

Sustainability Goals for UCCS

Final Report

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Developed by the:

Innovating for the Future: Sustainability Task Force

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I. Vision, Mission, & Leadership

Vision

The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs is a recognized leader in sustainability, integrating social, economic and ecological values into institutional policies, programs and practices.

Mission

Recognizing that institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to exercise leadership and create the future, UCCS actively pursues sustainability as a way to address the University's focus on increased student recruitment and retention, effective and efficient resource usage, and fiscal responsibility.

UCCS seeks to be a campus:

- Where committed campus administrators, in partnership with a dedicated faculty, staff, and educated student body, provide leadership and contribute expertise to local, regional, and global environmental efforts, and foster links with other institutions;
- Where we recognize our obligation to educate the university community about the importance of individual and institutional environmental responsibility and prepare our students by integrating sustainability literacy into academic learning and research across the curriculum and between the colleges;
- Where sustainability is integrated into all aspects of university functioning, including buildings, operations, planning, and purchasing, in such a way that we minimize the impact of our growing, dynamic campus upon the earth.

In doing the above, we will foster a culture of sustainability throughout UCCS's extended community.

Rationale

Higher education recognizes the need to reflect the reality that humanity is affecting the environment in ways which are historically unprecedented and which are potentially devastating for natural ecosystems, humans, and all living species. Since universities are an integral part of the global economy/community, we have a fundamental responsibility to teach, train and conduct research for sustainability, a framework addressing environmental, social, and economic factors. We believe the success of higher education will be judged by our ability to put forth a bold agenda, making sustainability and the environment a cornerstone of our academic and administrative practices.

(Rationale adapted from University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, www.ulsf.org)

Areas of Priority for Sustainability Goals & Objectives

- Based on importance, the priorities are: 1) Leadership; 2) Curriculum; and 3) Infrastructure/Operations.
- Based on timing (due to current building plans), the priorities are: 1) Leadership; 2) Infrastructure/Operations; and 3) Curriculum.

Leadership

- Clear statement of commitment from Executive Committee
- Development of UCCS sustainability vision/mission
- Continuous and comprehensive communication about commitment to sustainability (including channels for feedback from UCCS community)
- Commitment of resources (time and money) to sustainability efforts
- Signing of the Talloires Declaration
- Building of a “sustainability identity” for UCCS as part of recruitment and fund-raising
- Developing partnerships with stakeholder organizations to support sustainability efforts
- Fostering a culture of sustainability
 - Educating staff and faculty
 - Developing incentives/reward structures to support sustainability efforts
 - Expressing shared values towards sustainability in multiple ways

II. Operations/Facilities

Facilities management and operations significantly contribute to the creation of a sustainable university. Leadership towards this goal incorporates sustainability on many levels, including effective selection and utilization of human, economic and natural resources; creation of a land ethic that inspires a sense of place and stewardship; and enhancement of ecological literacy through facilities modeling and curriculum development. Furthermore, research and project collaboration between facilities, faculty, and students promotes sustainability goals on campus while providing leadership for the greater community. Accordingly, the Facilities/Operations subcommittee of the Chancellor's taskforce on sustainability developed the following areas of emphasis.

Human Resources

Nurture human capital by:

- Ensuring equity
- Embracing diversity – backgrounds, cultures, and opinions
- Hiring a Sustainability Specialist assigned to Facilities Services
- Sustaining our campus community

Tools (including facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies)

Create sustainable campus environments by:

- Considering ecological impacts in planning, design, construction, renovation and maintenance of all university facilities.
- Employing life-cycle-cost analysis techniques in all project work.
- Meeting LEED certification standards for all facilities until a superior campus set of standards is developed
- Meeting EPA Energy Star partnership and the Department of Energy Smart Schools program requirements
- Ensuring decision-making processes are transparent to all on campus

Minimize solid, liquid, and hazardous wastes by:

- Strategic purchasing
- Increased recycling

Protect the campus community by:

- Procuring Green materials and supplies
- Reducing campus community exposure to toxic chemicals

Natural Resources

Significantly reducing fossil fuel dependence by:

- Conserving energy
- Using renewable energy

Promoting and using sustainable transportation options by:

- Developing trails and bike path networks
- Encouraging car pools and bus use

Conserving and protecting water resources by:

- Enforcing an effective stormwater management program

- Observing City water conservation regulations
- Maximizing areas of natural vegetation and xeriscaping

Creating a land ethic that promotes stewardship of natural processes, ecosystems, and the conservation of green space by:

- Planning and incorporating Open Space into the UCCS Master Plan
- Educating faculty, staff, and students about ecosystem management

Student Support

Foster sustainability education to improve retention by:

- Supporting student groups whose objective is to enhance sustainability
- Supporting student projects focusing on actual, real-world campus problems
- Include student groups on campus planning committees (e.g. Master Plan)

Teaching/Facilities

Increase ecological literacy in campus community by:

- Supporting sustainability curriculum (guest lectures, sustainability materials)
- Conducting sustainable facilities training for campus community
- Modeling sustainable practices
- Actively participating in the development and implementation of a sustainability centered course curriculum

Research/Facilities

Explore and discover science and technology that enhance sustainability by:

- Pursuing sustainability focused research grants and donations
- Actively outreaching to the local community where sustainability actions are proactive (e.g. Fort Carson)
- Connecting to local governments and engage where appropriate
- In conjunction with the CU Design Review Board develop UCCS sustainability standards that go beyond LEED while better addressing regional and local environmental conditions

III. Education/Curriculum Goals

Minor Degree Program

Develop a draft proposal for an undergraduate Minor in Sustainable Development (see attached)

LAS

Increase the focus on sustainability in the LAS undergraduate general education requirements (e.g. within the Global Awareness requirement for LAS)

Freshman Seminar

Develop a new Freshman Seminar class focused on sustainability.

Interdisciplinary Course

Develop interdisciplinary courses (team taught) focused specifically on sustainability

Curriculum Transformation Program

Establish a curriculum transformation program to help faculty integrate sustainability components into their courses

(e.g. modeled after the Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies "Transforming the Curriculum" program in which faculty participants, selected based on submitted proposals, attend a summer workshop and collaboratively work on techniques to incorporate women and ethnic topics into their courses).

Colorado Springs Community

Increase educational offerings and community awareness on sustainability to the Colorado Springs community (e.g. such as developing a certificate program on sustainability).

Undergraduate Business Program

Increase the focus of sustainability in the undergraduate business program

- A. Seek to make the Minor in Sustainable Development available to business majors
- B. Increase the focus on sustainability in business courses

Graduate Programs

Increase the focus on sustainability in graduate programs

(e.g. consider developing interdisciplinary masters program with a sustainability area of emphasis).

Research

Encourage and support research in sustainability across all of the colleges.

Proposal for a Minor in Sustainable Development

Rationale for the Proposed Minor

This proposal seeks to establish an interdisciplinary minor in Sustainable Development. Education for sustainability, most often defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by paying equal attention to issues of environmental impact, social equity, and economic prosperity,” is an imperative for colleges and universities; so much so, the United Nations has named 2005-2015 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Universities as an integral part of the global economy/community, have a fundamental responsibility to teach, train and conduct research for sustainability, a framework addressing environmental, social, and economic factors. The success of higher education in the future will be judged in part by our ability to put forth a bold agenda, making sustainable development a cornerstone of our academic and administrative practices.

The proposed interdisciplinary minor includes courses on sustainability and environmental studies from eleven departments. Experiential, project-based and service learning will be encouraged. Expected outcomes from this initiative include : increased student competencies in dealing with social, environmental, and economic issues; contributions to UCCS and local organizations on environmental issues and projects; and, more responsible, active global citizens.

Academic Requirements

Students seeking the Minor in Sustainable Development must complete a minimum of 18 credit hours, 12 of which must be upper division courses. Coursework must be completed in a minimum of three of the departments in LAS or Business that participate in the program:

Biology/Chemistry, Communication, Economics, Geography and Environmental Studies, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Physics and Energy Sciences, Sociology, and Organization and Management. Special topic courses, internships, independent studies or other courses offered in these departments that are not listed here that might qualify require the consent of the Director of the Sustainable Development Minor. Courses that the student counts toward his/her major cannot be counted toward this minor.

BIOL 375	Conservation Biology, (cross-listed also as GES 375).
CHEM/BIOL 151 & 153 Lab	– Environmental Science
CHEM 341	Environmental Chemistry (science majors)
COMM 429	Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility
ECON 100	The Economics of Social Issues
ECON 330	Environmental Economics
HIST 489	Environmental History: The West and the World
GES 100	Environmental Systems: Climate and Vegetation
GES 210	Humans and Environments

GES 434	Soils
GES 441	Resource Management and Conservation
GES 445	Analysis of Environmental Systems
GES 448	Environmental Problems of Colorado
GES 450	Water Resources and Water Problems
GES 451	Applied Hydrology
GES 455	Disasters and Society
GES 475	Recreation, Tourism, and the Environment
PES 150	Introduction to Energy Science
PES 151	Introduction to Energy Science II
PES 250	Energy Fundamentals
PHIL 414	Environmental Philosophy
PSC 429	International Environmental Politics
PSC 435	Environmental Policies and Administration
SOC 222	Communities in a Global Environment
SOC 422	Sustainable Urban Development
SOC 438	Globalization and Development
HRMG 485	Directed Research in Human Resources and Management*

*The major project for this course must be on a topic related to Sustainable Development