

# How can Faculty Senate help sustainability and climate action at WMU?

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Report to Faculty Senate  
April 30, 2026

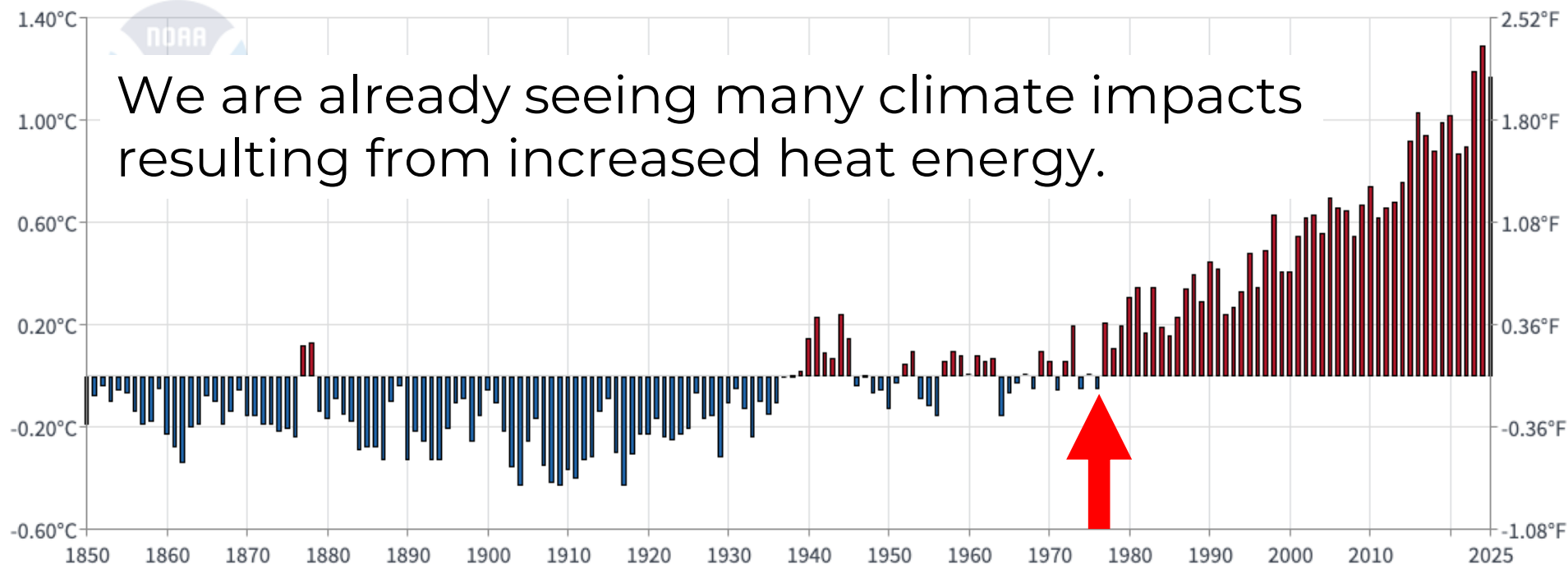
**REMIN**



# The world is facing a climate crisis. A threat multiplier.

## Global Land and Ocean Average Temperature Anomaly

January-December



We are already seeing many climate impacts resulting from increased heat energy.



# Sustainability is one of five core values in our strategic plan.



**Strategic Plan**  
2022-32

## Four Objectives of the Sustainability Goal:

1. Build a campus-wide culture of prioritizing sustainability that is consistently communicated by university leadership.
2. Every member of our WMU community develops **climate change literacy** understanding systemic sustainability challenges, inequities and practices via curricular, co-curricular and employment experiences.
3. **Achieve carbon neutrality** in alignment with the timeline set forth by the state of Michigan.
4. Invest in continuous improvement of facilities, infrastructure and practices to achieve a more sustainable campus and healthier community.

# Faculty Senate Climate Change Resolution read into the minutes on Feb. 1, 2024

**WHEREAS**, universities have a special moral imperative to ensure a sustainable future for their students and to serve as examples to their communities in addressing climate change, which is increasingly recognized as the greatest threat to human civilization and life on earth; and

**WHEREAS**, universities have an increasing responsibility to educate students about the urgency of the climate crisis, the implications of rapid global heating for the natural world and for human societies and health, and the ethical and justice issues climate change raises; and

**WHEREAS**, universities have an obligation to educate students about the social, economic, and political strategies that must be undertaken to avoid global temperatures exceeding 2°C above the preindustrial average, and the ways students can take climate action now and, in the future, including in their chosen careers; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Executive Board of the Faculty Senate of Western Michigan University on this first day of February 2024, toward the enhancement and betterment of our mission, Western Michigan University should:

- *immediately implement the commitment in the 2022-32 WMU Strategic Plan to “integrate sustainability” into all aspects of university functions and invest in this commitment at the highest level of institutional decision-making”*
- *support and encourage climate change education in all colleges across WMU*
- *reduce institutional greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality as quickly as possible, following a timeline that is in accordance with all aspects of the State of Michigan Healthy Climate Plan*
- *recognize and respond to the repeated call from students to achieve carbon neutrality at WMU by 2030*
- *analyze and take relevant steps to adapt to present and potential climate change impacts, including protecting students, staff, and infrastructure, and supporting and collaborating with the local community and other organizations who have similar goals*



# Decisions we make today will have long-term consequences.

Master Plan: “net zero emission” new buildings/renovations would cut emissions in half.

Three recent construction projects not designed “net zero”:

- 1) Student Center
- 2) Gold Oaks dorm
- 3) Michigan Geological Repository

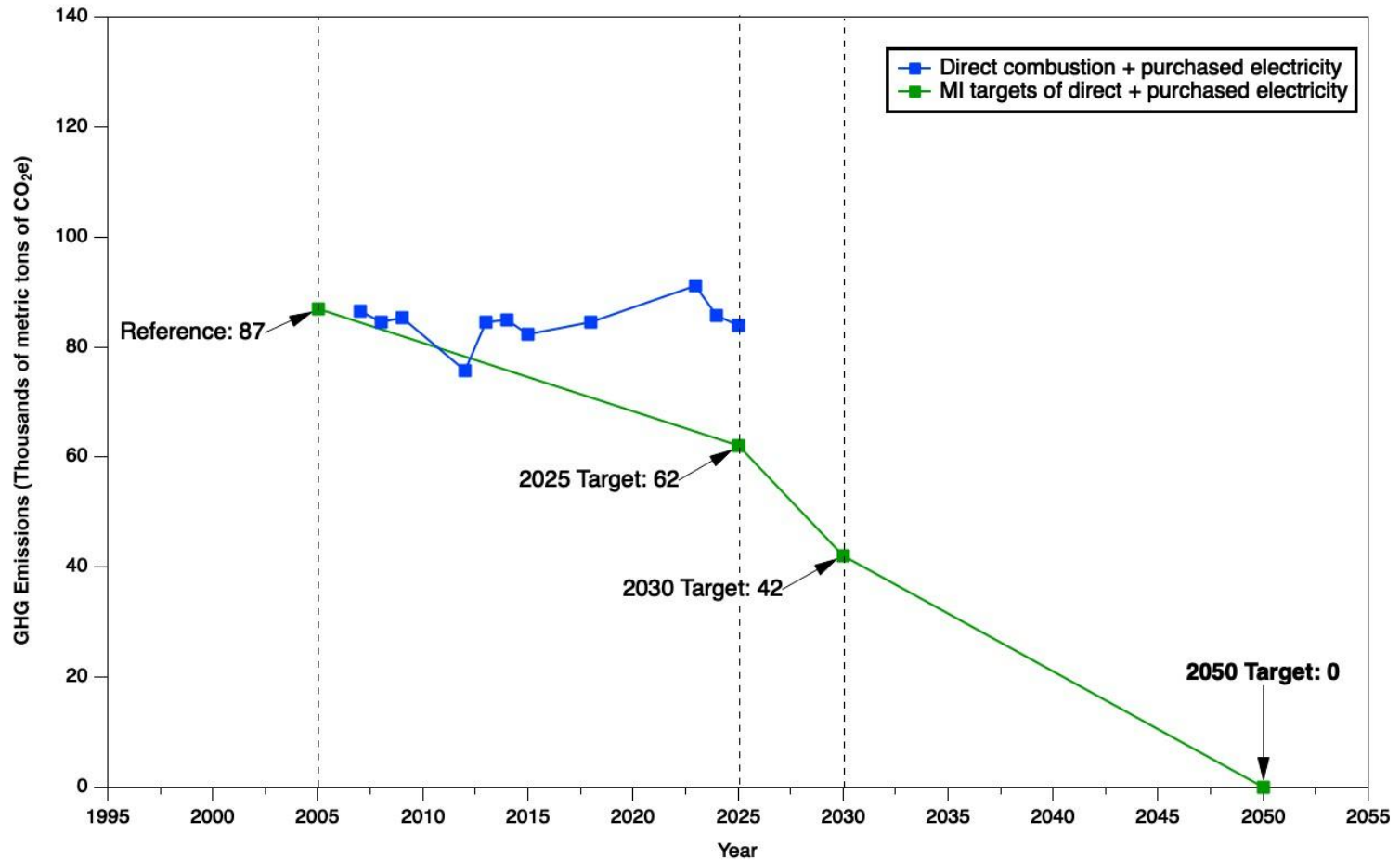
These buildings will operate for decades!



# REPORT

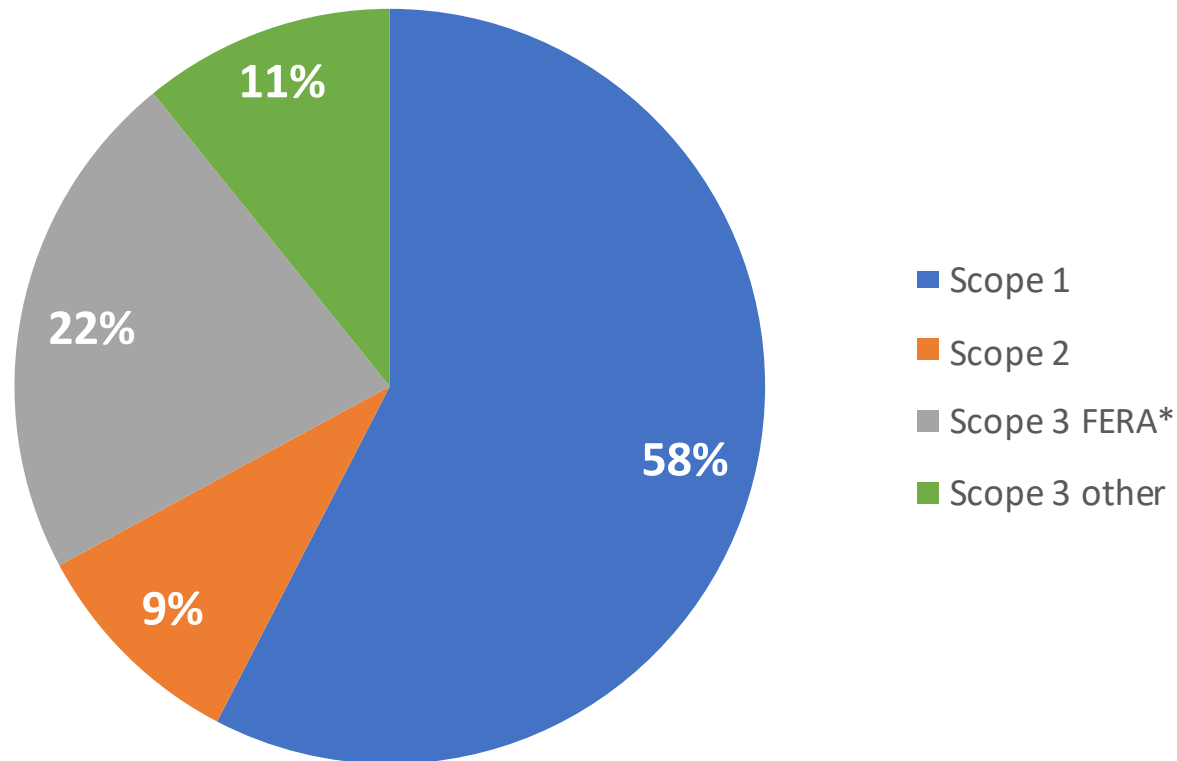


# We are falling short on our targets set out by the MI plan.



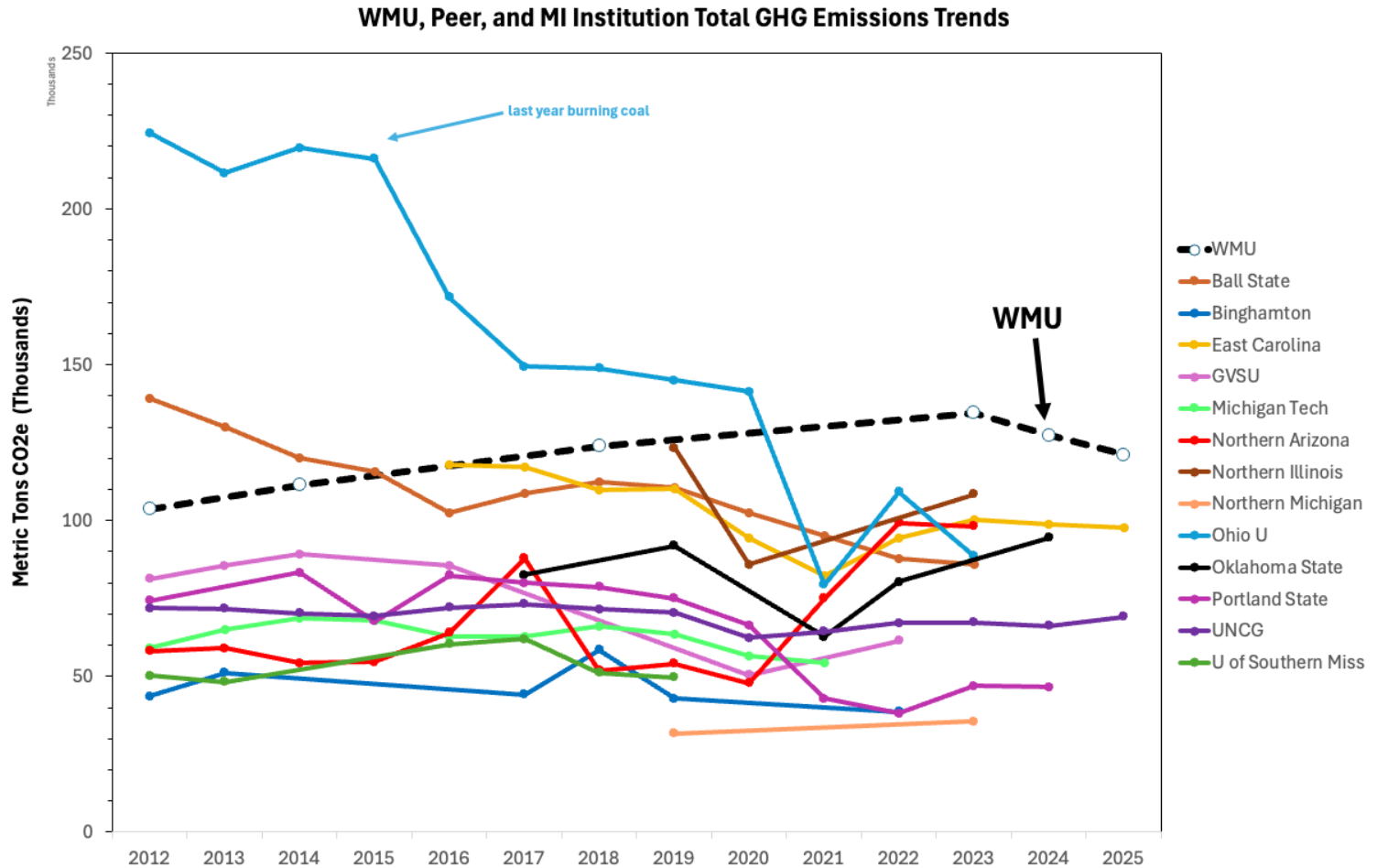
# Direct combustion is responsible for 58% of emissions at WMU.

Overall Emissions by Scope, FY 24



\*Fuel and Energy Related Activities “upstream” emissions

# Peers are doing better.



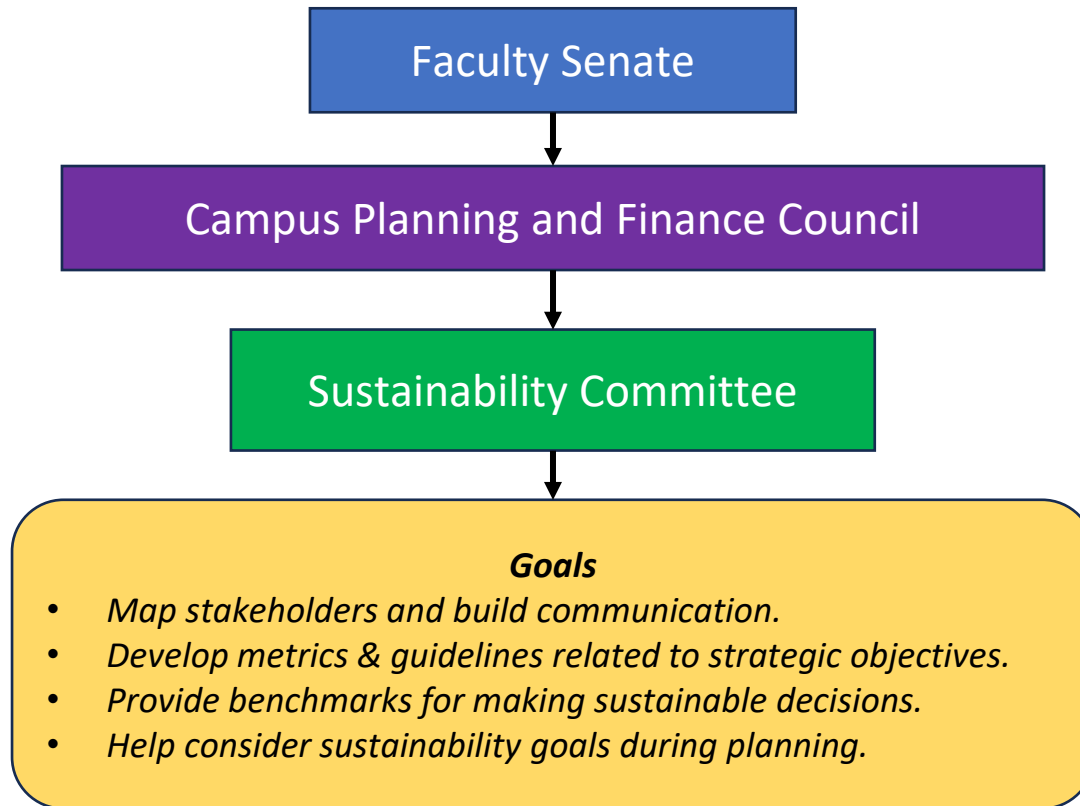
# There ARE important things happening.

- Looking for expert consultants to build roadmap
- Pro-bono decarbonization consultant award
- Climate literacy assessment
- Green revolving fund
- STARS effort (1<sup>st</sup> since 2018)
- Regular GHG inventories
- Climate migrant symposium
- Student engagement

**IMPLORE**

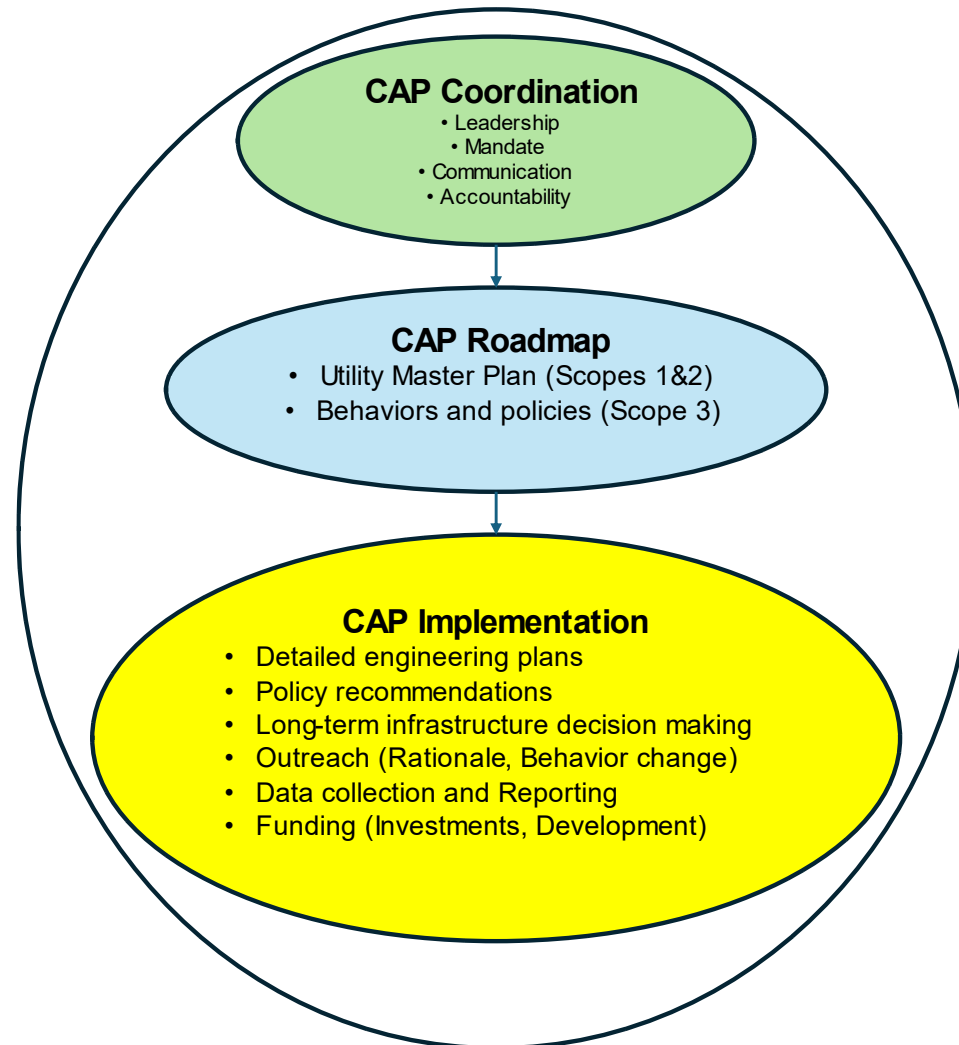


# Faculty Senate now has standing committee on sustainability



# We need a roadmap to carbon neutrality.

## WMU Climate Action Plan



# How can Faculty Senate help?

- Support formal assignment of leadership for climate work (VP level?).
- Share today's information with your colleagues.
- Revisit and strengthen climate change resolution.
- Ask for more frequent and detailed progress reports.
- Assure guidelines are followed by all units.
- Champion the STARS & climate literacy efforts.
- Join the Sustainability Committee!
- ???

# Thanks!

