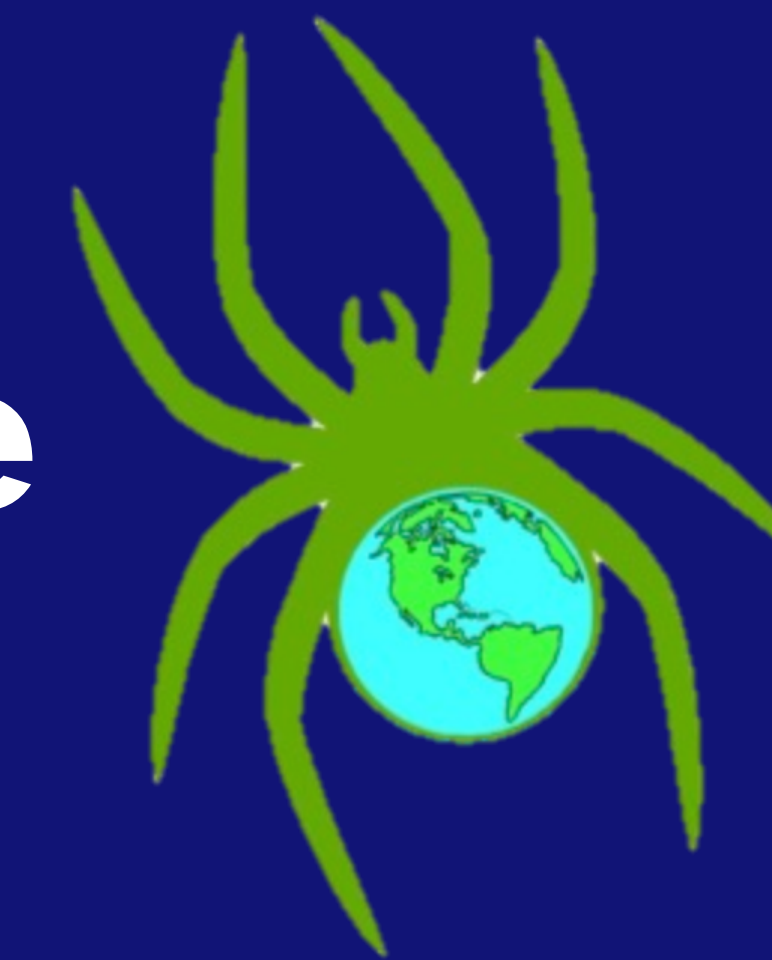




Research on Climate Change Education at University of Richmond and Proposal for a Stewardship/Sustainability Themed First Year Experience



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Introduction

The mission of the *University Strategic Plan 2017* is to educate students in an academically and intellectually challenging atmosphere that trains them for lives of purpose, prudent inquiry, and being accountable role models in the world.

The 5th value (Stewardship in a changing world) described in the *Strategic Plan* is to **“be a leader in innovative practices that sustain our environmental, human and financial resources in response to emerging environmental and financial challenges globally.”**

Our proposal incorporates **3/5** of the values described in the *Strategic Plan*:

- Academic excellence
- Thriving and inclusive University community
- **Stewardship in a changing world**

The *University of Richmond's Quality Enhancement Plan 2017 (QEP)* learning outcomes for the First Year experience are to:

- Introduce students to a culture of liberal arts,
- Bond students with a sense of place and purpose, and
- **Help students see the bigger picture of their education and make course and co-curricular choices in the context of opportunities available in and outside of the classroom.**

We recognize that the University has an opportunity to engage and increase its environmental education, and raise environmental awareness. Therefore, we propose to incorporate stewardship and sustainability as a curriculum theme into the proposed First Year Experience, more specifically the Living and Learning Program, as outlined in the current QEP in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

Literature Review and Methods

Transdisciplinary Approach & Problem-Based Learning

Inside the classroom and in everyday life, climate change needs to be connected to politics, religion, culture, economics, ethics and social life in order for people to fully internalize the issues. As a University, we must invite first year students into activities where they can develop vital critical thinking skills and further discuss and argue global environmental issues through a transdisciplinary curriculum. (Fretz 2016, Orr 2004)

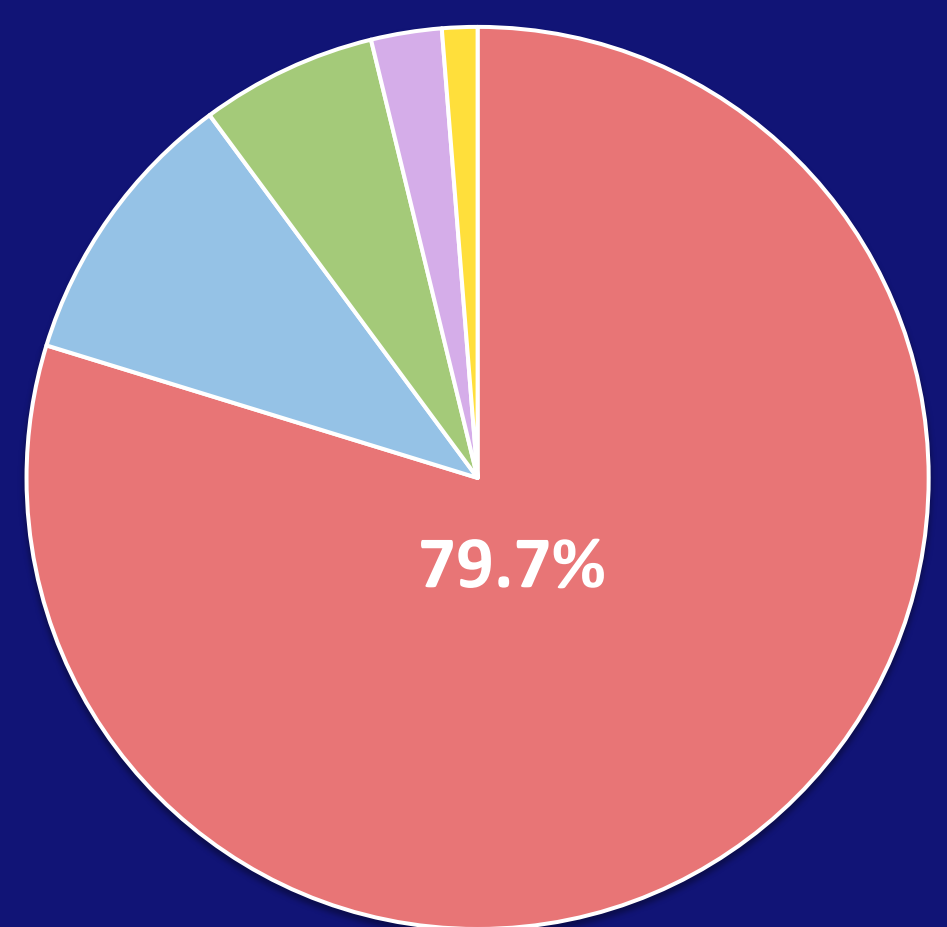
In our project, we researched and analyzed:

- The Climate Education Surveys at the University of Richmond
- First Year sustainability programs of competing universities
- Potential stewardship/sustainability themed activities and projects for a First Year experience

Climate Change Education Surveys

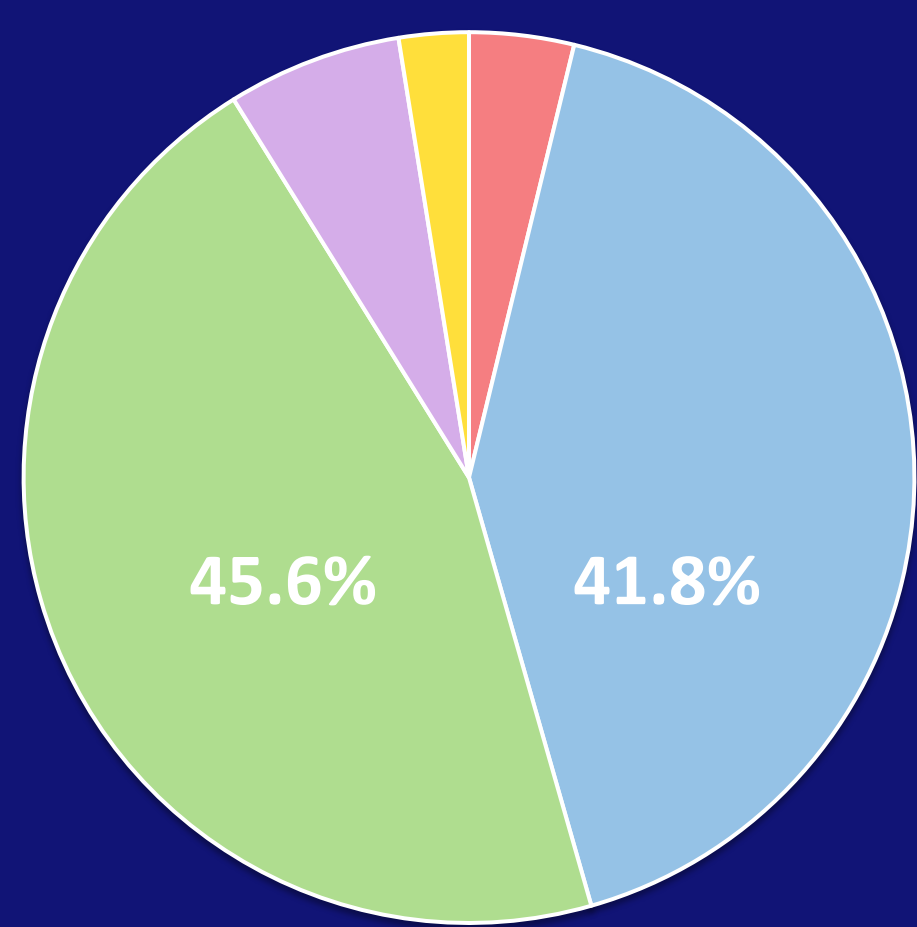
University of Richmond Professors

‘Is it important for students to learn about Climate Change on campus?’



Strongly Agree
Somewhat Agree
Agree
Neutral
Somewhat Disagree

How do you view UR's efforts on promoting sustainability?

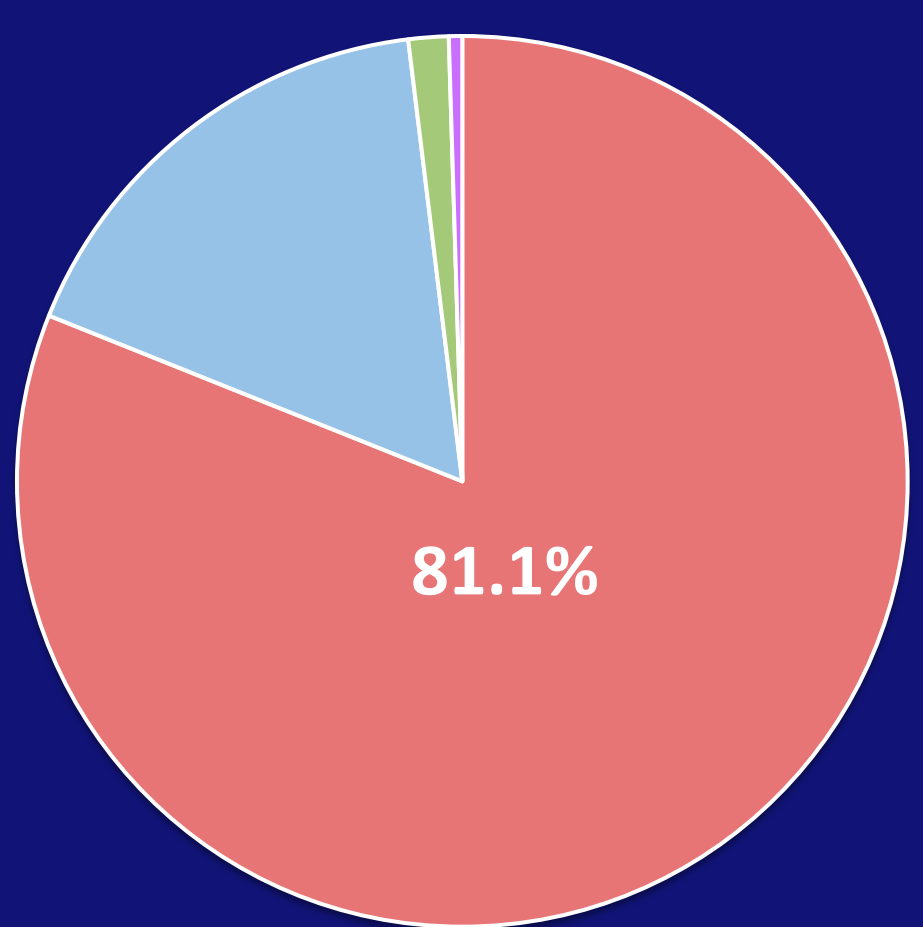


Very Successful
Good
Fair
Poor
Have Not Noticed Any

79 University of Richmond professors from 36 different departments were surveyed. A total of **97.5%** believe climate change is accelerated by humans.

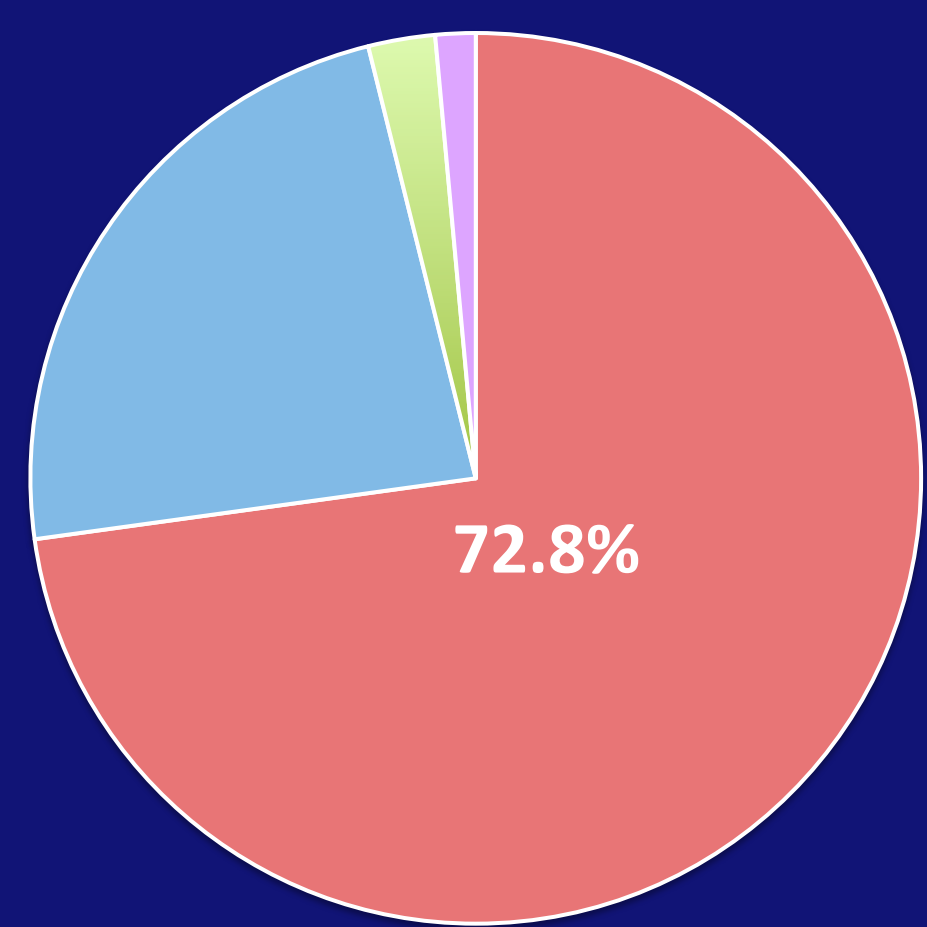
University of Richmond Students

‘Human accelerated climate change is...’



A threat that needs to be addressed immediately
A moderate threat to humans and ecosystems
Not happening
Not a threat to humans and ecosystems

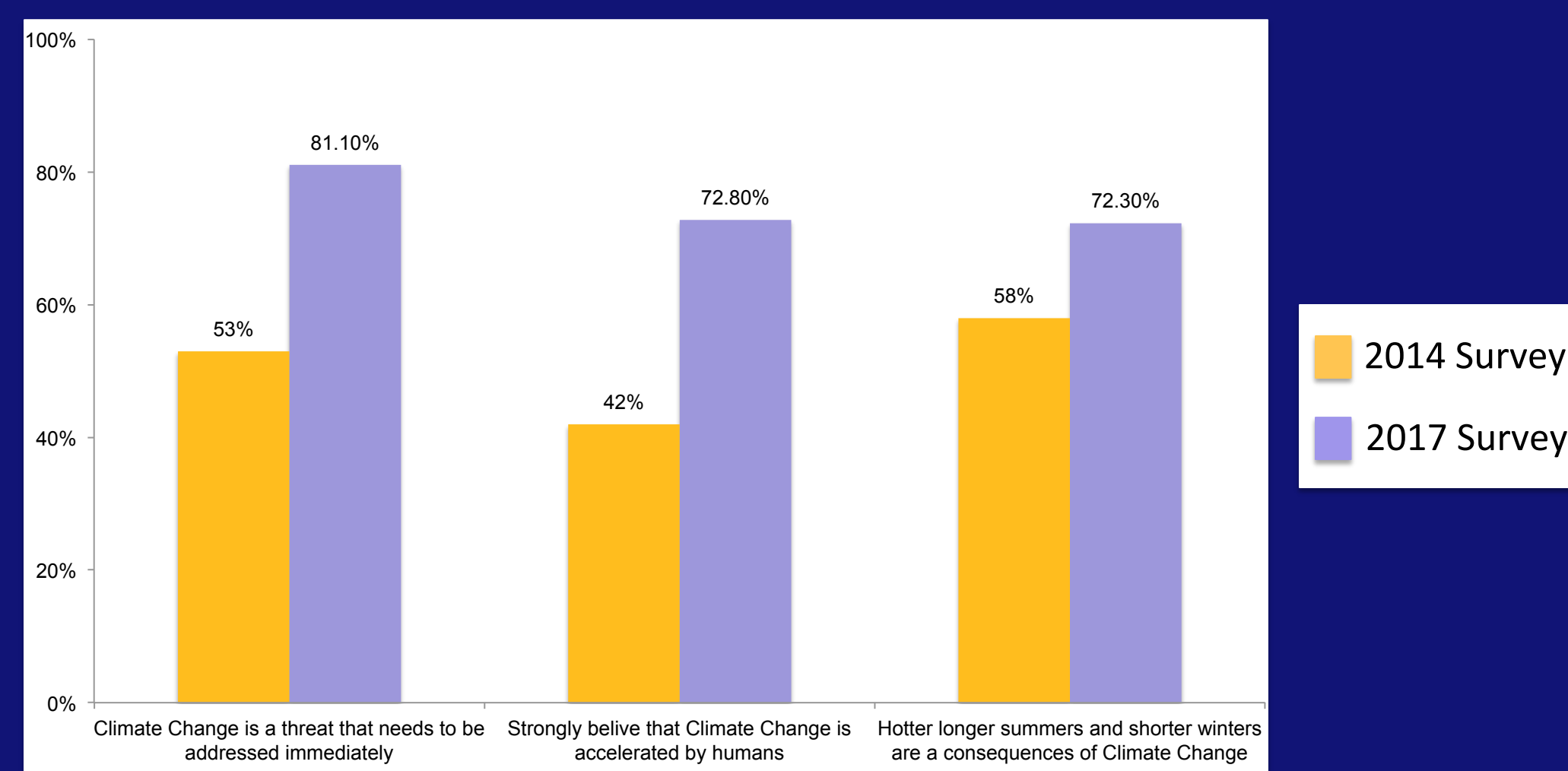
To what extent do you believe that climate change is accelerated by humans?



Strongly Believe
Believe
Neutral
Do Not Believe

A total of 206 students were surveyed. **98.1%** of respondents believe that human accelerated climate change is a (moderate or immediate) threat to humans and ecosystems.

2014 Survey Comparison



In 2014 Easby and Manning 2014 conducted a similar survey. In 2017, college students have a greater concern for climate change

University Programs Comparison



Sustainability-related Programs	Office for Sustainability	Academic Research	First-year Seminar or equivalent	First-year Living & Learning or equivalent
UVA	✓	✓		✓
VCU	✓	✓		✓
Oberlin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Richmond	✓	✓	✓	★
★ Potential for an establishment				

Conclusion

With **72.8%** of students strongly believing that climate change is accelerated by humans and **81.1%** responding that climate change is a threat that needs to be addressed immediately, there is a heightened demand for education on sustainable living and stewardship. The students' desire is equally matched by the professors, as **79.7%** responded that it is very important for students to learn about climate change.

A stewardship/sustainability themed FYE will help the University immerse students into the intellectual community environmental values into consideration. Students will have an opportunity to develop an attention to stewardship to continue to carry throughout their lives.

Works Cited and Acknowledgements

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Stewardship/Sustainability First Year Experience Recommendations

Third Spaces on Campus

- **“3rd space”** refers to the environment separated from the two usual social spaces -- **home** (“1st space”) and the **workplace** (“2nd space”). These spaces on campus are highly recommended for environmental education purposes.

List of Some Third Spaces on Campus

- 1 Transportation Hub
- 2 Solar Panel
- 3 International Center Globe
- 4 Marcus Weinstein Ellipse
- 5 Robins Business School
- 6 Jepson Hall Quad
- 7 Library 1st Floor Patio
- 8 MRC Patio
- 9 Boatwright Hill
- 10 Gazebo
- 11 Westhampton Lake
- 12 Commons Pathway
- 13 Westhampton Forest
- 14 The University Forum
- 15 Westhampton Creek
- 16 Westhampton Green
- 17 Gambles Mill Trail
- 18 Westhampton Creek
- 19 Intramural Fields

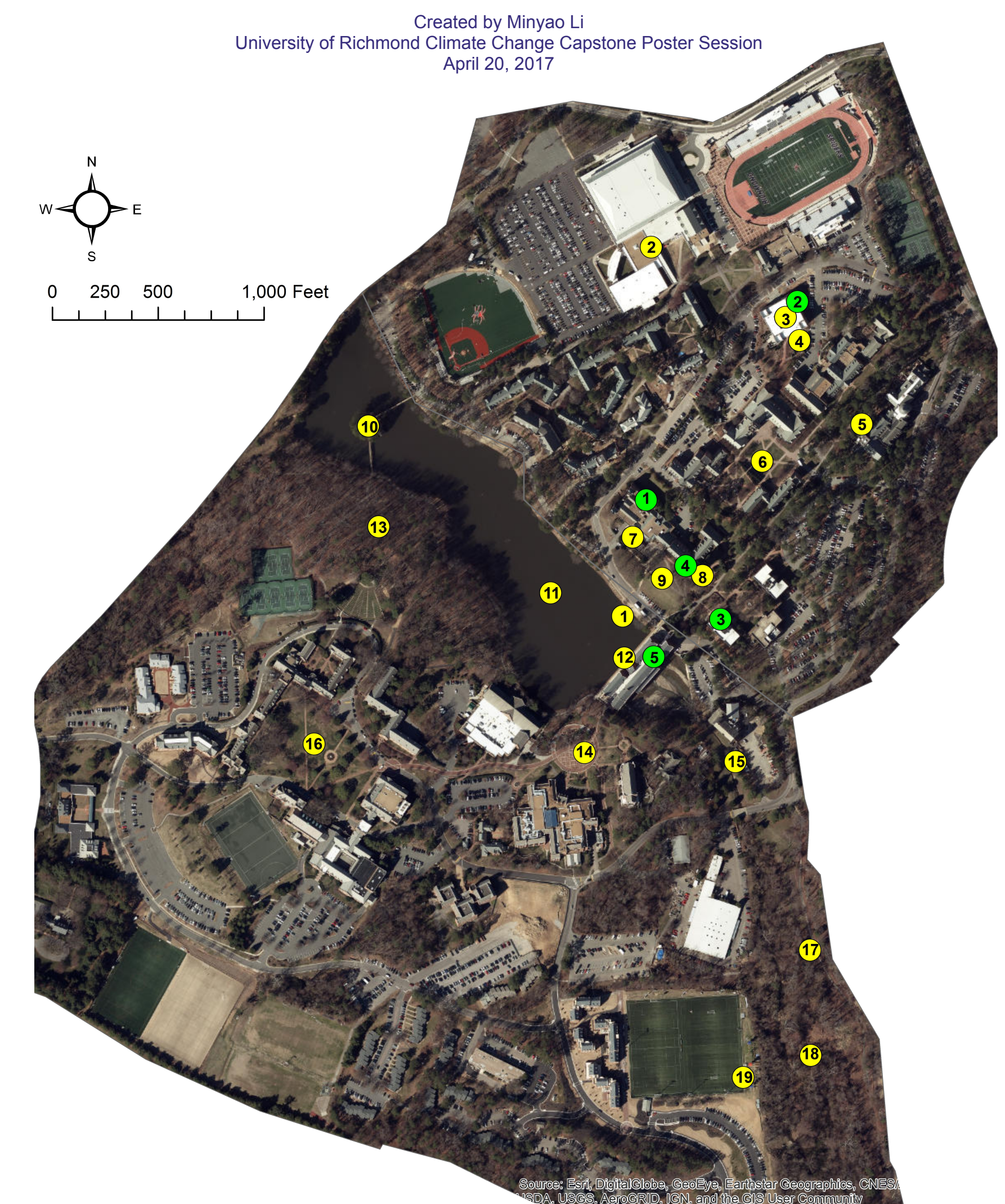
Campus Green Tour

- 1 Public transportation Hub
- 2 Solar Panel
- 3 International Center
- 11 Westhampton Lake
- 16 Westhampton Green
- 17 Gambles Mill Trail

Campus Certified Green Offices

- 1 Boatwright Memorial Library
- 2 International Education Office
- 3 Office for Sustainability
- 4 Academic Advising Center
- 5 Bonner Center for Civic Engagement

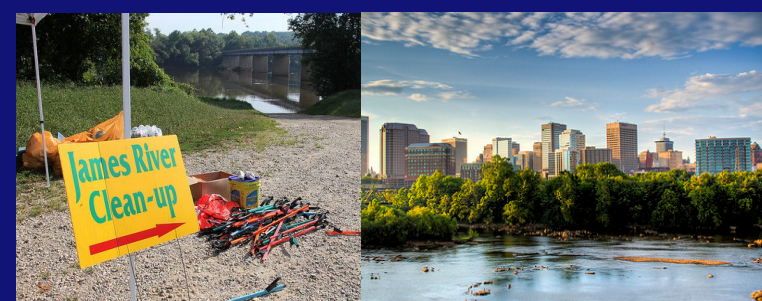
Map of Campus Certified Green Offices and Third Spaces for Environmental Education



Select Activities

Student Involvement

- Take part in a sustainability affiliated student organization event



Recycling Competition



- Green Room Program
- Participate in UR Recycle-Mania

Renewable Energy

- Have a Solar Tour on campus
- Read the University's Climate Action Plan
- Energy evaluation and cost-benefit analysis of campus buildings



Green Dining and Food Waste

- Try a Tray-less Week
- No Plastic-Bottle Competition
- Community Garden Project
- Research on organic/local food on campus

