

The Princeton Review to rank sustainability practices of colleges

A 'green rating' will grade colleges on sustainability practices.

By [Michelle Hagopian](#) May 2, 2008,

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Beginning this year, The Princeton Review will add a “green rating” to 600 college profiles in its annual college guides.

The Princeton Review spokeswoman Harriet Brand said the “green rating” measures how well schools are using their environmental practices to deliver a better campus experience and to prepare students to succeed in their future careers.

The rating criteria includes how environmentally responsible a school’s policies are, whether students have a quality of life on campus that is both healthy and sustainable and how well a school is preparing its students for employment and for citizenship in a world defined by environmental challenges.

The data for the rating is based entirely on the 2007-2008 academic year.

“The rating is a numerical score on a scale of 60 to 99, which is similar to other numerical ratings in the Review’s school profiles,” Brand said.

ecoAmerica, a nonprofit research and partnership-based environmental organization, helped formulate the rating’s criteria and data collection survey.

“We shared a commitment to helping students find colleges that will promote learning opportunities and lifestyle choices that will sustain our environment,” Brand said.

Among the 10,300 college applicants and parents of applicants The Princeton Review surveyed for its annual “College Hopes & Worries Survey,” 63 percent would value having information about a college’s commitment to the environment and that it would impact their decision to apply or attend the school.

The survey developed by ecoAmerica included 28 questions about topics such as recycling, food sources, building issues and transportation alternatives, among others.

The Princeton Review’s annual college guide is based entirely on data collected by 120,000 college students at 366 of the nation’s top schools, she said.

The “green rating” will be added to a list of over 65 different topical rankings including campus dining, residence hall conditions and quality of athletic programs.

Environmental Health and Safety Director Peter Ashbrook said everyone should practice green solutions.

“Everyone and every business should try to be green, and that includes colleges,” he said.

Challenges for schools include finding green solutions that are cost effective and determining whether the benefits of pursuing more expensive but “greener” practices are worth the cost.

Currently, MU provides sustainability information in campus publications such as Mizzou Weekly, Ashbrook said.

“Various campus departments such as Residential Life, Energy Management and Landscape Services have ways of promoting sustainable practices to students,” he said.

Much of the academic promotion comes from the office of environmental studies.

Sustain Mizzou President Ben Datema said education is a primary focus of the organization.

The reasons for colleges to implement eco-friendly solutions include financial benefits, educational value, public relations value, research and improved health.

He said the new “green rating” reflects how important environmental sustainability has become in modern American culture.

“This is an issue that prospective students take into account when choosing which institution they will attend to further their education,” Datema said. “It’s a step in the right direction.”

The Princeton Review’s annual college guidebook is scheduled for release July 29.