

WSU Executive Committee on Sustainability

Report and Recommendations for System-wide Sustainability.

Submitted by Committee Chairs:

Julie Padowski, Co-Director, Center for Environmental Research, Education, and Outreach and Research Associate Professor, School of the Environment

Jason Sampson, Co-Director for Environmental Health and Safety

Jeanne Weiler, Coordinator of Presidential Initiatives, Office of the President

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Washington State University's locations are on the homelands of Native peoples. We acknowledge their presence here since time immemorial and recognize their continuing connection to the land, to the water, and to their ancestors. The University expresses its deepest respect for and gratitude towards the region's original and current caretakers.

<https://wsu.edu/about/land-acknowledgement/>

Background & Overview

As a state-wide land-grant institution, Washington State University recognizes our responsibility as stewards of indigenous lands. The University commits to pursuing a sustainable and just future for our System, partners, and global neighbors.

The WSU System Strategic Plan commits the university to these missions:

- Educational: help students become more aware, engaged, and creative.
- Scholarly: drive the betterment of human existence through discovery and the creative expression of the human experience.
- Outreach: serve the needs of Washingtonians by sharing expertise and helping residents integrate that knowledge into their daily lives.

In October of 2022, President Schulz convened a small group of WSU subject experts focused on environmental science and sustainability. The President requested this group to create a core set of principles to drive Phase One of a system-wide sustainability initiative. Through the remainder of the academic year, 2022/23, this group met and crafted Washington State University's Commitment to Sustainability [[Appendix A](#)]. Its language was developed to directly align with the WSU System Strategic plan and, therefore, focuses on principles of practical education, scholarly inquiry, and outreach to affect a positive impact across the WSU system. The WSU Commitment to Sustainability was approved by President Schulz, WSU Senior Leadership, WSU Faculty Senate and ultimately our WSU Board of Regents in March 2023.

August 2023 marked the formation of the inaugural Executive Committee representing all six WSU campuses, WSU extension, and a permanent seat occupied by the ASWSU Deputy Director of Sustainability. The subsequent System-wide Sustainability Task Force was established to provide an introspective (i.e., across all campuses) assessment and exploration of sustainability at WSU by creating four sub-committees centered on four strategic core goals: Research, Innovation, and creativity; Student experience; Outreach, extension, service, and engagement; and Institutional effectiveness and infrastructure [[Appendix B](#)]. More than 80 individuals across the system applied to participate in the initial task force. Fifty (50) individuals were selected based on their interest and expertise and intentionally comprised of faculty, students, and staff from throughout the WSU system [[Appendix C](#)].

The subcommittee structure and goals were developed through a series of meetings, both as individual subcommittees and as an entire task force [[Appendix D](#)], and the charge was clarified. Committees were tasked to consider environmental, social, and economic sustainability when developing initiatives with measurable outcomes within their specific sub-committee focus area. Sustainability goals that address equity and justice issues were encouraged. To the extent possible, committees were encouraged to view the Commitment to Sustainability at

Washington State University as a non-binding, non-exclusive frame of reference when creating goals or metrics for evaluation.

While this Task Force initiative was aimed internally, the leadership acknowledges and expects that further assessments that explore WSU's impact and contribution to our local and regional sustainability- including our role and responsibility to our non-tribal and tribal communities- will be forthcoming in future efforts.

Task Force Recommendations

The following summarizes the recommendations developed by this Sustainability Task Force. We begin with two general recommendations that received the majority support of all Task Force members and a series of focused recommendations around specific strategic plan areas we were asked to consider.

A. General Recommendations

1. Establish and sufficiently fund a system-wide Office of Sustainability.

Unanimously supported by each of our four sub-group committees, this recommendation suggests creating a cross-system, cross-college office, center, or department (including a director, support staff, and operational funds) that can coordinate, communicate, grow, and track our sustainability efforts at WSU. Sustainability is not new at WSU, but without thoughtful, dedicated guidance it has been difficult to identify and assess the impact of the many sustainability-related projects and efforts by faculty, students, and staff over the years. A dedicated Office that can 1) coordinate on-going efforts and 2) communicate them both internally and externally to WSU is needed. Given the need for this Office to work system-wide, this office should also work towards 3) identifying areas where integration of ideas could launch WSU in new sustainability directions, including through potential collaborations with community partners, sister institutions or National Laboratories, and 4) develop metrics for, and track the success of, all sustainability activities at WSU.

2. Evaluate the feasibility of developing a policy for divestment from fossil fuels.

Although we recognize that developing plans for sustainable (green or eco) investment management and divestment of fossil fuels does not fall under the purview of these four established sub-committees, this Sustainability Task Force unanimously supports and recommends that WSU take swift and active steps towards identifying how to achieve socially responsible investing as an additional and essential focus of WSU's commitment to creating a comprehensive sustainable culture.

B. Focused Sub Committee Recommendations

B.1 Research, Innovation, and Creativity [see [Appendix D.1](#) for details]

1. Develop Capacity for Knowledge Integration

WSU already supports a diversity and depth of knowledge about sustainability. However, these efforts remain siloed by discipline and campus. To support innovation and encourage disciplines to work together on complex, interdependent, critical issues, WSU should develop mechanisms and incentives that encourage integration of knowledge across departments and campuses, between researchers and students, and through partnerships with communities- especially our Tribal neighbors and other communities beyond the borders of Washington State.

2. Invest in the Sustainability Research Enterprise

Research is core to the mission of WSU. As an R1 institution, we attract highly productive faculty and students who are interested in tackling and solving the multifaceted, complex challenges our society faces. To better leverage this advantage, WSU must:

- Actively seek opportunities for investment in sustainability through existing state and federal funding mechanisms,
- Stabilize budgets to allow for long-term planning and investment in research endeavors to reduce faculty turnover and bolster student recruitment,
- Prioritize climate and sustainability related faculty positions, equipment, and support infrastructure, including offering more opportunities for student participation in sustainability-related research and programs,
- Increase capacity for DEI in sustainability research and through support of indigenous science.

3. Position WSU as a model “sustainable society.”

University campuses are well-positioned to act as sustainability leaders. Already communities unto themselves, universities offer rich intellectual, infrastructural, and social ground for envisioning and operationalizing an alternative way of living. WSU should embrace our capacity to act as a “living laboratory” by supporting the integration of sustainability research and outreach into campus function and education (e.g. green or solar rooftops, and hydrogen fuel), by adopting and increasing opportunities for practicing sustainability (e.g., no plastic water bottles), and through the creation of educational and other opportunities for WSU students and our WA communities (e.g., new UCORE requirements, K-12 outreach).

B.2 Institutional Effectiveness and Infrastructure [see [Appendix D.2](#) for details]

1. Develop internal funding mechanisms for supporting sustainability efforts (One percent for Green Cougs)

Committing to sustainability will require devoting financial resources towards programs, opportunities, and improvements that will benefit WSU and WA communities into the future. As part of this commitment, WSU should commit 1-3% of philanthropic dollars towards addressing the University's most urgent priorities related to sustainability. Given the interest of the Office of the President in sustainability, this recommendation might be considered as part of the portfolio of the President's Excellence Fund. These funds could then be made available to the Office of Sustainability to support short- or longer-term projects (but not be used to pay for Office of Sustainability staff salaries).

2. Establish and maintain a System-wide Sustainable Infrastructure Grant Program

To become a true leader in sustainability, WSU must advance scholarship on sustainability and sustainable infrastructure. We propose establishing a Scholarly Sustainable Infrastructure Grant Program inspired by the WSU Grand Challenges developed nearly ten years ago. This proposed Grant Program would "capitalize on the institution's fundamental research strengths to achieve broad societal impact" through sustainable infrastructure activities (WSU Grand Challenges, February 2024). By offering financial support to WSU scholars and infrastructure professionals, this program would incentivize a unique and potentially highly innovative collaboration structure to encourage multidisciplinary applied research projects that result in infrastructure improvements on WSU campuses or Research and Extension Centers. Together, these groups will develop a needs assessment, research program, and course of applied action. The research must be designed to be implemented (should the research findings warrant implementation).

B.3 Student Experience [see [Appendix D.3](#) for details]

1. Include student leadership and engagement in all aspects of WSU sustainability.

Students are the heart of WSU and are our future leaders, innovators, and decision-makers. Providing ample and frequent opportunities for students to engage in capstone, service, or internships learning opportunities will give students the skills and knowledge for how to deal with the complex, difficult challenges they will face after leaving University.

2. Increase sustainable practices into the material student experience.

If WSU is to truly be a leader in sustainability, it should aim to provide students with not just intellectual, but tangible representations of how sustainability can be implemented in the real world. To this end, we recommend:

- Identifying and implementing methods to reduce carbon emissions in transportation to, from, and around campuses (e.g., more extensive public transportation options);
- Growing or scaling up new and/or existing waste reduction initiatives (e.g., WSU-Pullman's Dining's Reusable Container program);

- Improving water, energy, and waste management in student housing (e.g., easier access to composting, solar panel rooftops to support building energy demands);
- Emphasizing and improving student engagement through more effective programming, marketing, and awareness campaigns (e.g., incentivizing sustainable practices, promoting Sustainability Fairs, supporting the Green Fund).

3. Integrate sustainable practices into the educational student experience.

Given the potential at WSU to leverage multiple disciplines, minds, and resources into a cohesive and integrated collaborative effort towards improved sustainability, there is also vast potential for weaving student educational experiences into this endeavor by encouraging a “sustainability lens framework” for curricular and educational decision-making. Fruitful ways for accomplishing this would include:

- Creating incentive structures for faculty (e.g., course buy-outs, T&P revisions) to transform curriculum in ways that integrate sustainability thinking and practice into undergraduate learning goals and graduate education.
- Partner with UCORE leadership and committees and Faculty Senate to implement a curricular “sustainability” requirement (like recent Equity & Justice designation);
- Design and facilitate assessments to help students track learning progress and to identify ways to apply sustainability in their disciplines and their daily lives.
- Support current and expanded service-learning, internships, education abroad, and other high-impact curricular experiences that focus on environmental sustainability.
- Leverage existing co-curricular offices to deliver regular experiences focused on sustainability (i.e. Foley Center, School of the Environment).

B.4 Outreach, Extension, Service and Engagement [see [Appendix D.4](#) for details]

1. Develop and lead a “Community Climate Action Framework.”

Using a “collective action” framework WSU could act as a central hub and leader in bringing together community members, WSU faculty and staff, and others to co-create ideas and take actionable steps towards a more sustainable community. This framework could be based on previously developed structures (see Appendix X. X) that have shown promise in meaningfully bringing together diverse voices to find consensus on sustainable actions and futures and would leverage extension’s existing presence and networks across the state.

2. Create and promote climate literacy training and certification.

As a respected community member and educational leader, WSU has the potential to help promote a culture of sustainability that creates and educates leaders in the development, application, and distribution of sustainable practices for the benefit of WSU and all communities in Washington State and beyond. To this end, WSU should consider crafting and implementing a systemwide professional development program. This program would cultivate environmental sustainability at work, at home, and in the community by developing a series of training/UCORE courses designed to help individuals understand

sustainability conceptually and in practice while providing opportunities to connect peers towards catalyzing new ideas for bringing sustainability to all levels of community.

3. Support new Extension efforts towards community sustainability.

As a Land Grant University, we benefit from strong connections to WA communities through the efforts and trust built by our Extension faculty and staff. Providing resources to support the development of a sustainability-focused Extension program could:

- Create stronger connections with other WA organizations, such as the Washington Association of Counties and the Association of Washington Cities to connect WSU researchers and innovators more efficiently and effectively to community leaders and organizations interested in sustainable solutions.
- Develop additional programs and materials aimed at helping WA communities develop and tackle sustainable development, including food systems resilience and ecosystem services protection, and other aspects of development related to climate change and its attendant impacts.

APPENDIX A. Commitment to Sustainability at Washington State University

Washington State University, as a state-wide land-grant institution, commits to pursuit of a sustainable and just future for our System, our partners, and our global neighbors.

The WSU System Strategic Plan commits the university to these missions:

- Educational: help students become more aware, engaged, and creative.
- Scholarly: drive the betterment of human existence through discovery and the creative expression of the human experience.
- Outreach: serve the needs of Washingtonians by sharing expertise and helping residents integrate that knowledge into their daily lives.

These missions drive the following commitments to sustainability:

1. Reduce emissions across the WSU System throughout all dimensions of operations by both direct reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and indirect actions to reduce goods, services, and activities that contribute to carbon pollution.
2. Discover, promote, and invest in regenerative practices that conserve and rebuild natural resources to sustain ecosystem services and communities, via research, academic programs, and extension/outreach.
3. Build a working culture of sustainability across Washington by actively promoting sustainability endeavors within the WSU system and through meaningful engagement with our diverse partners in tribal, extension, and other statewide efforts.
4. Engage with other land-grant institutions to rapidly share and disseminate ideas and explore collective actions that promote the reduction of emissions and adopt regenerative practices.

“At WSU, it is not just a plan on paper.” Washington State University has been quietly taking the lead in many areas of sustainable scholarship for decades. Our four commitments capture these existing, growing strengths and position WSU to serve as a beacon for our sister institutions across the nation.

Core targets as determined by the Goals of the WSU System Strategic Plan:

- Research, innovation, and creativity:
 - Foster and promote cutting-edge, innovative, and impactful research and solutions that address local, regional, and global sustainability challenges.
- Student experience:
 - Provide transformative learning experiences that successfully prepare students and communities to make significant impacts in a rapidly changing world.
- Outreach, extension, service, and engagement:
 - Encourage and support our students and partner with broader communities in developing skills to lead initiatives that foster sustainable and just futures.
- Institutional effectiveness and infrastructure:
 - Operations- Reduce operational environmental impact with latest technologies; encourage researchers to use campuses and communities as a living laboratory; mandate that all new construction be as carbon-neutral as possible and prioritize replacement of infrastructure to update least carbon-efficient infrastructure first.
 - Administration- Create and facilitate efficient, transparent opportunities and pathways for WSU to make meaningful contributions to a sustainable future locally and globally.

Recommendations

- Establish a System-wide Task Force to carry out the commitments put forth here.
 - Recruit student, faculty, and staff representation across the System.
 - Broadly solicit interest via applications
 - Include selected community partners.
- Hire a full-time Director of Sustainability with staff support including web support for development of a system-wide sustainability website.
 - Immediately begin solicitation of ideas and suggestions from across the WSU community for Task Force consideration
- Explore enhancement of WSU sustainability initiatives via legislative support.

APPENDIX B. Washington State University Sustainability Task Force Guidelines

In accordance with Washington State University's (WSU) Commitment to Sustainability, a Sustainability Task Force shall be established and begin working on goals, policies and initiatives beginning Fall Semester, 2023. The Task Force is committed to providing recommendations to the WSU President, System Leadership Collaborative (SLC, Faculty Senate and the WSU Board of Regents by the end of the Spring 2024 semester. The task force will include an Executive Committee and sub-committees focused on four core targets: Research, innovation, and creativity; Student experience; Outreach, extension, service, and engagement; Institutional effectiveness and infrastructure. The Executive Committee will include one non-voting Ex-Officio representative for system-wide communications.

- Research, innovation, and creativity:
 - Foster and promote cutting-edge, innovative, and impactful research and solutions that address local, regional, and global sustainability challenges.
- Student experience:
 - Provide transformative learning experiences that successfully prepare students and communities to make significant impacts in a rapidly changing world.
- Outreach, extension, service, and engagement:
 - Encourage and support our students and partner with broader communities in developing skills to lead initiatives that foster sustainable and just futures.
- Institutional effectiveness and infrastructure:
 - Operations- Reduce operational environmental impact with latest technologies; encourage researchers to use campuses and communities as a living laboratory; mandate that all new construction be as carbon-neutral as possible and prioritize replacement of infrastructure to update least carbon-efficient infrastructure first.
 - Administration- Create and facilitate efficient, transparent opportunities and pathways for WSU to make meaningful contributions to a sustainable future locally and globally.
- System Wide Communications (Ex-officio)

Committees shall be comprised of faculty, students, and staff from throughout the WSU system and will focus on core areas for improvement in alignment with the WSU strategic plan serving the entire system and every community we serve.

Task Force Executive Committee:

By invitation of the President, the Executive Committee will be comprised of 6-10 individuals from across the system including the Task Force Co-Chairs, administrative support from the President's Office, and Subcommittee leads. The Executive Committee will be responsible for developing guidelines and expectations for subcommittees, and compiling information to develop recommendations for the SLC.

Task Force Subcommittees:

Subcommittee members will have expertise or interest in their primary core target area but will collaboratively provide recommendations in all target areas. Community and corporate

partners may also be engaged to support the subcommittees. The subcommittees will consist of 8-10 individuals and a lead representative that reports committee progress directly to the Executive Committee.

The subcommittees will provide recommendations on WSU actions or initiatives to advance institutional commitments to sustainability and are aligned with the WSU Strategic Plan. Additionally, the subcommittee will recommend a mechanism to track progress, and propose reasonable timelines.

Consideration for committee membership will be as follows:

- *Faculty*: Application to Faculty Senate providing brief overview of area of expertise, and why there is interest in participating. Faculty Senate and Executive Task Force will select faculty based on subcommittee needs.
- *Staff*: Recommendations by administration based on an individual's expertise and current involvement in commitment areas. Supervisors will need to approve participation on the task force.
- *Students*: Recommendations by Student Involvement via current levels of engagement or role individuals have within ASWSU.

Commitment to Sustainability at Washington State University

Washington State, as a state-wide institution for higher learning, and committed to our foundation as a land-grant university, is dedicated to pursuit of a sustainable and just future for our System, our partners, and our global neighbors.

The WSU System Strategic Plan, assures a commitment to “the principles of practical education for all, scholarly inquiry that benefits society, and the sharing of expertise to positively impact the state and communities.” It is the obligation of this university as a state-wide institution to embrace this commitment through a **culture** of sustainability and regenerative practices.

The system's strategic plan is built on three guiding principles:

- WSU's educational mission is to help students become more aware, engaged, and creative.
- WSU's scholarly mission is directed toward the betterment of human existence through the uncovering of new information, the discovery of how to use that information to solve problems and the creative expression of the human experience.
- WSU's outreach mission is to serve the needs of Washingtonians by sharing its expertise and helping residents integrate that knowledge into their daily lives.

Within each of these guiding principles, this commitment to sustainability serves to incorporate key areas of focus:

1. **Reduce emissions across the WSU System** throughout all dimensions of operations by both direct reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and indirect actions to reduce goods, services, and activities that contribute to carbon pollution.
2. **Discover, promote, and invest in regenerative practices** that conserve and rebuild natural resources and sustain ecosystem services, via research, academic programs, and extension/outreach.

3. **Build a working culture of sustainability across the WSU system** by engaging with our diverse partners in tribal, extension, and other statewide efforts.
4. **Engage with other land-grant institutions** to rapidly share and disseminate ideas and explore collective actions that promote the reduction of emissions and adopt regenerative practices.

APPENDIX C. WSU System-wide Sustainability Task Force Committee Roster

Institutional Effectiveness and Infrastructure

<i>First and Last Name</i>	<i>Job/Position</i>	<i>System Location</i>
Jon Schad**	Campus Facilities Executive	Spokane
Damien Sinnott**	Vice Chancellor, Tri-Cities	Tri-Cities
Kris Johnson	Faculty	Pullman
Shelby Ruiz	Research Associate/Project Manager, Integrated Design + Construction Lab	Pullman
Lisa Friend	Fiscal Analyst 2	
Jeff Lannigan	Associate Director, Utilities & Energy	Pullman
Eric Smith	Director of Capital Projects	Spokane
Razan Osman	Student	
VICENTE HERNANDEZ	STUDENT	
Jill Maxwell	IT Application Developer	
Katie Forsythe	Scholarly Assistant Professor	Pullman

Outreach, Extension, Service and Engagement

<i>First and Last Name</i>	<i>Job/Position or Current student standing</i>	<i>System Location</i>
Vicki McCracken **	Associate Dean, CAHNRS, Executive Director for Extension	Pullman
Holly Sitzmann **	AVP, Marketing and Communications	System
Carol McFarland	Associate in (Research) leading the PNW Farmers' Network	
Brad Gaolach	Professor	Everett Campus
Melissa Mayer	Public Relations/Communication Coordinator, Ask Dr. Universe	System/Vancouver
Ali Schultheis	Project Manager	
Aronn Rhinehart	Program Coordinator	
Diane Smith	Associate Professor	
Sarah Bergquist	County Director - Interim Program Coordinator / AP	Island County
Hailey Vanessa Smith	PhD Student	Pullman
Angus Matheson	Student	Pullman

Research, Innovation and Creativity

<i>First and Last Name</i>	<i>Job/Position or Current student standing</i>	<i>System Location</i>
Allyson Beall-King **	Director, School of the Environment, CAS	Pullman
Celestina Barbosa-Leiker **	Vice Chancellor, Spokane	Spokane
Xianming Shi	Professor and Chair	Pullman
Manuel Garcia-Perez	Professor & Chair	Pullman
Kate Hellmann	Director, International Student and Scholar Services	Pullman
Ayla Bales	Student	
Jordy Bautista	Current Standing student	
Patricia Townsend	Associate Professor	Everett
Jeremy Griffin	Director of Custodial Services	Pullman
Alex Pietsch	Executive Director	Seattle

Student Experience

<i>First and Last Name</i>	<i>Job/Position or Current student standing</i>	<i>System Location</i>
Kim Holapa **	Associate Vice Chancellor	Pullman
Brian Shuffield **	Executive Director, Student Involvement	Pullman
Kassandra Lynn Vogel **	Cougar Connector, Enrollment and Recruitment	Pullman
Jessica Goldberger	Professor	Pullman
Ella Jarvik	Medical Student	Spokane
Dylan Bugden	Boeing Distinguished Assistant Professor of Environmental Sociology	Pullman
Alecia Hoene	Academic Advisor II	Pullman
Armine Ghalachyan	Assistant professor	
Stephen Fawcett	Environmental Sustainability Alliance Chair (student)	Pullman
Clif Stratton	Vice Chancellor for Academic Engagement, WSU-Pullman	Pullman
Jonathan Stahl	Associate Director, Outdoor Recreation & Student Development	Pullman
Spencer Desmarais	Associate Director, Event Service and Operations, Compton Union Building	Pullman
Kristine Perry	Interim Director	Clark County
Gil Rezin	Student	
Jason Butcherite	Associate Director	Pullman

APPENDIX D. Sustainability Task Force Sub-Committee Final Recommendations

D.1 Research, Innovation and Creativity

1 Establish an Office of Sustainability and lead administrator focused on systemwide climate and sustainability activity for knowledge integration. SDGs ([United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals)) 8, 9, 10, 11,16, 17 [<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>]

Create a center, institute, or other such mechanism by which external entities can partner with WSU, taking advantage of the brainpower, facilities, and equipment across the system, to solve climate and sustainability needs and challenges. Ensure appropriate staffing, marketing, and support infrastructure necessary to make the effort successful.

(METRIC: Establishment of center; number of partners, projects). SDG 9, 11, 16,17

- Support collaboration with National Laboratories and other universities. (METRICS: number of maintained and new partnerships). SDG 17
- Catalog all current climate and sustainability research activities and sustainability strategies/practices. (METRIC: Initial publication and regular updates to catalog) SDG 16, 17
- Establish a public-facing dashboard to report climate/sustainability progress. (METRIC: Initial publication and regular updates to dashboard) SDG 16, 17
- Reach out to communities to help them with sustainability. SDG 11, 17 (e.g. <https://ecology.wa.gov/air-climate/climate-commitment-act/cap-and-invest>)

2. Invest in the Capacity for Knowledge Integration

- Create capacity and vision to develop sustainability algorithms for system wide knowledge integration across departments and campuses for both researchers and students. (METRIC: Number of new interdisciplinary projects that integrate knowledge across disciplines) SDG 1-17
- Using the system of knowledge integration collaborate with International Programs on American Council on Education Internationalization Lab to integrate knowledge systems of other cultures into research and innovation to position faculty across disciplines to work on complex, interdependent, critical issues that align with UN SDGs. We cannot be limited by the western perspectives which may be limiting our ability to become sustainable and should conduct research in areas which are beyond the borders of the state of Washington. (METRIC: Number of new projects that specifically use integrate knowledge and cultural systems beyond western perspectives) SDG 10, 11, 16,17

3. Invest in the Sustainability Research Enterprise SDG 1-17

- Pillar of the WSU 2031 Capital Campaign priorities. SDG 1-17

- Stabilize budget to allow for long-term planning and investment in research endeavors. (METRIC: years of stabilized budgets; lower faculty turnover rates; increased recruitment of top students. 1 SDG 1-17
 - Prioritize climate and sustainability related faculty positions, equipment, and support infrastructure. (METRIC: funding directed to climate and sustainability related investments) SDG 1-17
 - Increase capacity for DEI in research related to sustainability and include indigenous science. SDG 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16
 - Seek opportunities for investment through the Cap & Invest program under the Washington State Climate Commitment Act and other state and federal funding mechanisms. (METRIC: funding secured) SDG 7, 13
 - Strengthen the connection between research and career services as a strategy to shore up staffing challenges from within. Provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research and internship opportunities, prioritizing climate, and sustainability related programs. (METRICS: number of opportunities; number of graduates to matriculate to positions at WSU) SDG 4, 10, 16
- 4 Establish WSU campuses as “sustainable societies,” e.g. living laboratories, ecosystems, and inspirational places where students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors come to be inspired by the work and mission of adapting to and managing and climate change. SDG 1-17**
- Integrate sustainability research and outreach into campus function and education. (e.g. utilize biofuels, use roof tops for innovative solar and wind projects, increase composting and add additional EV chargers, add additional and better promote LEED building characteristics) (METRIC: number of visible projects). SDG 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13
 - Adopt and increase opportunities for sustainable practices (e.g. banning plastic water bottles at university events). (METRIC: reduction in waste volume; water, electricity usage, etc.) SDG 11, 12
 - Create opportunities to showcase the positive benefits of climate/sustainability research. (METRIC: number of programs, interpretive signage, events, etc.) SDG 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 13
 - Direct UCORE requirements and student projects to just climate/sustainability classwork (METRIC: enrollment in climate/sustainability-related majors, graduate programs) SDG 1-17
 - Develop opportunities for K-12 outreach, including reviving programs such as the Imagine Tomorrow competition, as a student recruitment strategy. (METRIC: number of K-12 students reached; enrollment) SDG 4, 10

D.2 Institutional Effectiveness and Infrastructure

1 Organizational Structure to support Sustainability Goals

- Establish an Office of Sustainability staffed with manager and support personnel. Responsibilities include development of a system-wide strategic sustainability plan (One WSU); promote, measure, and disseminate policy and goals; coordinate initiatives with internal and external constituents; and, communicate progress for the WSU community statewide.
- This office would develop and maintain a robust website supporting education in sustainable practices, program goals and objectives, and a dashboard that actively monitors progress.

2 One Percent for Green Cougs

- Inspired by 1% for the Planet, an organization composed of business members that “commit to donating at least 1% of annual sales directly to environmental organizations,” 1% for Green Cougs is designed to advance environmental sustainability at WSU through the generous support of donors. For example, and in practice, 1% of philanthropic dollars contributed to the WSU President’s Excellence Fund will be reserved for short- and long-term sustainable infrastructure projects across the WSU system. The President’s Excellence Fund was selected for this initiative because of President Kirk Schulz’s commitment to sustainability through the development of the WSU System Sustainability Task Force and the unrestricted nature of this fund. According to the President’s Excellence Fund description, this fund “provides WSU the nimbleness to address the University’s most urgent priorities...where critical funding is scarce.” Based on the WSU Board of Regent’s charge for President Schulz to develop a System Sustainability Task Force and the infrastructure needs across the University’s campuses and Research and Extension Centers, allocating 1% of President’s Excellence Funds going forward for these efforts is an appropriate way to address these urgent priorities.
- 1% for Green Cougs will be administered by the Office of the President in consultation with the Director of Sustainability and their Task Force (Commitment to Sustainability at Washington State University, March 2023). Special attention will be paid to short- and long-term infrastructure projects; use of funds will be balanced between immediate needs and strategically saving a portion of funds for larger projects. Project funds will not be used to pay for Director of Sustainability salary.
- Examples of short-term and long-term infrastructure projects across the WSU system include long term: Window retrofitting, in which we assess how the window’s placement affects the building’s temperature and bird’s livelihood due to bird-window collisions. Short term: Switching to more energy efficient appliances based on industry standards.

- We invite President Schulz to expand this charge to 2% for Green Cougs, or 3% for Green Cougs, if funding and desire from his office is present.
- Through this initiative, “WSU’s generous alumni and friends” will “make a difference in WSU’s daily operations by providing valuable resources to support the University’s areas of greatest need” (President’s Excellence Fund, February 2024).

3. Collaborative System-wide Sustainable Infrastructure Grant Program

- Scholars at Washington State University advance knowledge, society, and culture daily. Professionals across the Washington State University’s campuses and Research and Extension Centers (REC) care for, repair, and improve our physical holdings daily. There is an opportunity for these groups of researchers and infrastructure professionals to collaborate on applied research projects that will contribute to improved sustainability across the system.
- The Scholarly Sustainable Infrastructure Grant Program is inspired by the WSU Grand Challenges developed nearly ten years ago. This proposed Grant Program will “capitalize on the institution’s fundamental research strengths to achieve broad societal impact” through sustainable infrastructure activities (WSU Grand Challenges, February 2024). Scholars and infrastructure professionals will collaborate on multidisciplinary applied research projects that result in infrastructure improvements on a particular WSU campus or REC, or across the System. The fund will be managed by the WSU Office of Research. Proposals will be reviewed by a group that includes members of the Office of Research, the WSU Director of Sustainability, and members of the latter’s Task Force.
- Projects must be collaborative and mutually beneficial for scholars and infrastructure professionals/departments. Together, these groups will develop a needs assessment, research program, and course of applied action. The research must be designed to be implemented (should the research findings warrant implementation). Funding may be used for, but is not limited to, personnel, equipment, and necessary travel for research purposes. Funding will last for four years.
- Funded projects will be required to present their findings on an annual basis. In year one, teams will present their progress to the University community through a presentation. In years two and three, teams will present their findings at the WSU Sustainability Symposium (separate Sustainability Task Force Proposal). In year four, teams will present their overall findings and plan for application to the University community through a presentation (which may coincide with the WSU Sustainability Symposium).

- The Scholarly Sustainable Infrastructure Grant Program will advance scholarship on sustainability and sustainable infrastructure, highlight WSU as a leader in sustainable infrastructure and research, and address much-needed infrastructure improvements across the System.

D.3. Student Experience

1. Create a system Sustainability Office that:

- Has sufficient staff and a budget to meet identified goals.
- Identifies and acts upon system sustainability priorities, especially but not limited to the current student-led fossil fuel divestment campaign.
- Provides strategic goals and metrics by which the office and its campus partners are guided and held to account.
- Is held to account by an advisory council comprised of campus representation that includes faculty, staff, and students.
- Employs a sustainability lens to regularly hold the Office of the President and the Board of Regents accountable in its decision-making, including the university's material and financial relationship to fossil fuels.
- Secures funding, expertise, and logistical support for sustainability initiatives in the areas of:
 - a. Research, innovation, and creativity.
 - b. Student experience
 - c. Outreach, extension, service, and engagement
 - d. Institutional effectiveness and infrastructure
 - e. Financial responsibility (fossil fuel divestment, purchasing)

2: A core function of a system Sustainability office will be to support increased sustainable practices in the delivery of the material student experience (daily living on and off campus).

- All initiatives should involve student leadership and opportunities for students to engage in capstone, service, or internship learning opportunities. The sub-committee has identified the following as key foci:
- Transportation: Identify and implement ways to reduce carbon emissions in transportation to, from, and around each campus. Initiatives include:
 - a. City-campus partnerships in mass transit, ride share, walk/bike incentive programs.
 - b. Road and parking infrastructure assessment and revision to reduce carbon-based transportation.
 - c. Micro mobility on campuses (e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.)

- Waste Reduction: Identify and scale new and existing waste reduction initiatives. Initiatives include:
 - a. Expand WSU-Pullman University Dining’s Reusable Container program, which has saved 22,000 single-use containers from the landfill from just one Dining center on the Pullman campus.
 - b. Create food recapture programs.
 - c. Prioritize / incentivize vegetarian options and other sustainable food practices with new and existing third-party food vendors.
 - d. Inventory existing composting, recycling, and reuse programs at each campus and identify target reduction goals and needed support to reach them.
 - e. Explore smart waste collection systems starting with high-traffic areas on campus (BigBelly intelligent waste collection system, solar compactors)
 - f. Explore policies about single-use containers for third party contractors in food/beverage.
 - g. Scale use of proper waste management education materials/campaigns targeted at students via physical and digital methods.
 - h. Reduction in promotional materials generated (water bottles, bags, etc.)
- Student Housing:
 - a. University housing leadership in sustainability in building, power, and water consumption, etc. (i.e. LEED certified building priorities; solar panels on rooftops!)
 - b. Close partnerships with major off campus housing providers (tied to transportation too) to reduce carbon emissions.
 - c. Facilitate accessible waste management disposal systems in student housing allowing students to dispose of trash, recycle, and compost easily where they live.
- General Engagement: programming, awareness, marketing
 - a. Reframing what it means to give incentives (move from disposal to sustainable/experiential) Sustainability Fair, Earth Day, annual events and promotion.
 - b. Fundraising and Green Fund promotion.

3: A core function of the system Sustainability office will be to support campus- and system-level efforts to integrate environmental sustainability into the student educational experience. The sub-committee has identified the following as key foci / initiatives:

- Create incentive structures (funding/course buyouts/T&P language, etc.) for faculty to transform curriculum in ways that integrates sustainability thinking and practice into undergraduate and graduate education.

- Explore creation of sustainability learning goal for addition to current (or revised) undergraduate learning goals.
- Partner with UCORE leadership, UCORE committee, and Faculty Senate on possible implementation of a curricular “sustainability” requirement (like recent Equity & Justice designation).
- Support current and expanded service-learning, internships, education abroad, and other high-impact curricular experiences that focus on environmental sustainability; develop target metrics for student participation and create equitable pathways to access.
- Develop a sustainability lens framework for curricular decision-making, including industry partnerships, course creation and practices, program outcomes, and college and departmental strategic priorities.
- Leverage existing co-curricular offices to deliver regular experiences focused on sustainability, often in partnership with academic schools, departments, or programs (i.e. Foley Center, School of the Environment).
- Design and facilitate assessments to help students track learning progress and to identify ways to apply sustainability in their chosen fields of study and in their daily lives.

D.4. Outreach, Extension, Service, and Engagement

Community Climate Action Framework

Develop a “collective action” framework where community members, WSU faculty and staff, and others can co-create ideas and take actionable steps towards a more sustainable community.

- Creating an advisory committee for the sustainability office that includes members of the surrounding communities. Involve the communities across the state, leveraging our Extension presence across the state.
- Use Project Drawdown as a reference (<https://inletkeeper.org/actionkit/>). The theory of Drawdown is based on middle-out, community-level change, and starts by gathering community members (which could include WSU leadership, students, city government, local businesses, climate experts, etc.) in discussion forums to brainstorm, agree upon, and enact change that will create more sustainable, climate-resilient communities.
 - Could incorporate or build off work done by Clark County and Snohomish County Extension offices and process developed by the Extension team.
- Incorporate National Issue Forum / Deliberative Dialogue process ([Deliberation | NIFI](#)) and their Climate Issue Guide ([Climate Choices | NIFI](#)) into developing this framework for community deliberation on sustainability action.

Climate literacy training and certification

Influence a university-wide culture of sustainability that creates leaders in the development, application, and distribution of sustainable practices now and in the future, for the benefit of WSU and all communities in Washington State and beyond.

- Implementation of a systemwide professional development program modeled after Penn State's Green Paws Program. This program would cultivate environmental sustainability and resilience at work, at home, and in the community. Incorporate a required sustainability/climate literacy class into UCORE/Land Grant 101 for all students.
- Develop an active database that tracks community opportunities focused on sustainability. Consider including a K-12 engagement/outreach program for undergrads and grad students.
- Assess how to scale for Washington communities.
- Encourage partnerships with local businesses on our campuses. Utilize WSU's contract-making with new and existing businesses to ensure sustainability goals are being met.

Sustainability and resilience across WA

Contribute to the state-wide development of sustainability and resiliency through the implementation of location-specific climate adaptation, mitigation, and environmental justice strategies co-created with communities across the state. [3rd 'broader goal' description idea]

- Allocate additional funding/resources to Extension to serve as community development specialist who facilitate assessing community goals around food systems resilience and ecosystem services and identify and support the engagement of WSU expertise to work with communities toward their goals.
- Conduct a statewide assessment to identify community needs and goals, potentially in conjunction with the Washington Association of Counties and the Association of Washington Cities. Focus on curated solutions, rather than templated approaches. Expand our footprint in the areas that need it most.
- Climate resilience and adaptation
- Focus on strengthening food systems across the state – rural and urban – by increasing efficiency to decrease externalities related to climate change.
 - Build out additional 'systems' such as Water (quality and quantity); Air; Temperature (heat islands) that are impacted by climate change and impact human and planetary health.

APPENDIX E: Fossil Free WSU Proposed Pathways for Divestment

When considering sustainability, WSU should be working towards developing a comprehensive culture that does not include financially supporting large carbon-extraction companies through its investments. In part, this is because fossil fuel investments have the potential to become stranded or devalued assets due to the current transition to sustainable energy and increasing litigation against fossil fuel companies ([Soubeyran, 2022](#)), posing financial risks to WSU. At the same time, sustainable energy investments have shown promising growth and reliability, often outperforming fossil fuel investments ([Jain, 2023](#))

It is therefore recommended that all direct and indirect investments of WSU's endowment, including those in the Cougar Investment Fund, in the world's largest 200 publicly traded carbon reserve holders (e.g. those identified by [FFI Solutions](#)) be removed and further investments be made in sustainable energy. We further recommend that:

- the divestment process be completed within five years of the time of WSU's commitment to divest.
- no future investments be made in the "carbon underground 200" as compiled annually by FFI Solutions.
- WSU regularly and publicly provides accessible reporting of WSU's fossil fuel divestment progress. This progress will be measured by decreasing percentages of its investments in the "carbon underground 200" in a pattern consistent with the five-year timeframe. Once the divestment is completed, the dashboard will include, until a date to be determined, regular and publicly accessible reporting of WSU's maintenance of zero investments in the "carbon underground 200."