in the landscape, SMU applies an organic treatment called Holganix. This organic amendment containing over 800 beneficial microorganisms that boost soil health, strengthen root development, speed up plant establishment, and reduce the need for fertilizers and herbicides. In addition, core aeration relieves soil compaction, allowing better water and air movement into the root zone for healthier plant growth.

Recycling

SMU uses mulching mowers to reduce the removal of organic material. Grass clippings are finely cut and redistributed across the soil surface, where they decompose quickly and return nutrients to the soil. Organic materials that cannot be reused onsite are sent to recycling partners, including University Park and Organic Recyclers, where they are processed into mulch. This mulch is then applied to planting beds to suppress weeds and retain soil moisture. During the 2024–2025 fiscal year, approximately 500 cubic yards of recycled hardwood mulch were installed across campus.

Irrigation

More than 1,650 irrigation zones are inspected monthly to ensure proper landscape hydration while minimizing water waste from leaks and inefficiencies. Repairs and adjustments are made as needed to meet changing landscape conditions and plant maturity. The system is connected to an on-campus weather station for real-time monitoring, and a centralized control platform allows for remote management via computer or mobile device, ensuring efficient operation.

Equipment

In 2026, SMU began integrating battery-powered handheld equipment into our operations. Gas-powered blowers and string trimmers are being replaced with electric alternatives, reducing fuel consumption and noise across campus.



Perennial Transplanting Project

SMU's planting strategy includes both perennial and annual plants in campus flower beds. At the end of each season, perennials are relocated to permanent areas across campus. This approach enables the successful transplantation of about 3,600 plants each year, supporting long-term landscape sustainability.

Construction Projects

During construction and renovation projects, existing landscape materials are evaluated for preservation and relocation. In 2024–2025, about 500 plants and two trees were successfully transplanted. Remaining landscape elements near construction zones are protected and monitored for stress, and trees receive protective measures and post-construction soil treatments to support long-term health and resilience.

Landscape Upgrades/Installation

All plants considered for use on campus are evaluated for the following traits:

- Low significant insect or disease problems
- Drought tolerance (once established)
- Noninvasive
- Long-lived
- Encourages pollinators

