

# **Wellness Assessment: Environmental Wellness**

Center for the Study of Student Life

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## INTRODUCTION

Student wellness is an essential component of academic success in higher education and subsequent opportunities in the labor market. The Ohio State University Office of Student Life's Student Wellness Center uses a model that includes nine key dimensions of wellness: career, creative, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual.

The Wellness Assessment was designed to measure these nine dimensions of wellness in order to give students a better understanding of their own wellness and provide them with resources that they can utilize at Ohio State to improve their wellness. The Wellness Assessment survey is open year-round to all students. Additionally, in October 2015 and October 2017, the survey was emailed to random samples of approximately 5,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. In 2015, 5,000 students were recruited and 761 responded for a 15.2% response rate. In 2017, 4,989 students were recruited and 631 responded for a 12.6% response rate. This report examines environmental wellness in the context of the other wellness dimensions, as well as demographic variations in environmental wellness.

## METHODOLOGY

Each of the nine dimensions of student wellness acted as a scale within the survey, containing items designed to measure a range of attitudes and behaviors related to that dimension. Scores were calculated by adding the values of each component within a given dimension, then dividing by the total number of components, which produced an average wellness score for each dimension. The scores for respondents who did not answer all of the components of a dimension were calculated by summing the scores for the answered items and dividing by the total number of items answered. Students who failed to provide several responses for a dimension were excluded from the analysis, since creating wellness scores based on too few elements would lack validity and misrepresent the overall dimension.

Questions within the survey asked students to indicate their agreement on Likert scales. When asked about behaviors, students reported the frequency of the occurrence. A 5-point scale was used for all of the wellness dimensions. Higher scores indicated more positive attitudes and behaviors. Negative statements or questions were reverse coded so that unhealthy responses did not receive a high score. The findings presented below are analyses of variance (ANOVA) tests and independent samples t-tests of differences in average environmental wellness scores by student demographic characteristics, as well as chi-squared tests for differences in item cross-tabs by demographics. Analyses were limited to comparisons where each category contained 20 or more students; student samples with fewer than 20 respondents would be too susceptible to extreme scores.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Environmental wellness scores had a statistically significant increase from the 2015 random sample (4.01) to the 2017 random sample (4.07).
- Scores for the two undergraduate student random samples had statistically significant differences across years on the environmental dimension of wellness. No statistically significant differences across years were detected between the two graduate/professional student random samples.
- Environmental wellness scores for males had a statistically significant increase from 2015 (4.00) to 2017 (4.12). Scores for females also increased, but the difference was not statistically significant.



# DIMENSIONS OF THE WELLNESS ASSESSMENT

## EMOTIONAL

- I use alcohol/nicotine/other substances to manage stress.
- I am able to appropriately manage my feelings.
- I use relaxation techniques to manage stress.
- I am able to appropriately express my feelings.
- I would be willing to seek help from others when I am having a difficult time.
- I feel that I am able to cope with my daily stress.
- I have a positive image of my body.

## CREATIVE

- I express myself through creative activities.
- I attend arts-related events or programs.
- I think of myself as a creative person.
- I value multiple perspectives when thinking about complex topics.
- The arts help me appreciate other perspectives and cultures.

## SPIRITUAL

- I consider myself to be a spiritual person.
- I engage in self-reflection.
- I engage in spiritual practices.
- I feel a connection to something larger than myself.
- I seek out meaning in my life.

## INTELLECTUAL

- I am able to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- I am confident about my academic major decisions.
- I am confident in my ability to find solutions to my problems.
- I am confident that I can learn new skills.
- I am interested in learning new things.
- I engage in intellectually engaging activities.
- I feel that my education is a priority.
- I felt challenged by my academics during my most recent academic term.
- I was able to manage my academic workload during my most recent academic term.

## CAREER

- I am confident about my career decisions.
- I envision my future career as a means to contribute to society.
- I feel that my current studies will be helpful to my future career.
- I feel that my major/career decision is an appropriate expression of my abilities and personal strengths.
- I feel that I work in a positive environment.
- I feel that I work in a stressful environment.
- I feel that my current job interferes with other aspects of my life.
- I am able to balance my current job with the rest of my life.

## PHYSICAL

- I am confident that I can exercise regularly.
- I am confident that I can maintain a nutritious diet.
- I use illicit drugs (e.g. marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy).
- I use tobacco products.
- I use prescription medication that is not prescribed to me (e.g. Adderall, Xanax, Valium).
- I eat a nutritious diet.
- I engage in cardiovascular exercise 3-5 times per week for at least 30 minutes.
- I engage in flexibility exercise/stretching.
- I engage in strength training/resistance exercise 2-3 times per week.
- I get at least 8 hours of sleep per night.
- Do you get an annual flu vaccine?
- Do you maintain annual physical exam(s)?
- How often do you binge drink? (Males: 5+ drinks in about 2 hours, Females: 4+ drinks in about 2 hours)
- How often, in general, do you consume alcohol?

## FINANCIAL

- I am comfortable leaving a balance on my credit card(s).
- I think it is important to spend less than I earn.
- I am confident that I can plan a financial budget.
- I pay off the entire balance of my credit card(s) each month.
- I have enough money saved to handle financial emergencies.
- I track my spending to stay within my budget.
- I feel stressed by the amount of money I owe (credit cards, student loans, etc.).
- I stress about my finances.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

- I engage in environmentally friendly behaviors (turn off lights/faucets, walk or bike).
- I feel safe in my living environment.
- I feel that I live in a stressful environment.
- I often feel that I have little control over my safety.
- I take time to appreciate my surroundings.
- I take time to appreciate nature.
- I think it is important to conserve natural resources.
- If given the opportunity, I recycle.

## SOCIAL

- I feel a sense of belonging in a community.
- I feel supported by my family.
- I feel that I am a person who other people like to be around.
- I have a strong social network.
- I have at least one close friend whom I trust and can confide in.
- I feel comfortable communicating face-to-face with others.
- I rarely feel lonely.



## DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RANDOM SAMPLES

		2015 (n = 761)	2017 (n = 631)
Gender	Male	42.5%	36.5%
	Female	57.5%	63.5%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	90.9%	86.3%
	Bisexual, Gay/Lesbian, Questioning	9.1%	13.7%
First Generation	First generation student	19.6%	23.3%
	Non-first generation student	80.4%	76.7%
International Student	International student	9.2%	10.6%
	Domestic student	90.8%	89.4%
Race/ Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	72.1%	71.2%
	African American/Black	4.0%	3.9%
	Asian American	12.8%	13.7%
	Latino(a)/Hispanic	2.6%	2.3%
	Other Race/Ethnicity	0.8%	3.2%
Varsity Athletes	Athlete	3.2%	2.8%
	Non-athlete	96.8%	97.2%
Military Status	Ever been in US military	2.2%	2.5%
	Never been in US military	97.8%	97.5%
Self-Reported Class Rank	First-year undergraduate	20.6%	18.4%
	Second-year undergraduate	17.6%	17.1%
	Third-year undergraduate	17.3%	15.3%
	Fourth-year undergraduate	15.1%	14.0%
	Fifth-year+ undergraduate	5.9%	6.7%
	Graduate- Master's	8.2%	11.4%
Age	Graduate- Professional	5.4%	5.9%
	Graduate- Doctoral	10.0%	11.2%
	Traditional age (under 24)	84.5%	80.3%
Employment Status	Nontraditional age (24 or older)	15.5%	19.7%
	Not employed	24.8%	22.8%
Employment Status	Currently employed	75.2%	77.2%
	Work less than 20 hours a week	64.7%	61.2%
Residence	Work more than 20 hours a week	35.3%	38.8%
	Lives on-campus	34.3%	30.0%
	Lives off-campus, within walking distance	38.4%	31.4%
Greek Status	Lives off-campus, within driving distance	27.3%	38.7%
	Affiliated with fraternity or sorority	7.6%	10.7%
	Not Affiliated with fraternity or sorority	92.4%	89.3%

## FINDINGS

### AVERAGE ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS SCORES FROM 2015 TO 2017

#### Comparisons across Year and Demographics

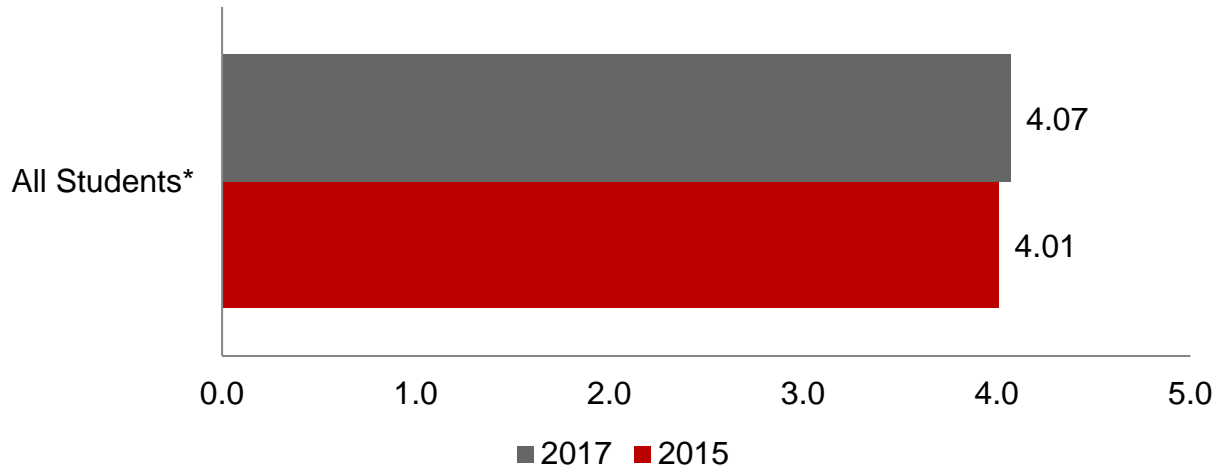
The table below presents comparisons of the environmental wellness scores from the random samples in 2015 and 2017. Undergraduate and graduate students were examined separately. Overall there were some statistically significant differences detected between 2015 and 2017.

Average Environmental Wellness Score	2015 Scores (n = 761)	2017 Scores (n = 631)	Statistically Significant
Male	4.00	4.12	*
Female	4.03	4.05	
First generation	3.94	4.02	
Non-first generation	4.03	4.10	*
International	3.97	3.86	
Domestic	4.02	4.10	**
Race/Ethnicity			
White	4.01	4.10	**
Black	3.86	3.97	
Asian	4.04	3.96	
Hispanic	4.12	3.78	
Multiracial	4.04	4.25	
Other	3.90	4.00	
Sorority or fraternity member	3.89	4.04	
Student unaffiliated with sorority or fraternity	4.02	4.08	*
Class rank			
First-year	4.03	4.09	
Second-year	4.02	3.99	
Third-year	3.92	4.06	
Fourth-year	3.99	4.06	
Fifth + year	4.03	4.33	**
Master's	4.16	4.05	
Professional	4.03	4.17	
Doctoral	4.03	4.07	
Does not work	4.02	4.05	
Works fewer than 20 hours	4.00	4.02	
Works 20 hours or more	4.03	4.10	
Residence			
Campus residence	4.01	4.08	
Within 43201 zip code	3.95	4.05	
Outside 43201 zip code	4.09	4.10	

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

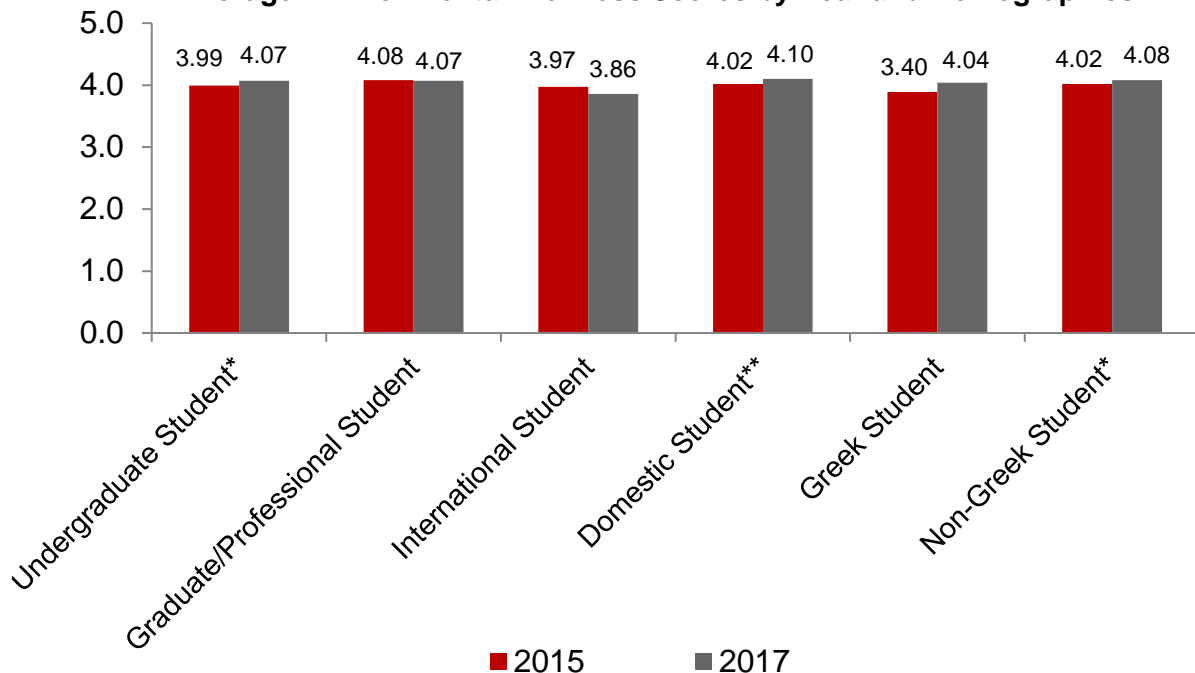
The chart below presents comparisons of the environmental wellness scores from the random samples of all students in 2015 and 2017. Undergraduate and graduate students were also examined separately. Overall, there was a statistically significant difference in environmental wellness scores from 2015 (4.01) to 2017 (4.07).

**Average Environmental Wellness Score - Overall Random Samples**



The chart below presents comparisons of the environmental wellness scores from the random samples in 2015 and 2017. Overall, there were statistically significant increases in environmental wellness scores among undergraduate students, domestic students, and non-Greek students from 2015 to 2017.

**Average Environmental Wellness Scores by Year and Demographics**



\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS ITEMS BY YEAR

	2015	2017	Statistically Significant
<b>I think it is important to conserve natural resources</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	2.7%	2.1%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10.5%	9.0%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	86.8%	89.0%	
<b>I take time to appreciate nature</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	6.9%	5.7%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	11.4%	13.4%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	81.7%	80.9%	
<b>I take time to appreciate my surroundings</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	5.6%	5.4%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10.8%	14.0%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	83.6%	80.6%	
<b>I often feel that I have little control over my safety</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	59.5%	64.7%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.1%	19.6%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	18.5%	15.7%	
<b>I feel safe in my living environment (e.g., residence hall, apartment)</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	3.7%	2.6%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.3%	8.7%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	86.9%	88.8%	
<b>I feel that I live in a welcoming environment</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	6.8%	5.5%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20.7%	21.0%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	72.6%	73.5%	
<b>I engage in environmentally friendly behaviors (e.g., turn off the lights, turn off faucets, walk or bike)</b>			
			*
Never/Rarely	5.8%	3.7%	
Sometimes	16.5%	19.8%	
Often/Always	77.7%	76.5%	
<b>If given the opportunity, I recycle</b>			
Never/Rarely	5.5%	3.8%	
Sometimes	14.6%	12.5%	
Often/Always	79.9%	83.7%	

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

# ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS ITEMS BY DEMOGRAPHICS FOR 2017

## Focus on Undergraduate and Graduate/Professional Students

The chart below looks specifically at student responses to the environmental wellness items, broken down by undergraduate and graduate students. Undergraduate students are more likely than graduate students to strongly agree or agree that they feel they have little control over their own safety. This was the only statistically significant difference between undergraduate students' and graduate students' responses to the environmental wellness items. These items include only students in the 2017 random sample.

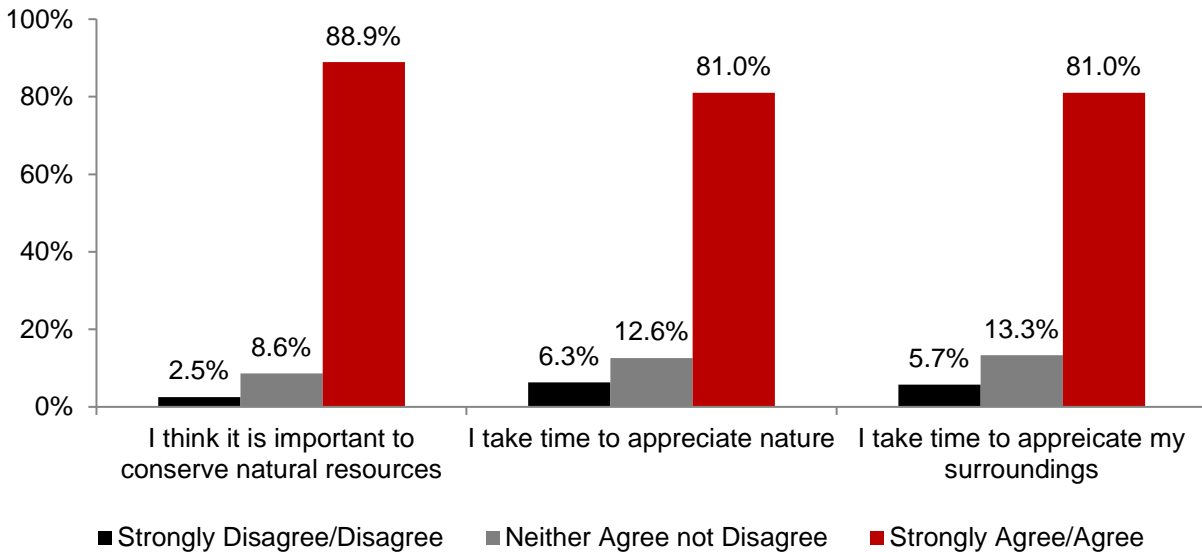
	2017 Undergraduate Students	2017 Graduate Students	Statistically Significant
<b>I think it is important to conserve natural resources</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	2.5%	1.1%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.6%	9.6%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	88.9%	89.3%	
<b>I take time to appreciate nature</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	6.3%	4.0%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.6%	15.3%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	81.0%	80.8%	
<b>I take time to appreciate my surroundings</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	5.7%	4.5%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13.3%	15.8%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	81.0%	79.7%	
<b>I often feel that I have little control over my safety</b> *			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	61.3%	72.9%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20.5%	17.5%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	18.2%	9.6%	
<b>I feel safe in my living environment (e.g., residence hall, apartment)</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	2.5%	2.8%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10.1%	5.1%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	87.4%	92.1%	
<b>I feel that I live in a welcoming environment</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	5.7%	4.5%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.6%	24.3%	
Strongly Agree/Agree	74.7%	71.2%	
<b>I engage in environmentally friendly behaviors (e.g., turn off the lights, turn off faucets, walk or bike)</b>			
Never/Rarely	3.4%	4.5%	
Sometimes	20.0%	18.5%	
Often/Always	76.6%	77.0%	
<b>If given the opportunity, I recycle</b>			
Never/Rarely	3.4%	5.1%	
Sometimes	10.7%	16.3%	
Often/Always	86.0%	78.7%	

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

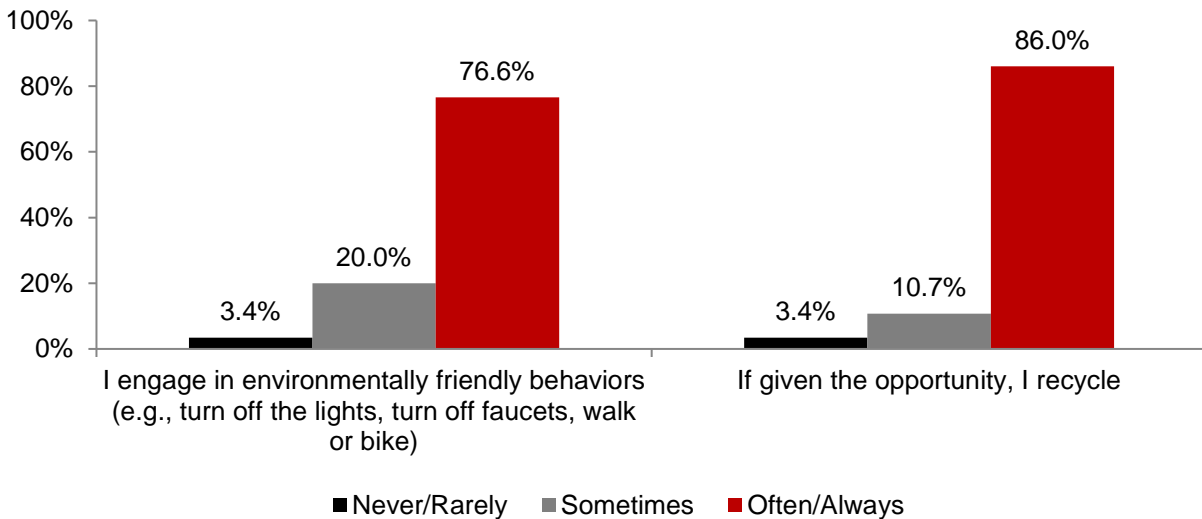


Demographic comparisons were run on undergraduate responses to the environmental items. The results are presented in the charts below. The findings indicate that 76.6% of undergraduate students strongly agree or agree that they engage in environmentally friendly behaviors. They also show that a large majority of students agreed or strongly agreed with all of the environmental wellness items.

### 2017 Undergraduate Student Environmental Wellness Item Responses



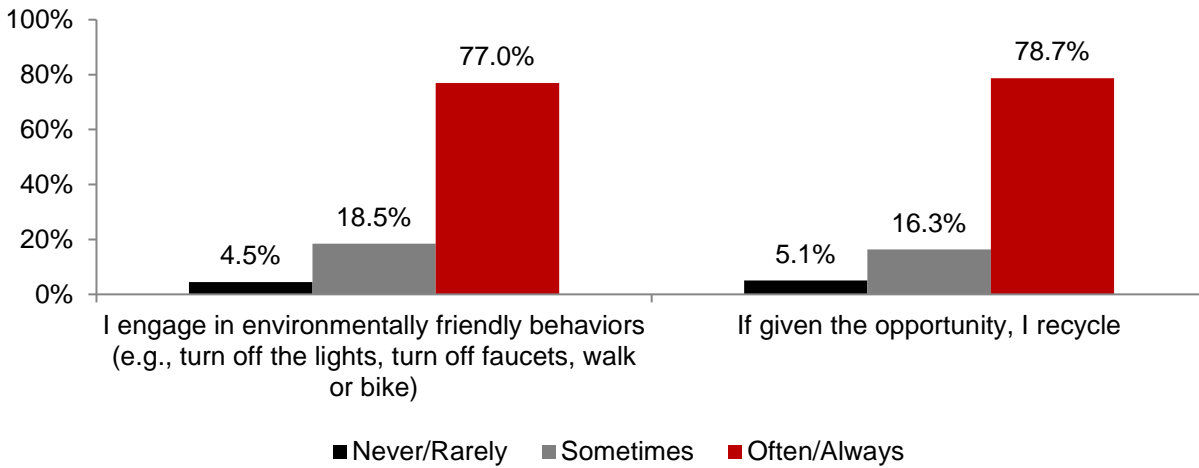
### 2017 Undergraduate Student Environmental Wellness Responses



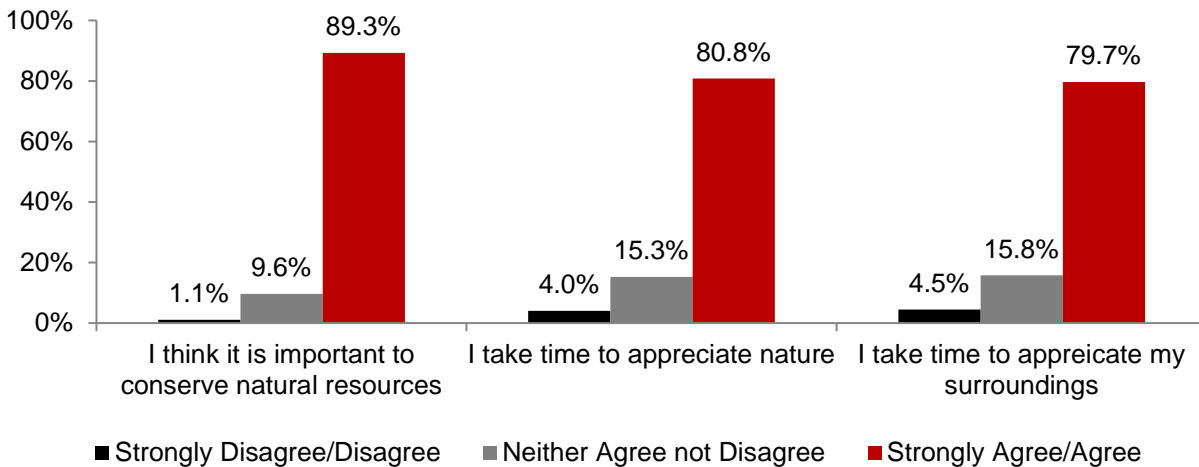
\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Demographic comparisons were run on graduate/professional student responses; the results are presented in the charts below. The findings indicate that 89.3% of graduate/professional students strongly agree or agree that it is important to conserve natural resources.

### 2017 Graduate/Professional Student Responses to Environmental Wellness Items



### 2017 Graduate/Professional Student Responses to Environmental Wellness Items



\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## CONCLUSION

The environmental wellness assessment data offer comparative insights into various student groups from a random sample of undergraduate and graduate/professional students on Ohio State's campus in 2015 and 2017. This report shows that the student environmental wellness scores had a statistically significant increase from 2015 to 2017 (from 4.01 to 4.07\*, respectively). Specifically, environmental wellness scores increased among males, non-first generation students, domestic students, students that identify as white, non-Greek students and students in their fifth year or more of their undergraduate degree. Additionally, the overall environmental wellness scores for the two undergraduate student random samples had statistically significant differences. No statistically significant differences were detected between the two graduate/professional student random samples. In 2017, undergraduate students were more likely than graduate/professional students to report that they often feel that they have little control over their safety. Last, there was a statistically significant difference between years in all students reporting that they engaged in environmentally friendly behaviors (e.g., turn off the lights, turn off faucets, walk or bike) from 2015 to 2017. These results contribute to our understanding of differences in environmental wellness among students at Ohio State in 2015 and 2017.