

## Sustainability Literacy Assessment

This short survey is intended to assess general knowledge about sustainability topics on a global scale, and down to the local level. The survey is given to incoming and outgoing students every year to assess the impact of coursework, research experiences, extra-curricular activities and sustainability office programming in terms of general sustainability literacy.

1. The term “sustainability” is best described as:
  - a) Creating a lasting government welfare system that ensures universal access to education, health care, and social services
  - b) Building communities that are both demographically and economically diverse
  - c) Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
  - d) None of these
  - e) Don't know / not sure
  
2. Most climate scientists agree the main cause of climate change is:
  - a) Human activity such as burning fossil fuels
  - b) Natural activity such as volcanic eruptions
  - c) Increased solar irradiance
  - d) No scientific consensus at this time
  - e) None of the above
  - f) Don't know, not sure
  
3. Which of the following statements about the relationship between environmental issues and socioeconomic issues is true?
  - a) Poorer people are disproportionately impacted by climate change because they are more likely to live in areas threatened by water scarcity, vector-borne disease, and/or potential damage from storms and floods
  - b) Wealthier people are disproportionately impacted by climate change because they are more likely to own properties and business that can be negatively influenced potential damage from storms and floods

- c) People of all socioeconomic classes are equally impacted by climate change, but for different reasons
  - d) Environmental issues and socioeconomic issues are unrelated
  - e) Don't know / not sure
4. The entrée with the highest carbon footprint is a:
- a) A serving of chicken wings
  - b) Lamb chop
  - c) Veggie burger
  - d) Salmon fillet
  - e) Don't know / not sure
5. Which statement about personal choices to conserve energy on campus is most accurate?
- a) It's not possible to have a measureable impact from behavior alone
  - b) I don't have control over it, so there is no point in thinking about it
  - c) Simple daily practices like shutting off lights and computers can have a measureable impact
  - d) It's not my responsibility as a student
  - e) Don't know / not sure
6. The majority of endangered species are at risk due to:
- a) Direct impacts of human activity on wildlife such as hunting and fishing
  - b) Indirect impacts of human activity such as climate change and the introduction of non-native species
  - c) Issues with inbreeding
  - d) Disease and illness
  - e) Don't know / not sure
7. Which best describes the system of recycling at ESF and in Syracuse?

- a) Waste-to-energy: everything including recyclables is incinerated to make renewable energy
- b) Sorted: different recyclables like glass, plastic, metal and paper are all kept in separate bins
- c) Single-stream: everything that is recyclable goes together in one bin
- d) None: everything goes in the trash
- e) Don't know / not sure.

8. The term "food desert" refers to:

- a) Urban or rural areas without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food
- b) Area where food is not grown due to climate, therefore all food must be shipped in
- c) A sweet treat at the end of a meal
- d) A fasting weight loss program
- e) Don't know / not sure

9. The term "environmental justice" refers to:

- a) Bringing justice to the environment by saving it from human destruction
- b) The predator-prey relationship in nature
- c) A system of government based on natural laws
- d) The fair treatment of all people with respect to development and environmental regulations
- e) Don't know / not sure

10. The term "ecosystem services" is best defined as:

- a) The work required by humans to keep natural habitats in good health
- b) The many benefits that humans gain from the natural environment
- c) Work done by environmental engineering firms
- d) Food, security and other services required to run a college campus
- e) None of the above

f) Don't know / not sure

11. The term "fossil-fuel divestment" is best defined as:

- a) Relying only on renewable energy and materials
- b) A tax on fossil fuel companies for the environmental destruction they cause
- c) The removal of investments from companies involved fossil fuel extraction as a means to address climate change
- d) None of these
- e) Don't know / not sure

12. The term "life cycle assessment" refers to:

- a) A holistic lifestyle practice that nourishes mind, body and spirit
- b) Biological method for assessing an organism's entire life from birth to death
- c) An assessment of environmental impacts of a product or process from cradle to grave
- d) None of these
- e) Don't know / not sure

13. Which of the following statements is most accurate:

- a) Using paper for any reason is wasteful
- b) Cutting down trees for any reason is harmful to the environment
- c) Paper is a renewable and sustainable resource, but should not be wasted
- d) Paper is recyclable but not compostable
- e) Don't know / not sure

14. Sustainability on campus includes:

- a) Curriculum and research
- b) Engagement with the campus and public
- c) Campus operations

- d) Planning and administration
- e) Innovation and leadership
- f) All of these
- g) Don't know / not sure

15. Which of the following best defines the term "ecological footprint":

- a) The impact of a person on the environment, expressed as the amount of land required to sustain their use of natural resources
- b) The positive impact of an ecological process on the built environment
- c) The impact of natural disasters on the human environment
- d) None of these
- e) Don't know / not sure