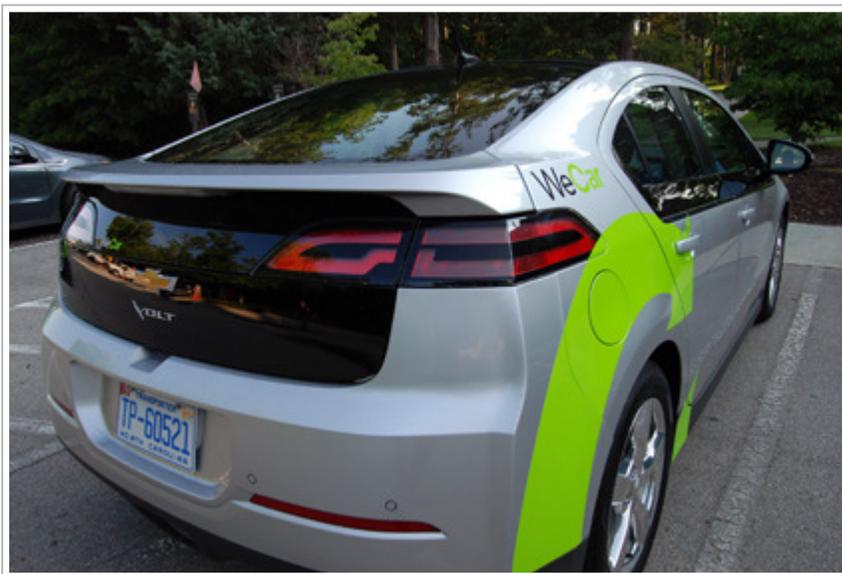


Carbon Emissions Down at Duke

University still has areas of growth for sustainable practices

TOPICS FOR THIS STORY: ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS, CAMPUS NEWS, STAFF, STUDENTS, TRANSPORTATION

January 7, 2013 | By Bryan Roth



This Chevy Volt is one of four of the electric vehicles on campus as part of WeCar, a car-sharing program at Duke. It's one of many ways students and employees can cut down their carbon footprint. Photo by Bryan Roth.

DURHAM, NC - Since establishing a carbon emissions baseline in 2007, Duke has reduced its footprint 16 percent, or roughly 53,200 metric tons of carbon dioxide.

That's the equivalent to the energy used by 2,738 homes a year or the emissions from 11,083 vehicles.

It's a lot, but Duke still has a way to go. A recently released [progress report by Sustainable Duke](#)

shows that the university has made great strides toward achieving its goal of [carbon neutrality by 2024](#). Still, there are areas for growth. Most notably, transportation emissions by students, faculty and staff rose 12 percent since 2007, despite an increase in [alternative commuting options](#).

"We're getting to the point where we need the campus community to really think about how our sustainable efforts impact them," said Tavey Capps, Duke's sustainability director. "As we move closer to our neutrality goal, it takes everyone on campus embracing the idea and taking action to help Duke cut emissions."

START GOING GREEN

Duke community members can read Sustainable Duke's [progress report online](#) and begin making changes in their actions today. Duke offers a variety of [alternative transportation options](#) as well as tips on [water management](#) and [energy conservation](#).

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Capps noted that air travel plays a large part in employee and student transportation emissions, although that can be hard to influence due to meetings and conferences that take place around the country and globe - especially as Duke continues to grow its China

campus. She highlighted technologies like Duke's [Cisco TelePresence conference call units](#) as ways to avoid long-distance travel.

On campus, 74 percent of Duke employees drive to work alone, according to Sustainable Duke's report, with carpooling (10 percent) and the bus (6 percent) as the other most popular choices for employees.

However, [alternative options](#) on campus have grown in recent years across the entire Duke community:

- About 1,300 students and employees are members of [WeCar](#), a car-sharing service on campus that features 16 vehicles, including four electric Chevrolet Volts.
- Slightly more than 7,000 Duke community members have the [GoPass](#), which allows for fare-free use of regional bus lines
- Nearly 700 Duke community members are registered as full-time or part-time [bicycle commuters](#) - a number that almost doubled from 2011 to 2012.

STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES LAY 'SMACKDOWN' ON EMISSIONS

After four full rounds of competition, Duke's sustainability-themed competition has 39 teams vying for the top spot and the wrestling-style championship belt that comes with it.

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"Not being stuck inside a car by yourself makes you appreciate the outdoors and the area where you ride every day," said Casey Collins, an energy engineer with Facilities Management. He's rode his bike to work nearly every day since the summer of 2011. "Most people have ridden bikes since they were children, but don't realize the ease of which you can also do it for utility."

But even as the Duke community focuses on transportation, it's only 29 percent of the university's overall carbon emissions. The

majority - 70 percent - comes from energy use.

Overall, Duke has reduced its energy emissions by 18 percent since 2007. Its cut the use of coal on campus, helping to drastically decrease carbon emissions, and has other projects like a solar-thermal system at the Bryan Center that provides 40 percent of the building's hot water for bathrooms, dining facilities and more.

Despite increases in campus square footage since 2007, Duke has also reduced potable water use by 25 percent and identified ways to save 8 million gallons of water in six university buildings.

Capps said that in addition to changing travel, students, faculty and staff can make a big difference with water use and recycling practices.

"There's only so much Duke can do operationally before it comes to what actions individuals can take," Capps said. "To become carbon neutral, it's going to take everyone on campus thinking about their own carbon footprint and the choices they make to get us to our goal."

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