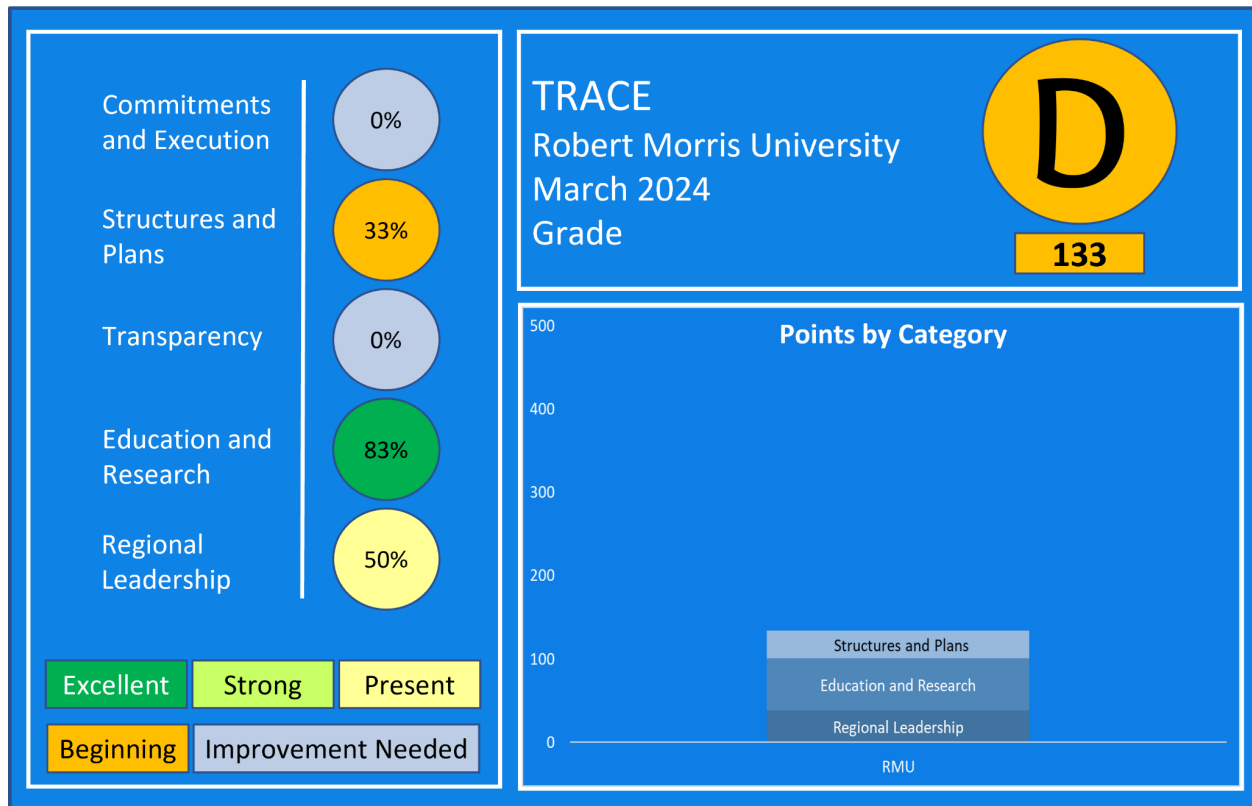




Robert Morris University
TRACE REPORT
March 2024



Executive Summary

Robert Morris University (RMU) is a private, four-year, suburban university located in Moon Township, Pennsylvania. RMU has historically set their sights on climate sustainability, but disbanded their sustainability team in 2011 for unknown reasons; since then, little work has been done to reduce carbon emissions. When scored for TRACE, RMU demonstrates few current climate initiatives, but a strong community education foundation from which an even stronger environmental entity may be developed with climate-conscious decision making. RMU is representative of higher education institutions at the beginning of their journey to climate sustainability; improvements made to RMU as a result of this report will act as a demonstration to other institutions that carbon neutrality among higher education is a realistic and worthwhile effort.



Highs

- RMU engages frequently and effectively with local communities. The university has several programs in effect, including collaborations with local high schools and engagement with local cultural programs. While RMU currently does not have any formal interaction with environmentally-oriented groups or events, their historical interactions with the community can easily be used as a foundation for building productive relationships with such groups.
- An Environmental Science major program exists at RMU, with a variety of foundational and specialist courses, including hands-on Field Methods courses.
- One climate-oriented student organization exists on campus: Students for Environmental Awareness, which meets approximately once per month. While communication between this organization and the administration is not direct, there do exist opportunities for the organization to interact with administrators.
- RMU is a member of the Higher Education Climate Consortium (HECC), of which Dr. Marcel Minutolo, the informal director of sustainability at RMU, is active co-chair.
- According to Dr. Minutolo, the current President of RMU, Dr. Michelle Patrick, intends to incorporate sustainability into RMU's 2024 strategic plan. Whether this will happen remains to be seen, as RMU has not publicly published any statement on the matter.

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

- Despite the successes above, RMU currently does not have any stated plan to work toward emissions reduction. They also do not have any stated goals to create or implement such a plan moving forward.
- Additionally, RMU currently has no formal sustainability office. Multiple staff members have indicated the previous existence of a Sustainability Council in 2011 and its subsequent dissolution. Dr. Minutolo, despite being the HECC representative for RMU



and supplying information for this report, is not formally named as director of sustainability.

- Transparency is another issue for RMU. There was no publicly stated intention to improve sustainability at RMU despite internal mentions. RMU does not provide updates on administrative plans to students, and its activities with HECC were also obscured from public view.
- Finally, while RMU is a member of HECC, the University is not currently a member of AASHE and has indicated no plans to join AASHE or otherwise monitor their carbon footprint.

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 Robert Morris University scoring, the process was led by a Robert Morris University student with guidance from 350 Pittsburgh. Input from the school was provided by Dr. Marcel Minutolo. Final scoring was jointly established by the RMU student and 350 Pittsburgh.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Marcel Minutolo, who provided information to assist with the scoring process.

Disclaimer

This assessment has been conducted by 350 Pittsburgh, the local affiliate of 350.org. 350 Pittsburgh is solely responsible for the result. RMU faculty provided information during the scoring process.



Score Breakdown

RMU received a final score of 133 for a “D” 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	0%	0
Has published target dates for divestment from fossil fuel interests	0%	
Is making visible documented progress toward stated goals	0%	
Institution Structures and Plan	Score	
Has a formal sustainability office/initiative/director	0%	33
Has a formal/public climate action plan with implementation underway	0%	
The plan meets 350 Pittsburgh Quality Standards	100%	
Transparency	Score	
The institution is reporting at least annually via public documentation and presentation	0%	0
Education and Research	Score	
Curriculum	100%	63
Students	50%	
Research (where applicable)	100%	
Regional Leadership	Score	
Publicly visible engagement and advocacy with regional higher education and non-education institutions	50%	38
Peer Institutions Leadership	100%	
Local Community	0%	



Public Source Material

Commitments, Goals and Objectives	No source material found
Institution Structures and Plan	Dr. Marcel Minutolo
Transparency	No source material found
Education and Research	Environmental Science Degree Program Students for Environmental Awareness
Regional Leadership	HECC

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.