

ISCN 2014 International Sustainable Campus Network Excellence Awards

Please provide a brief description of the project (~100-200 words), including for construction projects, the physical size, population served, energy or environmental standards planned or achieved, cost, timeline (including planning and construction process) and key milestones, etc.

Sustainability means managing deep organizational changes for universities. The University of Washington (UW) fosters sustainability through an institutional approach that continually embraces multiple stakeholders as a part of the planning process, involving those who are responsible for identifying and managing their own goals. These goals involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving natural resources, tracking and reporting institutional activities, and increasing interdisciplinary collaboration to foster sustainability in research and curriculum. This definition is expanding to all three pillars of sustainability – environmental, social and economic.

Sustainability is a significant part of the University's educational mission, due in large part to student demand, engagement and activism. This focus on sustainability adds value in recruiting the best faculty, students and research support.

In 2004, the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee was formed by the Provost and Executive Vice President, chaired by a Dean. In 2008, a central Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability office was established under the Senior Vice President with oversight by an Associate Vice President.

This central office coordinates information and activities across the University to facilitate initiatives within three campus locations, medical centers and auxiliaries. The office was also established to raise university-wide visibility for sustainability.

To improve access of information to all stakeholders, this office tracks and communicates about sustainability metrics, conservation programs and initiatives. Through centralization, this approach mitigates institutional risk through coordinating dialogue and building consensus for strategic planning.

With this inclusive approach to managing change, UW developed a Climate Action Plan working in concert with students, faculty and staff. Today the university is developing carbon reduction policies that align with our strategies.

Please provide the URL for any online resources (websites, blogs, etc.) that describe the project.

<http://green.washington.edu/cap> -- University Climate Action Plan

<http://green.washington.edu/esc> -- University Committee

<http://green.washington.edu/dashboard> -- Central Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability Office

<http://green.washington.edu/climate-of-change> -- Collaborative sustainability video series

Based on the ISCN Charter, what do you think uniquely qualifies your project to receive the ISCN Award?

Sustainability is embedded into the institution's strategic planning activities, facilities management and educational, research and service missions, aligning with the three principles stated in the ISCN charter.

Why and how could your project promote sustainable campus projects at other universities?

Central management and coordination for environmental stewardship continues to support the University's leadership in sustainability among higher education institutions. With the increasing competitive nature of sustainability to attract students, faculty and research funding, it is imperative for the University to be consistently aware of the needs and attitudes of its many stakeholders. This successful approach adopted by the University of Washington can be used as a model by other higher education organizations.

How is this project different from other projects carried out at your university?

This project is a continual process that is part of engaging and managing sustainability related activities at the University, cuts across all campuses, medical centers and auxiliaries, and is transformational for all faculty, staff and students. In this ongoing way it differs from other projects that occur episodically or have a start and end. This is not a project – it is a transformational change effort that will expand and continue to innovate.

Has your project already received any award? If yes, please give name and date.

The University of Washington is a recognized leader with environmental stewardship and sustainability. More information can be referenced here:

<http://green.washington.edu/promote/uw-awards>

Please describe the process implemented for this project, including:

The Environmental Stewardship Committee is appointed by the Senior Vice President and reports to the President and Provost. The Committee is led by a Dean, and represented by individuals from six administrative departments, seven academic units, four students, as well as ex-officio members from the UW Bothell, UW Tacoma campuses and several auxiliary organizations.

The Environmental Stewardship office operates within the University's administration and reports to an Associate Vice President. The unit is made of full-time staff, student interns and many faculty, staff, and student volunteers. ESS coordinates sustainability across the university, which includes other full time staff dedicated to various aspects of this work.

Please describe challenges, problems, hurdles, barriers and how they were overcome during this project.

Due to budget restraints from the economic downturn, limited funding continues to be a challenge for establishing the University's sustainability office. Collaboration with other departments and groups continues to be the key for the Office to implement its programs and activities.