

KEENE STATE COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

Keene State College cares deeply about our communities—the human communities where we live, work, study, and play—and also the non-human communities that share our regional home. Our ethic of care frames our definition of sustainability and approach to taking action.

The College expresses its care in many ways, from organic management of the grounds and using low carbon fuel in the heat plant, to offering a robust sustainability curriculum and co-curriculum. A Sustainability Collegewide Learning Outcome guides these activities, as do the College's AASHE STARS goals of attaining a Gold rating by the end of 2020 and a Platinum rating no later than 2025. A commitment to environmental sustainability and to personal well-being and that of the larger world is expressed in the College's Mission and Values, and throughout KSC's guiding policies.

Sustainability on campus is guided by Yankee pragmatism/ingenuity with an eye toward the leading edge of practice. On the one hand, we see sustainability as a way to conserve resources, thereby saving the College money while also saving the planet.

On the other hand, we also look to and learn from the leading edge of sustainability—hence our commitment to attain an AASHE STARS Platinum rating no later than 2025. KSC seeks to move beyond “mere sustainability” to cultivating a campus environment where the well-being and flourishing of humans and our non-human community members is paramount.

The College embraces the holistic and inclusive vision of sustainability that AASHE describes:

AASHE defines sustainability in a pluralistic and inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods, and a better world for all generations... [As measured in] performance indicators related to, for example, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democratic governance.

(<https://stars.aashe.org/resources-support/help-center/the-basics/what-is-sustainability/>)

Keene State College considers global imperatives and local needs in its definition of sustainability. The College prioritizes initiatives that address the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals and Earth Charter Principles. We reference the sound science of global consensus reports such as those from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the National Climate Assessment, and the United Nations. Priorities and needs of the City of Keene as expressed in its Master Plan or Sustainable Energy Plan also inform the College's definition of sustainability.

These factors came together to inform KSC's determination of its Collegewide Learning Outcomes, two that directly address human and environmental dimensions:

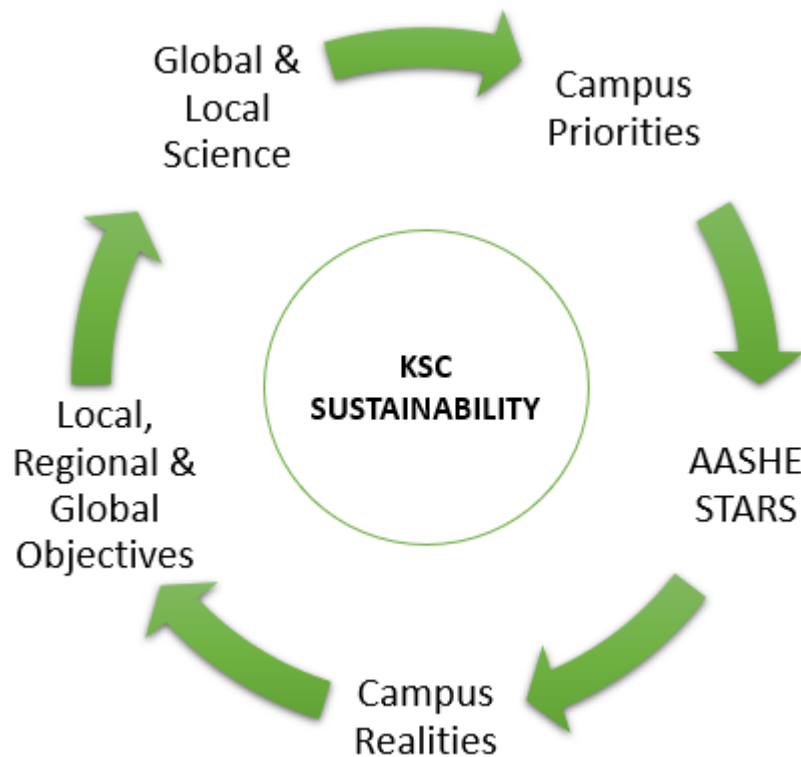
- **Sustainability:** Keene State College students will explore their place in interconnected natural and human systems; evaluate the personal, social, and environmental impacts of their choices; and apply their knowledge and skills for building a just, resilient, and thriving world.

- **Commitment to Well-Being:** Keene State College students will reflect critically on their own well-being and that of the larger world, demonstrate knowledge of issues that impact health and wellness, advocate for themselves, and commit to one or more practices that promote well-being.

DETERMINING PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Keene State Colleges integrates and aligns many factors to define sustainability and determine sustainability and climate priorities and action. Figure 1 shows the major criteria informing and defining sustainability at Keene State College.

Figure 1. Factors Defining Sustainability and Informing Sustainability and Climate Actions at Keene State College



All sustainability and climate actions at Keene State College, from goal setting to implementing projects, are grounded in **Global and Local Science**. The College considers academically rigorous and consensus-based science in its decision making and priorities determination. The Office of Sustainability and President’s Council for a Sustainable Future emphasize actions that support the College’s leadership in taking bold actions that support recommendations in the *IPCC’s Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees Celsius*. The science of local needs also matters, and the College looks to solutions that will address critical air quality objectives, as one example. We seek to align our goals and actions with local recommendations presented in City Resolutions, Policies and Plans, and recommendations from the United Nations, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, National Climate Assessment, Project Drawdown, and the Doughnut of Social and Planetary Boundaries.

Campus Priorities are determined through frequent and ongoing interaction with the campus community through focus groups, interviews, surveys, and interactive workshops. The Office of Sustainability, with the President's Council for a Sustainable Future, emphasize relationship building and stakeholder engagement. Several key outreach efforts inform KSC's ongoing approach to sustainability:

- Green Keene, a comprehensive stakeholder engagement campaign to determine campus sustainability priorities that was conducted from 2015 through 2017.
- The College's Sustainability Literacy Assessment, conducted annually with each entering and graduating class
- A Sustainability Culture and Behavior Survey that is offered on alternating years during Earth Month.

AASHE STARS provides an essential framework and benchmarking tool. The College has linked its sustainability planning and implementation to the AASHE STARS framework with the goals of attaining AASHE STARS Gold by the end of 2020 and Platinum no later than 2025. The College looks to the AASHE STARS recommendations for optimal sustainability performance and uses those for goal setting. The College also uses the AASHE STARS report to announce and codify sustainability goals that have been thoroughly vetted through the respective College governance channels.

Campus Realities: KSC balances all proposed sustainability and climate action goals and implementation recommendations through multiple lenses, including a financial lens. Like so many other colleges, KSC has experienced declining enrollments and fiscal challenges since 2014. All proposed sustainability and climate initiatives must address the College's commitments to human and planetary well-being, while also being financially feasible. All initiatives must also demonstrably support other College priorities as defined in its Strategic Plans, such as enhancing the student experience.

As with global and local science, KSC considers **Local, Regional, and Global Objectives** when proposing sustainability and climate actions. Under the leadership of the Office of Sustainability, the College reviews local, state, regional, national, and global regulatory, policy, and planning frameworks to ensure proposed actions address key needs and demonstrate KSC's commitments and leadership. For example, this was demonstrated when KSC modified its renewable energy goal to match the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030 approved by the City Council in its 2019 Sustainable Energy Resolution (https://ci.keene.nh.us/sites/default/files/Boards/Resolution%20R-2018-36_adopted.pdf).

SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Of critical importance in determining KSC's sustainability and climate action priorities is the interdependence of natural and human systems. The Earth Charter and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide the most comprehensive frameworks for addressing the human and environmental dimensions of sustainability and climate changes. KSC uses these frameworks to identify critical sustainability challenges. These frameworks are how the College develops its sustainability course and research inventories, as well as assessing the efficacy of the Sustainability Collegewide Learning Outcome.

Table 1. Sustainability Challenges

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	EARTH CHARTER: Overarching Principles I. Respect and care for the community of life II. Ecological integrity III. Social and economic justice IV. Democracy, nonviolence, and peace
1. No Poverty	III.9) Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.
2. Zero Hunger	III.9) Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.
3. Good Health and Well-Being	III.10) Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner. 12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.
4. Quality Education	II. 8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired. IV. 14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.
5. Gender Equality	I. 3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful. III.11) Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity.
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	III. 9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	II. 7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	I. 3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	II. 6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
10. Reduced Inequality	I. 4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

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11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	I. 4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations. II. 6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	I. 4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations. II. 7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.
13. Climate Action	II. 5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
14. Life Below Water	I. 1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity. I. 2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love. II. 5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life. IV. 15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration
15. Life on Land	I. 1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity. I. 2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love. II. 5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for

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<p>16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions</p>	<p>I.3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.</p> <p>IV.13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice.</p> <p>15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration; 16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace</p>
<p>17. Partnerships to Achieve the Goal</p>	