

**University of Florida
Sustainability Task Force (STF)**

**Implementation Proposals for
High Priority Recommendations**

Submitted to President Charles Young

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High Priority Recommendation 1: Education

- *Identify and publicize sustainability-related courses and programs.*
- *Encourage colleges to incorporate sustainability into core curricula.*

Qualification as high priority

- Minimal cost
- High impact associated with increasing faculty and student participation in sustainability
- Considerable opportunity for increasing public awareness and reputation of the University

Status

- Partial implementation in select colleges. The STF report identified over 125 existing courses with sustainability-related content.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Sustainability is a globally emerging trend that emphasizes the interdisciplinary integration of social, fiscal, and environmental priorities. As such, increased sustainability-related curriculum at the University of Florida is consistent with the Strategic Plan's focus on "interdisciplinary research and instructional programs on an institutional level" that includes "research in ecology and environment; research into the status of children and families; and the internationalization of the campus and the curriculum." [SP, page 3]

Requested Presidential action

- Send a letter to Deans, Directors, and Department heads (DDD) declaring enhanced sustainability education as consistent with the goals and mission of the university and encouraging its integration into curricula.

High Priority Recommendation 2: Land Management

- *Manage lands for no net loss of biodiversity*
- *Set up a land management committee to review and guide sustainable management of UF lands*

Qualification as high priority

- High visibility and public relations potential
- Strong emphasis on environment in Florida
- Actions are already in progress with many staff and resources allocated for execution
- Protects natural land resources that are used for academic teaching and research

Status

- Underway. Certain units are implementing sustainable land management techniques; however, the program needs to be incorporated as part of the University's mission, expanded, and a coordinating unit established.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- As indicated, ecology and environment are central tenets of the Strategic Plan. As such, exemplary campus land and habitat management practices enhance that goal while also supporting the Strategic Plan's aim "to attract the best faculty, graduate students, and postdocs, the University must support a modern infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities." [SP, page 15]

Requested Presidential action

- Authorize the Ecology Conservation and Stewardship Committee (ECOS) to coordinate all related programs, develop a "manage for no net loss of biodiversity" policy on UF's campus, and bring related recommendations to the Vice-president for Finance and Administration.
- Direct the ECOS to develop plans to expand coordination/implementation of the policy to all UF lands.

High Priority Recommendation 3: Buildings

- *Adopt USGBC's LEED Standard for New Construction, latest version, as one of the construction documents that must be followed for new construction.*

Qualification as high priority

- Higher up-front cost but will return substantial long-term cost savings
- High impact and demonstrates long-term commitment to sustainability
- Existing projects (Rinker Hall, Orthopedic Center) will continue to generate significant media attention

Status

- Partial implementation. LEED features are currently voluntary, subject to value engineering. Consultant selection criteria do require LEED qualifications.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan speaks to the need for fiscal efficiencies as well as enhanced funding to effect its implementation. A proactive LEED implementation program achieves these goals by requiring “a wise investment of resources, calculated to achieve maximum impact in the academic community, industry, government, and the public sphere.” [SP, page 6]

Requested Presidential action

- Direct that a study be performed to evaluate FPCD & PPD operations and conduct research into related industry practices resulting in recommendations that include:
 - Implementation options for UF
 - Vendor opportunities
 - Average project budget implications
 - Staff training needs
- Incentivize LEED: Direct that options be developed for the endowment of a revolving fund that would be dedicated to funding LEED infrastructure needs and could be paid back by Colleges over time.
- Disincentivize wasteful faculty and staff energy consumption behaviors by billing departments for energy use as discrete metering capabilities and new buildings allow.

High Priority Recommendation 4: Energy and Resource Use

- *Map all UF-related Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and develop a strategy for carbon neutrality with an ambitious, yet realistic timeline.*

Qualification as high priority

- Recommendation has a very high profile and public relations potential
- Implementing GHG reductions will result in reduced energy consumption and increased cost savings
- Implementation steps are already in progress
- High probability of obtaining additional funded research awards

Status

- Underway. Existing research has inventoried all UF facilities' energy consumption/GHG characteristics and begun to model reduction scenarios.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Goal of carbon neutrality has obvious linkage to the environmental elements of the Strategic Plan and would enhance the fiscal efficiencies delivered by an aggressive energy efficiency program. The substantial near term cost savings likely from a carbon-neutrality program comport with the Strategic Plan's call for "wise investment of resources, calculated to achieve maximum impact in the academic community, industry, government, and the public sphere." Indeed, as much as any recommendation herein, this initiative qualifies as among the "clever and bold choices" faculty and administrators are encouraged to make so as to "manage efficiently and effectively all the funds at their disposal" (SP, p.6). An additional benefit of the carbon-neutral goal would be to accrue substantial media coverage and secure UF's place in history as the first major university to commit to carbon-neutrality.

Requested Presidential action

- Direct the formation a working group comprised of staff and relevant faculty to present research and implementation options detailing likely carbon-neutrality scenarios to the Board of Trustees
- Send letter to UF Trustees and DDD articulating and formalizing UF's commitment to carbon neutrality.

High Priority Recommendation 5: Energy and Resource Use

- *Promote efficient, low emission vehicle purchase and develop green fleet policy.*

Qualification as high priority

- Higher purchase price quickly paid back resulting in life cycle cost savings
- Highly visible affirmation of UF's commitment to environment and sustainability
- Increase local and national recognition and provide positive public relations
- Action steps are straightforward and easily put in motion with a policy directive

Status

- Underway. Some departments have purchased hybrid vehicles.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Long-term cost savings likely from a green fleet program comport with the Strategic Plan's call for "wise investment of resources, calculated to achieve maximum impact in the academic community, industry, government, and the public sphere." Indeed, as much as any recommendation herein, this initiative qualifies as among the "clever and bold choices" faculty and administrators are encouraged to make so as to "manage efficiently and effectively all the funds at their disposal" (SP, p.6).
- A green fleet policy implementation on the UF campus could assist the research and marketing of new technologies developed by the College of Engineering.

Requested Presidential action

- Direct the Vice Presidents to coordinate with the US Department of Energy Clean Cities Program to promulgate a green fleet policy that implements a phased-in requirement for new vehicle purchases over a 3-5 year period. [See www.clean-cities.org.]

High Priority Recommendation 6: Transportation

- *Increase RTS system in collaboration with the City of Gainesville to accommodate more locations and service times to move faculty, students and staff to and from the UF campus.*

Qualification as high priority

- Highlights UF's involvement as responsible civic community partner
- Past successes at targeting student ridership have created the foundation for positive expansion

Status

- Operating status: underway. However, capital needs for expanded infrastructure are currently unfunded

Recommendation's relationship to Strategic Plan

- While a robust transit service is certainly consistent with the spirit of the "environment and ecology" focus of the Strategic Plan, it is the Campus Master Plan that is more directly on point. The Transportation Element of the master plan calls for, "an efficient, balanced transportation system that accommodates projected changes that will occur at the University and encourages transportation modal choice" by "increasing the use of transit services between off-campus housing areas and the campus; and providing enhanced on-campus shuttle bus service" (UF Master Plan Update, June 2001, p. 11-1)"

Requested Presidential action

- Assess interests, priorities and funding opportunities for faculty-oriented route services.
- Request Shands and UAA to consider funding pre-paid transit for their employees that access the campus.
- Direct the Vice President of Finance and Administration to update and prioritize the list of infrastructure needs related to enhanced on-campus bus service
- Dedicate additional capital funds to transit infrastructure as available

High Priority Recommendation 7: Waste Management and Purchasing

- *Implement U.S. EPA's WasteWise program in all University offices.*
- *Appoint task force to organize pilot project in sustainable purchasing.*
- *Assist departments in developing plans and policies for purchasing and contracting in conformance with sustainable principles.*

Qualification as high priority

- These recommendations are bundled together because they synergistically reinforce the success of each program.
- The WasteWise program is an existing and successful EPA program that can be implemented at low cost within existing university infrastructure. This program also has potential for financial benefits owing to its focus on resource conservation.
- The WasteWise and sustainable purchasing recommendations are both effective means of creating good public relations for the University and directly involving faculty and staff in sustainability-related actions.

Status

- New: WasteWise
- Underway: Purchasing. Staff members from the Purchasing Division (with input from various departments and vendors) are in the process of developing a draft environmental purchasing policy.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- The executive summary of the Strategic Plan references the Florida Board of Education's Strategic Imperative: "Achieving world-class nationally recognized institutions of higher learning by improving access, funding, performance and accountability." The draft policy addresses one aspect of the term "accountability" because of its attention to the use of resources.
- Exemplary campus waste management practices enhance environmental goals while also supporting the Strategic Plan's aim "to attract the best faculty, graduate students, and postdocs, the University must support a modern infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities." [SP, page 15]

Requested Presidential action

- Phase in the WasteWise program within administrative units of the university.
- Upon successful phase-in within administrative units, direct the implementation be extended into all academic units.

High Priority Recommendation 8: Waste Management

- *Require significant construction and demolition waste reduction, deconstruction of buildings, and stockpiling and reuse of suitable materials in all future construction and renovation contracts.*

Qualification as high priority

- UF already has considerable expertise and an international reputation in this area. Recent experience with Rinker Hall proved the economic viability of reducing and recycling construction waste versus landfilling.

Status

- New

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- As already noted, the Strategic Plan calls for “clever and bold” fiscal choices in order to better use fiscal resources. This recommendation enhances fiscal efficiency and, given the Strategic Plan goal of achieving top ten research university status, advances the university towards that end, especially on the international front where UF is already seen as a deconstruction leader.

Requested Presidential action

- Initiate a significant construction and demolition waste reduction program for new projects and develop a plan to phase in advanced building deconstruction practices over time as project size and stockpiling capacities warrant.

High Priority Recommendation 9: Investments

- *Appoint a committee to make recommendations for adapting UF's investment policies to incorporate sustainability.*
- *The UF Foundation should adhere to Global Reporting Initiative transparency standards for investment disclosure.*

Qualification as high priority

- Recommendation has a high public relations potential

Status

- New

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- “Allocation of Resources to Achieve Strategic Imperatives: the best support mechanism will be the allocation of funds to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan.” Transparency disclosure and uniform positions regarding sustainability investment options will create efficiencies in the handling of private and UF resources.

Requested Presidential action

- Appoint a committee representing various groups to make recommendations concerning:
 - (a) adoption of Global Reporting Initiative transparency standards for investment disclosure; and
 - (b) investment policies that incorporate sustainability options.

[There are numerous organizations affiliated with UF that have investment portfolios: the UF Foundation, the UF Research Foundation, the University Athletic Association, Shands Hospital, the various faculty practice plans and, in the future, UF itself. Each of these investment pools has different goals, needs and strategies.]

High Priority Recommendation 10: Community Outreach and Integration

- *Create a community section on the UF Web site and a community resource center* to facilitate increased communication with the community.*

Qualification as high priority

- Minimal cost requirements, very high community impact.
- Staff and resources are already committed to community service and public relations initiatives. These actions will better match unmet community needs.
- The recommendation overlaps with strategies of the Town and Gown Task Force Report

Status

- New
- Underway

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Recognition of faculty contributions to community service is a tenet endorsed in the Strategic Plan, as the plan calls for increased opportunities for faculty leadership on campus and the concurrent development of programs that support and reward faculty and staff.

Requested Presidential action

- Direct that a task force evaluate sites for a Community Resource Center* such as the Community Design Center or the Business Incubator
- Direct that a Community Resource Center be created in the appropriate location(s)
- Evaluate possible enhancements to the community section of UF's web site and, where appropriate, implement those enhancements

** A Community Resource Center is a staffed location where community members may research and be referred to personnel, information, or activities relevant to community affairs. In short, an Ombudsman office.*

High Priority Recommendation 11: Organizational Policies and Practices

- *Revise the University's mission statement to include specific reference to sustainability concerns, including an institutional commitment to diversity.*

Qualification as high priority

- Minimal cost requirements, would positively emphasize current commitment

Status

- New
- Underway

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- One of the Strategic Plan's central goals is to "attract the best faculty, graduate students, and postdocs." Accordingly, given the emergence of sustainability and diversity concerns as among academia's most challenging present and future issues, a firm and clear commitment to these outcomes institutionalized in the university's mission would advance UF towards its strategic goals.

Requested Presidential action

- Direct revisions to the mission statement that include specific reference to sustainability concerns, including an institutional commitment to diversity.