



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Sustainability Plan

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, concern is growing about the impact of human beings on the environment. Environmental degradation has fostered not only climate change and species extinction, but also a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. The poorest inhabitants of planet earth are the most likely to suffer the ill effects of pollution, deforestation, and rising competition for clean water, food and fuel. Moreover, natural resources are being consumed at a rate that puts at risk the survival of future generations.

In response, a worldwide sustainability movement has emerged. The concept of sustainability originates in biology, where it refers to the ability of ecosystems to survive over time. Today, the term refers to humanity's ability to meet the needs of today's global population without endangering the viability of future generations.¹ This definition recognizes that healthy economic and social systems, as well as a healthy environment, are the three equally essential components of sustainability.

Connecticut College's sustainability plan is built on the premise that, while we should make every feasible effort to reduce the College's impact on the environment, our most significant contribution will be through our educational mission. Our goal is to prepare graduates to advance the principles and practices of sustainability in a variety of roles, from careers in sustainability to active citizenship.

The plan aims to infuse sustainability into all aspects of a Connecticut College education. The study of sustainability will be integrated into the curriculum, and students will have new opportunities to put into practice the knowledge gained in the classroom. Sustainability will be incorporated into co-curricular activities and student-faculty research, and we will seek new ways to support sustainability in New London and the surrounding region.

In addition, by incorporating sustainability into day-to-day operations and management, Connecticut College can be a model of sustainable best practices, both for our students and for outside organizations. Teams of faculty, staff and students are already working together to begin implementing the plan, including figuring out how to incorporate sustainability into strategic planning and decision-making processes. By identifying campus-wide sustainability priorities and engaging a wide variety of community members through the process of achieving our goals, we hope to make Connecticut College a model of sustainability for all other higher education institutions throughout the country and the world.

The resource efficiencies proposed in this plan will make the College itself more sustainable in its second century and beyond. Moreover, the educational emphasis on sustainability will, over time, increase the value and relevance of a Connecticut College education.

¹ One of the most widely used formulations comes from the 1987 Brundtland Commission of the United Nations, which defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Connecticut College is committed to fostering systemic environmental, social and economic responsibility through leadership and education that drive decisions, policies and practices. We seek to contribute to the development of more economically successful and equitable communities—local, national and global—by teaching and practicing fair and responsible use of finite natural resources. Our commitment is to create and maintain a campus, a community and a curriculum that advances the quality of education today while ensuring the continuity of this education for future generations.

We view sustainability as an opportunity to enhance economic wellbeing and social equity for present and future generations through education and environmental stewardship. Our vision is rooted in the core values of the College:

- Academic excellence
- Diversity, equity and shared governance
- Education of the entire person
- Adherence to common ethical and moral standards
- Community service and global citizenship
- Environmental stewardship

The plan and its implementation are organized around four strategic priorities: Education, Resource Efficiency, Campus Stewardship and Community Building.

Focusing on these priorities, the College will integrate sustainability more systematically into the educational program while also positioning itself as a model of best practices for a sustainable campus and community. The plan will further distinguish Connecticut College among its peers by building on the College's ongoing commitments to interdisciplinary studies², campus diversity, community action, internationalization and environmental studies.

These priorities will also help the College meet its obligations under the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. This agreement, signed by Connecticut College in 2007, requires institutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and work toward the goal of climate neutrality.

On the following pages the four priorities are explained in more detail, along with specific goals and assessment metrics for 2013-2016³. A summary of the implementation process, annual assessment procedure and the teams of faculty, students and staff organized to implement the plan is on pages 12 and 13.

² The plan aims to build on the high-impact learning practices used in the five interdisciplinary academic centers: The Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts, the Holleran Center for Public Policy and Community Action, the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment, the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology, and the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity

³ The Connecticut College Sustainability Plan has established goals and priorities for the next three years and contains funding needs for the first year

LIST OF PRIORITIES

These sustainability priorities will help Connecticut College take important steps toward becoming a model of sustainability for our students and colleges around the country. The priorities will also support the College in striving for our long-term vision of a sustainable future.

I. Education: *Incorporate the values of social equity, economic viability and environmental stewardship into campus culture by expanding the presence of sustainability in the curriculum, co-curricular activities, and community education.*

1. **Foster Understanding** Nurture understanding of sustainability on campus, and show individuals how they can incorporate sustainability into their daily lives.
2. **Curricular Integration** Increase the number of sustainability-related courses by 5 percent in a range of disciplines.
3. **Sprout Garden** Expand and enhance the campus gardening program as a co-curricular learning opportunity.
4. **Sustainability Grants** Expand awareness of the Steel House Sustainability Grants program as an opportunity for students to conceptualize and implement sustainability pilot projects.

II. Resource Efficiency: *Reduce the College's consumption of unsustainable resources and production of greenhouse gases by promoting conservation and on-campus production of resources.*

5. **Resource Consumption** Reduce resource consumption (energy, waste, water) and greenhouse gas emissions by 3 percent relative to a 2005 baseline.
6. **Revolving Fund** Establish a revolving sustainability fund that provides funding for resource efficiency projects.
7. **Food Systems** Increase sustainable food offerings (e.g. local, ecologically responsible, fair trade, humanely produced) from 8 percent to 10 percent of campus food budget

III. Campus Stewardship: *Make the physical campus a model of sustainability by establishing and expanding sustainable practices in construction, facilities operation and maintenance, and land use.*

8. **Policies and Practices** Enhance and strengthen sustainability policies for construction, building maintenance and land management.
9. **Purchasing** Establish resources to help the campus community locate discounts and purchase opportunities for environmentally benign and socially responsible products.
10. **Asset Reinvestment** Incorporate sustainability considerations into ongoing reviews and updates of the campus asset reinvestment plan.

IV. Community Building: *Support the development of a more diverse and inclusive Connecticut College community, foster new sustainability collaborations, and incorporate sustainability into the College's governance structure.*

11. **Community Collaborations** Develop sustainability collaborations between and among offices, departments, centers and community organizations that promote environmental stewardship, social equity and economic wellbeing on campus.
12. **Communications** Publicize the College's commitment to sustainability, as well as milestones and achievements in this area, to both internal and external audiences.
13. **Campus Decision-Making** Begin developing an Office of Sustainability, including a faculty position, to make recommendations for incorporating sustainability into campus decision-making and strategic planning.
14. **Alternative Transportation** Expand and develop opportunities for the College community to travel to, from and around campus in ways that reduce fuel consumption and increase a sense of community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – EDUCATION

1. Fostering Understanding

Nurture understanding of sustainability on campus, and show individuals how they can incorporate sustainability into their daily lives.

Rationale:

A successful sustainability initiative requires a strong, cross-campus understanding of sustainability and its underlying values of environmental stewardship, social equity and economic wellbeing. Broader understanding of how sustainability benefits the College will provide a foundation for larger and more complex sustainability projects in the future. This initiative will build on existing student programs such as the Community Organizers for Sustainability Transformation (COST) program and create new programs to engage staff and faculty. It will also enhance

Assessable Outcomes:

- Understanding of sustainability among all campus constituents, as evidenced by results of an annual sustainability literacy survey
- Number of offices, departments and individuals involved with sustainability projects, programs or committees

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – EDUCATION

2. Curriculum Integration

Increase the number of sustainability-related courses by 5 percent in a range of disciplines.

Rationale:

The College's expertise in interdisciplinary teaching and learning offers an exemplary framework for understanding and addressing sustainability issues and will be enhanced by increasing sustainability related courses across the curriculum. Sustainability education benefits from a strong connection between intellectual exploration and applied experience; this approach is particularly strong in the College's academic centers, community learning programs, student-faculty research and a funded internship program that is available to all students. Integrating sustainability throughout the curriculum will help strengthen students' ability to develop solutions to global systemic challenges – an educational outcome tied to the College's core values.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Number of new and previously offered courses identified as sustainability-related
- List of sustainability-related courses publicly available
- Number of total students who enroll in sustainability-related courses
- Attendance at workshops for faculty interested in integrating sustainability into their existing courses (collaboration with Center for Teaching and Learning)
- Number of sustainability-related academic events on campus (which will enable professors to broaden sustainability components of existing classes)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – EDUCATION

3. Sprout Garden

Expand and enhance the campus gardening program as a co-curricular learning opportunity.

Rationale:

The student-founded Sprout Garden, now expanded and relocated, has turned into a focal point on campus with greater growing capacity than ever before. With support from the College, students have built a garden that will produce more food for the campus community while also providing faculty, staff and students and members of the extended community with hands-on opportunities to experience and address the challenges of sustainable food production.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Number of programs, events and courses using the garden as an educational resource
- Number of students consistently involved with the garden
- Number of community education programs using the garden (collaboration with OVCS)
- Annual crop production (lbs.) and sales

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – EDUCATION

4. Sustainability Grants

Expand awareness of the Steel House Sustainability Grants program as an opportunity for students to conceptualize and implement sustainability pilot projects.

Rationale:

Student interest and actions have been critical to advancing sustainability at Connecticut College. In 2011, the College designated endowment to create a grant program to support students' grassroots efforts and initiatives. The Steel House Sustainability Grants program provides \$25,000 a year in funding for pilot projects proposed and developed by students. Already, this financial support has expanded the range of students involved with sustainability on campus and produced successful project outcomes. Increasing student awareness of the grant program will support all the College's sustainability efforts.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Diversity of proposals and the students engaged
- Number of students submitting proposals
- Steel House Sustainability Grants program web site traffic statistics
- Number of sophomore and juniors involved in generating proposals

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES - RESOURCE EFFICENCY

5. Resource Consumption

Reduce resource consumption (energy, waste, water) and greenhouse gas emissions by 3 percent relative to a 2005 baseline.

Rationale:

Connecticut College has long been dedicated to reducing its resource consumption, with recent efforts including the use of a geothermal heating and cooling system in the newly redesigned New London Hall. Continuing to reduce resource consumption will decrease the College's reliance on non-renewable resources and will help save the College money over time. It will also reduce environmental impacts and pollution. By investing in resource efficiency now, the College is working to reduce resource consumption and costs for future generations. Previous studies (e.g. Ameresco Energy Audit) and the College's Capital Asset Reinvestment Plan will be used to help determine what projects are completed.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Resource consumption statistics compared to the 2005 baseline data
- Utilities budget allocations and saving
- Greenhouse gas emissions statistics compared to the 2005 baseline data

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – RESOURCE EFFICENCY

6. Revolving Fund

Establish a revolving sustainability fund that provides funding for resource efficiency projects.

Rationale:

A sustainability revolving fund will provide critical, long-lasting support for resource efficiency projects, without the use of debt or operating funds. Such a fund would provide funding to complete resource efficiency projects that will have a financial payback over time. The annual savings actualized by completing a project would be rolled back into the fund until the project has been completely paid off. Once a project is paid off, additional savings would be incorporated into the College's operating budget. The goal is to establish a revolving fund financed by young alumni gifts and, in the process, reduce the need to use operating budget or institutional debt capacity to finance resource efficiency projects. This is an example of innovative financing that can help the College reduce resource consumption without drawing on the operating budget.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Fund established with procedures for use
- Number of resource efficiency projects completed
- Return on investment gained from completed projects each year

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – RESOURCE EFFICENCY

7. Food Systems

Increase sustainable food offerings (e.g. local, ecologically responsible, fair trade, humanely produced) from approximately 8 percent to 10 percent of campus food budget.

Rationale:

Supporting local and sustainable food systems is a central component of sustainability and has been a focus of the College's sustainability efforts in recent years. Using local and sustainable food supports healthy communities locally and internationally, reduces environmental impacts, and can increase individuals' health. Dining Services and the office of Events and Catering are working to incorporate more sustainable food options on campus; recent successes including sustainable coffee and bananas. Through the expansion of the Sprout Garden, efforts to define what constitutes sustainable food, increased student involvement with local farms and an increase in the food budget to support more sustainable purchases, the College will become an increasingly important supporter of sustainable food systems in southeastern Connecticut.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Percentage of food budget dedicated to purchasing sustainable food
- Produce purchased from Sprout Garden (lbs. and cost)
- Number of local farms from which food is purchased
- Number of students involved with local farms (research, volunteering, etc)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – CAMPUS STEWARDSHIP

8. Policies and Practices

Enhance and strengthen sustainability policies for construction, building maintenance and land management.

Rationale:

Strong and well-articulated sustainability policies related to all construction, maintenance and land management efforts are necessary building blocks for a lasting commitment to sustainability. Connecticut College is committed to sustainable construction and maintenance, as demonstrated by the completion of New London Hall, which will be our third LEED certified building project in the past three years. Additionally, the College is known for its beautiful grounds and campus arboretum, all of which is cared for with minimal use of pesticides and herbicides. This initiative will help assure that the College maintains this commitment in the most foundational, yet innovative ways.

Assessable Outcomes:

- List of new or enhanced policies available on the sustainability website
- Number of projects and campus operations functioning within sustainability policies
- Number of LEED certified buildings and projects

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – CAMPUS STEWARDSHIP

9. Purchasing

Establish resources to help the campus community locate discounts and purchasing opportunities for environmentally benign and socially responsible products.

Rationale:

With a newly hired director of purchasing in place, the College is already reducing costs through more effective purchasing practices. Purchasing policies and practices should also be used to identify products and services that are environmentally benign, socially responsible and competitively priced. This priority will help create resources (websites, trainings and personal assistance) to assist campus departments and programs to reduce costs, while also increasing use of environmentally benign and socially responsible products.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Annual savings generated from purchasing efficiencies
- Publically available list of price-competitive environmentally and socially responsible products available
- Percentage of purchasing agents on campus who complete sustainable purchasing workshop

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – CAMPUS STEWARDSHIP

10. Asset Reinvestment

Incorporate sustainability considerations into ongoing reviews and updates of the campus asset reinvestment plan.

Rationale:

In the most recent review of the College's asset reinvestment program, sustainability has been incorporated as a consideration for project selection and completion. The asset reinvestment program has been consistently dedicated to minimizing costs; articulating the importance of sustainability in this program supports the College's commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility. This holistic approach to evaluating and funding facility and infrastructure projects will demonstrate the College's commitment to sustainability and help maximize the benefits of our investments.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Incorporation of sustainability parameters and goals into future updates
- Number of projects completed that incorporate sustainability values
- Incorporation of sustainability parameters and assessments into ongoing considerations of the Utilities Master Plan

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – BUILDING COMMUNITY

11. Community Collaborations

Develop sustainability collaborations between existing campus offices, departments, centers and community organizations that promote environmental stewardship, social equity and economic wellbeing on campus and in the community.

Rationale:

Connecticut College has strong institutional commitments to environmental stewardship, social equity and economic sustainability. Increasing connections among individuals and programs in each of these areas will facilitate collaboration and build community on campus as well as in the surround areas. In the microcosm of society that is Connecticut College, an engaged and inclusive campus community is essential for integrating sustainability practices throughout the campus culture. In this way, the College will bring the broadest possible set of perspectives, questions and solutions to decision making. This priority aims to increase participation in sustainability by fostering sustainability activities that connect and address economic wellbeing, social justice and environmental stewardship. Programs, activities and partnerships on- and off-campus will help foster a stronger sense of community and commitment to sustainability within New London County.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Number of interdisciplinary sustainability events hosted per year
- Number of programs developed with local community
- Heightened understanding of the College's support of New London

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – BUILDING COMMUNITY

12. Communications

Continue to publicize Connecticut College’s commitment to sustainability and the impact of sustainability initiatives to both internal and external audiences.

Rationale:

This priority will help build support for sustainability on campus while also ensuring that sustainability will be an increasingly important part the College’s institutional identity. Particular emphasis will be placed on communications to prospective students, alumni and the campus community. Communications will highlight not only the direct impact of the College’s sustainability initiatives, but also the broader impact of sustainability programs – through our alumni – on the world. We will also continue to emphasize how sustainability is rooted in the College’s “liberal arts in action” mission and connected to other historic strengths, such as environmental stewardship, social justice, a focus on global issues, and community action.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Percentage of incoming students with demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Number of students enrolling in sustainability-related courses
- External ranking and recognition related to sustainability and components of sustainability (e.g. College with a Conscience, President’s Honor Roll of Community Service)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – BUILDING COMMUNITY

13. Campus Decision-Making

Begin developing an Office of Sustainability, including a faculty position, to make recommendations for incorporating sustainability into campus decision-making and strategic planning.

Rationale:

For sustainability to truly take shape at an institution, it must become a criterion considered during all decision-making processes and incorporated into all strategic planning initiatives. The College has many priorities that must be weighed and considered within our system of shared governance. An important objective then, is to incorporate sustainability into the governance structure and decision-making processes of the College so that sustainability objectives can be represented, considered and weighed against other College priorities. Establishing an Office of Sustainability will provide the College with the internal structure and leadership that will support the College in achieving all of its sustainability priorities. The Office will serve as the primary driver behind integrating sustainability values into campus decision-making and strategic planning processes, which will be vital to the completion of virtually all sustainability priorities.

Establishing an Office of Sustainability involves three steps:

1. Establish a Faculty Director position with \$10,000 stipend to co-direct the Office
2. Transform the Manager of Sustainability position into an Administrative Director position
3. Officially establish the Steel House as the home of the Office of Sustainability

In the future we hope to provide additional resources to the Office of Sustainability including administrative support and expanding the annual budget from the current \$2000.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – BUILDING COMMUNITY

14. Campus Decision-Making (cont.)

Assessable Outcomes:

- Establishment of an Office of Sustainability
- Sustainability criteria added to Priorities, Planning and Budget Committee, Faculty Steering and Conference Committee decisions
- Sustainability criteria added to Student Government Association decisions
- Sustainability criteria added to Staff Council decisions
- Sustainability criteria included in all strategic planning processes (General Education Reform, Utility Master Plan, College Strategic Plan, Campus Master Plan, Capital Campaigns)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – BUILDING COMMUNITY

15. Alternative Transportation

Expand and develop opportunities for the College community to travel to, from and around campus in ways that reduce fuel consumption and increase a sense of community.

Rationale:

Increasing the use of alternative transportation is an important priority for any community that is dedicated to advancing sustainability because virtually everyone depends on transportation for something in their lives – getting to and from important places, deliveries of vital medicine, etc. Increasing the use of alternative modes of transportation will help reduce the many negative environmental and health impacts that come from fuel consumption and will help develop a stronger sense of community. Connecticut College has long been a champion of alternative transportation amongst students by offering them a number of options to get to, from and around campus. Moving forward, the College plans to expand their important student programs and open more opportunities for faculty and staff to utilize alternative transportation. Specifically, a preferred parking program for efficient cars will be examined, as well as the development of a carpooling program.

Assessable Outcomes:

- Number of bicycles rented from the CC Cruisers Program
- Number of bicycles rented from Spokespeople each year
- Establishment of a Sustainability Preferred Parking Program
- Number of community members enrolled in the Sustainability Preferred Parking Program
- Percentage of staff and faculty enrolled in a carpooling program (i.e. NuRide)

IMPLEMENTATION

To support the implementation of the College's Sustainability Plan, the Sustainability Steering Committee created ten Implementation Teams to work toward the completion of one or more goals. Each Implementation Team is comprised of students, faculty and staff that work together to complete specific projects and initiatives that will support the completion of the sustainability goal(s). A Sustainability Internship Program has been established to provide each implementation team with one or two student interns who assist in completing necessary tasks.

Each Implementation Team is also tasked with developing budgets for any projects that wish to complete, which are then submitted to the Sustainability Steering Committee where they will be prioritized and sent forward to the President and the Priorities, Planning and Budget Committee for consideration.

The ten Implementation Teams are listed below.

- 1) Sustainability in the Curriculum
- 2) Community Collaborations and Education
- 3) Waste Minimization
- 4) Energy Conservation and Efficiency
- 5) Sustainable Purchasing
- 6) Sustainable Food Systems
- 7) Sustainable Transportation
- 8) Sustainable Facilities
- 9) Sustainable Land Management
- 10) Finance and Assessment

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Every spring, the Manager of Sustainability will conduct an assessment of the Sustainability Plan, with support from the Sustainability Steering Committee and the Implementation Teams. The primary goal of the annual assessment will be to identify which goals have been completed and what goal(s) should be added in place of the those completed. Implementation Teams that complete one or more of their assigned goals will be asked to suggest additional goals that will help the College continue to pursue its overarching sustainability priorities. With input from the Environmental Model Committee, the Sustainability Steering Committee will revise the plan, before submitting it to the Senior Administrators for review and support at the end of each academic year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sustainability Steering Committee (2012-13)

Roger Brooks (Chair) Dean of the Faculty, Elie Wiesel Professor of Judaic Studies
Patricia Carey, Vice President for College Relations
Molly Conlin '13
Glenn Dreyer, Charles and Sarah P. Becker '27
Director of the Arboretum
Ulysses Hammond, Vice President for Administration
Genevieve Harding '13
Peter Horgan, Energy Systems and Project Manager*
Chad Jones, George and Carol Milne Assistant Professor of Botany
Josh Stoffel, Manager of Sustainability
Doug Thompson, Karla Heurich Harrison '28
Director of the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment

Sustainability Steering Committee (2011-12)

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Additional Recognition

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Nick Luce '14
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Kristine Serwinski, Purchasing Manager of Software Administrator
Katie Surrey-Bergman '14