According to a study by the Sustainable Endowments Institute, Carleton College merit a surprising C+ rating for sustainability. In comparison to Carleton’s mediocre grade, other institutions such as Williams and Dartmouth received an A. These grades are all part of the College Sustainability Report Card, which is a review of campus and endowment policies at leading institutions.

The Green Roof Project, like other undertakings at Carleton, put forward a desire to increase sustainability practices on campus. President Robert Oden. He stated about active ownership of the Institute’s investments and shareholders initiatives. Unfortunately, the College received low grades in Investment Priorities. Where did Carleton go wrong?

On closer examination, the rating was mainly lowered due to poor ratings in three categories which focused more on investing than sustainability. Carleton received a C+ in Endowment Transparency and Shareholder Engagement and a C in Investment Priorities. In accordance with the study criteria, the College received low ratings in these categories because it does not publish its endowment’s investments and shareholder voting record, because it invested for maximum profit, and because it has not made any public statements about active ownership or a proxy voting policy.

"It’s hard because we’ve worked on those issues," said President Robert Oden. He pointed to the foundation of the Carleton Responsible Investment Committee (CRIC), which helps make shareholder decisions on the college’s stock holdings, such as voting on corporate diversity and environmental initiatives. Furthermore, a Carleton-directed project called the Northfield Initiative serves as a community development loan fund. Both of these groups fulfill requirements for which the Sustainable Endowment Institute docked Carleton points.

"Those F’s are close to right, but, as a whole, we have some things in place," said Treasurer Fred Rogers. He pointed to the foundation of the Northfield Initiative Committee but has not, in fact, made a loan yet. Similarly, CRIC has not had a full cycle of meetings, so the effects of their work have yet to be felt.

In the other four evaluative categories, Carleton’s grade averaged out to an A-, putting it in a list of 26 schools recognized as “Campus Sustainability Leaders.” This achievement was derived from A’s in Administration, Climate Change and Energy, and Food and Recycling, and a B rating in Green Building.

"I think that by next year we’ll get better grades," said Rogers, but he emphasized that the college is already doing the right work, independent of the Sustainable Endowments report. "I don’t have independence – we deserve all A’s," he said.

One of the biggest issues in Carleton’s low score was the college’s lack of publicity about its good work. Despite this, Carleton should make its policies more public to help its image. "Let’s make sure [the Sustainable Endowment Institute] knows that we’re doing this," he said.

He added that Carleton can work to raise its green building score, especially in the construction of a new residence hall. Although Rogers admitted that the report certainly highlighted the issue of sustainability, he was satisfied that students were maintaining a sustainable campus, and that Carleton is "bubbling up." Indeed, not only is Carleton staying sustainable, but, as a highlighted copy of the report on Fred Rogers’ desk suggested, Carleton is taking independent security seriously and working towards a more complete sustainable campus.

For more information on the Sustainable Endowment Institute and how to engage your endowments, visit

The Green Roof Project, like other undertakings at Carleton, show a desire to increase sustainability practices on campus.