

UNC Greensboro Sustainability Council

Operating Papers

Approved December 2021

The University of North Carolina's [Sustainability Policy](#) states that the University "shall establish sustainable development and resource management, or 'sustainability' as a core value of institutional operations, planning, capital construction, and purchasing practices." The policy sets the goal of becoming carbon neutral and zero waste by 2050 and states sustainable practices are to be implemented via the following means: systemic integration, master planning, design and construction, operations and maintenance, climate change mitigation and renewable energy, transportation, recycling and waste management, and environmentally preferred purchasing.

At UNC Greensboro, sustainability is "the enduring interconnectedness of social equity, the environment, the economy, and aesthetics." This unique definition applies to all aspects of academics, operations, and outreach. Such interconnectedness provides a foundation from which to discover, implement, and enrich sustainable principles and practice. Our intent is to promote justice, develop innovative approaches and solutions to environmental and economic challenges, and instill civility and grace into our communities.

These operating papers articulate the purpose, scope, and membership of the Sustainability Council and outline its operational procedures.

Article 1: Mission and Principles

Section 1: Mission

The Council works to identify and recommend responsible and sustainable practices in all aspects of institutional culture including operational activities, academic programs, and community relationships.

Section 2: 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 individuals whose personal choices will affect our campus carbon footprint, our interactions with the community, and our financial success. Cooperation and commitment from all stakeholders will allow us to achieve our goals.

Article 2: 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 UNCG's submission to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) and submit every three years.
- C. Conduct a gap analysis (Sustainability Matrix) to recommend and influence policy, academics, and operations and to advocate for and allocate any available resources needed to integrate sustainability into the university community.
- D. Support the Office of Institutional Research in their annual submission to the Times Higher Education Impact Ratings that track UNCG's progress in meeting the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- 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.
- F. Form or foster working groups, committees, task forces or other such smaller groups as necessary to accomplish specific tasks.
- G. 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.
- H. Solicit applications and select the Academic Sustainability Coordinator and the Sustainability Faculty Fellows.
- I. Review and offer feedback on UNCG's annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory (once the Council members are satisfied with the documents, the Council may vote to endorse them).
- J. Report annually to the Chancellor regarding campus sustainability and progress toward goals.

Article 3: Organization

Section 1: Membership

A. Members

The Council should be comprised of approximately equal numbers of individuals from faculty, staff, and students. Attention should be given to the diversity of the Council members, including but not limited to college/school affiliation, gender identity, and ethnicity.

1. Representation must include members with expertise in the following four areas:

- Environment or ecology
- Economics or business
- Equity or social justice
- Aesthetics or culture

2. Ex-officio members:

- Chief Sustainability Officer
- Sustainability Coordinator for Office of Sustainability
- Academic Sustainability Coordinator
- Director of Environment and Sustainability Program
- Sustainability Faculty Fellows
- Past-Chair of the Sustainability Council
- Student Government Association Appointee
- Graduate Student Association Appointee
- Faculty Senate Representative
- Staff Senate Representative

B. Officers

The Council shall have two officers: one Chair and a Secretary. The Chair and Secretary will be elected by members of the Council. Elections for a Secretary will be held annually. The Chair will serve a two-year term. Elections will take place near the end of each term.

1. Duties of the Chair

- Coordinate the activities of the Council
- Arrange for the Executive Council to meet with the Chancellor once per year at a minimum
- In collaboration with the Secretary, set the Council meeting calendar and agenda
- Preside over the meetings of the Council
- Prepare annual sustainability progress report
- Manage the membership of the Council
- Prepare the agenda and facilitate meetings.

2. Duties of the Secretary

- Set the meeting calendar
- Prepare and distribute Council meeting agenda and minutes
- Assist the chair with documentation management
- Notify Council members as well as all members of the UNCG community of meeting time, date and location at least one week prior to each meeting.

C. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Council should be composed of at least six individuals, including the two elected officers, the Academic Sustainability Coordinator, the Director of the Environment and Sustainability Program, the Sustainability Coordinator from the Office of Sustainability, and the Chief Sustainability Officer. The full Sustainability Council reserves the right to elect more members to the Executive Committee as it deems appropriate. The Executive Committee is responsible for directing the scope of the Council's operations during the academic year and shall meet at least six (6) times during the academic year. Additionally, Executive Committee members or their duly designated alternates will also serve on the Green Fund Advisory Council.

D. Qualifications

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

E. 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.

F. Terms of Service

Student members will be appointed to one--year, academic-year terms. All faculty and staff members will be appointed by the Chancellor for a renewable two-year term beginning 1 August.

Section 2: Sub-Committees and Special Assignments

Additional sub-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 an annual retreat. Executive Committee meetings may be called as necessary by members of the Executive Committee. No action votes will be taken during Executive Sessions. Minutes of the Council shall be maintained and distributed to the Council and added to the Council's Canvas account. All meetings will be open to the public except Executive Committee meetings.

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.