

EMU Cross-Cultural Programs Carbon Budget Policy

As part of EMU's vision to explore and learn the ways God is active in our world and in different cultures, we seek to equip students with intercultural competence. The cross-cultural program has been providing semester and summer experiences to students for over 35 years. EMU's unique approach to intercultural learning combines didactic and experiential requirements to allow students to develop critical awareness of themselves, others, and God in a global and local context.

In addition to the positive outcomes of EMU's Cross Cultural (CC) program, we also acknowledge that individual, institutional, and community actions have local and global impacts on the current and future health and prosperity of all humans and other species. This policy seeks to create a balance between providing our students with life-changing opportunities to immerse themselves in global cultures and recognizing and minimizing the toll this privilege may take on our global neighbors and creation. This policy takes action to support the EMU Climate Action Plan goal of net-zero status by 2035, recognizing that CC travel is a large percentage of the annual EMU carbon footprint.

As we continue to work toward a goal of sustainability and global mindfulness, there is a need to recognize, name and respond to the use (overuse) of resources in the global north and the unequal burden/consequences this places on those with less access to those resources in much of the global south.

Cross-Cultural Carbon Budget

The purpose of the Carbon Budget policy is to move toward more responsible and sustainable travel planning while continuing to meet the [CC Learning Goals](#). This policy recognizes the climate impact of our CC programs and provides provisions for responding sustainably.

Proposals for CC seminars (both semester and summer) will be prioritized based on an overall carbon budget over a 3 year period with plans to decrease emissions over time. The Intercultural Programs office in consultation with the CC Committee will attempt to keep the CO2 budget "balanced" while offering students meaningful and varied cross-cultural learning opportunities. Initially the goal will be to keep at or below [140 CO2e M.T.](#) annual average over a three year period.

On/offsetting and/or Reparations Projects:

In addition to the carbon budget policy, CC proposals that include a significant experience that allows students to recognize and participate (in an embodied manner) in an on/offsetting or reparations project, either in the US or, if possible, in conjunction with local partners and their

ongoing work will be prioritized. The Leaders Manual ([4-Academic Planning](#), sections 4.11-4.16) provides resources and ideas for incorporating sustainability into the proposed cross-cultural.

Other considerations and best practices:

1. Direct flights emit less CO2/passenger than connecting and/or multi-leg itineraries. Even when direct flights are more expensive (in dollars), they should be selected for significantly reduced climate impact; this is a teaching/learning issue with students.
2. Consider the distance to be traveled in relation to the length of time for the CC. Use [this document](#) as a resource when planning CC travel. Those CC that are beyond the destinations referenced are not ineligible, but will be given consideration within the available Carbon Budget for the proposed time period.
3. Avoid significant travel while in the cross cultural setting, especially any travel by air. When possible/practical, use least-impacting transportation modes; see chart below, which provides average emissions of group travel by transportation type:

Mode	Gram CO2/km/pass.	Multiples
Walk/hike	Zero direct emissions**	-
Sea/ship	5	Measurably more than walking
Rail/train	10	Roughly 2x sea
Road/ bus	30	Roughly 3x rail, 6x sea
Air/plane	250*	Roughly 8x bus, 25x rail, 50x sea

* Includes secondary effects of high altitude delivery (radiative forcing).

** We recognize the indirect emissions of food production to provide energy.

4. Consider travel and/or exploration that can occur by foot, such as walking, hiking, or trekking. Not only will that minimize carbon emissions, but this close-to-the-ground navigation more effectively embeds foreigners in the local context.
5. High-density living uses fewer resources, and such arrangements are more likely to emulate living conditions in host countries/cultures, given that U.S.-based cultures are some of the most private in the world.
6. Where possible, and without offense to local customs and culture, meals might be planned for a minimal carbon footprint, such as vegetarian or vegan. However, food is such a critical marker and part of culture, that cultural learning (compliance with) might take precedence over carbon considerations, especially in the presence of local host(s).

7. Sourcing goods and services from the local economy will in most cases come with lower environmental impact, in addition to supporting the vibrancy of the local economy. This guideline might apply to food, lodging, transportation, and consumer purchases.

Responsible Party

Responsibility for this policy lies with the Director of Intercultural Programs.

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed every two years.

Approved by Cross-Cultural Committee, October 2020

Approved by Academic Cabinet, 2020