Connecting Yale Teaching and Research to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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Background: In 2015, the Yale Office of Sustainability started a project aimed at helping understand how Yale teaching and research aligns with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It took a team of students just over two years to audit the 4,400 Yale faculty members. The objectives of this project were:
1. Identify pathways for collaboration between disciplines.
2. Provide a rationale for thinking of higher education sustainability beyond operational commitments.
3. Identify the expertise Yale might lend to the process of achieving the SDGs.

Conclusions: Yale has ample coverage for each SDG. Every academic department or school has at least one faculty member whose work relates to the SDGs.

What now? The data is currently being used for three purposes:
- Create multidisciplinary lists of faculty with shared interests in key topics.
- Integrate academic highlights into a set of sustainability action plans for professional schools and academic departments.
- Develop department-specific reports to be used to start discussions with department leadership and faculty.

What Next? The next phase of this project will be a set of ground-truthing interviews, departmental reports, and reports by SDG. The team will also explore platforms to share the data.