

UW ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2 June 2016

ESC ROLE AND FUNCTION

The Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC) is the UW entity charged with oversight of the University's system-wide environmental sustainability efforts and performance. This involves (1) guidance and advocacy on UW sustainability efforts, (2) an advisory role to key UW senior administrative positions and groups, and (3) a strategic management role with the UW Office of Sustainability. Specifically, the ESC:

1. Advises the Provost, President, Board of Regents, faculty, staff and students on UW sustainability goals and efforts
2. Advocates for sustainability as a guiding doctrine in decisions and policies at all levels
3. Provides strategic direction for the UW in the area of sustainability by benchmarking sustainability performance and cooperatively setting sustainability goals
4. Monitors UW sustainability performance
5. Facilitates collaboration between operations, academic and other UW groups in pursuit of sustainability goals
6. Educates students, faculty, and staff on and draws their attention to UW sustainability goals, efforts, and achievements.
7. Serves as the UW Sustainability Office advisory board

Key Deliverables

- Short, concise, annual report on the UW State of Sustainability. This serves as the UW's sustainability performance review.
- Annually set the academic year's priority sustainability efforts. A short list of 3-5 items on which the ESC and UW Sustainability Office will focus

PROPOSED UW SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Topic	Goal	KPI
Climate	Climate-neutral	scope 1,2,3 GHG emissions
Energy	100% renewable	electricity consumption energy mix
Consumption	Zero-waste	Water use waste diverted/to landfill
Economic	Positive ROI	ROI on expenditures
Peer Standing	Gold STARS rating	STARS rating
Infrastructure	All infrastructure certified	3 rd party certification
Transportation	<10% SOV	Mode share
Food	50% local/organic	Local/organic food % of total
Awareness	All UW aware of goals/actions	Survey results
Education	Robust & growing class inventory	Sustainability course inventory

ESC AS THE UW SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE ADVISORY BOARD

The ESC should reside with the Sustainability program and function as the UW Sustainability Office advisory board and provide non-binding strategic advice to it. In this role the ESC should:

- Review and understand the financial health of UW sustainability efforts. This review should include the UW Sustainability Office's budget and other sustainability-related budgets such as the Campus Sustainability Fund, and Green Seed Fund. This review is informational only, but is essential to ensure the ESC understands the financial underpinnings of UW sustainability efforts, and can advocate for them to continue to be the priority they are meant to be and funded at such a level.
- Review and understand the status of UW sustainability efforts. This means setting key performance indicators (KPIs) based on UW sustainability goals, benchmarking those KPIs against peer institutions, and setting goals related to them. While the UW Sustainability Office may lead such efforts, it is essential benchmarks and goals be approved by an inclusive university-wide body such as the ESC to ensure their reasonableness and continuity with other university efforts.
- Review and provide input for a UW Sustainability Office strategic plan annually.
- Make its members available to the UW Sustainability Office such that it can draw on the expertise, skills and time of ESC members to achieve its goals and objectives.

BACKGROUND & SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Foundations of the ESC

The ESC was founded as an informal task force in December 2000, which morphed into an advisory committee, which it generally still is (meaning guidance and oversight but no direct decision authority). The most recent statement of the ESC's guidance and oversight role comes from UW Executive Order Number 13, Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability, approved by then-President Young on 30 August 2012. The more complete history is here:

<http://green.uw.edu/inform/esc>

From its background the ESC can rightfully claim the following roles:

- Formulate UW sustainability goals
- Benchmark UW sustainability efforts
- Foster collaboration between operations and academic to meet sustainability goals
- Make UW aware of progress towards these goals (what UW sustainability does now)
- Interact with other environmentally-related committees
- Report annually to the Provost, EVP, President, and Board or Regents

Climate Action Plan Integration

The CAP should be managed by the ESC and taken as the framework for achievement of the UW's climate-neutrality goal. It should be managed by an ESC subcommittee that is charged with reporting UW progress towards CAP goals. Resources from the UW Sustainability Office should be made available to help make progress towards climate neutrality.

UW Definition and Scope of sustainability

Definition

We propose 2 levels of definition. First, a restatement of the Brundtland Commission generalized statement on sustainable development, which is most appropriate for general consumption:

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Second, a system definition that is more scientific, which is an appropriate systems definition to direct university action. This is taken from *The Natural Step* as:

"In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing ...

1. ... concentrations of substances from the earth's crust (such as fossil CO₂ and heavy metals),
2. ... concentrations of substances produced by society (such as antibiotics and endocrine disruptors),

3. ... degradation by physical means (such as deforestation and draining of groundwater tables),

...and in that society ...

4. ... there are no structural obstacles to people's health, influence, competence, impartiality and meaning.

Scope

The ESC focuses specifically on sustainability as it relates to the environment and/or ecology. While both definitions recognized society and human needs and values as critical, the UW already has a number of systems in place that focus on society and human values (e.g., safety, diversity, budget management, etc.).