



2020 EARTH DAY SURVEY EXECUTIVE REPORT

Prepared by the Mānoa Institutional Research Office | <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/miro/>

The Mānoa Institutional Research Office (MIRO) and the Office of Sustainability administered an Earth Day Survey in April 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was comprised of eight open-ended questions and seven multiple-choice questions. It was conducted online and open for two weeks to all students, faculty, and staff. The response rate among students was close to 7% and was 8.4 % from employees. Altogether, we received almost 13,000 pieces of narrative responses from the open-ended questions.

The 2020 survey results show that 95% of Mānoa community members are concerned about sustainability and climate change issues. Compared with the 2018 survey results, the percent of “very concerned” individuals among students increased in both the undergraduate group (6% increase) and graduate student group (8% increase). The Mānoa community—91% of survey respondents—expressed an interest in seeking more information about sustainability and climate change issues. Nearly half of the Mānoa community reported an increase in their level of concern due to COVID-19. The reported impact of COVID-19 was higher for undergraduate students than graduate students (58% vs. 51%, respectively).

MIRO has developed online data tools to disseminate both quantitative and qualitative survey data to all Mānoa students and employees. These data tools can easily look at data from different angles, filters, the student class level, employee level, and gender demographics (among others). The Earth Day Survey web apps can be accessed through the Decision Support system on MIRO’s website. (www.manoa.hawaii.edu/miro)

55% of Students and 47% of Employees Said COVID-19 Increased Their Concerns About Sustainability / Climate Change Issues

COVID-19 Prompted Individuals To:

- Reduce Their Cost of Living
- Choose a Minimalist Lifestyle
- Adopt a Healthier Lifestyle
- Grow Their Own Food
- Support Environmentally Friendly Businesses & Orgs.
- Reduce Waste & Recycle





95%

Of the Mānoa Community is Concerned or Very Concerned About Sustainability / Climate Change Issues

Q: How concerned are you regarding various **sustainability/climate change** issues? (2020 vs. 2018)

The 2020 survey results show that 95% of Mānoa community members said they are “concerned” or “very concerned” about sustainability and climate change issues (94% among students and 95% among employees). Compared to 2018, In 2020 the % of “very concerned” among UG and GR students both increased. The percent of “very concerned” UG students went from 61% to 67% and for GR students went from 64% to 72%. Combining the “very concerned” and “somewhat concerned” responses, the percent of concerned students among the UG group went up from 93% to 96%, showing an increase in their overall level of concern.

Among employees, faculty reported a much higher rate of being “very concerned,” compared to the non-faculty group. However, this gap shrunk in 2020. The % of “very concerned” among faculty dropped 2% and the percent that chose the same option among the “non-faculty” group went up by 3%.

	YEAR	STUDENT			EMPLOYEE		
		UG	GR	All students	Faculty	Non-Faculty	All Employee
Very concerned	2018	61%	64%	62%	80%	54%	69%
	2020	67%	72%	68%	78%	57%	71%
Somewhat concerned	2018	32%	30%	32%	18%	40%	27%
	2020	29%	21%	26%	18%	35%	24%

“[I am most concerned about] ocean acidity, beach erosion, plastic pollution in our ocean, because of the immediate effects on our entire Pacific region, the largest geographical feature on the planet, and how it affects our ecosystems and food chain.”
 --- Mānoa faculty



51%

Of the Mānoa Community has Increased Their Level of Concern About Sustainability Due to COVID-19.

Q: How has **COVID-19** changed your level of concern about sustainability and climate change issues?

The 2020 survey results show that 55% of students have increased their level of concern about sustainability due to COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 to undergraduate students' concern regarding sustainability is higher than for graduate students. 58% undergraduate vs. 51% graduate students increased their concern due to COVID-19. Among employees, 47% of employees said COVID-19 has raised their concerns about sustainability. The impact on female employees is higher than male employees. 53% of female vs. 37% of male employees increased their concern towards sustainability due to COVID-19.

	STUDENT			EMPLOYEE		
	UG	GR	All Students	Faculty	Non-Faculty	All Employee
Greatly Increased	22%	21%	21%	19%	28%	18%
Somewhat Increased	36%	30%	34%	22%	40%	29%

"Currently, COVID-19 has made me more aware of the impact people have on the environment and has reminded me of how capable the earth is of healing itself. These two ideas combined have made me more aware that addressing issues of climate change is more about human sustainability rather than "saving the earth". With people out of the way, given time earth can heal herself. The question is if we can change our practices enough for earth to heal herself without humans causing our own extinction." --- Mānoa faculty

"It opened my eyes on how dependent Hawaii is on manufacturing of items such as paper towel, kleenex, toilet paper, and cleaners with ammonia & bleach. Also how Hawaii isn't really looking into diversification in different industries which would make us not so dependent on Tourism. We will not be able to sustain our economy or our environment with Tourism. Buying local shouldn't be only in times of diversity. Lastly, in order to preserve our marine life and beaches we need to balance use and preservation so future generations will be able to enjoy." --- Mānoa staff

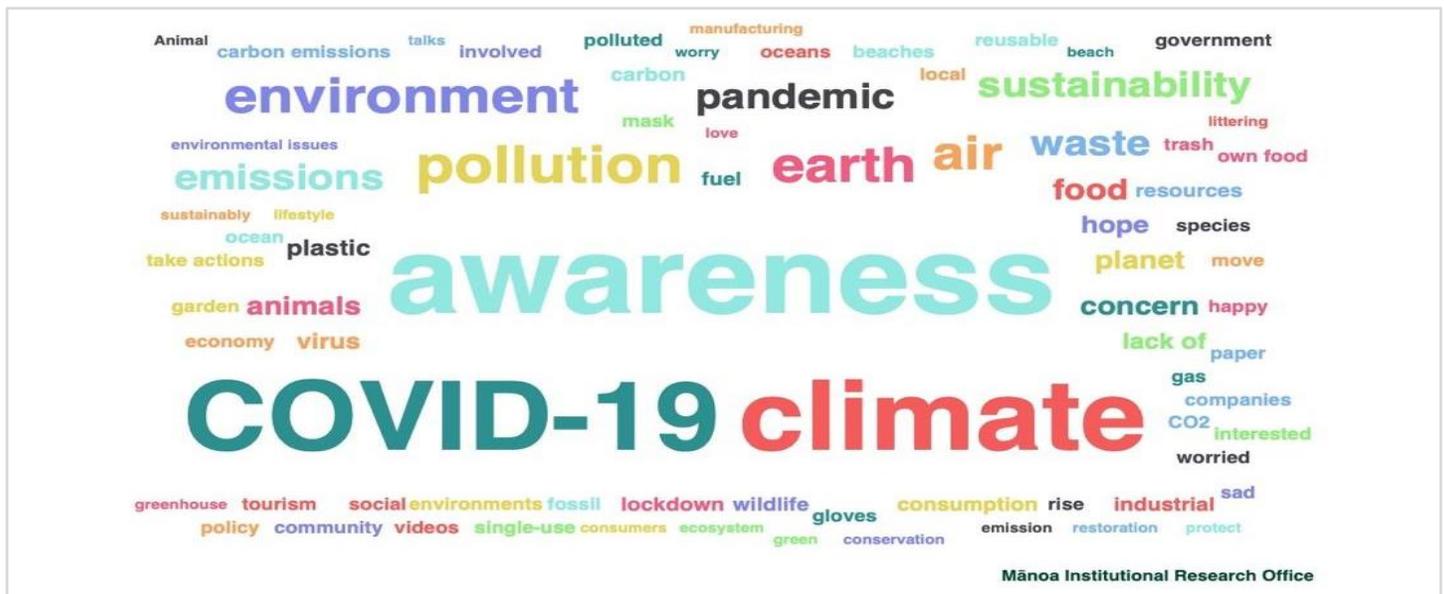
Q: What presentations or talks would students like to attend?

Response	UHM	
	N	%
Healthy Eating and Growing Your Own Food	656	60%
How to Live Sustainably workshop	594	55%
Everyday Clean Energy Options	543	50%
Hawai'i and Sea Level Rise	533	49%
Climate Change and Its Impacts on Life on Earth	520	48%
Volunteer Opportunities Related to Sustainability	488	45%
Water Security in Hawai'i and the World	445	41%
COVID -19, globalization and climate change	406	37%
Indigenous Ancestral Knowledge Systems in Hawai'i	401	37%
Equity, Peace, and Environmental Justice	374	34%
How to Prepare for Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters	355	33%
Major and Career Opportunities Related to Sustainability	354	33%
Climate Change Communication	299	28%
How to Make and Get Involved in Sustainability Related Policy Making	297	27%

Q: What actions has COVID-19 prompted students to take?

Response	UHM	
	N	%
Find ways to reduce my cost of living	621	57%
Choose a more minimalistic lifestyle	555	51%
Adopt a healthier lifestyle	539	50%
Support environmental friendly business and organizations more	454	42%
Grow my own food	422	39%
Change my behavior to reduce waste and recycle more	415	38%
Change my behavior to save energy and reduce energy cost	406	37%
Read more, talk more, and involve more on environment/sustainability related issues.	352	32%
Choose more sustainable ways of commuting (such as walking, biking, bus, or carpool)	341	31%
Drop out or take some time off from school	189	17%
Take courses that are more sustainability / climate change related	176	16%
Change my career goals to make them more sustainability / climate change related	116	11%
Choose a thesis or dissertation topic that is more sustainability / climate change related	73	7%
Change or add major/minor that is more sustainability / climate change related	67	6%

Q: How has **COVID-19** changed Mānoa community's awareness of sustainability and climate change issues?



When asked to describe how **COVID-19** has changed their awareness of sustainability and climate change issues, a few topics emerged from the open-ended survey responses, such as: significant change to nature in a short amount of time in response to the reduction of human activities; food security and supply in Hawaii; and the role and impact of tourism on Hawai'i.



The Impact of Human Activities

"COVID-19 brought to light just how destructive humans have been to our planet. We can see that this pause in our lives has let mother earth breath and it gives me hope." --- Mānoa student

"Covid-19 had actually peaked my interest in climate change because since we have had to stay inside, the earth is healing itself. Water is Europe is becoming clear, Hanauma bay is thriving with fish and orcas have returned to the Hawaiian Islands." --- Mānoa student

"As we are all going through this pandemic, I've had some time to personally retreat and reflect. COVID-19 made me realize the negative impacts we as humans have on the earth. It is my hope that when we all come out of this, we will all hold onto the empathy and have greater appreciation for the land we live on and the waters we are surrounded by." --- Mānoa student

"The pause button that has been pressed on planet earth shows the detrimental effect that humans have on the environment. I believe that lessons should be learned about remote working and the positive impact that keeping people off of roads and out of packed, air-conditioned buildings has on the earth." --- Mānoa staff



The Impact of Food

"It has changed my views on where and how my food is prepared. It really helped me to start cooking my own food more often." --- Mānoa student

"Survival gardening for everyone. Vegetable and herb pots." --- Mānoa student

"It's brought to light the increasing vulnerability of our state due to our isolation. I think everyone should be encouraged to plant their own gardens, community gardens, or other. We should also encourage former sugar cane farmland to be repurposed to grow food to feed our population."

--- Mānoa faculty

"COVID19 has definitely made me think a lot more about sustainability and self-sufficiency because of the fact that people are panic buying and stores' inventories are being exhausted and we live on an island, but also just because being self-sufficient and sustainable gives us more control over where our food comes from, the quality, whereas when we buy from the store, it's been transported, so it's not as fresh, sometimes depending on the season it may not even be from the US, it may be from a foreign country. I try to support local as much as possible because we want our local providers and businesses to thrive and flourish, but also everything is fresher that way." --- Mānoa student



The Impact of Tourism

"COVID-19 has shown that Hawaii's tourism industry plays a major role in climate change. Within weeks of tapering Hawaii's tourism industry, more monk seals are resting on the beach, our air quality has improved and there is less plastic pollution on the beaches." --- Mānoa student

"The absence of visitors on the island has revealed the extreme degree to which we have sold our soul for tourism profits. For Hawai'i, a more controlled visitor population should be part of our solution. I'm also expecting to get to the ocean soon and experience first-hand just how pristine our near shore waters can be." --- Mānoa faculty

"I have seen here in Hawaii how much the production of waste has gone down with our drastic decrease in tourism. This goes to show how detrimental the industry that fuels our economy is for our environment and I believe this opens doors for new ways of approaching waste production and recycling with the goal of minimizing waste production from tourists once they are coming back." --- Mānoa student

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For more information, visit MIRO's Decision Support Page: <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/miro/apps/>
If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact MIRO at: miro@hawaii.edu