PENN STATE
STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Spring 2023 Executive Summary
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SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION
ZERO WASTE
CARBON NEUTRALITY
MISSION:
To advocate for a holistic sustainability education that equips the Penn State community with workable knowledge to be able to address 21st century sustainability challenges in their personal and professional lives.

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EDUCATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Support the formation of a School of Sustainability and act on the curricular steps needed to get there.
- Establish Sustainable Learning Outcomes
- Code Classes with a Sustainability Designation
- Expand Faculty Development Workshops
- Institute a Sustainability University Requirement

EDUCATION ACROSS NEW FRONTIERS
Expose the realm of recreation club sports at Penn State to sustainability
- Establish a chair to oversee mandatory sustainability-focused community service hours within club sports teams to expose a new demographic of students.
- Incentivize the most successful team with a $500-$1,000 reward.

Target students in Greek life to foster sustainability (Update)
- Create a Sustainability chair/committee responsible for planning mandatory events that educate attendees about sustainability.
- Create an OFSL orientation module discussing topics such as Sustainability Institute, involvement opportunities, etc.

Sustainability Integration within Athletics (Update)
- Fund and develop student internships, workshops, and faculty training to integrate sustainability.
- Establish attainable goals within the Athletic Department and monitor progress to achieve these goals.
- Use the athletics space to open up sustainability opportunities for fans, alumni, students, and faculty.
- In the long term, appoint a Sustainability Officer within the Department of Athletics.
MISSION:
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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION: TRAYLESS DINING

Trayless dining aims to eliminate tray usage in 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 process
- Improved Health: Portion control

We recommend implementing trayless dining at Penn State Dining Halls to reduce food waste. Going trayless 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 have are currently piloting this program at West Commons, a dining hall that would be able to handle Trayless Dining because of the conveyor belt system.

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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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Penn State needs to develop a climate action plan. Following the commitments of several other Big Ten schools, Penn State's emissions reduction commitment has fallen behind, and hasn't changed its goals to reflect the urgency of the issue presented by evidence in the 2023 IPCC report and the community calls for action.

The Carbon Emissions Reduction Task Force report provided recommendations and technical options to pursue more aggressive emissions reductions goals. However, we have not seen any true commitment or allocation of resources toward achieving carbon neutrality.

A presidentially-backed commitment to carbon neutrality is absolutely necessary to galvanize the community. We are tasking the University to create a team to outline a feasible Climate Action Plan that will guide the University towards carbon neutrality. Subgroups will be created to take on specific initiatives to ensure all aspects and obstacles of achieving sustainable action are understood and planned for. Additionally, at least one student should be present on each initiative team to bolster educational and development opportunities during this process.

A fundraising campaign will begin to raise money for sustainable projects, and innovative financing will be rigorously explored. Other universities have found great success through these campaigns seeing individual six-figure donations, something Penn State should also be looking to find.

It is time to turn opportunities into ACTION. Climate action is a priority of the Penn State student body and the faculty, whom are prepared and willing to help the University take action. The administration must respond by committing to a detailed plan of true action.

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Penn State requires a **top-down strategic push** to prioritize sustainability.

**In practice, sustainability is not prioritized.**

**Record-breaking campaign fails to mention sustainability.**

The "A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence" campaign website mentions sustainability 0 times out of 3,640 words, accounting for written and spoken language throughout the webpages and videos.

**Benefactors lack options to make sustainability gifts.**

Only 6 out of 25 Penn State colleges and campuses are set up to accept sustainability gifts.

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**Can you make a sustainability gift?**

- **College of Agricultural Sciences**
- **College of Arts and Architecture**
- **Smeal College of Business**
- **College of Engineering**
- **College of International Affairs**
- **Penn State Law**
- **College of Medicine**
- **Eberly College of Science**
- **Division of Undergraduate Studies**
- **Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications**
- **College of Earth and Mineral Sciences**
- **College of Education**
- **College of Information Sciences and Technology**
- **College of the Liberal Arts**
- **Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing**
- **Schreyer Honors College**
- **The Sustainability Institute**
- **World Campus**
- **Penn State Abington**
- **Penn State Altoona**
- **Penn State Erie**
- **Penn State Harrisburg**
- **The University College**
- **Penn State Berks**

24% ✓ 76% ×

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**START AT THE TOP**

Our President and members of the President’s Council must declare sustainability to be a **core imperative.**

Bring a sustainability focus to our **resourcing ecosystem.**

**SET A COURSE**

Expand our vision and goals around sustainability and create strategies to guide the way forward.

**INSPIRE AND EMPOWER**

Provide our students and employees with the critical resources to engage in sustainability action, education and outreach.

**CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY**

A Penn State that embraces sustainability from top to bottom will build a strong and enduring connection with its surrounding communities.

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Carl Fredrick G. Aquino  
Student Sustainability Advisory Council  
Penn State University, Spring 2023  
Source: data provided, accessed on April 13, 2023