

H. Purchasing

1. Introduction: Purchasing - the acquisition of goods and services on the best possible terms, has historically been based on two criteria, price and quality, with the view to maximizing benefits for the procuring organization. Sustainable, or “green” purchasing broadens this framework to ensure that quality criteria includes minimal adverse environmental and health impacts. In making a sustainable purchasing decision, the entire life cycle costs (financial, environmental, and social) of the product are taken into consideration. The life cycle takes into account extraction, production, manufacturing, distribution, operation, maintenance and disposal. Many “green” products are competitively priced with their conventional counterparts, are of comparable quality, and have one or more of the following attributes:



- High Content from Post-Consumer Recycled Materials
- Low Embodied Energy (consumed to extract, manufacture, distribute and dispose)
- Recyclable
- Non-toxic
- Energy Efficient
- Durable and/or Repairable
- Produced in an Environmentally- and Socially-Sustainable Manner

2. Goal: Develop and follow sustainability-focused purchasing policies in more than 50% of spending for campus materials and equipment by 2012.

3. History:

At the present time, the campus purchasing process is quite de-centralized, with departments and individuals making independent purchasing decisions. Although there are proscriptive state purchasing guidelines, including directions on which vendors are to be utilized for specific products, there is no major emphasis on sustainable purchasing.

a. The following items are currently purchased with recycled content in accordance with the state contract guidelines:

- * Toilet Paper
- * Copier paper
- * Computer Monitors
- * Photo Copiers

b. Over the past several years, incandescent lights have been replaced with compact fluorescents fixtures in many of the Residence Halls.

c. Custodial Services began purchasing environmentally safer cleaning chemicals in 2006.

d. Food vendors, campus retail stores, and Dining Services have made some sustainable products (e.g., fair trade, organic, local, cruelty-free, etc.) available for sale and special events.

4. Action Plan In order to accomplish the goals listed in this section, the following recommendations should be enacted:

Initial Consideration:

- *Develop a sustainability-based purchasing policy that stimulates the purchase of cost competitive (based on broad accounting standards, e.g. life cycle analysis) products and services. Products and services covered by this policy would have a reduced effect on human health and the environment compared to competing products or services that serve the same purpose.*
 - *Establish a sustainability purchasing committee with the mission to research attributes of current campus purchasing patterns, identify alternatives, and to make recommendations. The committee should revisit and update their recommendations on an annual basis, or as necessary.*
 - *The UW Oshkosh Purchasing Department should track and record sustainable purchasing efforts and prepare a report highlighting performance on an annual basis.*
 - *Collaborate with UW System on pilot projects that demonstrate sustainable purchasing policies, particularly when state policies interfere with best practices; continuously, share the information with UW System, other institutions, and vendors to improve state policies and preferred vendor contracts.*
 - *Make sustainable products and services easily available in convenience or “captive audience” situations (e.g. less harmful detergents in dorm laundry rooms, sustainable choices in dining halls and vending machines, etc.)*
- *Produce and annually update a “green” guide to purchasing that provides a list of recommended environmentally friendly products or services. The guide should cover a wide variety of materials and equipment, including Energy Star-rated office equipment, kitchen equipment, laundry equipment, and vending machines.*

Within Three Years:

- *Educate the campus community about sustainability purchasing programs and policies.*

Future Considerations (5 years or greater):

None noted