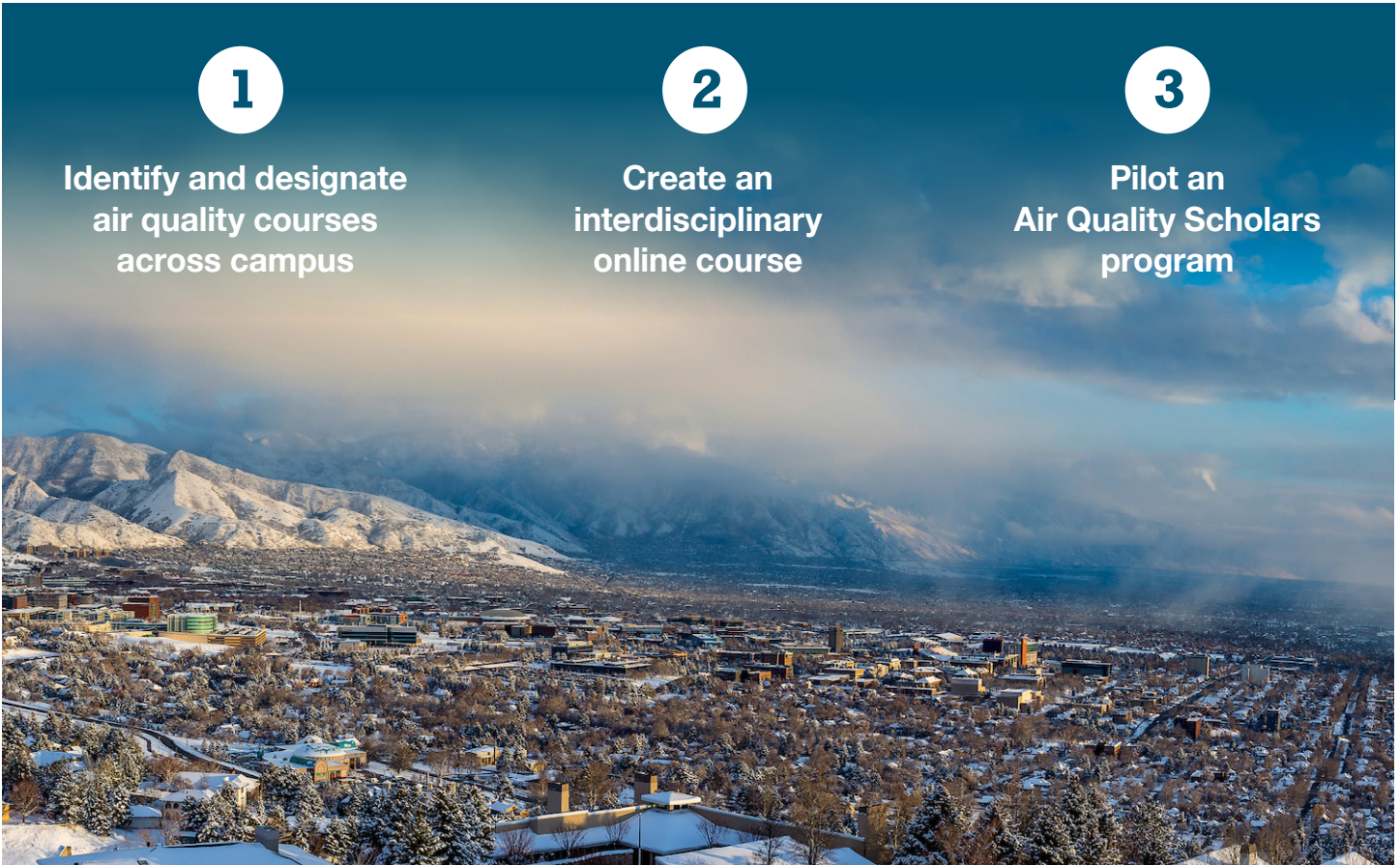


PERFORMANCE REPORT

Enhancing Access to Air Quality Education

In conjunction with the October 2019 symposium, *The Air We Breathe: A Multidisciplinary Approach on Air Quality*, the Sustainability Education team advanced several exciting initiatives to enhance access to interdisciplinary air quality education at the University of Utah. The \$9,000 provided by the Senior Vice President’s Office allowed us to:



1

Identify and designate air quality courses across campus

2

Create an interdisciplinary online course

3

Pilot an Air Quality Scholars program

Identify and designate air quality courses across campus

1 The Sustainability Education team identified 42 courses from 12 departments across the University of Utah that include air quality content. These courses will be incorporated into an air quality track within an undergraduate sustainability certificate to be launched in 2021. The identification of these courses also increased offerings for the existing graduate sustainability certificate. Courses can also receive sustainability designations to help students locate them more easily.

2

Create an interdisciplinary online course

Collecting interdisciplinary video and content from the symposium, the Sustainability Education team developed a new online course that will allow students to explore and integrate a variety of approaches to air quality. Students will learn about local air quality initiatives through the lenses of geography, policy, and health, as well as explore air quality as an environmental justice issue.



President Ruth Watkins speaks at The Air We Breathe: A Multidisciplinary Approach on Air Quality symposium on Oct. 3, 2019.

3 Pilot an Air Quality Scholars program

The Education team piloted an Air Quality Scholars program to engage an interdisciplinary group of students to address local air quality problems. Three graduate and five undergraduate students from across campus received scholarships and participated in a year-long cohort led by instructors Emerson Andrews and Meghan Dovick. In addition to attending the air quality symposium, students developed the following projects:

ANALYZING RISK PERCEPTIONS

The Air Quality Data Analysis Project with Tabitha Benney, assistant professor in Political Science, investigated Utahns understanding of health risks associated with long-term and short-term air quality issues. Three Air Quality Scholars performed data analysis on 1,160 responses to the Utah Air Quality Risk and Behavioral Action Survey to determine the impacts of socioeconomic status on the perception of the health risks of air pollution. Scholars wrote a joint research paper on their data analysis

and findings, which they will submit to an undergraduate journal.

ENGAGING LEARNERS

In collaboration with the Utah Museum of Fine Art’s planned “Air” exhibition, organized by senior curator Whitney Tassie, Air Quality Scholars developed three apps that will engage the community in healthy behaviors. The first app is a survey about personal habits and air quality, and the second app is a pledge to adapt personal habits to improve air quality. The final app examines the correlation between air quality and school absences. These apps will be on hand at the exhibit and the Marriott Library.

ALERTING THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

A new email delivery system will inform students, faculty, and staff about air quality status and how to respond. The Sustainability Office and the Global Change & Sustainability Center plan to host a webpage where people can sign up for the emails. Full implementation of the system is scheduled for fall 2020.

Student response to air quality symposium

Undergraduate students in an environmental justice course who participated in the air quality symposium said:

“When we are learning a topic so relevant to what is going on around our daily lives, it is really interesting to see the value that our professors have outside of class, [and] the ways in which we are given the opportunities to work with knowledgeable professionals on a daily basis as part of our education...and how these things all really intersect.”

“I found it very effective to have professors from different disciplines weighing in on the issue (of air quality) and how they are studying it. Hearing how each of them is researching and approaching air quality offered different areas of research.”

“I found that hearing from professors across different disciplines about their unique perspectives on the air quality issue was helpful in creating a more holistic view of the problem.”

Undergraduate environmental justice students participated in a community-engaged research project. Read more at attheu.utah.edu/facultystaff/taking-on-environmental-injustice