

# Energy Use Profile for GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Benchmarking 2016



**Strategic energy management** presents a significant opportunity for campuses throughout Connecticut to improve building energy performance, save money and reduce carbon emissions.



**Benchmarking** is the process of comparing current energy usage data to previous years' energy usage data for the same facility or to the energy performance of comparable facilities. Benchmarking provides an opportunity to stimulate conversation and deeper inquiry into energy use, opportunities for savings and optimizing building performance.

MANY OF CONNECTICUT'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS HAVE MADE BOLD CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENTS. Higher education, the only sector with an organizational commitment to carbon neutrality, provides a model for setting and tracking climate targets and accountability in meeting climate commitments.

In Connecticut, 27% of colleges and universities have made commitments to become carbon neutral and have developed greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans for their campuses. These commitments impact over 44% of the full-time students enrolled at higher education institutions in Connecticut.

Accordingly, Connecticut's higher education institutions will provide a strong contribution to meeting Connecticut's goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) campuses - 12 community colleges and 4 state universities - provide opportunities to

approach sustainable energy management systemically and make significant contributions toward the state's 20% energy reduction goals. Moreover, the CSCU campuses comprise 18% of the total square footage of all state agency buildings and 30% of all higher education students in Connecticut.

This report analyzes energy and water use benchmarking data for **Gateway Community College**. It was produced with companion reports for each of the 11 other community colleges in the CSCU system, with the goal of providing data and analysis to inform the CSCU Energy Master Plan and to improve energy management at Gateway Community College specifically.

### KEY FINDINGS

# 70%



of Gateway Community College's annual total energy cost in 2016 was for electricity, even though only half of its total energy was supplied by electricity.

# 7%

less energy (as measured in site energy use intensity) is being used by Gateway Community College in 2016, as compared to 2013.

# \$127,500

in annual potential savings could be realized if Gateway Community College reduced its building energy use by 10%.



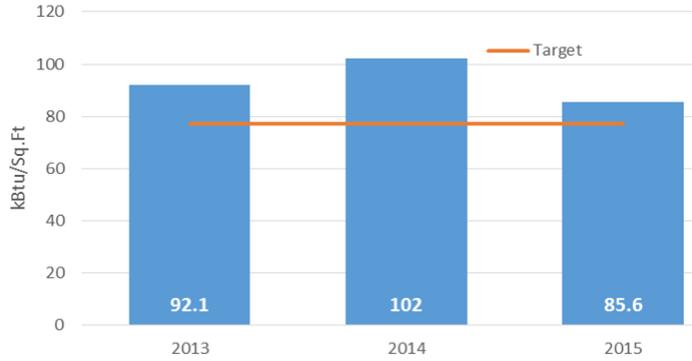
Gateway Community College is comprised of two main campuses that include mixed use spaces, with energy usage reported as an aggregate. In 2012, a new LEED gold building was constructed. Gateway Community College’s existing gross area is 532,500 square feet.

### Finding 1

**Between 2013 and 2015, energy use decreased by 7% for Gateway Community College.**

The energy performance of a building is a reflection of the building’s design, systems, equipment and operating and maintenance practices, as well as the behavior of those using the building. Site energy is the annual amount of all energy a property consumes onsite, as reported on utility bills. Site energy use intensity (EUI) is the site energy use per square foot of property.

The current average site EUI for community colleges in Connecticut is



**Figure 1. Building energy performance (site EUI) by calendar year from 2013 to 2015 (in blue) and a proposed energy use target (in orange) for Gateway Community College. The target reflects a 10% reduction in energy use from 2015 use.**

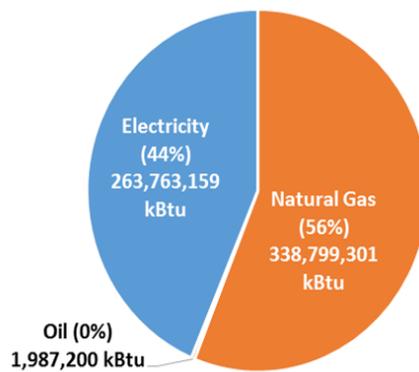
101 kBTu/ft<sup>2</sup> (See **Methods** for source). Gateway Community College’s site EUI is currently below the Connecticut average, at 85.6 kBTu/ft<sup>2</sup>, indicating better than average energy performance among Connecticut community colleges. Additionally, from

calendar year 2013 to calendar year 2015, site EUI decreased from 92.1 to 85.6 kBTu/ft<sup>2</sup> (see **Figure 1**), representing a 7% decrease. This report sets forth a 10% reduction in energy use as an attainable further target.

### Finding 2

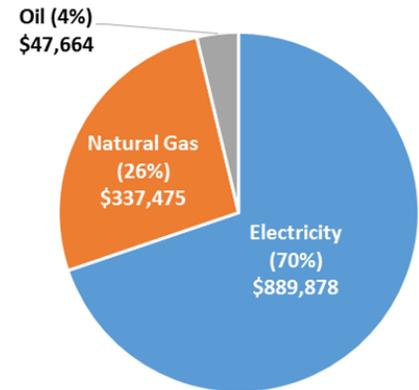
**Electricity accounted for almost half of Gateway Community College’s total energy use but 70% of its total energy costs in 2014.**

From January 2014 to December 2014, Gateway Community College’s total campus energy consumption was split between electricity (44%) and natural gas (56%), with a small amount of fuel oil (see **Figure 2** for energy consumption by fuel type). However, due to the relatively higher cost per Btu of electricity during this time period, electricity costs were significantly higher at 70% of the total, compared to natural gas (see **Figure 3**). In order to optimize cost savings, the college



**Figure 2. 2014 energy consumption by energy source for Gateway Community College.**

might consider prioritizing actions that reduce electricity use (see **Next Steps** in this report), with the understanding that



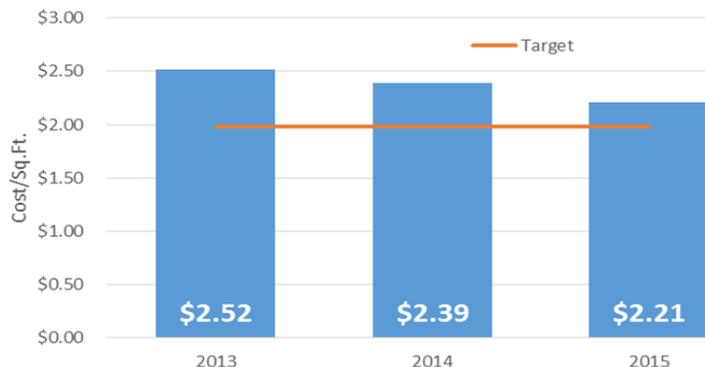
**Figure 3. 2014 energy cost for Gateway Community College.**

energy prices vary over time and that both electricity and natural gas prices may vary year to year.

### Finding 3

**Gateway Community College has the potential to save up to \$127,500 per year, if building energy use is reduced by 10%.**

In 2013, Gateway Community College spent \$2.52 per square foot on its total energy costs (including electricity, natural gas and fuel oil) versus \$2.21 in 2015 (see **Figure 4**). If Gateway reduced its 2015 energy use by 10%, the cost per square foot would drop to \$1.98,



**Figure 4. Energy cost per square foot for Gateway Community College from 2013 to 2015 (in blue) and a proposed target (in orange) that assumes a 10% reduction in energy use.**

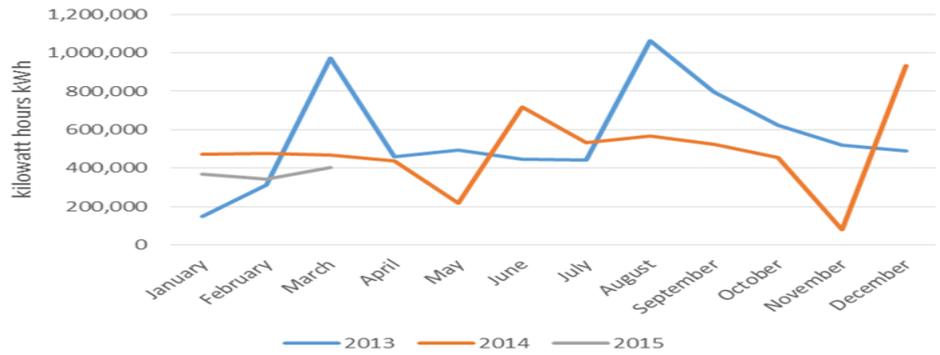
resulting in potential savings up to \$127,500 per year, assuming energy

prices remained constant.

### Finding 4

**Electric use at Gateway Community College varied between less than 100,000 kWh and more than 1,000,000 kWh, with seasonal variations.**

Detailed electricity use data is available for Gateway from January 2013 to March 2015 (see **Figure 5**). Electricity usage in 2014 was lower than that of 2013.

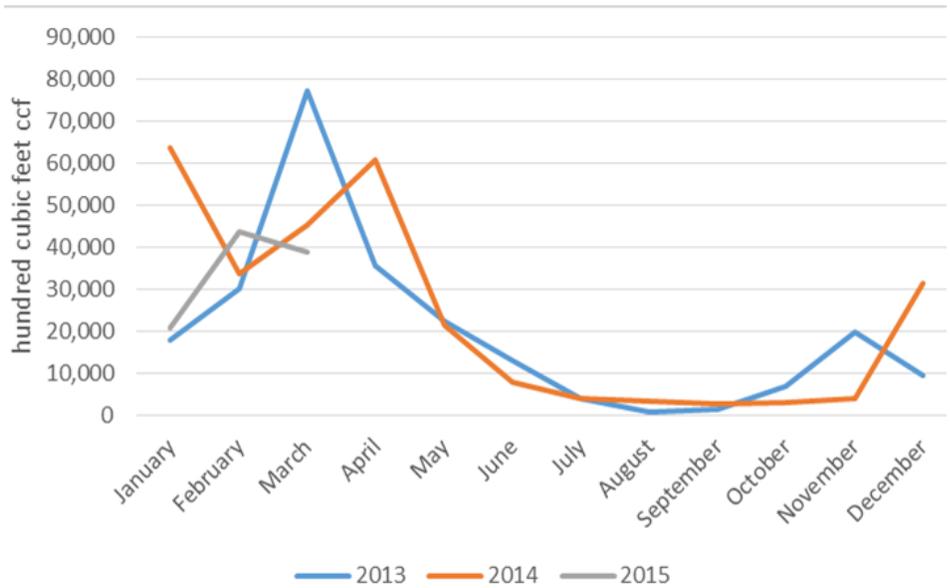


**Figure 5. Monthly electric energy use (in kilowatt hours) for Gateway Community College from January 2013 to March 2015.**

### Finding 5

**Natural gas use at Gateway Community College varied seasonally, with lowest use in the late spring and summer months and peak use in the winter months.**

Detailed natural gas use and cost data is available for Gateway Community College from January 2013 to March 2015 (see **Figure 6**). Over that time frame, there was no natural gas used between August and September each year as there were no building heating needs. Annually, natural gas use steadily climbs through the fall as outside temperature drops, peaking at about 60,000 to 80,000 ccf in March/April, and declines through early spring. In 2013, the peak reached 77,424 ccf in March, whereas in 2014, the peak reached 60,663 ccf in April. Interestingly, natural gas use for the beginning of 2015 is lower overall than both previous years.

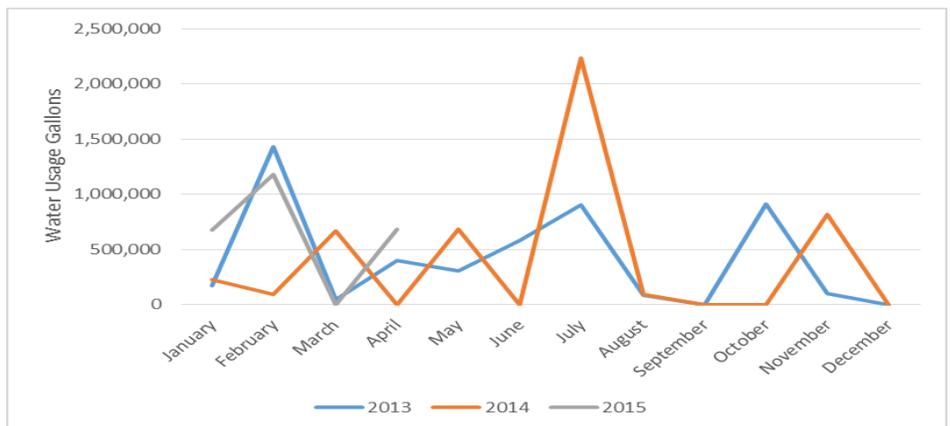


**Figure 6. Monthly natural gas energy use (hundred cubic feet) for Gateway Community College from January 2013 to March 2015.**

### Finding 6

**Water use at Gateway Community College varied over the course of each year.**

As with energy benchmarking, benchmarking water consumption can stimulate conversation about water use, opportunities for savings and optimizing water use. Detailed water use data is available for Gateway Community College from January 2013 to April 2015 (see **Figure 7**). The annual cost of water used at Gateway is around \$36,000.



**Figure 7. Monthly water use (in gallons) for Gateway Community College 2013-2016.**

## Next Steps

Energy and water use benchmarking data provide a critical foundation to understanding building energy performance and tracking changes in energy and water use over time. While data alone cannot identify why a building is efficient or inefficient or what is causing a change in energy or water use, the data and graphs in this report are very useful tools in identifying the areas of further inquiry. For example:

- Although Gateway Community College decreased its energy use from 2013 to 2015 (see **Figure 1**) there are still significant opportunities to save energy and costs. Discussion with building operations staff and an on-site energy audit, available through the EnergizeCT program, would identify specific energy saving measures.
- Seasonal variations in electricity use (see **Figure 5**) and peaks of natural gas use in the winter months (see **Figure 6**) suggest opportunities to explore heating and cooling efficiencies to optimize energy costs relevant to building use.
- Gateway Community College should consider adopting building energy performance targets, beginning with a 10% reduction in

energy use. Many resources are available to help identify, finance and implement reductions.

- Gateway Community College should explore opportunities for solar energy, which could further reduce energy costs.
- Gateway Community College should continue to track water use to identify opportunities for water efficiency.

The CSCU Energy Master Plan (2016) provides additional detail on current operations and energy management practices and recommendations for improvement. The Energy Master Plan will provide a useful roadmap for coordinated, system-wide energy savings initiatives.

In addition, there are many resources available through EnergizeCT and the Connecticut Green Bank to help implement energy saving actions. These include energy audits, retro commissioning, equipment financial incentives, and financing. Information on these programs is available through utility account representatives and at [www.energizect.com](http://www.energizect.com).

## Additional Background and Methods

### Benchmarking Experience and Value

The Institute for Sustainable Energy has benchmarked over 900 buildings in Connecticut using Energy Star Portfolio Manager. This benchmarking work has helped building owners understand energy use and take the next steps to identify opportunities and implement actions to save energy. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, buildings that were benchmarked consistently in Portfolio Manager over a 3-year period reduced energy use by an average of 2.4 percent per year, for a total savings of 7 percent.

### Data Sources and Energy Target

In 2015, Eversource launched an online, interactive data tool, known as the Eversource Customer Engagement Platform (CEP). In partnership with Eversource and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system office, the Institute for Sustainable Energy helped pilot the use of the CEP to obtain monthly electricity, natural gas usage, and cost data for this report. Water data was self-reported by Gateway Community College and obtained by the Institute from the CSCU System Office.

This report suggests an initial energy savings target of 10%. This report further references an average site EUI of 101 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup> for community colleges in Connecticut. This figure was calculated by consultants Woodard & Curran for the 2016 CSCU Energy Master Plan using aggregate 2014 fiscal year energy data for all 11 community colleges in Connecticut.

### Energy Star Portfolio Manager

Energy Star Portfolio Manager is an online tool created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, designed to track and assess energy and water use across multiple buildings. Portfolio Manager controls for key variables affecting a building's energy performance, including climate, hours of operation and building size, allowing for meaningful comparison of buildings within the same building type. In addition to energy use and cost data, Portfolio Manager analysis relies on building demographic data, such as the number of kitchens, walk-in freezers, pools, and other building features.

Currently, Portfolio Manager does not include "Community College" as a building

type. Data for all 11 community college campuses in Connecticut were coded as the "K-12 School" building type because community colleges, as non-residential centers of education, often function most similarly to this type of building. This coding enables appropriate comparisons between community colleges but should not be used to determine an Energy Star building score.

The Energy Star Portfolio Manager benchmarking account prepared for Gateway Community College is available to authorized users, who have been provided the username and password to the account by the Institute for Sustainable Energy.

### Time Period Covered

Unless otherwise indicated in this report, data is substantially complete from January 2013 to March 2015, and annual data is reported by calendar year.

### Process and Quality Control

Source data were entered into Microsoft Excel before being uploaded to Energy Star's Portfolio Manager. Two independent reviewers cross-checked data to verify the accuracy of the data input.

## AUTHORS AND PARTNERS

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This report was prepared by the professional staff and student interns of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University. For over 15 years, the Institute has provided technical support to Connecticut's colleges and universities, state agencies, municipalities, K-12 schools, and others to implement practical solutions that increase energy efficiency, sustainability and resilience. [www.easternct.edu/sustainableenergy](http://www.easternct.edu/sustainableenergy)



This report was prepared with the support of the Energy Efficiency Fund and Energize Connecticut. Energize Connecticut, supported with funding from a charge on customer energy bills, promotes cost and energy savings through home and business rebates, financing and services for energy efficiency and clean energy improvements. [www.energizect.com](http://www.energizect.com)

