



# WSU SYSTEM-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

## Executive Committee Report

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Board of Regents Meeting

September 19, 2024



# Commitment to Sustainability at Washington State University

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Washington State University, as a state-wide land-grant institution, commits to the 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 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 emissions reduction and adopt regenerative practices.

***“At WSU, it is not just a plan on paper.”***

**Washington State University has quietly taken 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 nationwide.**



# WSU's Mission & Sustainability



Washington State University is a public land-grant research university committed to practical education for all, scholarly inquiry that benefits society, and the sharing of expertise to positively impact our state and our communities.

## **WSU Land Acknowledgment**

Washington State University's locations are in the homelands of Native peoples. WSU profoundly respects and recognizes our responsibility as stewards of these native lands.

## **Commitment to Sustainability**

WSU is committed to serving as a beacon to our sister institutions by promoting sustainable practices focused on the environmental, social, and economic needs of every community we serve.



# Background and Overview



- ❖ System-wide representation, including all six campuses and WSU Extension.
- ❖ A 50-member committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students.
- ❖ Three guiding principles:
  - ❖ Educational
  - ❖ Scholarly
  - ❖ Outreach
- ❖ Key areas of focus:
  - ❖ Reduce emissions across the system.
  - ❖ Discover, promote, and invest in regenerative practices.
  - ❖ Build a working culture of sustainability across the system.



# Focused Sub-Committees

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Four sub-committees have been established, focused on four core goals. These sub-committees are charged with considering environmental, social, and economic sustainability through a lens of equity and justice.

- Research, Innovation, and Creativity
- Institutional effectiveness and infrastructure
- Student experience
- Outreach, Extension, Service, and Engagement



# General Recommendations

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

Unanimously supported by each of the four sub-group committees, this recommendation suggests creating a cross-system, cross-college center or department to coordinate, communicate, and grow sustainability efforts across the system.

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

Although divestment does not fall under the purview of the Sustainability Task Force, this committee unanimously supports active steps towards achieving socially responsible investing and a commitment to creating a comprehensive sustainable culture within the university.





# Focused Recommendations Research, Innovation and Creativity

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1. Develop capacity for knowledge integration.
2. Invest in the Sustainability Research Enterprise.
3. Position WSU as a model “sustainable society.”



# Focused Recommendations

## Institutional Effectiveness and Infrastructure

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1. Develop internal funding mechanisms for supporting sustainability efforts.
2. Establish and maintain a collaborative system-wide Sustainable Infrastructure Grant Program.



# Focused Recommendations Student Experience

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1. Include student leadership and engagement in all aspects of WSU sustainability.
2. Increase sustainable practices in the material student experience (daily living on and off campus).
3. Integrate sustainable practices into the educational student experience.



# Focused Recommendations

## Outreach, Extension, Service and Engagement

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1. Develop and lead a “Community Climate Action Framework.”
2. Create and promote climate literacy training and certification.
3. Support new extension efforts towards community sustainability and resilience across the state.



# Questions or Comments?

