Wolsfeld Literacy and Culture Survey Report

February 2020

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Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to gain a greater understanding of the knowledge of sustainability practices among students, faculty, and staff at the University of Saskatchewan.

Methodology

Two surveys were administered. The first survey asked about respondents' day-to-day sustainability practices and was administered to second and third-year undergraduate students, as well as staff and faculty on campus. This survey was comprised of 3,439 respondents.

The second survey was administered to first- and fourth-year undergraduate students and asked them about their knowledge of sustainability and their day-to-day sustainability practices. This survey was comprised of 1,646 respondents.

Findings from the survey are summarized and results are presented in tables and graphs as appropriate throughout this report. Open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively and grouped based on emergent themes. Information about the Social Sciences Research Laboratories, University of Saskatchewan, is located in Appendix A.

Findings

Survey One: Wolsfeld Culture Survey

Participant Demographics

Respondents were first asked what their year of study was, with most participants indicated that they are staff or faculty members (36.5%; n = 1,256), followed by students in second (34.2%; n = 1,177) or third year (26.9%; n = 925) of university. Additionally, 2% of participants were classified as unknown or not applicable (n = 81). The results are displayed in Figure 1.

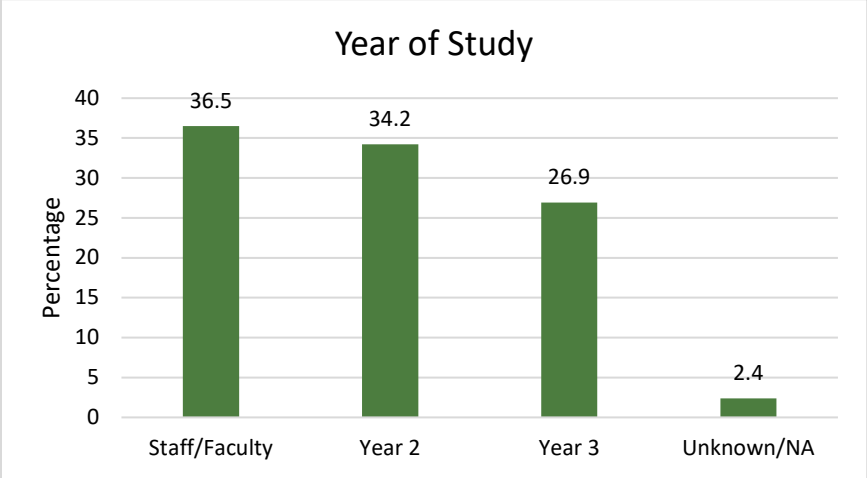

Figure 1. Year of Study

Environmental Importance

Most respondents stated that environmental issues were very important (40.6%; n = 1,367) or extremely important (26.8%; n = 921) to them. The results are displayed in Figure 2.

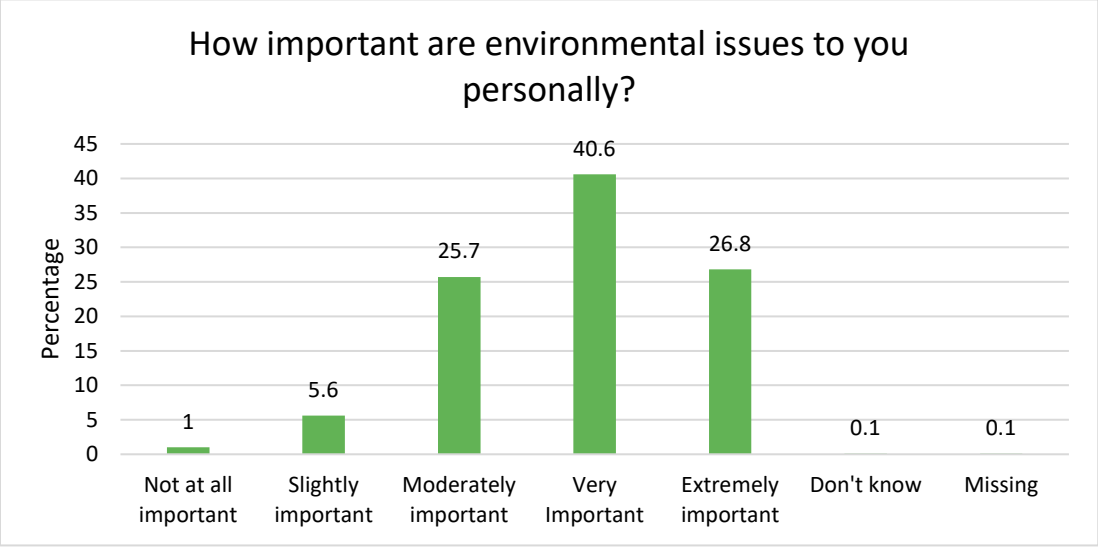

Figure 2. Personal Importance of Environmental Issues

Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle

Most respondents stated that their lifestyle was moderately environmentally sustainable (59.3%; n = 2,039). The results are displayed in Figure 3.

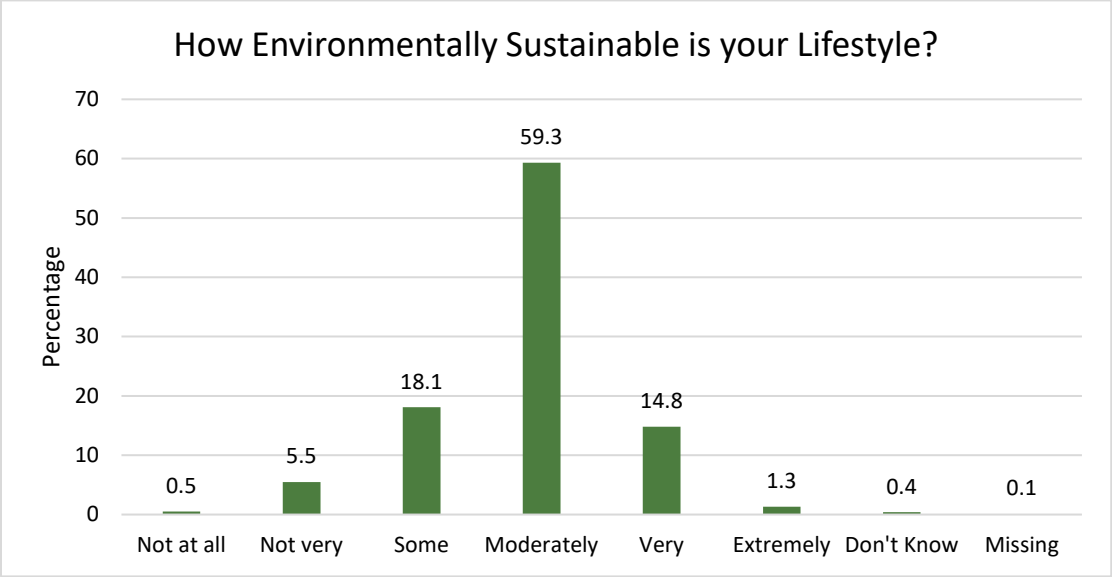

Figure 3. Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle

Ideal Sustainable Lifestyle

Most respondents stated that they would like their lifestyle to be very (54.9%; n = 1,887) or extremely (24.9%; n = 857) environmentally sustainable. The results are displayed in Figure 4.

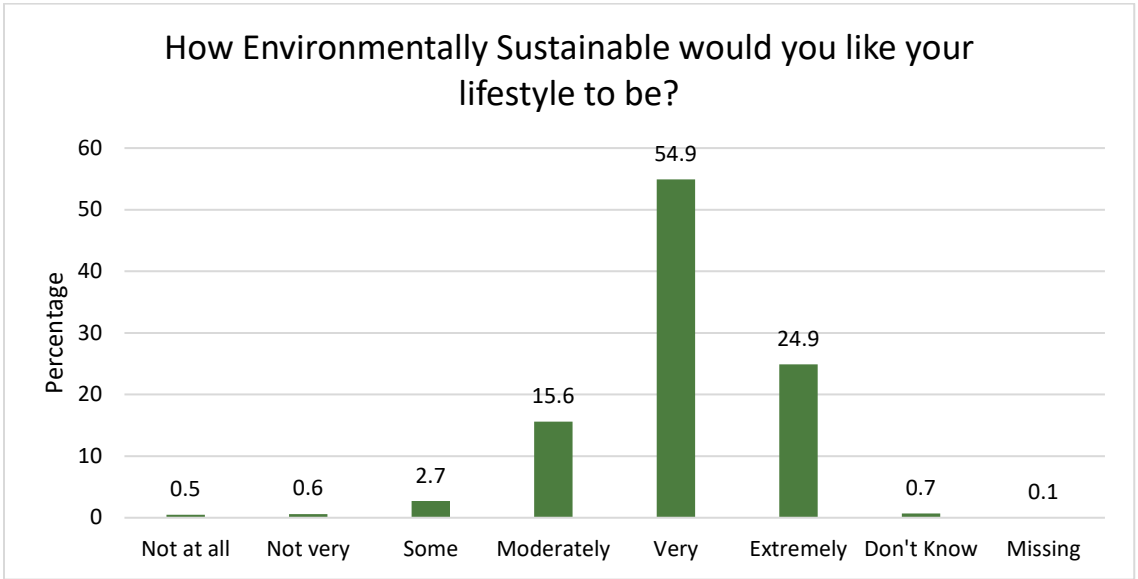

Figure 4. Ideal Sustainable Lifestyle

Sustainable Actions

Participants were asked to rank their environmentally sustainable actions on a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Respondents were most likely to report turning off lights not in use, reusing containers and bags, using a reusable drinking mug, printing double sided, and washing clothes in cold water. The results are displayed in Figure 5.

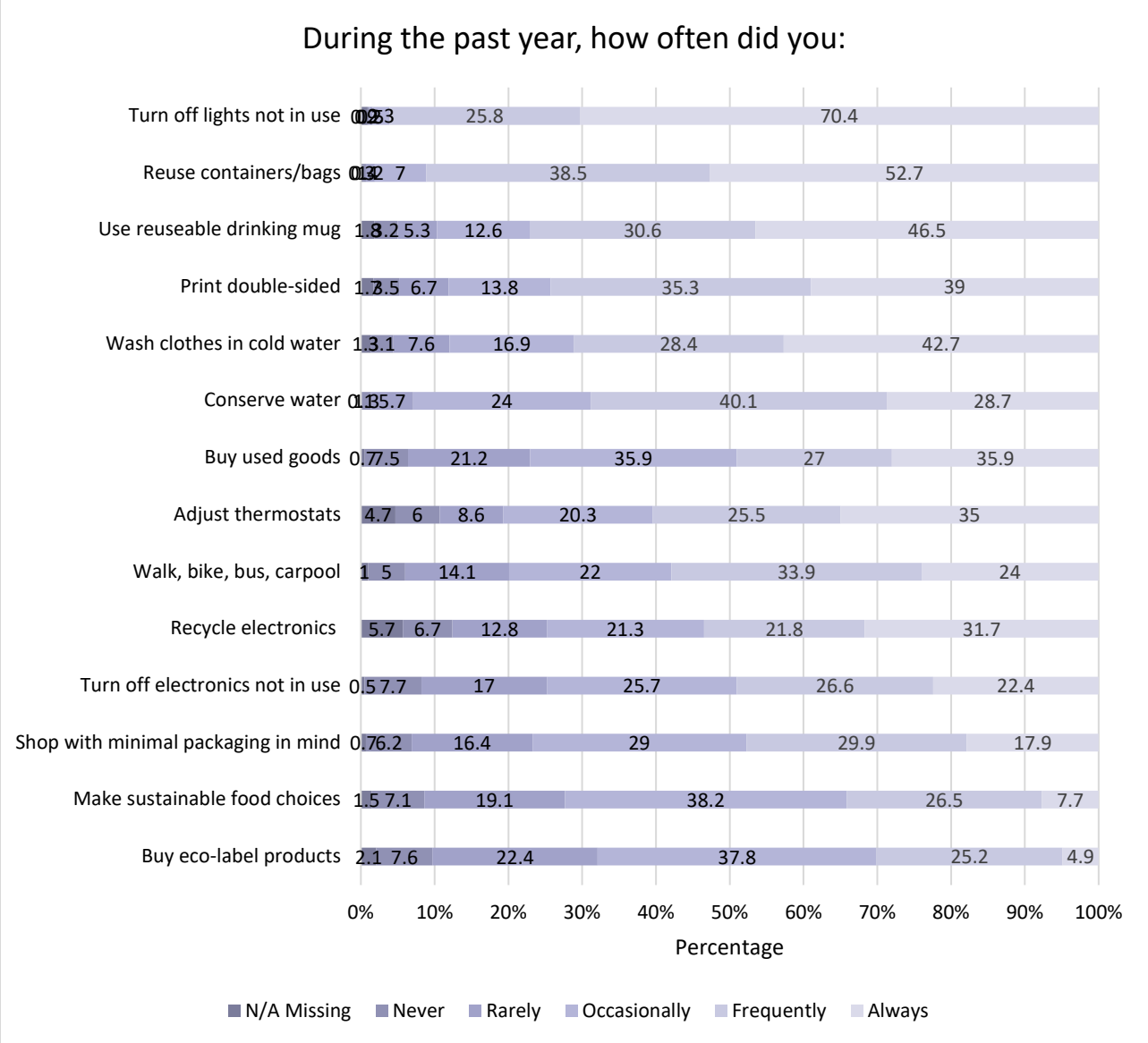

Figure 5. Sustainable Actions

Environmentally Sustainable Events

Participants were asked if they had taken part in any voluntary services related to sustainability environmental issues in the past year. Overall 15.7% of respondents (n = 539) had taken part in voluntary service. The results are displayed in Figure 6.

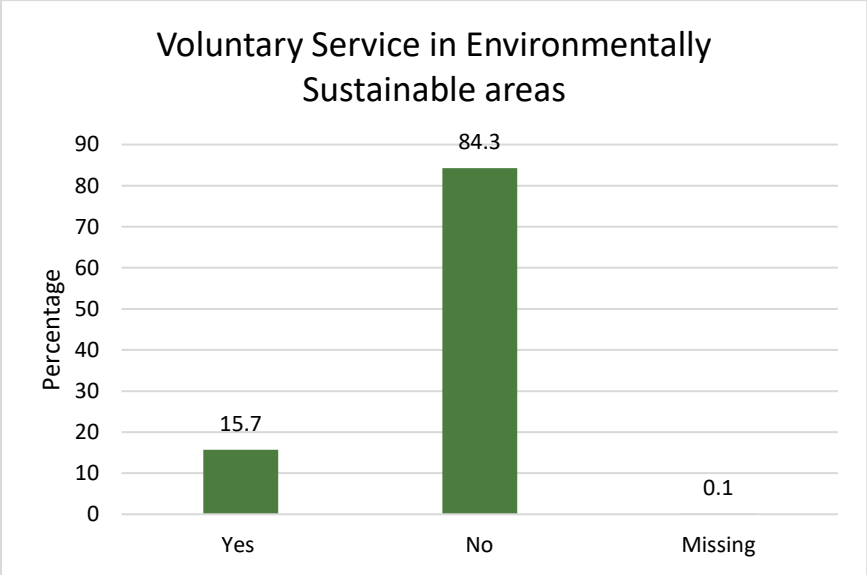

Figure 6. Voluntary Service

Most respondents were not involved in environmentally sustainable events on campus (56.1% ; n = 1,928); however, the remaining 43% of respondents were at least somewhat involved in sustainability events on campus. The results are displayed in Figure 7.

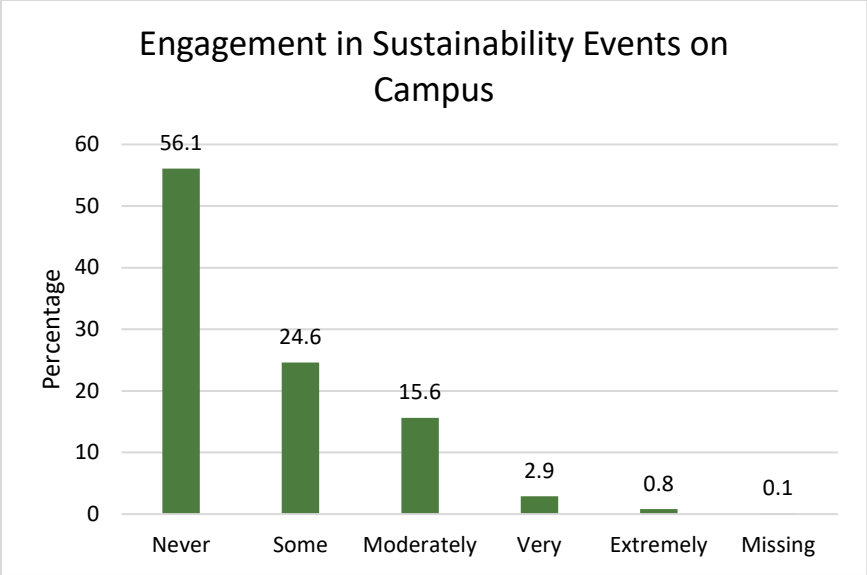

Figure 7. Events on campus

Most respondents were not involved in environmentally sustainable events in the broader community (47.1% ; n = 1,620)., but slightly more likely to be at least somewhat involved in events in the community (52.9%) compared to on campus. The results are displayed in Figure 8.

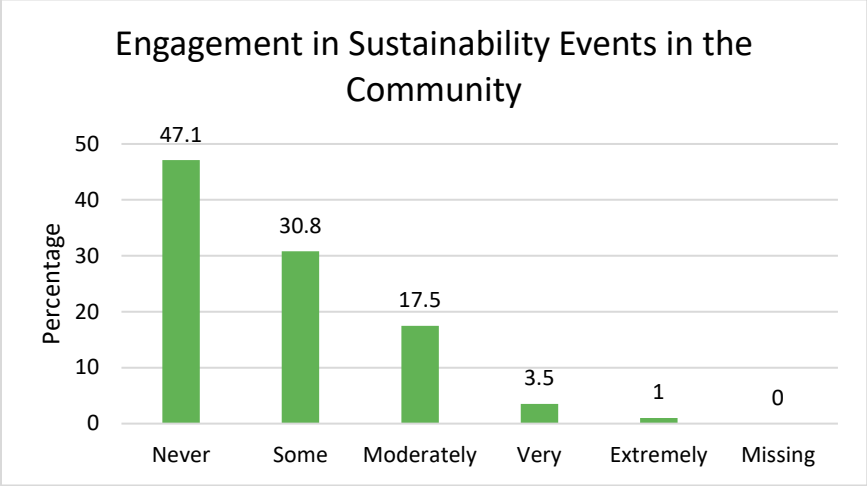

Figure 8. Events in the community

Involvement in USask Sustainability Events

Participants were asked which sustainability student events, programs, services, projects, and plans and policies they were aware of or took part in. The results are displayed in Figures 9 to 13.

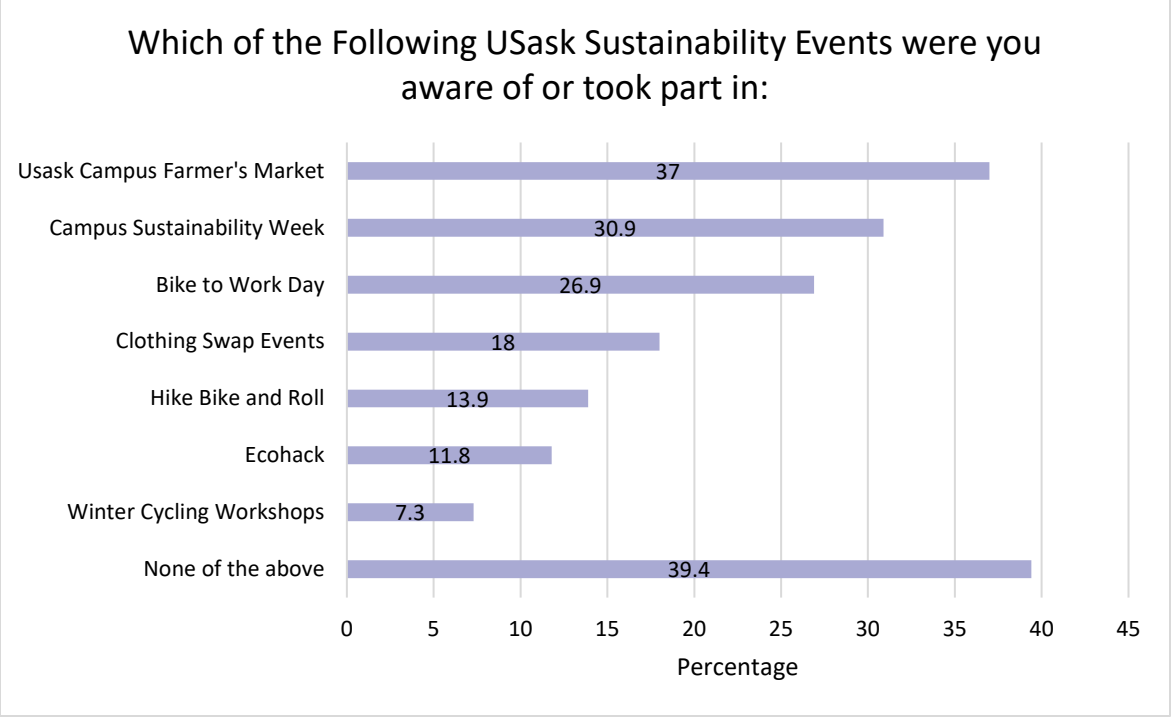

Figure 9. USask Sustainability Events

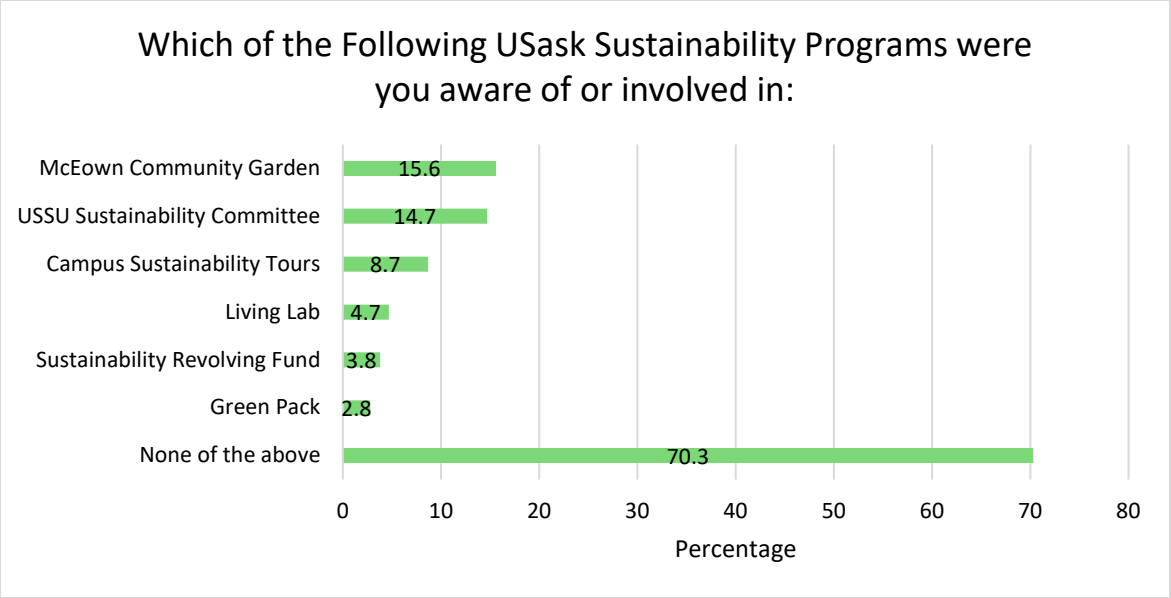

Figure 10. USask Sustainability Programs

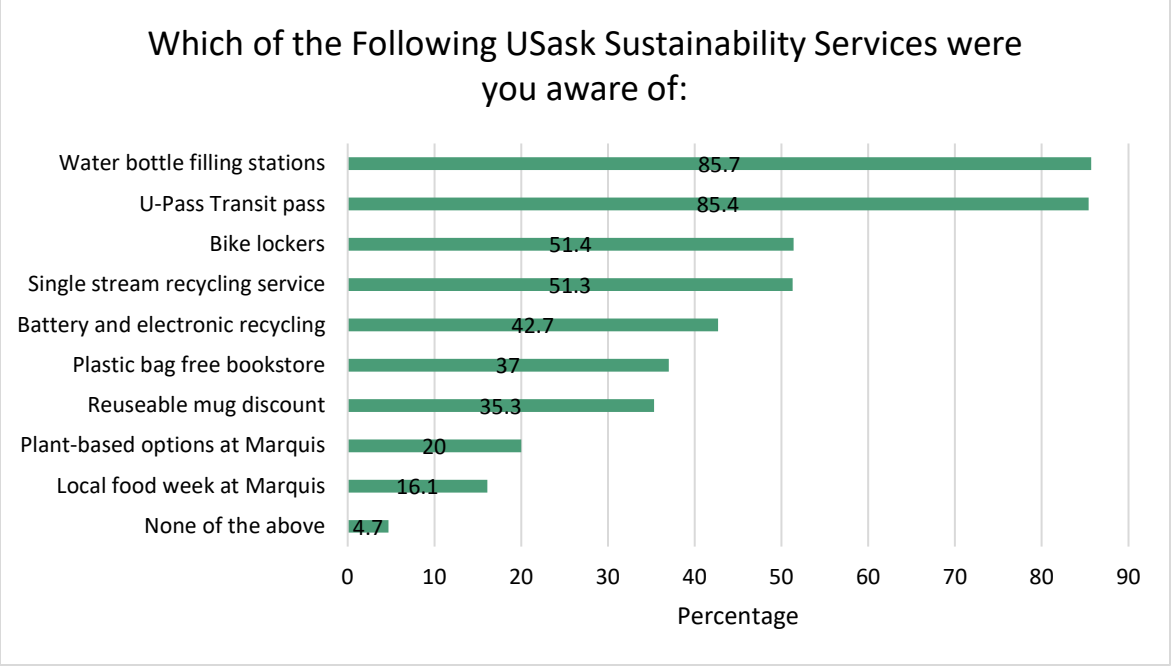

Figure 11. USask Sustainability Services

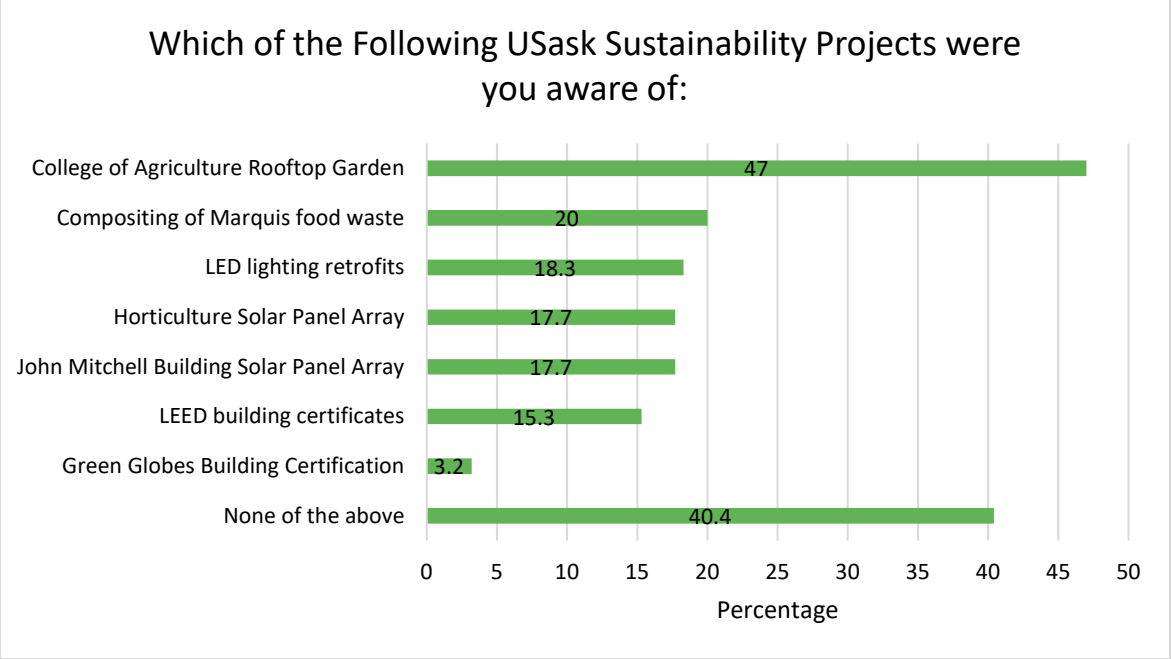

Figure 12. USask Sustainability Projects

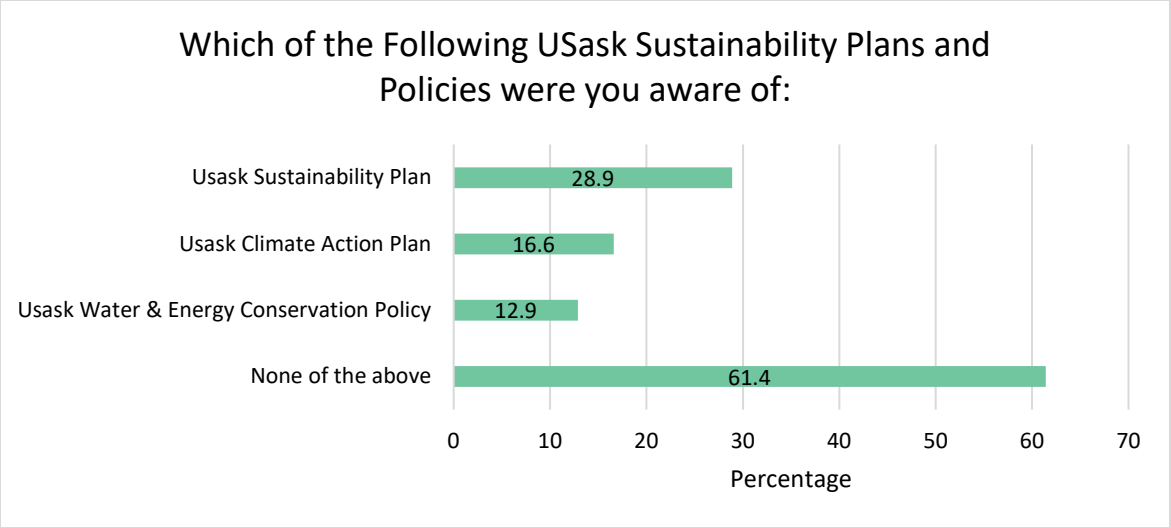

Figure 13. USask Sustainability Plans and Policies

Overall, participants were most aware of the water-bottle filling stations, U-Pass transit, bike lockers, single stream recycling services, rooftop garden, battery and electronic recycling, campus farmer's market, plastic free bookstore, reusable mug discount, and Campus Sustainability Week.

Importance of USask Sustainability

Participants were asked how important it is to them that the University has a strong commitment to environmental sustainability, with most respondents agreeing (43.4%; n = 1,494) or strongly agreeing (45.2%; n = 1,553) that it is important. The results are presented in Figure 14.

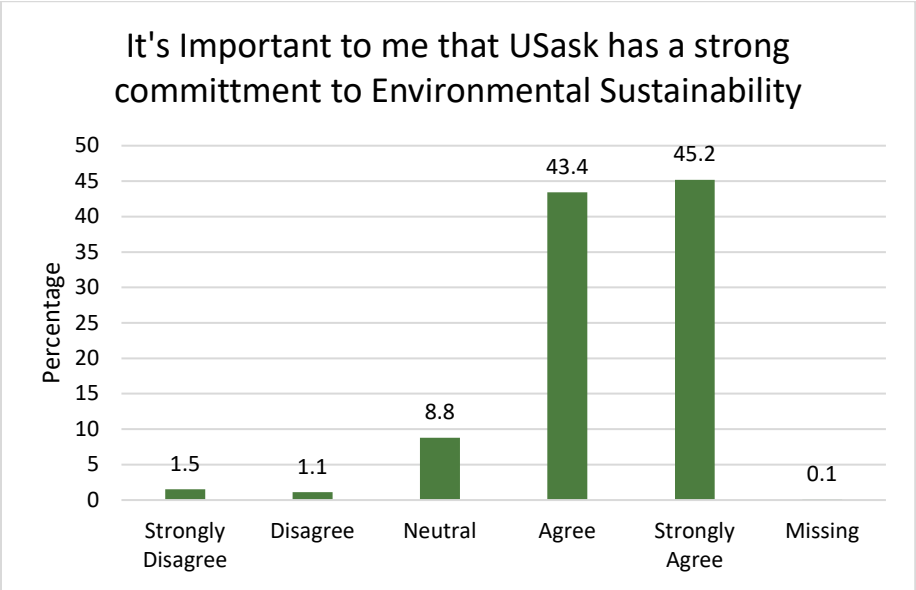

Figure 14. Importance of USask Sustainability

Most participants agreed (62.6%; n = 2,153) or strongly agreed (22.2%; n = 762) that they try to make sustainable choices in the way they live. The results are presented in Figure 15.

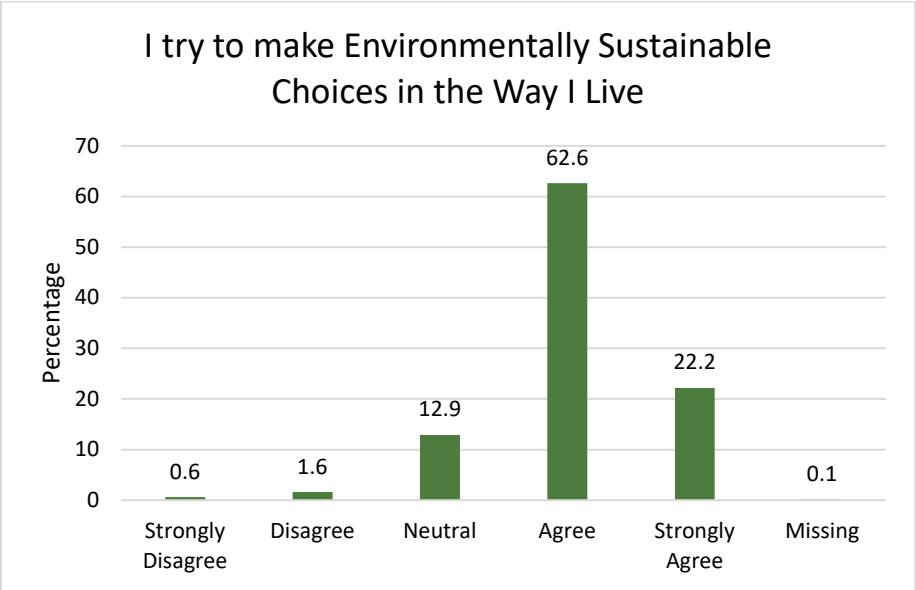

Figure 15. Making Environmentally Sustainable Choices

Only 10% of respondents chose USask for its sustainability reputation, with results presented in Figure 16.

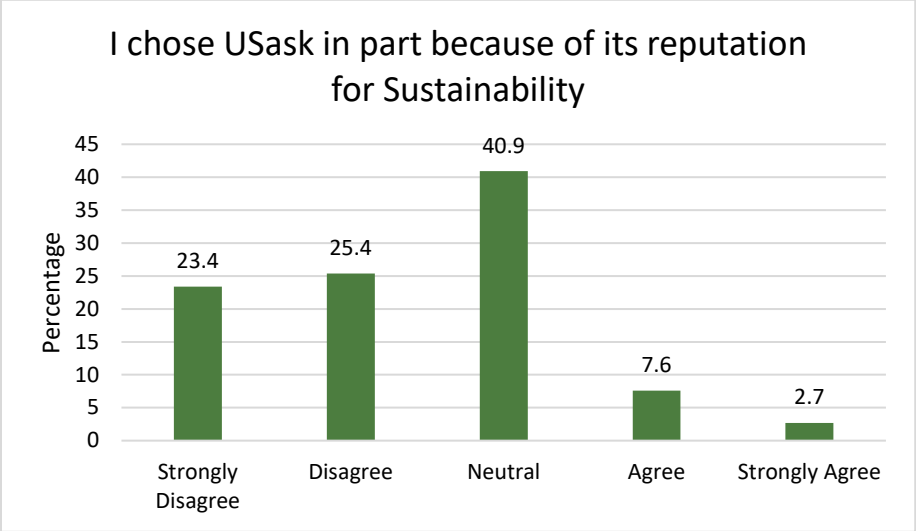

Figure 16. USask Sustainability Reputation

Sustainability Sources

Participants were asked which of the following sources informed their answers for this survey. Most participants stated their sources were from social media (52.6; n = 1,808), news articles (47.0%; n = 1,615), or news websites/blogs (43.1%; n = 1,483). The results are presented in Figure 17.

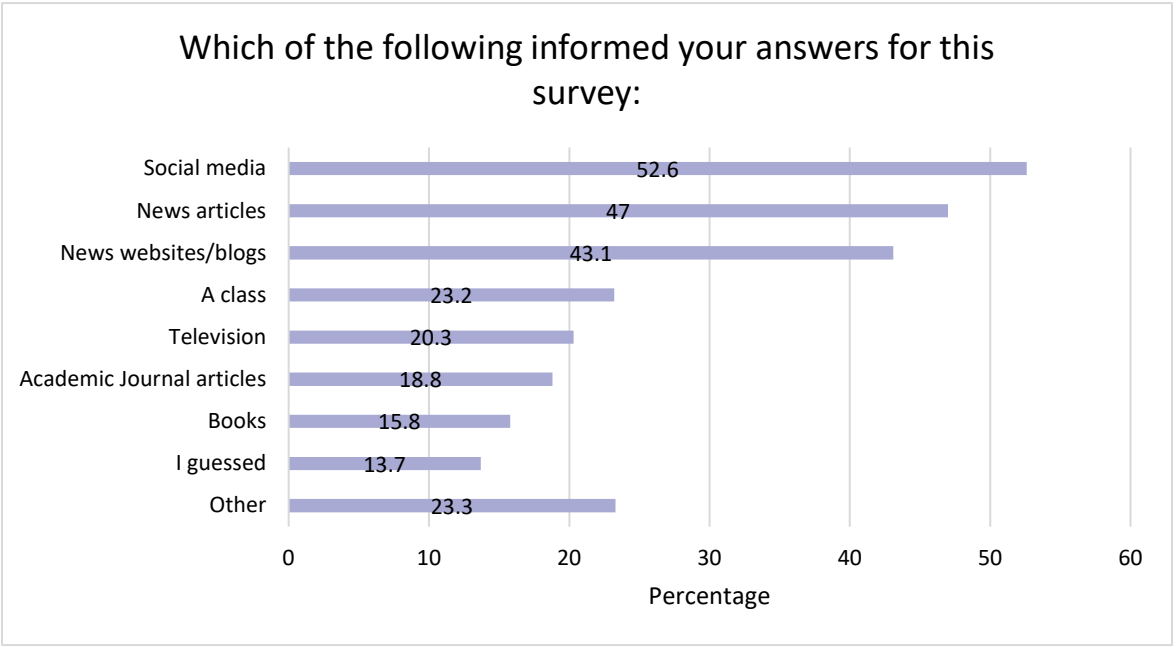

Figure 17. Sources for Survey

Overall, 23% of respondents (n = 779) indicated getting their information from another source. Some participants provided multiple sources. These sources are presented in Table 1, with general knowledge, experiences and observations on campus, and PAWS emails being reported as the most common sources.

Table 1. Sources of Information

Which of the following informed your answers for this survey:	**Frequency of Response**
General knowledge/Personal experience	225
Walking around and exploring campus/campus tours/posters	205
Emails/PAWS Announcements	173
Discussions with friends/peers/family	115
Attending events/engaging in projects/community involvement	23
Internet/YouTube/Podcasts	18
Work meetings	15
Radio	5
Unknown/Cannot remember	12

Additionally, as participants in this version of the survey were not asked any questions about their environmental sustainability knowledge, many were confused about the nature of this question, as they were only asked about their own personal opinions and did not use any sources to answer the questions in the survey.

> *"This question is unclear. I live and work here, you have a habit of picking up things going on around you."*

> *"I don't understand the question. Most of the survey is about my personal practices and awareness of campus initiatives."*

> *"I'm not sure of what informed me other than seeing things around campus and my personal lifestyle. Would need clarification to answer this question better."*

Furthermore, several respondents expressed that some practices (i.e., organic farming) were misclassified as sustainable and this led to further confusion in the survey.

> *"I strongly feel that the above question is quite poorly constructed. Pure organic farming is not sustainable (i.e. soil fertility concerns, soil erosion concerns). There are beneficial aspects to be sure, but as it exists is quite arguably less sustainable than those conventional farmers of SK who are practicing more sustainable, scientifically proven BMPs (yet not organic). In addition, "humane treatment of livestock" has nothing to do with sustainability. For future surveys, I would suggest consulting with individuals who have some expertise in the subjects discussed to generate more accurate questions, which will in turn produce better survey data that the university can use to inform its sustainability decisions."*

"Organic foods are NOT more sustainable. They take more land and more resources to grow an equivocal amount of food and this is not sustainable with the growing population and the need for more food. Also, Meatless Mondays are not sustainable and the evidence towards this idea is place in poorly designed studies. The fact of the matter is, a lot of the land used for cattle cannot be used for crops and a lot of what is fed to cattle is not food grade and you actually get more out if it than the poor quality crop in the first place. Please consult the agriculture and college of veterinary medicine before you make your plan. I would be ashamed if our college put out a statement with misconceptions because you are following mainstream media and not science. Frankly, I'm disappointed that this was even on the survey. It makes me question the credibility of those creating the plan."

"Please remove 'organic' as an example of sustainable agriculture. It is not."

"Please don't confuse organic with sustainable. They are NOT the same thing and it is misleading to try and say they are."

"Examine the science behind plants being more environmentally sustainable than meat. This is not always the case and this University which is a leader in agricultural research should be better educated on the truths about agriculture sustainability!"

Lastly, a few participants also provided a few suggestions to improve the sustainability practices on campus.

"It would be great if the Janitors didn't put the recycling into the garbage. I think it's b/c it's so inconvenient for them to do so, and it increases their workload and they are already overworked. They are only supplied a garbage cart"

"I turn off the lights in the classroom next to my office nearly every day, several times. Why can't students and other prof's try this. Why should we waste money on unused lighting?"

Survey Two: Wolsfeld Literacy and Culture Survey

Participant Demographics

Respondents were first asked what their year of study was, with most participants reporting being in first year (55.6%; n = 915) or fourth year (44.4%; n =731) of university. The results are displayed in Figure 18.

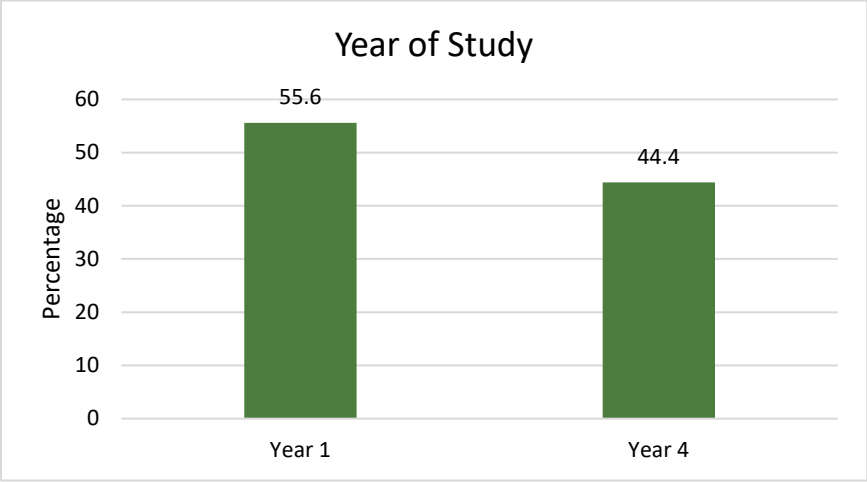

Figure 18. Year of Study

Sustainability Knowledge

Respondents were then asked which of the following was not one of the three dimensions of sustainability. Most participants indicated that democracy (75.0%; n = 1,235) was not a dimension of sustainability. The results are displayed in Figure 19.

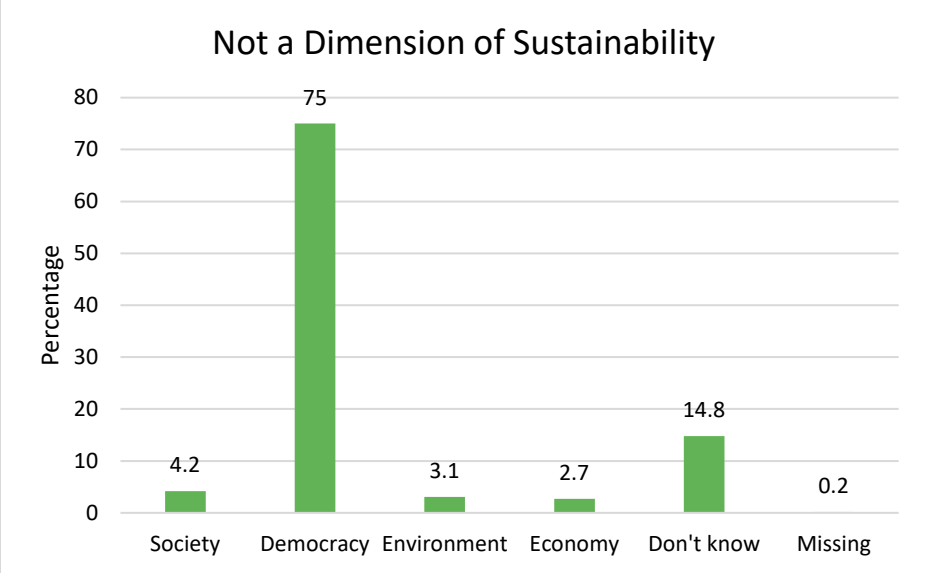

Figure 19. Dimensions of Sustainability

Respondents indicated that the most commonly used definition of sustainable development is "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (75.9%; n = 1,249). The results are displayed in Figure 20.

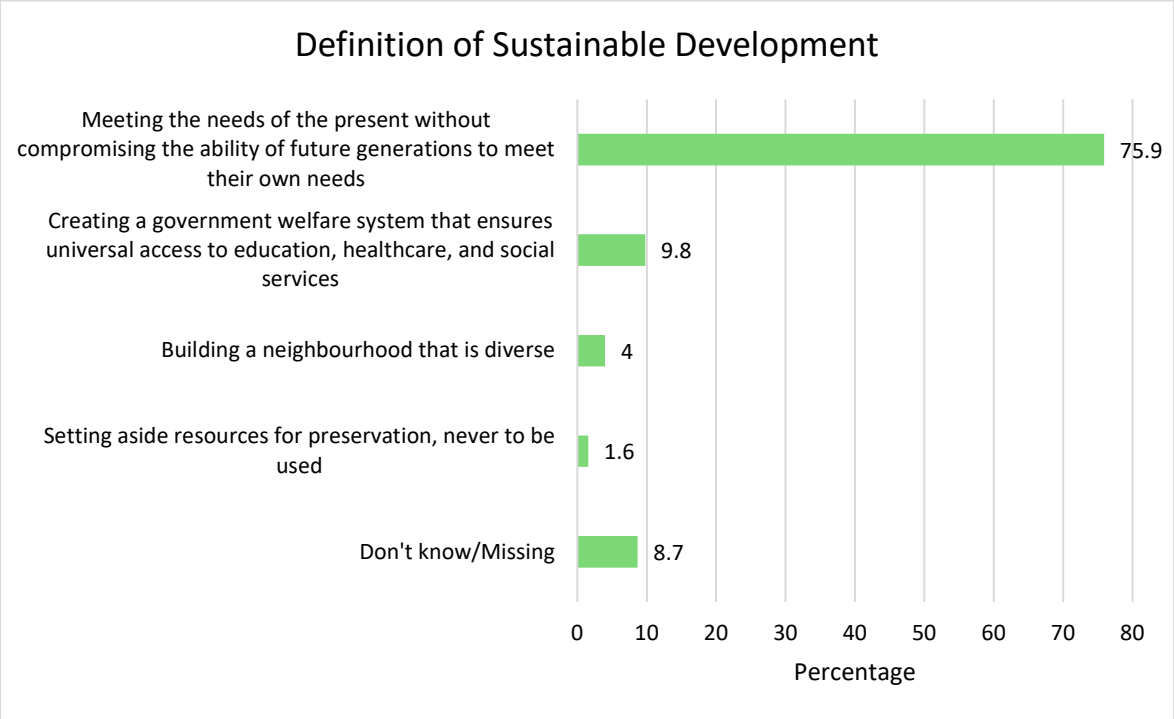

Figure 20. Definition of Sustainable Development

Most respondents indicated that the following statement is true (63.7%; n = 1,048). The results are displayed in Figure 21.

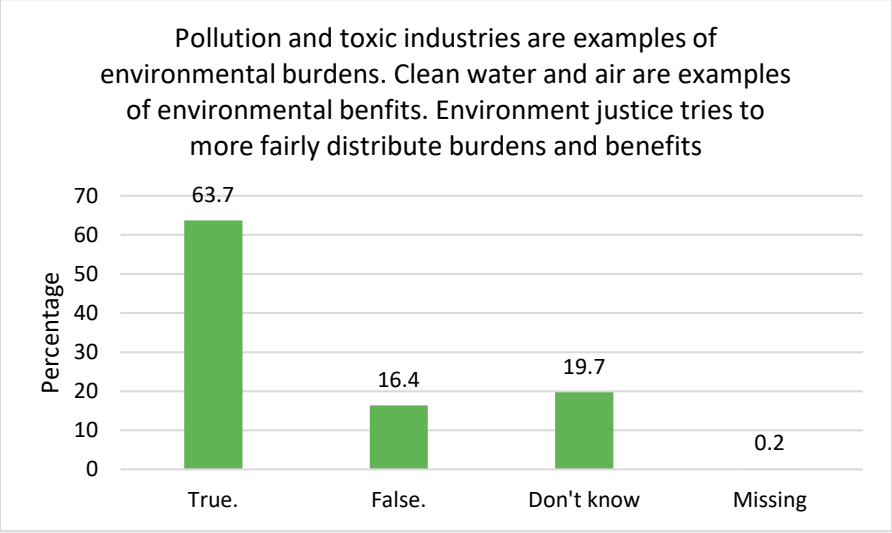

Figure 21. Environmental Justice

Most participants indicated that the triple bottom line refers to "A balance of environmental, social, and financial well-being" (65.1%; n = 1,072). The results are displayed in Figure 22.

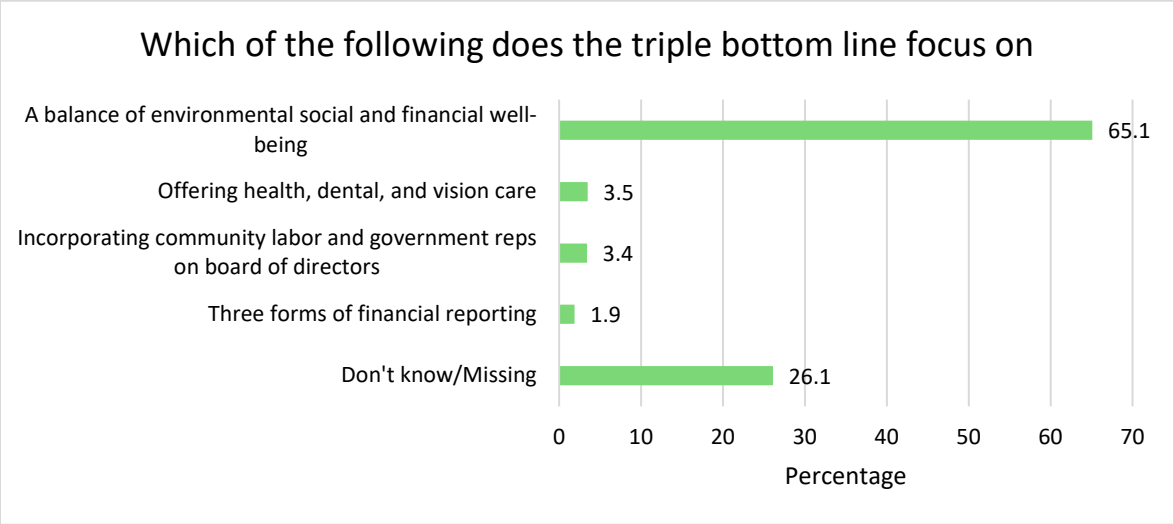

Figure 22. Triple Bottom Line

Most participants indicated that the following statement was true "Carbon dioxide is the most prevalent greenhouse gas" (67.7%; n = 1,115). The results are displayed in Figure 23.

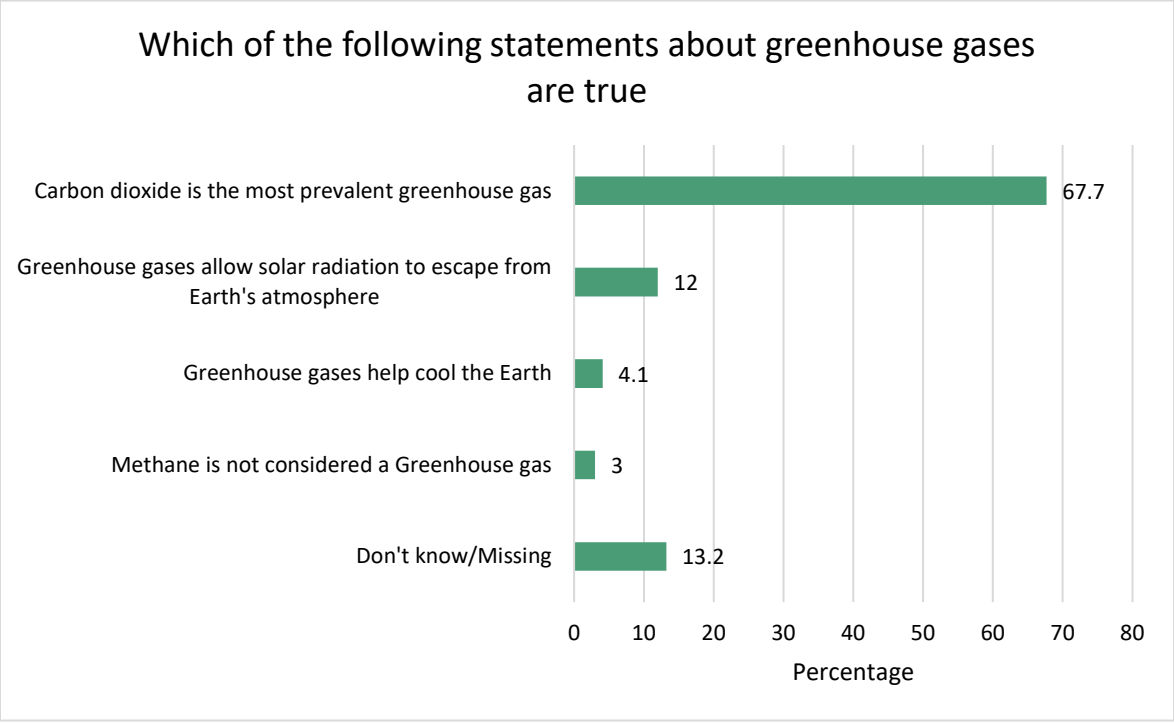

Figure 23. True Statement about Greenhouse Gas

Most participants indicated that the following statement was false "Compositing organic waste reduces the amount of plastics being landfilled" (55.9%; n = 920). The results are displayed in Figure 24.

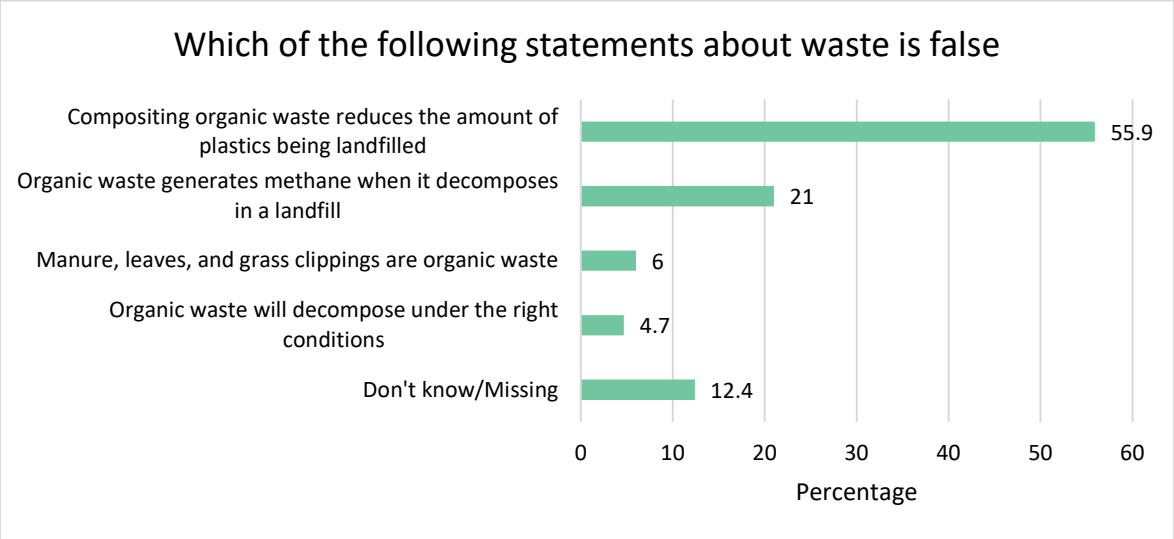

Figure 24. False Statement about Waste

Most participants indicated that plastic bottles (80.0%; n = 1,316), metal cans (69.6%; n = 1,146), and cardboard boxes (68.2%; n = 1,122) were accepted by the recycling system. The results are displayed in Figure 25.

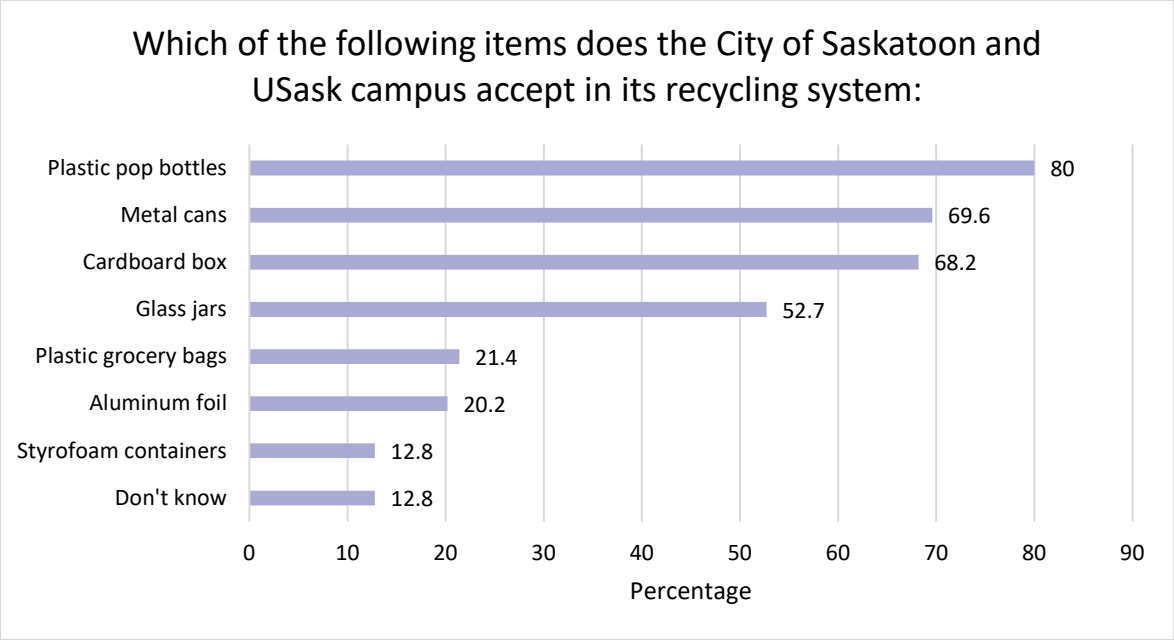

Figure 25. Recycling System Items

Most respondents indicated that electricity in Saskatchewan was powered by natural gas (45.1%; n = 742) or coal (26.4%; n = 435). The results are displayed in Figure 26.

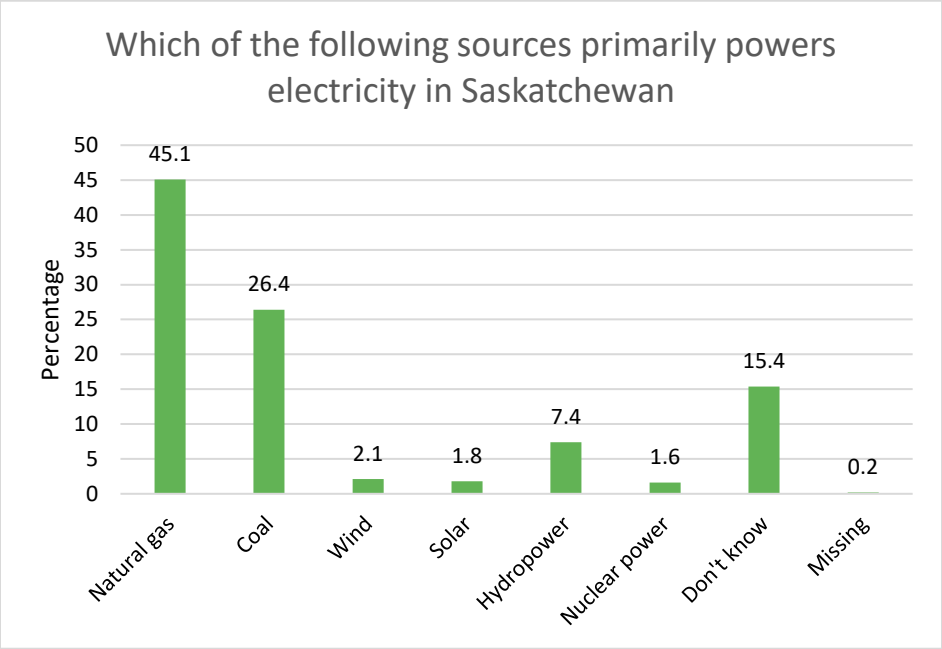

Figure 26. Electricity Sources in Saskatchewan

Most respondents indicated that climate change was predicted to result in an expansion of deserts (59.7%; n = 982) and a decrease in sea level (19.9%; n = 327). The results are displayed in Figure 27.

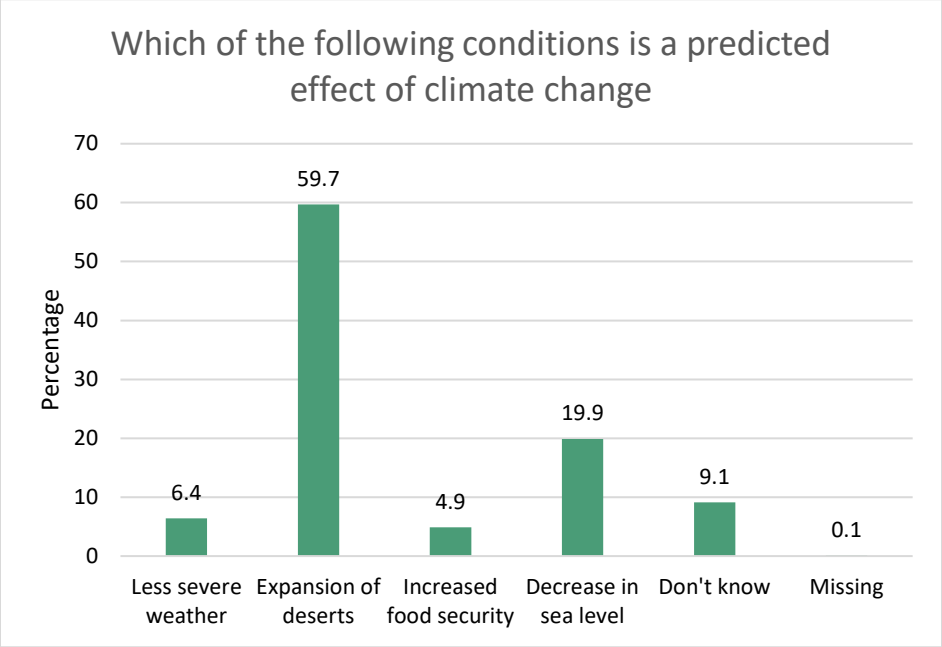

Figure 27. Effects of Climate Change

Most participants indicated that the following statement was true "Poorer people are disproportionally impacted by climate change" (45.4%; n = 747). The results are displayed in Figure 28.

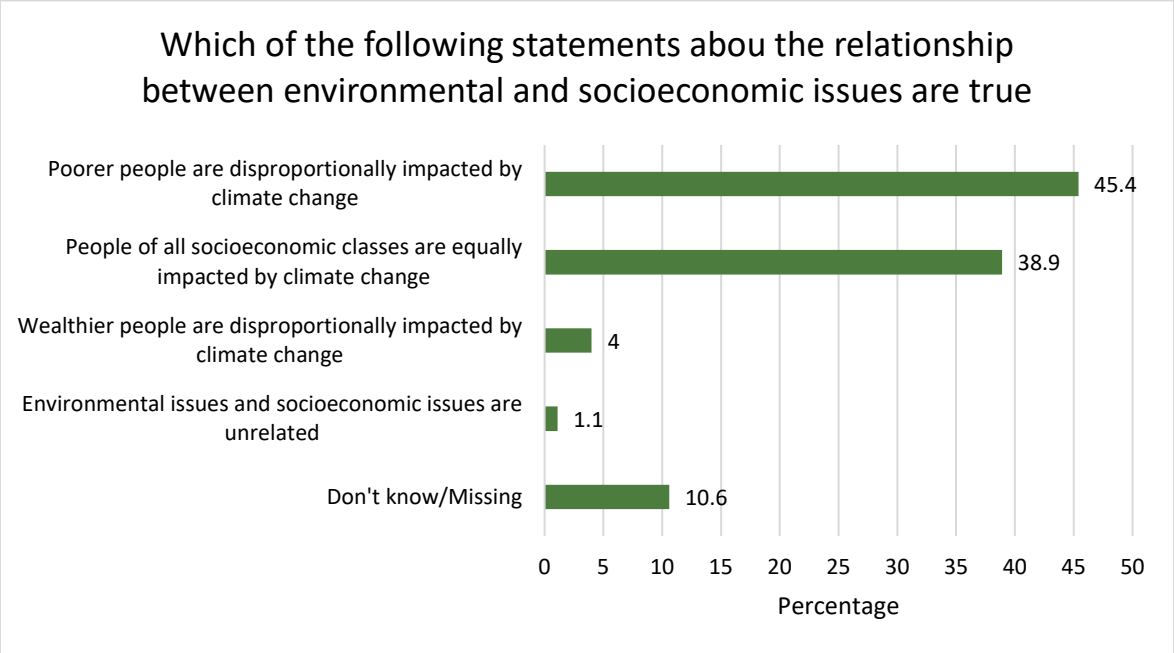

Figure 28. True Statement about the Relationship between Environmental and Socioeconomic Issues

Most respondents stated that reducing consumption of all products would reduce their environmental footprint the most (58.6%; n = 965). The results are displayed in Figure 29.

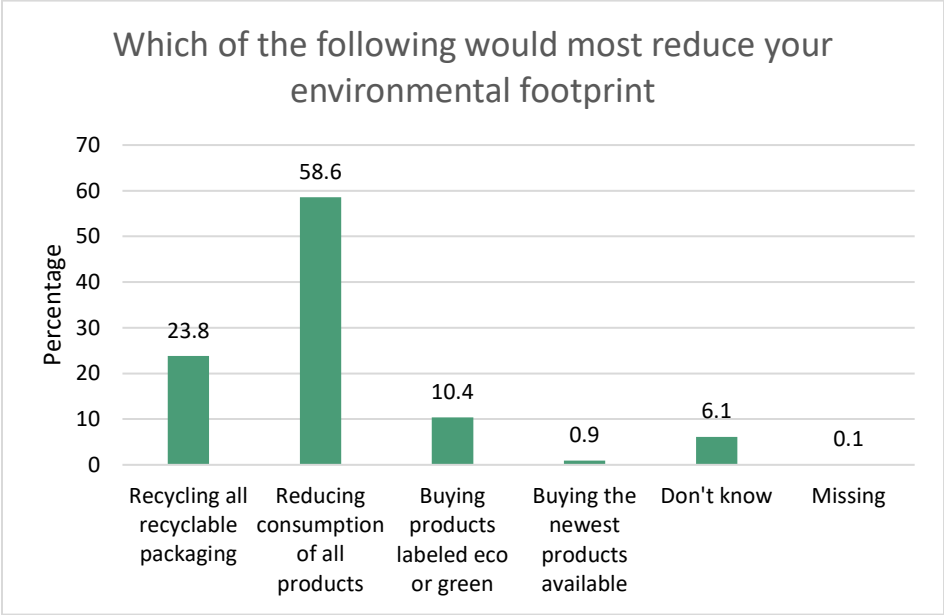

Figure 29. Reducing Environmental Footprint

Most participants indicated that the following statement was the Paris Agreement "To keep global temperature rise well below 2ºC pre-industrial levels and to pursue a path to limit warming to 1.5ºC" (47.9%; n = 788). Overall, 28% (n = 462) of participants were unsure. The results are displayed in Figure 30.

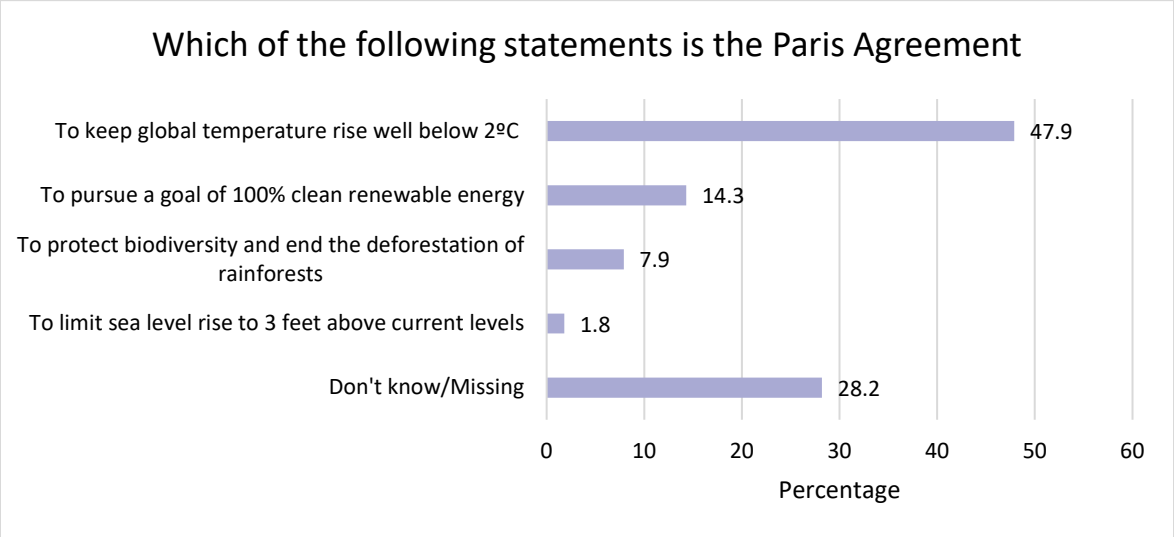

Figure 30. Paris Agreement

Environmental Importance

Most respondents stated that environmental issues were very important (40.2%; n = 661) or moderately important (29.7%; n = 489) to them. The results are displayed in Figure 31.

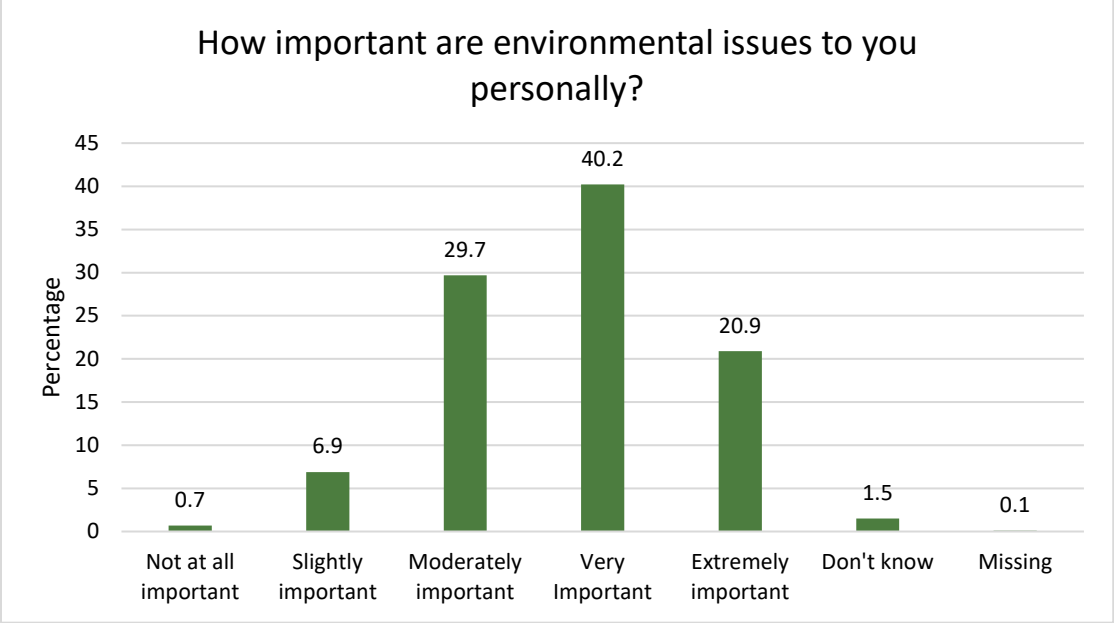

Figure 31. Personal Importance of Environmental Issues

Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle

Most respondents stated that their lifestyle was moderately environmentally sustainable (55.2%; n = 908). The results are displayed in Figure 32.

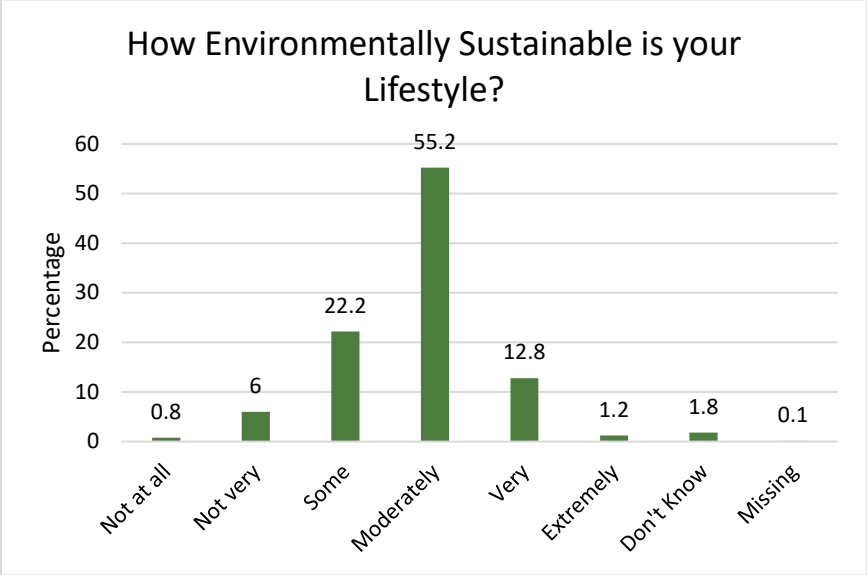

Figure 32. Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle

Ideal Sustainable Lifestyle

Most respondents stated that they would like their lifestyle to be very (49.3%; n = 881) or extremely (28.4%; n = 468) environmentally sustainable. The results are displayed in Figure 33.

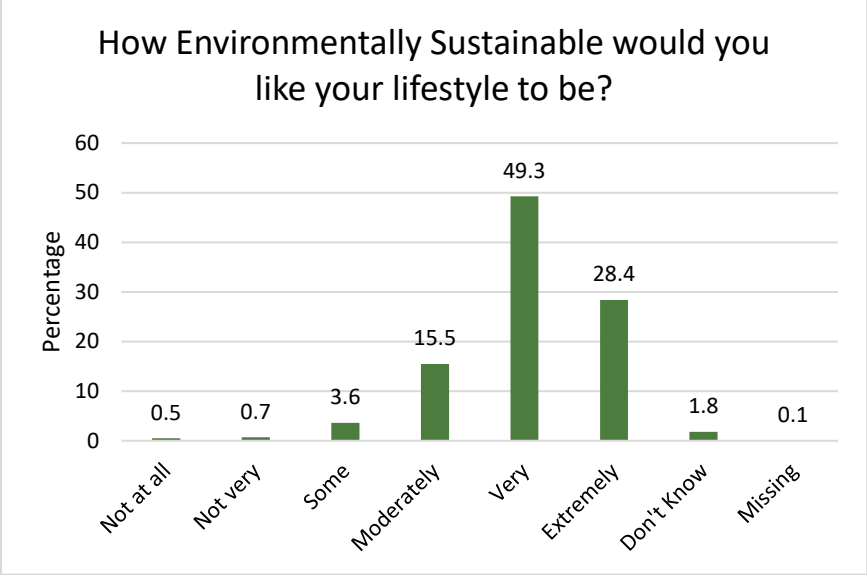

Figure 33. Ideal Sustainable Lifestyle

Sustainable Actions

Participants were asked to rank their environmentally sustainable actions on a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Respondents were most likely to report turning off lights not in use, reusing containers and bags, using a reusable drinking mug, conserving water, and walking, biking, or carpooling. The results are displayed in Figure 34.

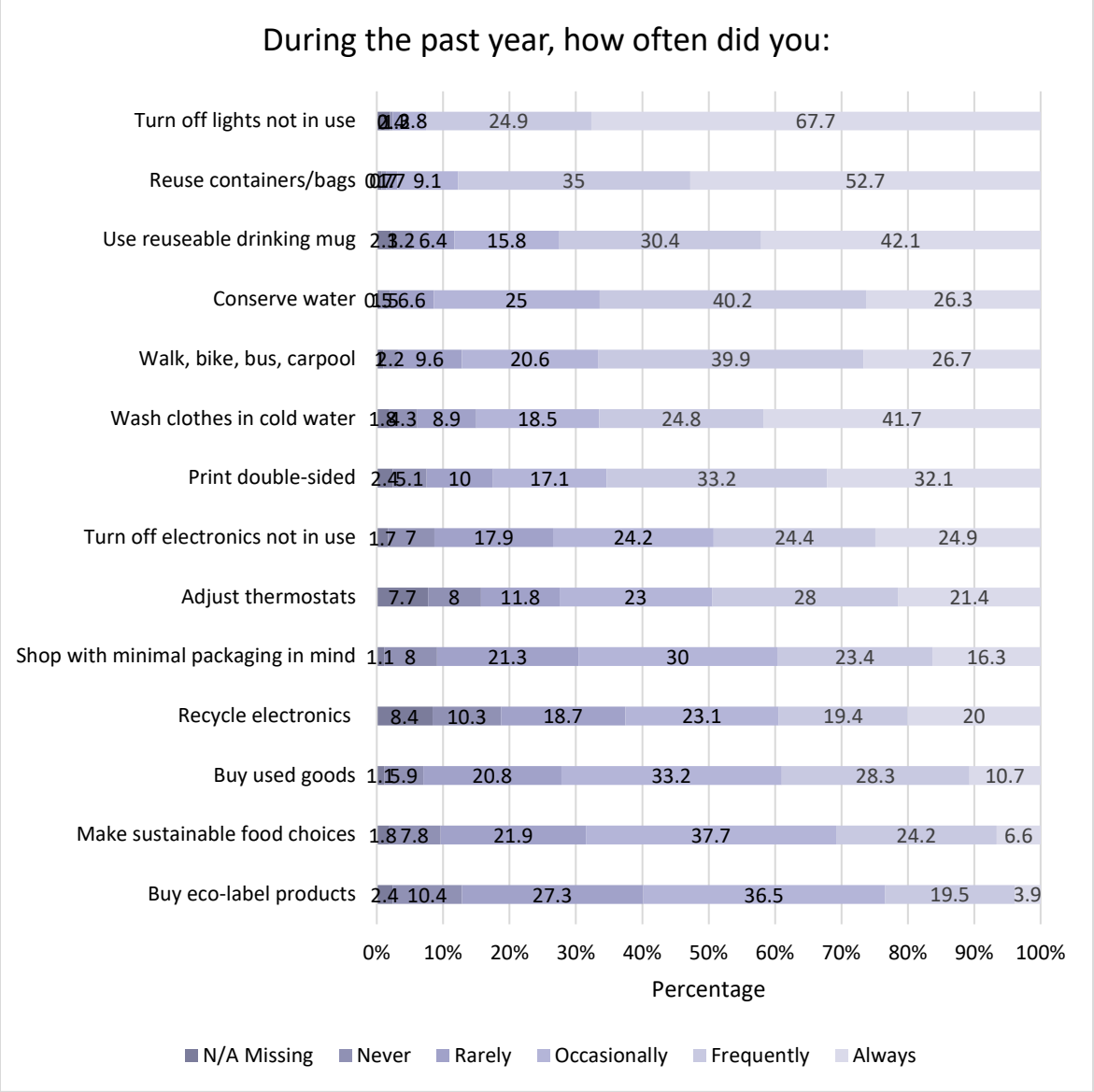

Figure 34. Sustainable Actions

Environmentally Sustainable Events

Participants were asked if they had taken part in any voluntary services related to sustainability or environmental issues in the past year. Overall 19.3% of respondents (n = 318) had taken part in voluntary service. The results are displayed in Figure 35.

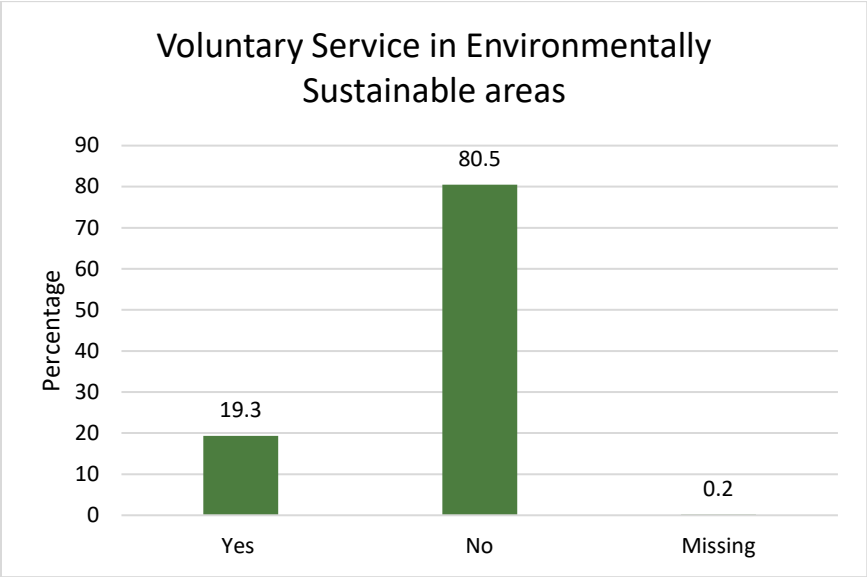

Figure 35. Voluntary Services

Most respondents were not involved in environmentally sustainable events on campus (63.3% ; n = 1,042); however, the remaining 36% of participants were at least somewhat involved in sustainability events on campus. The results are displayed in Figure 36.

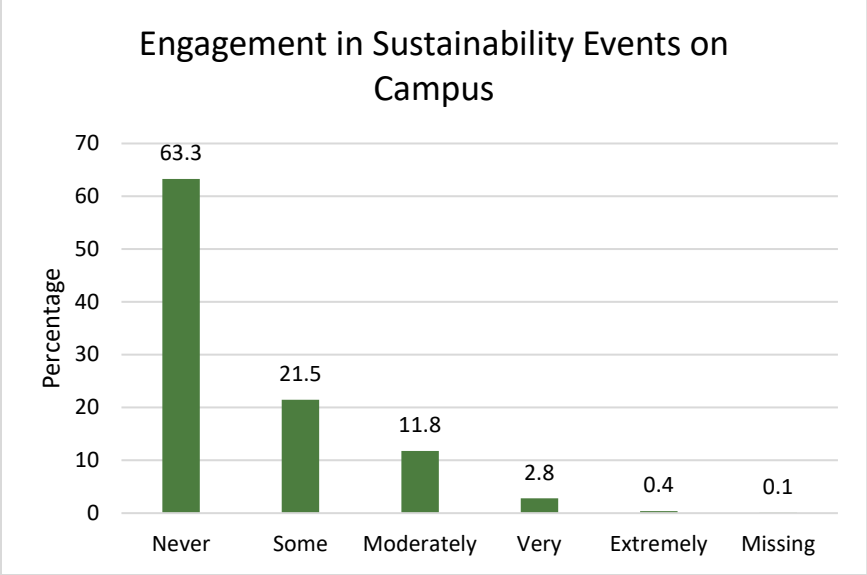

Figure 36. Events on campus

Most respondents were not involved in environmentally sustainable events in the broader community (52.1% ; n = 857) but were slightly more likely to be involved in events in the community (47%) compared to on campus. The results are displayed in Figure 37.

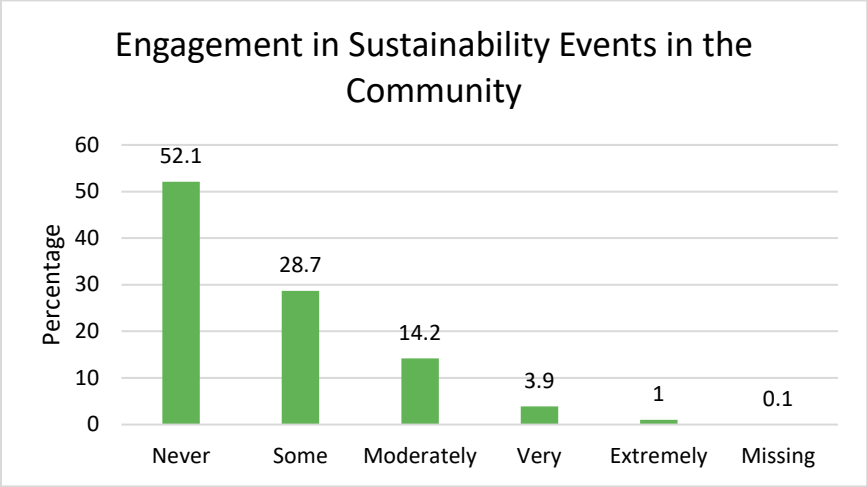

Figure 37. Events in the community

Involvement in USask Sustainability Events

Participants were asked which sustainability student events, programs, services, projects, and plans and policies they were aware of or took part in. The results are displayed in Figures 38 to 42.

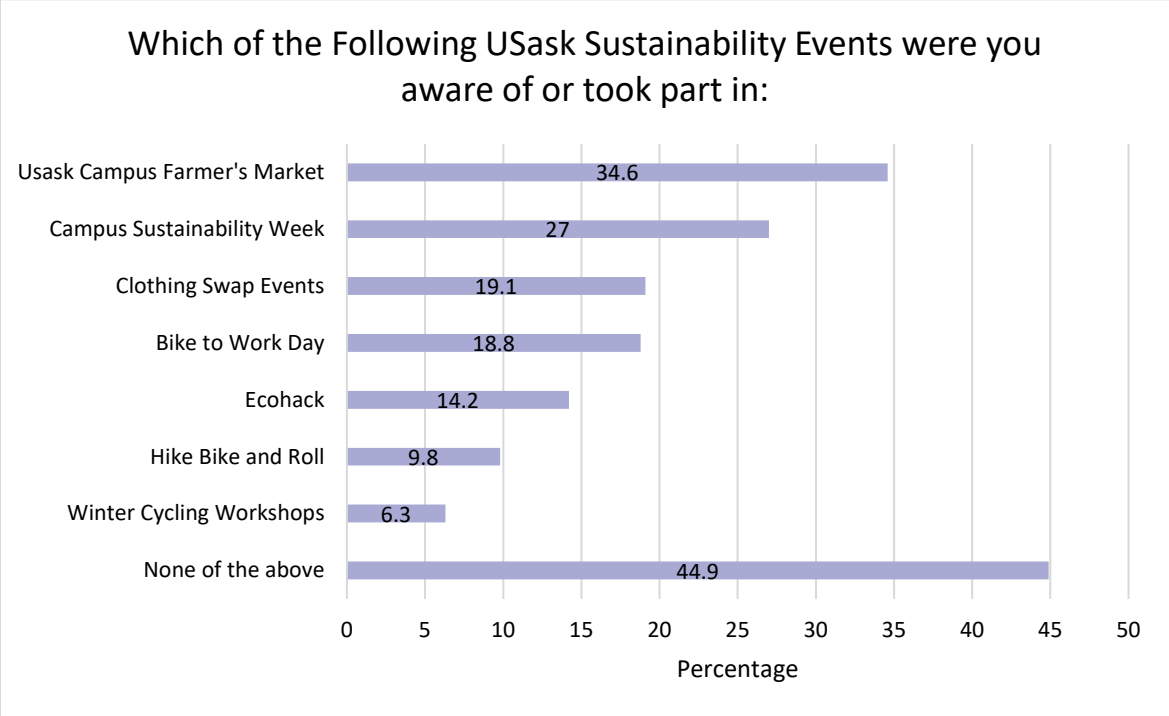

Figure 38. USask Sustainability Events

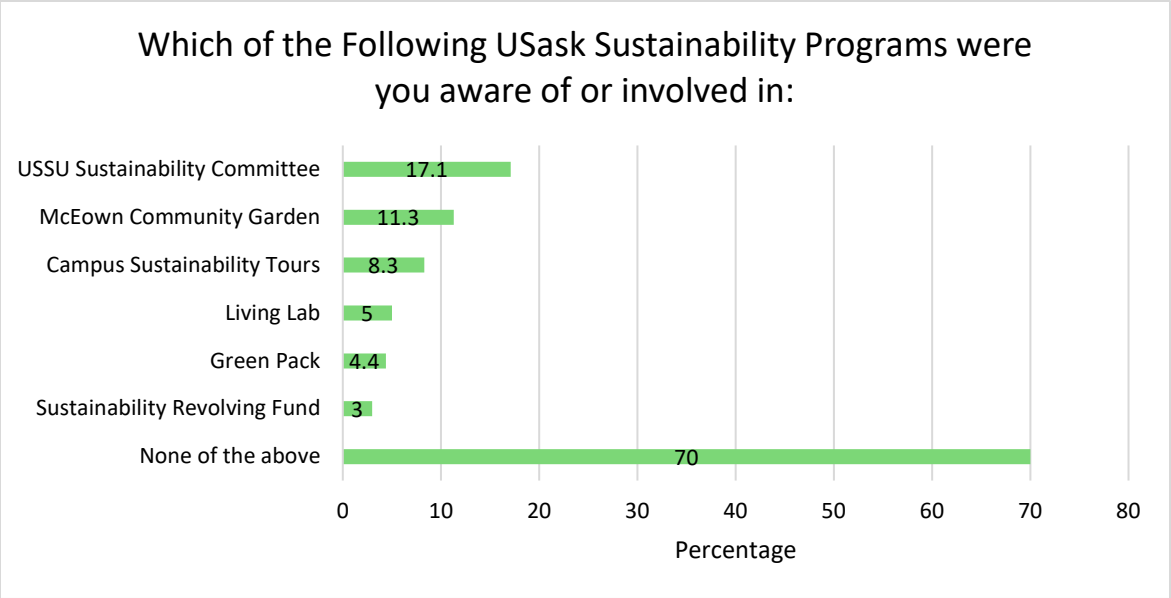

Figure 39. USask Sustainability Programs

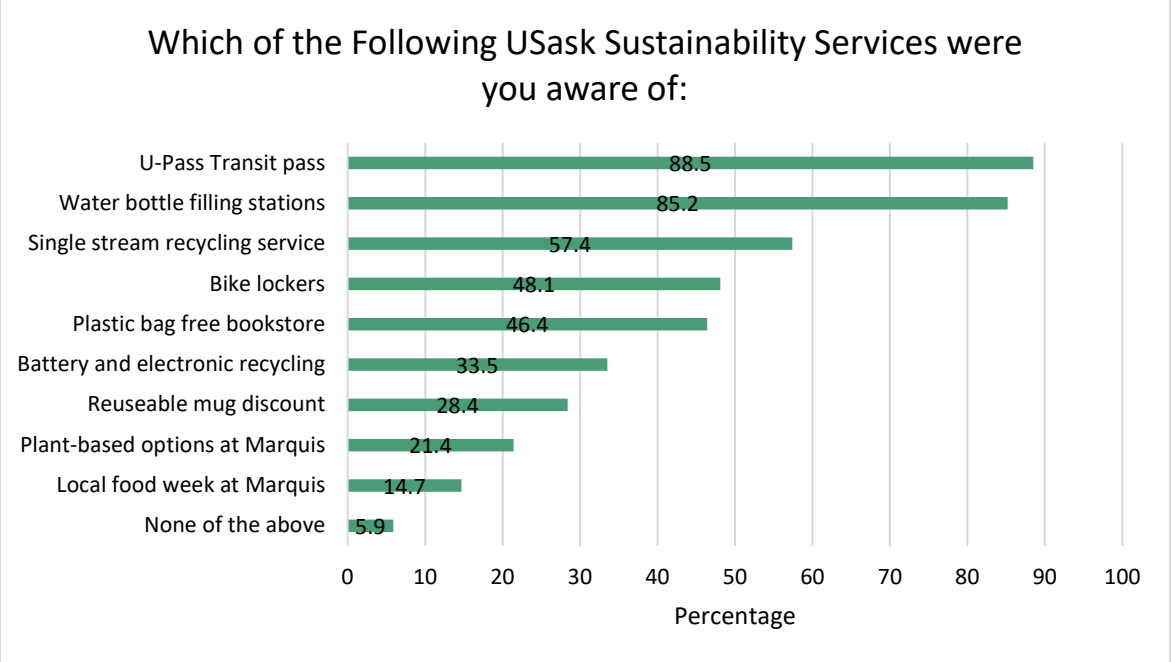

Figure 40. USask Sustainability Services

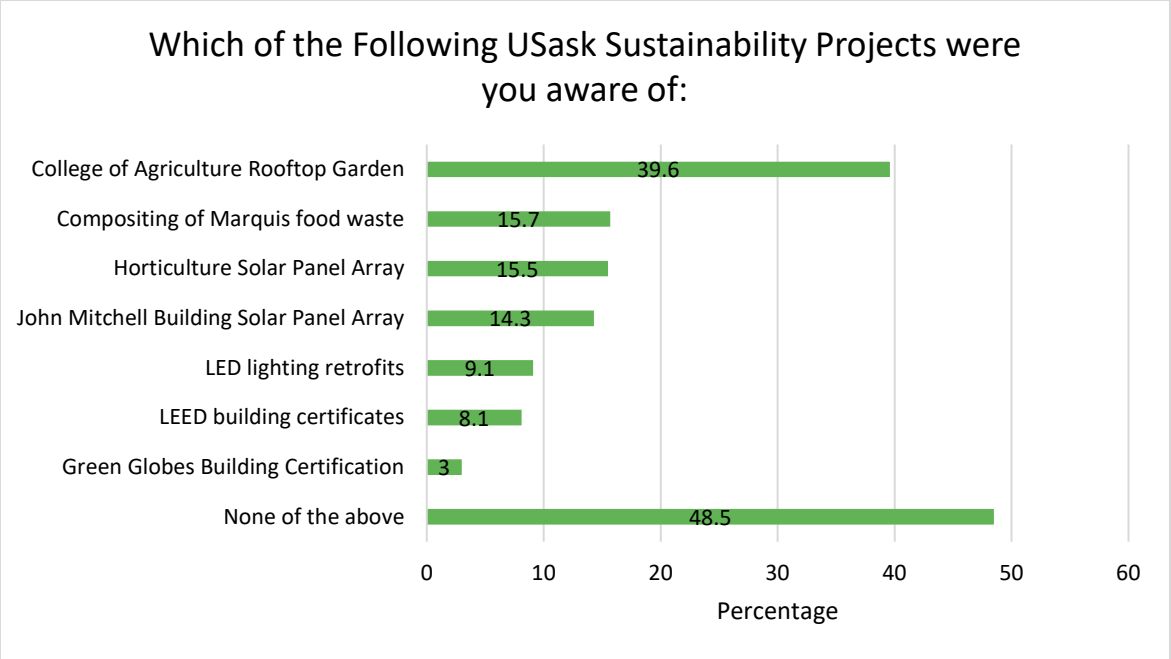

Figure 41. USask Sustainability Projects

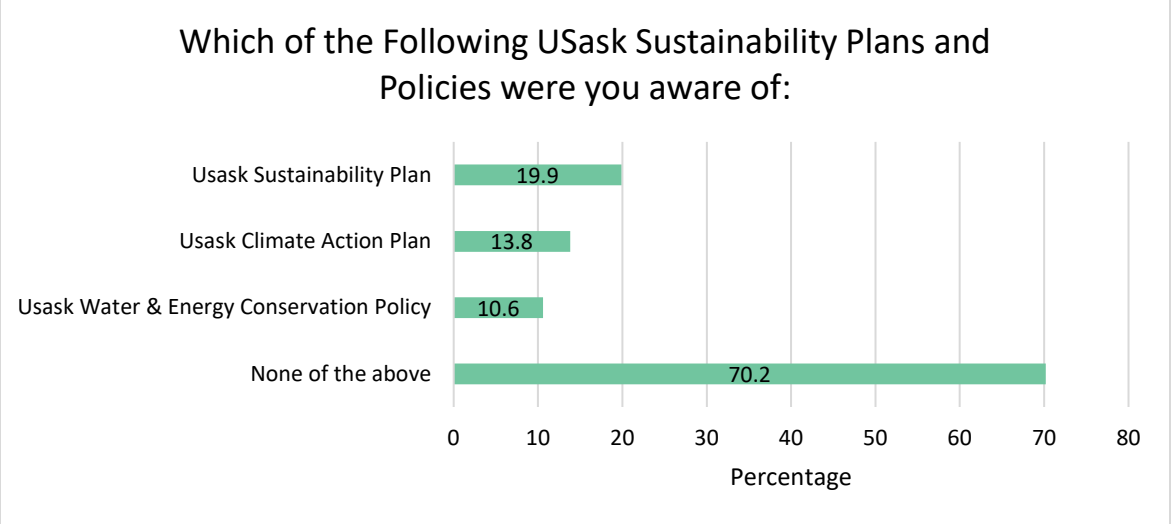

Figure 42. USask Sustainability Plans and Policies

Overall, participants were most aware of the U-Pass transit, water-bottle filling stations, single stream recycling services, bike lockers, plastic free bookstore, rooftop garden, campus farmer's market, battery and electronic recycling, reusable mug discount, and Campus Sustainability Week.

Importance of USask Sustainability

Participants were asked how important it is to them that the University has a strong commitment to environmental sustainability, with most respondents agreeing (43.7%; n = 720) or strongly agreeing (43.1%; n = 710) that it is important. The results are presented in Figure 43.

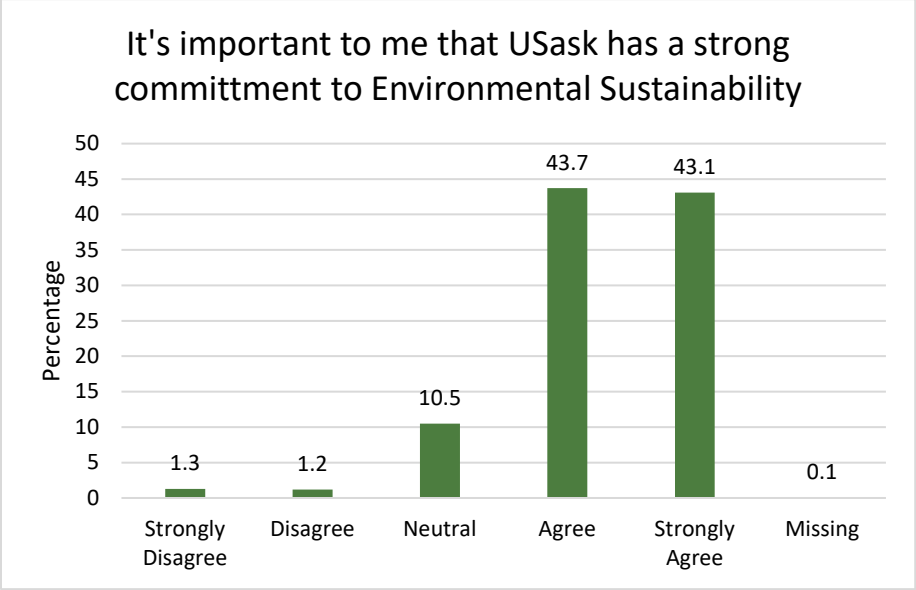

Figure 43. Importance of USask Sustainability

Most participants agreed (62.9%; n = 1,035) or strongly agreed (17.2%; n = 283) that they try to make sustainable choices in the way they live. The results are presented in Figure 44.

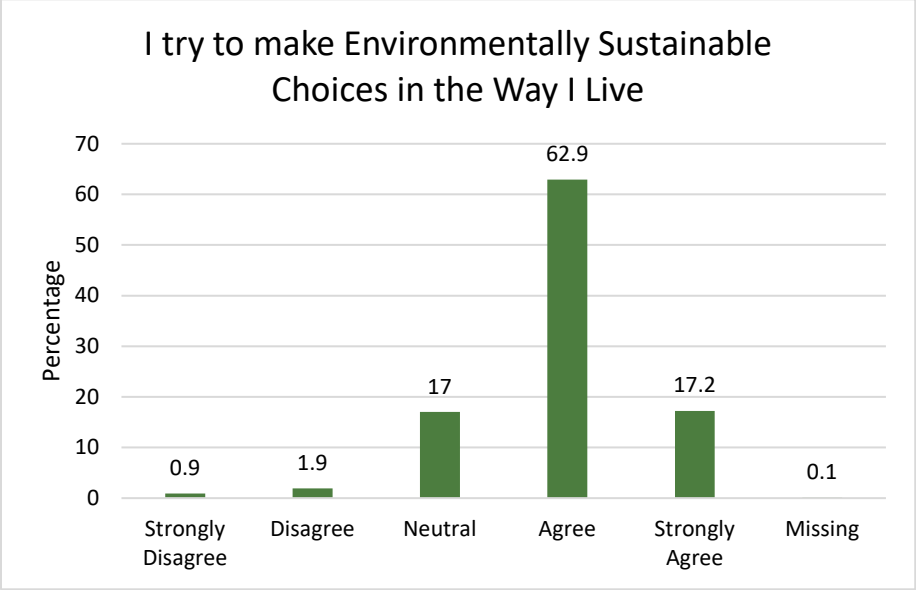

Figure 44. Making Environmentally Sustainable Choices

Only 12% of respondents chose USask for its sustainability reputation, with results presented in Figure 45.

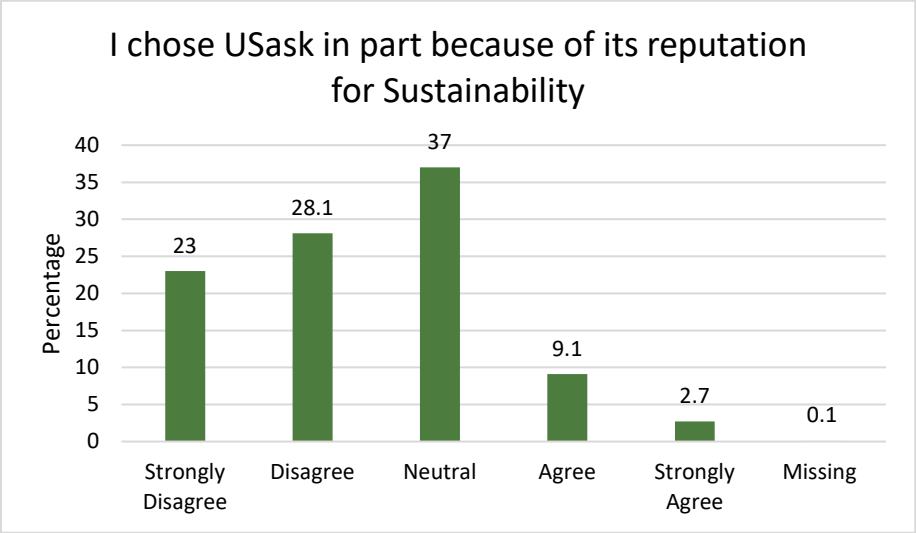

Figure 45. USask Sustainability Reputation

Sustainability Sources

Participants were asked which of the following sources informed their answers for this survey. Most participants stated their sources were from social media (55.6; n = 915), news articles (51.5%; n = 847), or they guessed (45.1%; n = 743). The results are presented in Figure 46.

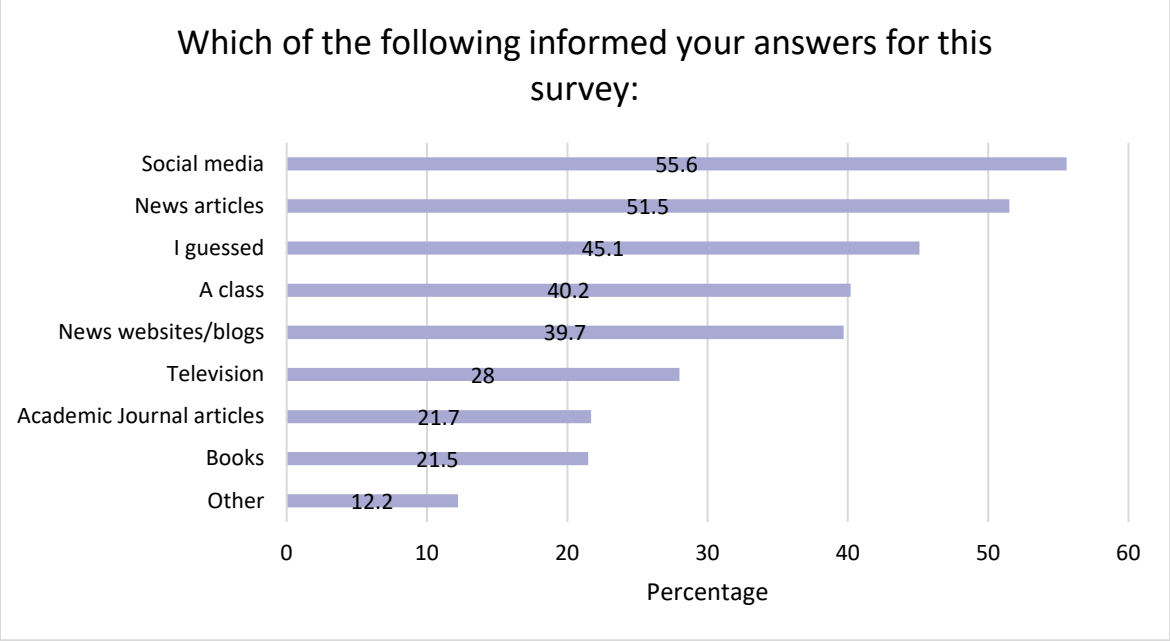

Figure 46. Sources for Survey

Overall, 12% of respondents (n = 199) indicated getting their information from another sources. These sources are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sources of Information

Which of the following informed your answers for this survey:	**Frequency of Response**
Emails/PAWS Announcements	61
Walking around and exploring campus/campus tours/posters	45
Discussions with friends/peers/family	35
General knowledge	27
Internet/YouTube/Podcasts	9
Work meetings	6
Involvement in community	1
Unknown/Cannot remember	15

Conclusion

The purpose of these surveys was to examine knowledge and sustainability practices among students, faculty, and staff at the University of Saskatchewan.

The first survey was administered to second and third-year undergraduate students, as well as staff and faculty on campus, and was comprised of 3,439 respondents. Most respondents stated that environmental issues were very important (40.6%; n = 1,367) or extremely important (26.8%; n = 921) to them, with most respondents living moderately environmentally sustainable (59.3%; n = 2,039) lifestyles. However, nearly 80% stated that they would like to lead very or extremely sustainable lifestyles (n = 2,744). Additionally, 85% of respondents agreed that they try to make sustainable choices and 89% agreed that it is important to them that the University is committed to environmental sustainability. However, only 10% of respondents chose the University of Saskatchewan for its sustainability reputation, with one participant stating that USask does not have a reputation for sustainability.

Approximately 43% of respondents were at least somewhat involved in sustainability events on campus, and 53% were at least somewhat involved in sustainability events in the community. Overall, participants were most aware of the water-bottle filling stations (86%), U-Pass transit (85%), bike lockers (51%), single stream recycling services (51%), rooftop garden (47%), battery and electronic recycling (43%), campus farmer's market (37%), plastic free bookstore (37%), reusable mug discount (35%), and Campus Sustainability Week (31%). Most participants stated their information sources were from social media (52.6; n = 1,808), news articles (47.0%; n = 1,615), or news websites/blogs (43.1%; n = 1,483).

The second survey was administered to first- and fourth-year undergraduate students and was comprised of 1,646 respondents. Nearly half (48%) of respondents in this survey indicated that the Paris Agreement intends to keep global temperature rise well below 2ºC pre-industrial levels (n = 788), while an additional 28% of participants were unsure of the goal of the Paris Agreement (n = 462).

Most respondents stated that environmental issues were very important (40.2%; n = 661) or moderately important (29.7%; n = 489) to them, with most respondents living moderately environmentally sustainable (55.2%; n = 908) lifestyles. However, about 77% stated that they would like to lead very or extremely sustainable lifestyles (n = 1,349). Additionally, 80% of respondents agreed that they try to make sustainable choices and 87% agreed that it is important to them that the University is committed to environmental sustainability. However, only 12% of respondents chose the University of Saskatchewan for its sustainability reputation.

Approximately 36% of respondents were at least somewhat involved in sustainability events on campus, and 47% were at least somewhat involved in sustainability events in the community. Overall, participants were most aware of the U-Pass transit (89%), water-bottle filling stations (85%), single stream recycling services (57%), bike lockers (48%), plastic free bookstore (46%), rooftop garden (40%), campus farmer's market (35%), battery and electronic recycling (34%), reusable mug discount (28%), and Campus Sustainability Week (27%). Most participants stated their sources were from social media (55.6; n = 915), news articles (51.5%; n = 847), or they guessed (45.1%; n = 743).

Appendix A – About the Social Sciences Research Laboratories

The Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) is a unique and leading network of nine research laboratories made possible by the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the University of Saskatchewan, including many of its colleges, schools and administrative units. As a research support unit, the SSRL assists faculty, staff and students undertaking research in the social sciences by providing access to specialized research infrastructure (computers, software and equipment) and research space (specific and multi-purpose), and providing access to research supports in the form of specialists with backgrounds and training in specific social science research methodologies (quantitative research; qualitative research; experimental research; surveys; GIS and cartography; social network analysis; among many others).

Our mission:
To provide shared research infrastructure and technical administrative support to faculty, staff and students at the University of Saskatchewan and beyond, to facilitate the design, delivery and dissemination of cutting-edge social science research.

The SSRL currently consists of the following laboratories:

- *Community-Based Observation Laboratory (COL)*
- *Experimental Decision Laboratory (EDL)*
- *EEG Hyperscanning Laboratory (EHL)*
- *Mixed Methods Research Laboratory (MMRL)*
- *Qualitative Research Laboratory (QRL)*
- *Survey and Group Analysis Laboratory (SGAL)*
- *Social Network Laboratory (SNL)*
- *The Spatial Laboratory (TSL)*
- *Video Therapy Analysis Laboratory (ViTAL)*

The SSRL has three objectives:

- To provide researchers access to shared research infrastructure and technical and administrative support.
- To enable hands-on research training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in the social sciences.
- To enable and support investigator-driven and community-engaged research.

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