

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Sustainability Council Operating Papers

April 2016

Sustainability in institutions of higher education is characterized by activities that are ecologically sound, socially just, economically viable, and aesthetically engaged. Sustainable institutions emphasize these components in day-to-day operations and in curriculum and research, thereby preparing students to recognize challenges, develop solutions, and model behaviors that contribute to a regenerative, healthful, beautiful, and just world.

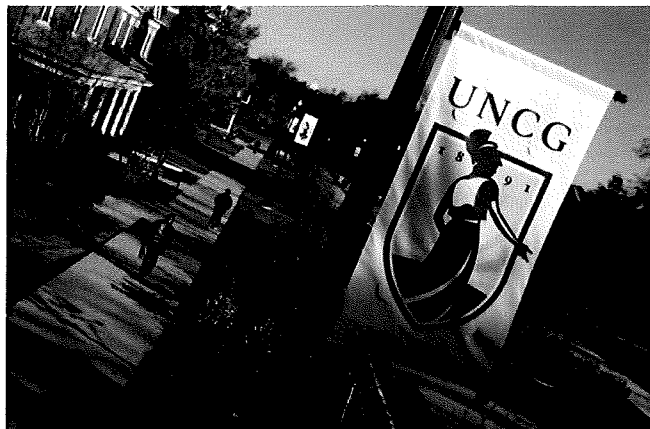
Given this framework for sustainability in higher education, the UNCG Strategic Plan 2009-2014 incorporated the following “core value”:

Sustainability – Academics, operations, and outreach are conducted with careful attention to the enduring interconnectedness of social equity, the environment, the economy, and aesthetics.

The members of the committee who developed that Strategic Plan used the following working definition:

Sustainability is the enduring interconnectedness of social equity, the environment, economy, and aesthetics. This interconnectedness provides a foundation from which to discover, implement, and enrich sustainable principles and practice. The intent of sustainability is to instill values that promote justice, invent innovative approaches and solutions to environmental and economic challenges, and invest civility and grace into our communities.

The UNCG Strategic Plan 2009-2014 called for the development of a Sustainability Council that formed during the fall of 2010 to “support activities in academics and sustainable practices.” The intent of this document is to articulate the purpose, scope, and membership of the Sustainability Council and to clarify its operational procedures.



Article 1: Mission, Commitment, and Principles

Section 1: Mission

The Sustainability Council supports and promotes efforts by the university community to address sustainability in operations and academics at UNCG.

Section 2: Commitments of UNCG to Sustainability

- Chancellor Linda Brady signs the Appalachian Energy Summit Signatory Commitment, July 2012.
- Chancellor Linda Brady signs the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), October 2011.
- UNCG becomes a charter member of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) in July 2011.
- Sustainability Council formed, August 2010.
- Sustainability adopted as a core value in The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) 2009-2014 Strategic Plan, May 2009.
- UNCG's 2009-2014 Strategic plan directs the pursuit of LEED Silver certification for any major building projects, May 2009.
- UNCG adopts The University of North Carolina Sustainability Policy, October 2009.
- University Committee on Sustainability formed by Chancellor Patricia Sullivan, Spring 2008.
- Executive Order No. 156 of the State of North Carolina, "State Government Sustainability, Reduction of Solid Waste, and Procurement of Environmentally Preferable Products," signed by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., July 1999.

Section 3: Sustainability Principles

Together we are moving toward a sustainable future and leading by example with these principles supporting all of our actions and plans. Therefore, the Sustainability Council is committed to:

- A. Recognizing the inextricable connections between nature, society, economy, and aesthetics. To respect this interconnectedness, the Council will strive for a holistic and transparent approach to decision-making across the campus that generates economic, environmental, social and cultural values in everyday practice on campus and in our surrounding communities.
- B. Acknowledging the unity of humanity and nature and emphasizing natural systems as the model of appropriate design. Natural systems utilize renewable energy and have no concept of waste. They are also characterized by diversity, interdependence, and regenerative growth, defining characteristics of healthy academic environments as well. The Council will aim to shift university practices toward products and processes that mimic natural systems.
- C. Supporting human and environmental health through our decisions and practices. Human health and wellness are tied directly to environmental health. The Council will pursue the use of materials and activities that have no harmful effects on human or environmental health. Accompanying this commitment is an emphasis on creating a physical campus that promotes healthy activity.
- D. Championing social justice and equity, mutual cultural respect, and inclusiveness. The Council will encourage the university community to honor diversity in its myriad combinations through our practices, policies, teaching, research, and service.
- E. Appealing to our senses is as important as appealing to our minds. Beyond the sensory, however, there is also a beauty when people and systems perform at their best. The Council will encourage the university to strive for civility and beauty in all our endeavors.
- F. Understanding the need for stewardship of all resources, including financial ones. Concomitantly, the Council recognizes that materials and activities that enhance the natural and social environments are financially beneficial. Loss or degradation of these systems must be considered expenses, and the Council will advocate for these costs to be considered part of any budget calculus.
- G. Helping UNCG become a sustainable institution. UNCG is comprised of many individuals with personal choices that will affect our campus carbon footprint, our interactions with the community, and our financial success. Cooperation and commitment from individuals across campus will allow us to achieve our goals.

Article 2: Responsibilities

Section 1: Duties

The Sustainability Council will:

- A. Provide advice and make recommendations to the Chancellor with the intention of integrating sustainability into university strategic initiatives, practices, and policies;
- B. Maintain, monitor, and update the Sustainability Matrix first developed by the Council in 2011;
- C. Make policy recommendations and advocate for and allocate resources needed to integrate sustainability into the university community;
- D. Foster collaborative efforts between faculty, staff, students, and members of communities external to the campus;
- E. Collect, centralize, and disseminate information regarding, e.g., events, activities, and programs occurring at UNCG that are related to sustainability such as guest speakers or campus competitions; and
- F. Form or foster working groups, committees, task forces or other such smaller groups as necessary to accomplish specific tasks.

Section 2: Assessment and Reporting

- A. The Sustainability Council shall review UNCG's annual Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) report and identify areas for improvement.
- B. The Sustainability Council shall review and offer feedback on UNCG's annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory and UNCG's bi-annual Climate Action Progress Reports. Once the Council members are satisfied with the documents, the Council may vote to endorse them.
- C. The Sustainability Council Executive Committee shall issue a report to the Chancellor once a year regarding campus sustainability and progress toward goals.

Article 3: Organization

Section 1: Membership

A. Members

The Council will be comprised of the following members appointed by the Chancellor:

- Chief Sustainability Officer (*ex officio*)
- Sustainability Coordinator for Operations (*ex officio*)
- Academic Sustainability Coordinator (*ex officio*)
- Director of Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program (*ex officio*)
- Sustainability Faculty Fellow(s) (*ex officio*)
- Past-Chair of the Sustainability Council (*ex officio*)
- Student Government Association President or Appointee
- Graduate Student Association President or Appointee
- Representative of the Alumni Association
- Representative of Athletics
- Representative of Student Affairs
- Representative of Business Affairs
- Representative of Academic Affairs
- Faculty Senate Representative
- Staff Senate Representative
- Representative of Information Technology
- Representative of the Office of Research and Economic Development
- Representative of University Advancement
- In addition, the Council must have at least eight faculty members. The College and the Schools of the University should be represented. Of these eight faculty members, the following four areas must be represented:
 - Environment or ecology
 - Economics or business
 - Equity or social justice
 - Aesthetics or culture

The Council will have no more than 24 members.

B. Officers

The Council shall have three officers: one Chair, one Chair-elect, and a Secretary. The Chair and Chair-elect (the Co-Chairs) will be elected by the Council members from within the Council, and represent academics (a faculty member) and operations (a staff member). The Secretary will be elected by the Council as well. No more than two of the three elected officers shall be *ex officio* members. Elections for a Secretary and Chair will be held annually, and the Chair will serve a two-year term: the first year as Chair-elect, the second year as Chair. After serving as Chair, the Chair becomes the past-Chair and serves on the Council for one more year. Elections will be held during the first meeting of the fall semester.

1. Duties of the Co-Chairs

- coordinate the activities of the Council;
- along with the Sustainability Coordinators, meet with the Chancellor twice per year at a minimum;
- in collaboration with the Secretary, set the Council meeting calendar;
- preside over the meetings of the Council;
- prepare annual sustainability progress report;
- manage the membership of the Council.

2. Duties of the Secretary

- set the meeting calendar
- prepare and distribute Council meeting agenda and minutes

C. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Council is comprised of the three elected officers, the Academic Sustainability Coordinator, the Director of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program, the Sustainability Coordinator for Operations, and the Chief Sustainability Officer. If the list above results in an Executive Committee of less than six persons, then the Council shall elect additional members from the Council to total six. The members of the Executive Committee or their duly designated alternates serve on the Green Fund Advisory Council as needed.

D. New Members

The current Council members shall consider, solicit, and recommend potential members to the Chancellor who will make all appointments to the Council. The Council may invite guests from the campus community to serve or provide expertise to the Council as needed.

E. Qualifications

Student members must be registered either as full or part-time during the term of office. Faculty and staff members must be current employees of UNCG.

F. Expectations

All members shall be active participants on the Council and attend all meetings or provide a knowledgeable proxy. Members serve as the primary liaison between the Council and their unit. Members should promote sustainability efforts within their unit and should bring to the Council any concerns their unit may have. Members not meeting these expectations may be removed from the Council. These members will be notified at least one week prior to a vote for removal. In the event of a removal or a member's resignation, the Council will recommend a replacement to the Chancellor.

G. Terms of Service

Student members will be appointed to one-year terms beginning 01 August of each year. All faculty and staff members will be appointed by the Chancellor for a renewable 2-year term. Members appointed on 01 August in an odd-numbered year will serve until 30 June of the next odd numbered year; and members appointed on 01 August in an even-numbered year will serve until 30 June of the

next even numbered year. All faculty and staff members appointed by the Council will serve for renewable 2-year terms.

Section 2: Committees and Special Assignments

The University Committee on Sustainability formed as a standing committee in 2008 with a charge to "identify and recommend responsible and sustainable practices in all aspects of institutional culture including operational activities, academic programs, and community relationships." In 2013, this committee was incorporated into the Sustainability Council. Recognizing the valuable role that the Committee served to capture and implement the interests, ideas, and initiatives of various members of the university community, its structure will remain as a component part of the Sustainability Council and will be organized in relation to the requisite areas of the Climate Action Plan.

Additional committees, task forces, and working groups may be formed as needed and at the discretion of the Council to accomplish specific assignments. These groups may include members of the university and surrounding communities who are not members of the Council.

Section 3: Meetings

The Council shall meet at least three (3) times per semester plus a fall retreat. The Secretary will notify Council members as well as all members of the UNGC community of meeting time, date and location at least one week prior to each meeting. All meetings will be open to the public except during Executive Session. The Co-Chairs shall prepare the agenda and facilitate meetings.


Executive Sessions (comprised of members of the Executive Committee as outlined in Article 3, Section 1, above) may be called as necessary by the Co-Chairs. No action votes will be taken during Executive Session.

Minutes of the Council shall be maintained and distributed to the Council and the Chancellor.

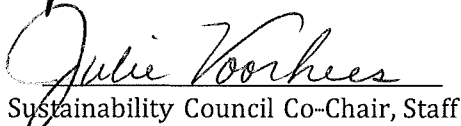
Section 4: Governance

The Council shall govern by consensus whenever possible. Four-fifths of the Council members shall be required in the absence of consensus to alter these operating papers. These operating papers must be revised or reaffirmed at least every five years. Unless otherwise specified, all other actions of the Council require a simple majority (51%) vote. Quorum is established by a simple majority (51%) of the Council.


Approved:



Chancellor



Sustainability Council Co-Chair, Staff



Sustainability Council Co-Chair, Faculty

8/16/2016

Date