

CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN PROPOSAL
FOR
OHIO UNIVERSITY
September 8, 2008

This proposal to develop a comprehensive Campus Sustainability Plan is intended to help the institution make significant contributions to energy conservation, resource management, and environmental awareness as well as make contributions to the institution's education and research efforts on Ohio University's six (6) campuses. The plan would serve as both a long-term vision and a blueprint for campus sustainability efforts. As an institution, Ohio University would be making a commitment to being a leader in sustainability through education, research and action.

INTRODUCTION

The Ohio University Vision Ohio Strategic Plan articulates an institutional commitment to sustainability. The President has made a commitment to move the institution toward a carbon neutral footprint. The State of Ohio has passed House Bill 251, which seeks to reduce energy consumption by twenty percent over the next ten years at colleges, universities, and other state agencies. This proposal is intended to combine the goals of Vision Ohio, the President's commitment and the requirements of H.B. 251 into a comprehensive plan that measures the University's progress toward these goals and requirements and in general toward leadership in movement toward a sustainable future.

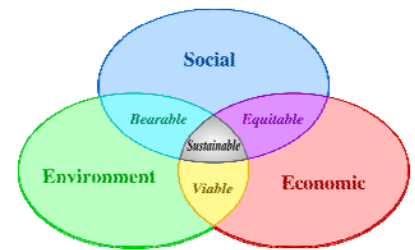
This proposal seeks to lay the ground work for the following issues;

- Measurement of Ohio University's progress toward sustainability;
- Measure the change in the environmental impacts of Ohio University's activities over the past decade; and
- Identify baseline data and create benchmarks that can be used for internal and external comparison over time.

If these questions are evaluated in an accurate and honest way, they will provide a number of opportunities. The University will be able to document exemplary performance, recognize its leadership, and identify opportunities to build on its successes. It will be able to identify shortcomings, presenting opportunities for action and improvement. Further, conducting evaluations of sustainable performance allows the University to make well-informed changes that will promote progress.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

In a report to the United Nations, "Our Common Future," also known as the Brundtland Report, sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines sustainability as "the ability to achieve continuing economic prosperity while protecting the natural systems of the planet and providing a high quality of life for its people."



Sustainable solutions are understood to meet needs that are environmental, social, *and* economic.

WHAT IS CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY?

Campus sustainability refers to the degree to which activities at a particular university or college conserve natural resources, minimize environmental impacts, and lead society toward sustainability through research, teaching, and public service.

THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

It is proposed that a plan be developed that is a dynamic document that is updated on a regular basis. A committee to oversee the process should be developed that will broadly represent the campus constituents. This committee would be chaired by the Associate Vice President of Facilities. The committee or group would then work with a broad based coalition of campus change agents representing the faculty, staff, and students. The comprehensive Campus Sustainability Plan would be developed much in the same way that the Vision Ohio Strategic Plan was developed. It is important to note that students would make an **STRONG** contribution to this plan's development. In addition, scientists and scholars in Environmental Studies, Voinovich Center, the Russ College of Engineering and Technology, and the Department of Geography as well as other academic units can make important contributions to the plan.

Illustrating how Ohio University is committed to being an example of the principles of sustainability, the comprehensive Campus Sustainability Plan will provide a roadmap for major steps toward achieving sustainability in the years to come. The plan would identify recommendations, goals, objectives, and benchmarks for varying points over the next two decades. The plan's vision needs to include the development and utilization of emerging technologies while balancing economics with social and environmental impacts. The sustainability plan should provide clear linkage between campus operations and the academic experience of Ohio University's undergraduate and graduate students.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES BY FUNCTIONAL AREAS

The sustainability plan would include a number of goals and objectives to guide the institution in the years to come. These goals and objectives can and should be broken down by functional areas. Identified below and being proposed are eleven (11) functional areas for examination and assessment.

1: GOVERNANCE

Governance focuses on the extent to which sustainability has been institutionalized into decision making at all levels. Although campus sustainability efforts can originate at all levels of the institution, the commitment of high-level administrators to organizing and guiding sustainability efforts is critical. High-level administrators can create an institutional atmosphere that empowers and inspires opening the door for broad, decentralized action and grassroots innovation for sustainability.

2: FUNDRAISING & ENDOWMENT

Fundraising and endowment investments can be leveraged to support and enhance sustainability goals. Many colleges and universities have recognized that the development of gift opportunities in this area toward investment in funds selected according to sustainability criteria or the financing of campus sustainability projects can serve to promote better environmental stewardship while improving the ecological footprint of the institution as a whole.

3: ACADEMIA AND CULTURE

Academia and culture is intended to assess the extent to which Ohio University embraces sustainability into its curriculum, research, and public service as well as how well it cultivates an environmentally-focused student culture. Measurements of the curriculum should include course offerings related to sustainability and the University's capacity for building environmental literacy. Assumed here is that Ohio University has a responsibility to foster a sense of environmental consciousness in its students.

4: MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

Materials management is intended to focus on efficient procurement strategies, processes, and systems for the acquisition and responsible use of resources in a manner that supports economy, society, and environment. Materials management assesses the extent to which Ohio University incorporates sustainability into the procurement and disposal of packaging, office supplies, furniture, computer equipment, and chemicals for custodial, landscaping, research, and teaching use. This objective also examines campus trends in solid waste and recycling and its efforts to reduce waste and properly dispose of hazardous waste. Solid waste is a significant problem in our society. Landfills carry high financial and environmental costs. Waste is expensive to collect and transport. It is important to decrease the quantity of waste sent to landfills. It is also important to reuse and recycle materials whenever possible.

5: FOOD

The food area strives to develop a local and organic closed-loop food system by observing sustainability criteria for food purchasing, preparation and service, cleaning, waste disposal, and purchase of equipment and supplies. Food assesses the extent to which Ohio University incorporates sustainability into food procurement and disposal decisions. The purpose of this objective is to evaluate the amount of sustainably produced food purchased by the University, the amount of food wastes reused or recycled by the University, and the institutions initiatives and educational programs regarding food procurement and disposal.

6: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Global climate change is a serious social issue facing society today. Greenhouse gases play a major role in this change. Ohio University emits greenhouse gases through energy use, transportation, and chemical use. The greenhouse gas emissions objective is intended to assess the University's greenhouse gas emissions and examine current efforts to limit emissions and the potential to decrease them in the future.

7: ENERGY

The energy area strives to be a climate neutral campus through energy efficiency, conservation, on-site generation and strategic procurement of clean and renewable energy. Energy examines its use for campus operations. Electricity and steam are the two primary sources of energy. This item will, in part, be driven by the requirements of House Bill No. 251.

8: TRANSPORTATION

The transportation area is to develop strategies that reduce fuel use, air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions while providing opportunities for alternative transportation including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Transportation assesses how students, faculty and support staff commute to campus and what Ohio University does to promote and support alternative means of transportation. Transportation is an important indicator of campus sustainability because transportation has a significant environmental impact.

9: WATER

Ohio University should continue to strive to reduce potable water use while protecting and conserving all water resources within the campus watershed through implementation of efficiency measures, collection technologies, re-processing and re-use. Water assesses Ohio University's use of water for campus operations, including steam, irrigation, and domestic use.

10: LANDSCAPE/BIOTIC ENVIRONMENT

Ohio University should strive to foster protection and maintenance of the natural campus environment through restoration, preservation, and education while enhancing the campus as a classroom. Landscape and Biotic Environment assesses the extent to which Ohio University has incorporated sustainability goals into landscape design, maintenance, and whether it is meeting those goals. The assessment should examine plantings, pest management and storm water management. This includes recreational areas, building landscapes, and native habitat.

11: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ohio University has and should continue to strive to create outstanding places to study, work, and live. These places should enhance the health and performance of building occupants through sustainable planning, design, construction, operations, and retrofits. Built Environment assesses the extent to which Ohio University has incorporated green building and design goals into existing buildings and new construction projects. The measures should look at the institutional commitment to green building and design, the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, and space management. The requirements of House Bill No. 251 are addressed in this indicator as well as the energy objective. Efforts should be made to better utilize what space the institution has available at present. Space management should be tightened up with stronger justification for new space. Where possible, existing space should be used, including renovation to increase efficiency, finding under utilized space and promote multi-use, and where absolutely necessary renovate existing mothballed spaces.