

# Sustainability Education at the University of Washington

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## Background

- Environment is facing consequences of human actions, and the new generations are being looked upon to find solutions.
- However, we do not have the proper education and tools solve these complex issues, and start developing a more sustainable way of living.
- Therefore, we must understand what sustainability education we *do* have, and fill in the gaps.

## Question:

What does sustainability education look like at the UW? Furthermore, how can we increase sustainability literacy within the University?

## Methods

- Internship with UW Sustainability Office
- Compiled list of Sustainability-Focused and Sustainability-Inclusive Courses (see fig. 1)
- Independently researched sustainability education

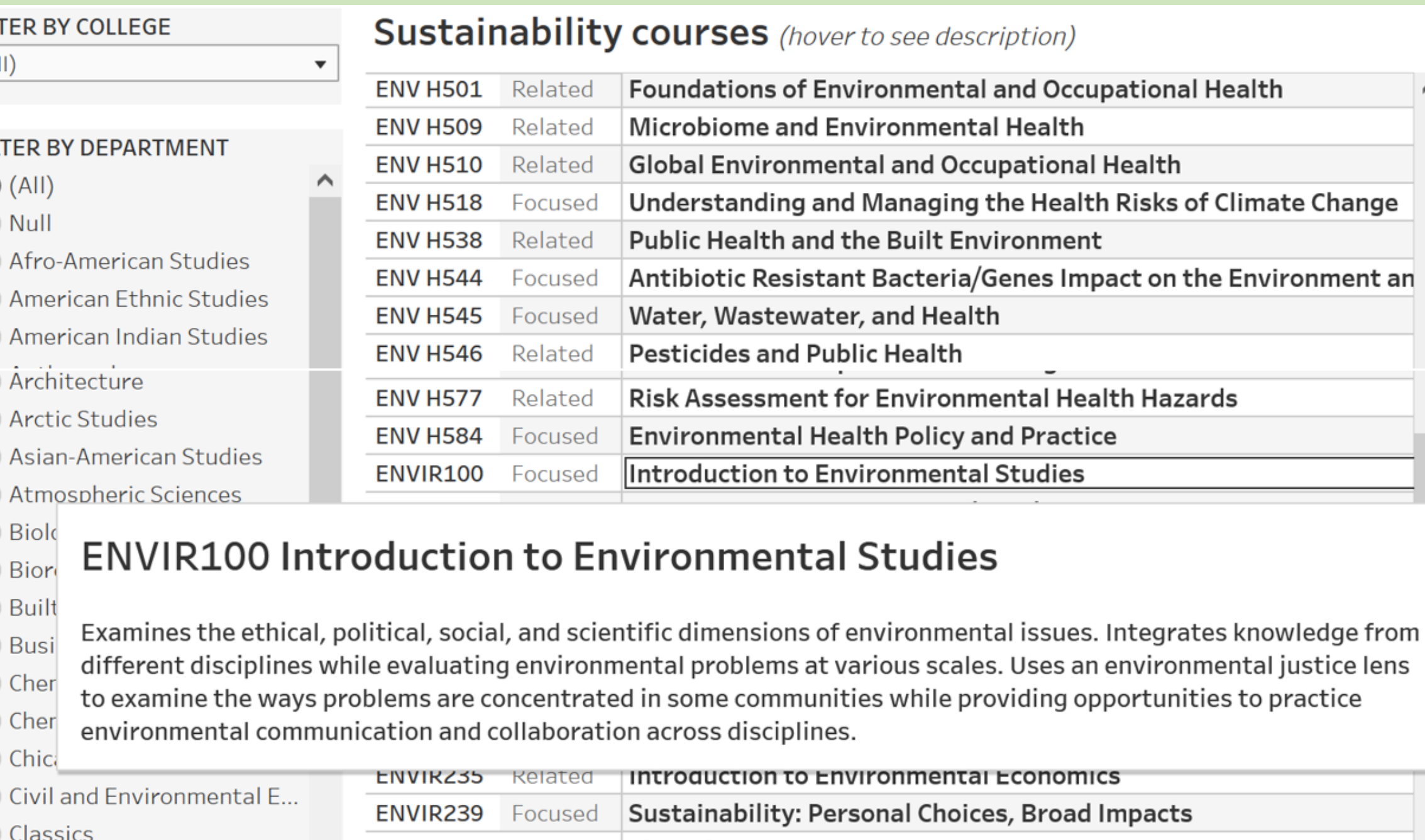
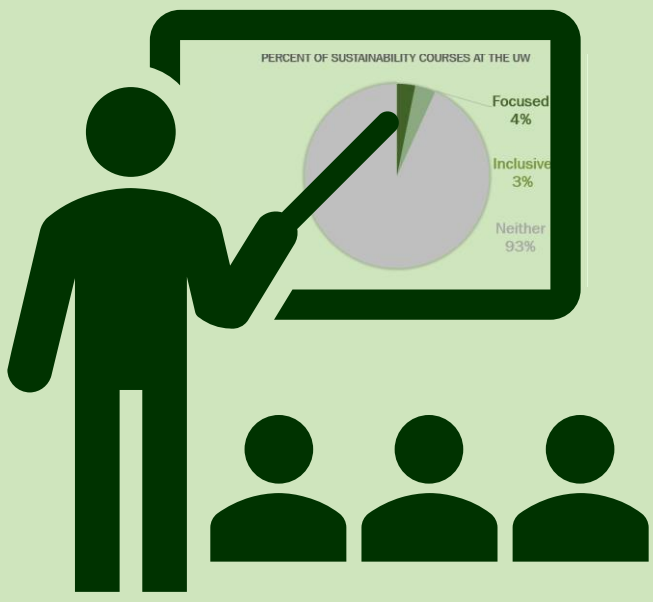


Figure 1: Example of a display for UW students to search for/view sustainability related courses.

## Results

### Sustainability in courses

- Out of 6953 courses
- 252 Sustainability Focused
  - 223 Sustainability Inclusive



Wide range of departments (see Fig. 2)  
Only 7% of classes at the UW are sustainability inclusive or focused (see Fig. 3)

### Barriers to Sustainability Education

- Credit-intensive majors
- Under-prepared teachers and professors

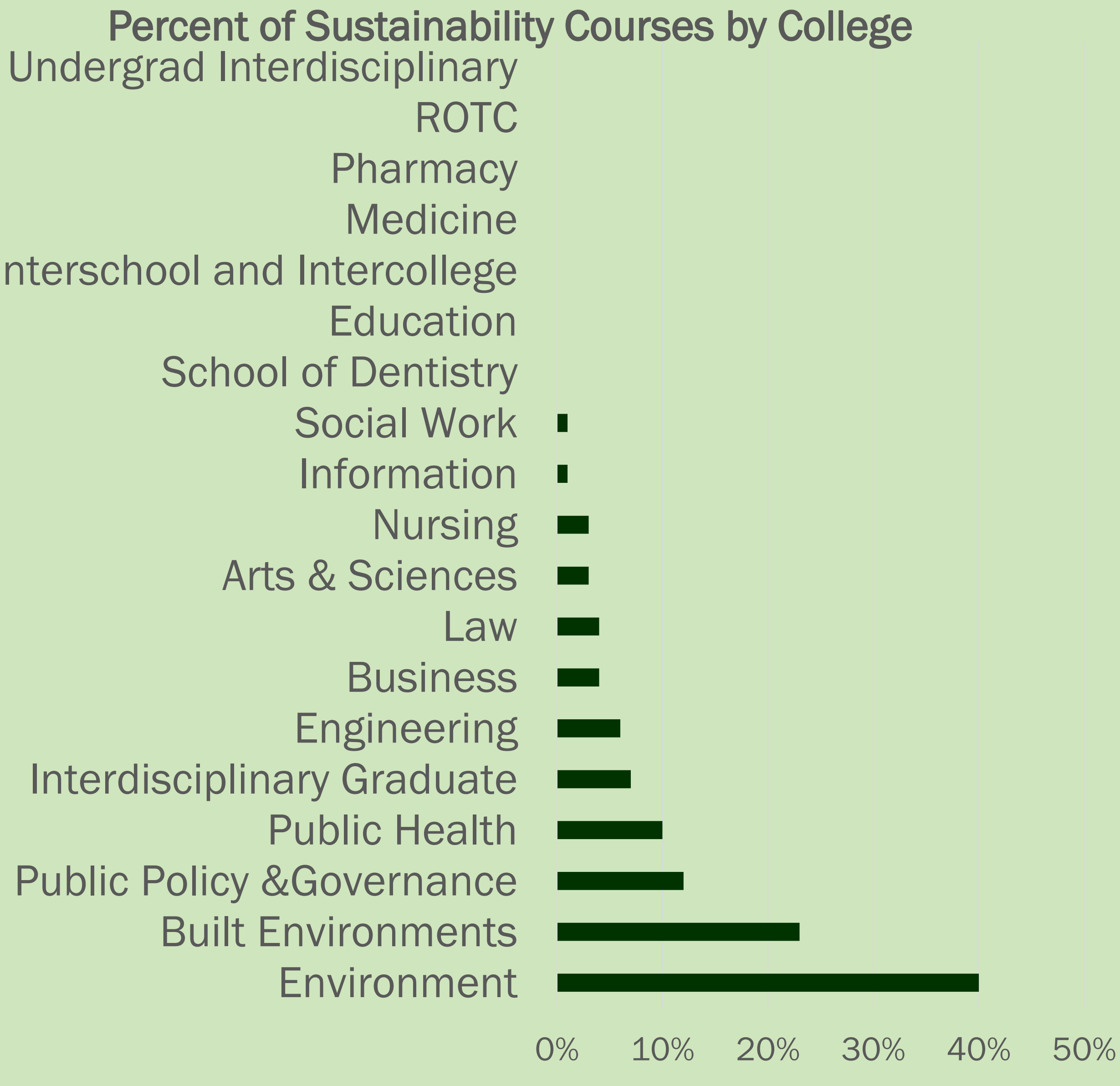


Fig 2. Percent of Sustainability-Focused and Sustainability-Inclusive courses offered by each department at the University of Washington. Courses were filtered from the 2020-2021 Course Catalog using the UW's definition of sustainability.

## Key Takeaways

- Rather than implementing a sustainability credit requirement, we need to increase sustainability education throughout the curriculum
- “Threading and embedding”
  - Can be applied to nearly every field of study

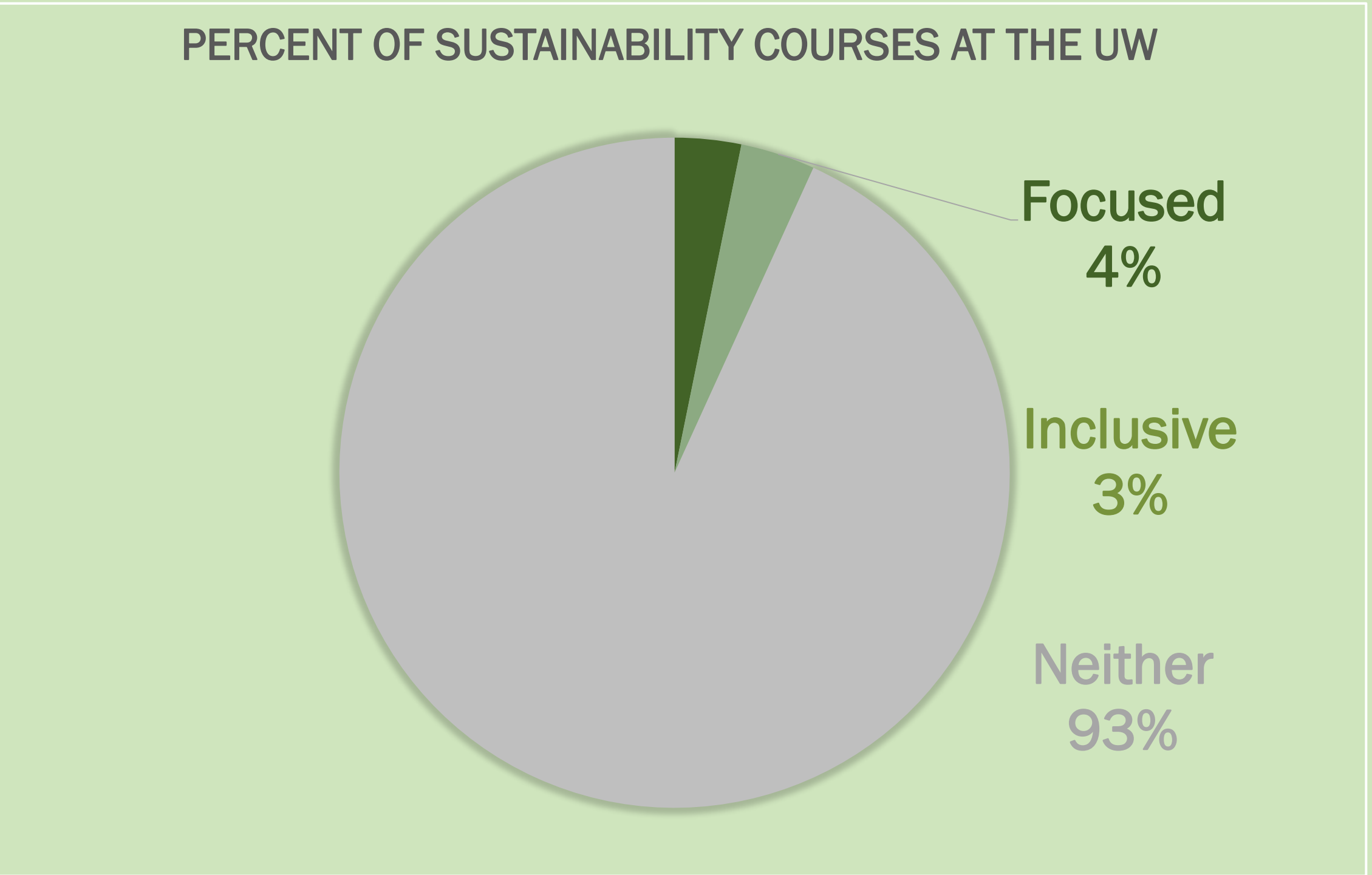


Fig 3. Percentage of sustainability courses at UW in comparison to non-sustainability courses.

## Broader Significance

- We need to start implementing sustainability education in all areas in order to attain a sustainable society
- Enforces the idea of sustainability being a pillar of education, rather than a subject.

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