

UMD News

University of Minnesota Duluth

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UMD and Lake Superior College Awarded Solar Assistance Grants

Campuses Seek Answers on What Part Solar Will Play in Energy Future

Duluth, MN – The University of Minnesota Duluth and Lake Superior College (LSC) were each recently awarded technical assistance grants to learn more about the feasibility and economic assessment of installing solar photovoltaics on their campuses. Photovoltaic systems generate electricity by converting sunlight into direct current electricity.

In support of the [U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot initiative](#), the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) offered no-cost technical assistance to universities seeking to “go solar.” The program was designed to increase deployment of mid-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) systems at universities, engage stakeholders to develop deployment solutions, and empower decision makers.

UMD and LSC will receive initial assessment of solar PV feasibility at their campuses, including cost-effectiveness of solar PV installations, recommended system sizes, estimated capital costs to implement solar, and estimated life cycle cost savings. The results will help the campuses plan for future ways to be cost-effective and reduce carbon emissions.

“We saw this as an opportunity to not only gain answers around the technical feasibility and economic considerations of solar investment opportunities, but also as a way to engage students and provide learning opportunities,” said Mindy Granley, Sustainability Director at UMD. “This semester, students in engineering courses are working on technical solar questions, students are involved in mapping solar potential, and six students formed a Solar University Network (SUN) Delegation team at UMD, to promote the use of solar on campus.”

“The NREL solar assistance opportunity came along at exactly the right time,” said Kristi Heintz, Sustainability Coordinator at LSC. “As LSC discusses its overall strategic plan for the coming years, we can concurrently develop our strategic energy future.”

In the first round of assistance to universities, NREL chose to provide solar screenings to the following institutions:

- Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Lake Superior College
- Luther College
- University of Minnesota Duluth

- Washington and Lee University
- Milwaukee Area Technical College
- Northern Arizona University
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

More information on UMD Sustainability: www.d.umn.edu/sustain

More information on LSC Sustainability: www.lsc.edu/about-lsc/sustainability/

Our mission: The University of Minnesota Duluth integrates liberal education, research, creative activity, and public engagement and prepares students to thrive as lifelong learners and globally engaged citizens.

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