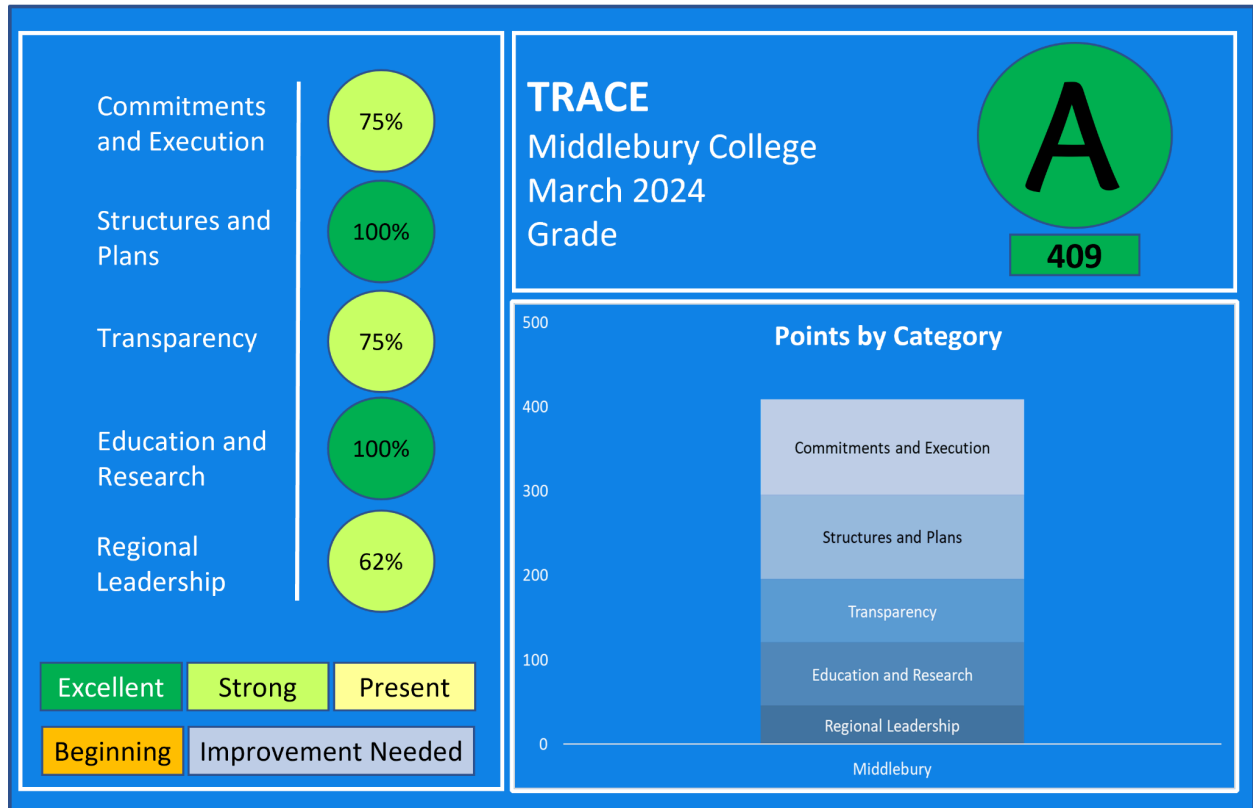




Middlebury College
TRACE REPORT
March 2024



Executive Summary

Middlebury College is a private liberal arts college located in Middlebury, Vermont. Middlebury places an emphasis on sustainability and responding to the threats of climate change, and therefore has invested significant time and resources in becoming a leader in environmental sustainability within higher education. While Middlebury may present an example of impactful climate policy for colleges and universities, it is also important to critically analyze Middlebury’s progress to recognize areas still requiring improvement. The TRACE scoring of Middlebury suggests a host of admirable work has been done, notably in its structures and plans and education, but also notes that work can be done to strengthen its commitments, transparency, and especially its regional leadership.



Highs

- Middlebury's recent history has been marked by a deep desire for and resounding success in its GHG emissions reductions goals. In 2007 it adopted a resolution for carbon neutrality, which was achieved in 2016.
- Carbon neutrality was achieved through a number of efficiency measures, but most prominently through the construction of a biomass gasification plant that burns local wood chips for heating and cooling needs as well as through sourcing renewable electricity and carbon offsets.
- A successful eight-year student lead divestment campaign was successful in 2019 when the Board of Trustees voted to divest from direct fossil fuel investments by 2034.
- A variety of well developed sustainability student groups exist at Middlebury, and there is dialogue between these groups and school administration.
- Sustainability is well integrated into the student curriculum, with a prominent environmental studies department as well as integration into other departments such as economics and history. This is one of four pillars of Middlebury's most recent climate policy, entitled Energy2028.

About TRACE

Given the importance of higher educational institutions to the southwestern Pennsylvania region, we have created the *350 Pittsburgh Three Rivers Assessment of Carbon Emissions (TRACE)*. This scorecard is intended to be a simple and understandable assessment of each institution's progress toward carbon neutrality. The scorecard assesses the school's results in five categories. These five categories are weighted based on the degree of impact they have on operational, financial, and educational results. For more information on the scorecard, see <https://world.350.org/pittsburgh/TRACE/>

Areas for Improvement

- With these successes in mind, there is much room for improvement in Middlebury's transparency. While releases documenting successes do exist, the public is updated on an inconsistent basis, with at times limited details and therefore a lack of transparency.
- There is also room for Middlebury to improve as a regional leader. While there are limited higher education institutions in the surrounding area, Middlebury has the potential to support small liberal arts schools throughout New England in their sustainability efforts as a leader in the field. While there is language surrounding Middlebury's desire to do this in relevant press releases and other documentation, direct public examples of this are lacking.
- Finally, the developers of this scorecard sought the input of and collaboration with the Middlebury administration. Middlebury, however, was unable to partake in the



development of a final score. Months of email correspondence were consistently met with delayed response and a lack of willingness to offer feedback. This contributes to the already observed theme of Middlebury's lack of leadership and transparency.

Process

Because of the high priority that TRACE places on transparency, the scoring process starts with a survey of publicly available information provided by the University and other public data sources. This approach helps assure that the general public and other institutions can see the individual school's approach and progress. The public data search is supplemented with an opportunity for the school to respond to the initial scoring by providing additional information not found in the public data search. The final score is adjusted with the additional information and the school is encouraged to make this information available to the public.

For the 2023 Middlebury scoring, the process was led by a Middlebury College student with guidance from 350 Pittsburgh. Final scoring was jointly established by the Middlebury student and 350 Pittsburgh.

Acknowledgements

We would like to recognize the work of Duncan Kreps, a January 2023 350 Pittsburgh Research Intern and Middlebury College student, who completed the scoring effort and supported the development of the TRACE scorecard. We'd also like to recognize Jack Byrne, Middlebury Dean of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability, and all involved in environmental sustainability at Middlebury for their dedication to this work.

Disclaimer

This assessment has been conducted by 350 Pittsburgh, the local affiliate of 350.org. 350 Pittsburgh is solely responsible for the result.



Score Breakdown

Middlebury received a final score of 409 for an “A” Grade. **Because the 350 Pittsburgh Quality Standards have not yet been finalized, full points were awarded for that attribute.**

Commitments, Goals, and Objectives	Score	Category Score
Has a target date commitment and interim milestones to carbon neutrality for all 3 GHG Protocol scopes	100%	113
Has published target dates for divestment from fossil fuel interests	25%	
Is making visible documented progress toward stated goals	100%	
Institution Structure and Plan		
Has a formal sustainability office/initiative/director	100%	100
Has a formal/public climate action plan with implementation underway	100%	
The plan meets 350 Pittsburgh Quality Standards	100%	
Transparency		
The institution is reporting at least annually via public documentation and presentation	75%	75
Education and Research		
Curriculum	100%	75
Students	100%	
Research (where applicable)	N/A	
Regional Leadership		
Publicly visible engagement and advocacy with regional higher education and non-education institutions	60%	46
Peer Institutions Leadership	75%	
Local Community	50%	



Public Source Material

Commitments, Goals and Objectives	Carbon Neutrality 2016 Divesting From Fossil Fuels Sustainability in Action
Institution Structures and Plan	Dean of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Energy 2028
Transparency	Sustainability in Action
Education and Research	Educational Opportunities
Regional Leadership	AASHE Gold

About 350 Pittsburgh

350 Pittsburgh was founded in Spring 2015 by local environmental activists to build on the momentum of the 2014 People’s Climate March and form a Pittsburgh group dedicated to climate issues. We envision a future where policies and actions at the local, state, federal and international levels will have ensured a stable climate that provides an opportunity for all people to achieve health, prosperity and fulfillment.

Through public education and collaborative civic activism, 350 Pittsburgh:

- Promotes understanding of the devastating impact of climate change on the urban and rural communities in our region and elsewhere.
- Demands that the region’s decision makers take all possible steps to help diminish climate disruption by ending our reliance on fossil fuels and investing in good jobs in a renewable energy economy.
- Encourages people in our region to become actively involved in the urgent struggle to reverse catastrophic climate change.

TRACE information, including a white paper, can be found on the 350 Pittsburgh [website](#). To contact 350 Pittsburgh, email 350pittsburgh@gmail.com.