STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Spring 2022 Executive Summary
Chair: Eliana Wagner, erw5278@psu.edu
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Working Groups:

- SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION
- ZERO WASTE
- CARBON NEUTRALITY
MISSION:

Our mission is to advise on the expansion of sustainability education that equips the Penn State Community with workable knowledge, both personally and professionally, to be able to address 21st century sustainability challenges.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION IN THE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Convene a Sustainable Learning Outcomes Task Force in order to inform:

- Inventory of Sustainability Classes at Penn State
  Survey faculty across colleges and CWCs to assess current catalog of sustainability course offerings.
- Faculty Sustainability Workshops
  Equip faculty with foundational sustainability knowledge for those interested in revamping their course(s).
- Sustainability Course Designation
  Attribute coded in LionPATH for students to search for sustainability-focused courses.
- Sustainability Course Requirement
  A university-wide requirement that students can fulfill in a flexible manner, either through completing a course or obtaining a degree title.

EDUCATION IN THE CO-CURRICULAR SPHERE

Integration within New Student Arrival Events

We propose introducing students to current sustainability education opportunities and initiatives in orientation programs to cultivate a long-lasting culture of sustainability. The next step is to create a framework for new student events dedicated to giving students the resources and knowledge necessary to pursue these interests. The goal is to lay the foundation for the natural integration of sustainability education into a student’s life through immediate and upfront exposure.

EDUCATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

Sustainability Assessments in Student Athletics and Organizations

- Expand the Green Paws Program beyond just staff and faculty to include formally assessing sustainability through student athletics within the criteria of:
  - Purchasing
  - Water and Waste Management
  - Transportation
  - Energy
  - Engagement with the university and community

Sustainability in Student Organizations

Student organizations with 30+ members will be required to elect a sustainability officer that will create and see through a framework outlining specific tasks that they will see through pertaining to sustainability.

PREPARED BY

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To cultivate waste reduction and circular economy cultures through community, education, and business partnerships that will strengthen Penn State’s identity as a national leader in sustainability.

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ATHLETICS BIN GOALIE PROGRAM

We propose a bin goalie program (BGP) for athletic venues with the following objectives:

- to increase the average waste diversion rate
- to decrease the contamination rates of recycling and composting
- to save money long-term
- to boost patron experience

The BGP involves staffing volunteer bin goalies at each waste receptacle in an athletic venue to educate patrons on proper waste sorting procedures. We envision this program as a framework to achieve zero waste events. Thus, its implementation is suitable in any Penn State athletic venue.

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION: TRAYLESS DINING

"Trayless Dining" aims to eliminate tray usage at the Penn State, University dining halls. Benefits of trayless dining include:

- Waste Reduction: Reduces food waste
- Savings: Fewer dishes to clean, less food to cook, and less trash to take-out
- Improved Health: Portion control
- Higher Customer Satisfaction: Better food quality
- Retail: May bring in more customers

We recommend implementing "Trayless Dining" at Penn State Dining Halls to reduce food waste. Going trayless inherently reduces the amount of food that gets thrown away. This goal has several benefits with regard to waste reduction, savings, improved health, and retail benefits for Penn State. We also suggest exploring sustainable infrastructure to utilize PSreUse exclusively at the Penn State dining halls.

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MISSION:
To commit Penn State to rigorous, sustainable, and just climate action, including reaching net-negative greenhouse gas emissions and disseminating drawdown solutions to other institutions.

EXPLORING THE "HOW?"
Students want to see Penn State commit to real Climate Action: including in Education, Operations, Outreach, and Finances.

In our discussion, we hope to explore the how:
- how can we afford carbon drawdown?
- how can we ensure the next administration prioritizes climate action?
- how can we align University priorities with those of the students that it serves?