



Onondaga Community College Masters Sustainable Energy



Student Enrollment:
9,834

Institution Type:
2-Year Community
College

Institution Size:
280-Acre Campus

Region:
Upstate NY



Achieving Sustainability Goals

A sustainability leader among community colleges with multiple efficiency and renewable energy projects, Onondaga Community College is closer to achieving their sustainability goals by developing an energy master plan with the help of NYSERDA's funding and technical support.

A Roadmap for Energy Savings

NYSERDA's Roadmaps program, which has since transitioned to the FlexTech Program, was essential to developing Onondaga's energy master plan, which identified several capital improvements and operational energy conservation measures: such as replacing chillers and HVAC equipment, upgrading lighting controls and building lighting to LEDs, installing additional renewable energy systems, and implementing building improvements, computer power management, HVAC controls, and a continuous commissioning program.

Many conservation measures identified in the energy master plan will be incorporated into the development of the facilities master plan. This will allow Onondaga Community College to seek capital funding from New York State to implement the energy efficiency measures included in the plan.

NYSERDA's On-site Energy Manager program provides 75% cost-share for an energy manager, which enabled Onondaga to designate part of an employee's time to actively manage campus energy use. The campus energy manager has already identified low-cost, no-cost energy saving opportunities like adjusting occupancy schedules and setpoints to minimize run time for chillers and other equipment.

"NYSERDA offered a 75% cost share for Clean Green Campuses Members, and that allowed us to hire an energy consulting team to develop our energy master plan at an affordable price."

— Sean Vormwald, PhD, Director of Sustainability and EHS



“NYSERDA programs like FlexTech and On-site Energy Manager have allowed Onondaga to identify and implement energy-saving opportunities that will help achieve energy and greenhouse gas emission reductions. The College is on track to meet our internal clean energy goals.”

— Sean Vormwald

“Clean Green Campuses provides opportunities to network with energy managers and sustainability coordinators at other New York campuses, and to learn about other NYSERDA funding sources.”

— Sean Vormwald

A Focused Energy Strategy

Onondaga’s latest project was installing energy-efficient LED lights in the SRC Arena and Events Center and installing LED exterior lighting on all college buildings. This includes building wall packs and entryway lights. The college is also installing interior LED lights in the gymnasium and in certain academic buildings. When this project is complete, the entire exterior of the campus will have LED lighting that uses a fraction of the energy of the previously installed lights.

Onondaga also installed two solar arrays and a geothermal heating and cooling system on campus and is participating in a Large-Scale Renewable Energy Consortium with other New York campuses. The group of 20 campuses is working with a consultant to develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a renewable energy virtual power purchase agreement. If the RFP yields cost-effective proposals, the college will consider purchasing the renewable energy attributes from a large-scale solar or wind project. This would allow Onondaga to make a significant contribution toward its clean energy goals.

The Next Generation for Sustainability

Onondaga uses the campus as a living, learning laboratory for teaching students about clean energy and sustainable practices. Students receive regular tours of the campus solar arrays and green infrastructure installations such as the rainwater collection and reuse system. Faculty uses the campus LEED Gold certified buildings and the smart-home laboratory featuring solar panels and a geothermal heating and cooling system to teach students about green buildings. The biology faculty members often use the sustainable landscape areas to teach students about ecology and species diversity.

Onondaga is recognized for their clean energy and sustainability efforts as a Clean Green Campuses Leader and named in the Princeton Review’s Guide to Green Colleges, the Sierra Magazine Cool Schools List, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s Sustainable Campus Index, and the Knowledge Review’s Top Ten Green Schools.

Ready to join? Get started today.

Learn how at nyserdera.ny.gov/clean-green-campuses.

