

# Syracuse University's Sustainability Portfolio to Be Managed by New Integrated Leadership Team

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Beginning this academic year, an integrated team of University leaders is responsible for overseeing Syracuse University's expansive sustainability portfolio via a new integrated approach that will allow Syracuse to expand and grow its impact in this important field.

John Liu, incoming vice president for research; Peter Venable, dean of the Graduate School; and Pete Sala, vice president and chief facilities officer, have been tasked by Vice Chancellor and Provost Michele Wheatly to elevate the University's sustainability initiatives—from an academic, research, environmental and campus perspective.

"Syracuse University's students, faculty and staff are more environmentally conscious than ever before," says Wheatly. "It is important that we approach our sustainability efforts holistically, and I am confident this new team is well-equipped to create an integrated strategy that benefits all members of our campus community."

This new approach comes on the heels of Sherburne "Shere" Abbott concluding her tenure as vice president for sustainability initiatives to pursue her passion for teaching and policy research. During her time in that role, Abbott partnered with faculty, staff, students and the wider community to strengthen connections between scholarship and practice. She also focused on forging new institutional collaborations to create novel approaches to sustainability and advance the University's commitment to leadership in sustainability in higher education.

Abbott, University Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy, will continue to play an important role in sustainability initiatives by developing innovative curricula based on her years of experience. David Van Slyke, dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, and Karin Ruhlandt, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, have charged Abbott with creating an Integrated Learning Major in environmental science and policy.

"Shere has been a valued member of the University leadership team and has taken a number of critical steps to expand Syracuse's position as a leader in sustainability initiatives," says Wheatly. "Her leadership laid important groundwork, and, because of her efforts, the University is now poised to accomplish great things in the future. I look forward to working with her in her new role and am eager to see the academic program she will develop that will benefit future generations of Syracuse students."

As Abbott transitions into her new role, Venable has assumed interim leadership of several key initiatives, including the Center of Excellence for Environmental and Energy Systems and the Center for Sustainable Community Solutions. These efforts, and others, will eventually shift to Liu's portfolio. He begins his tenure as vice president for research on Sept. 1 and will initiate conversations with campus faculty and research staff about the University's ongoing sustainability efforts, particularly as it relates to alignment with the Academic Strategic Plan.

Meanwhile, Energy Systems and Sustainability Management, which is housed in the Office of Campus Facilities Administration and Services, will oversee implementation of sustainability initiatives as it relates to the campus' physical presence. Led by Sala, Energy Systems and Sustainability Management is focused on ensuring Syracuse University uses its resources more effectively. From automated energy and building systems, steam and chilled water production and energy conservation to campus sustainability programs, this office works throughout the entire University community to efficiently create and maintain comfortable, sustainable and high-performance campus environments. From the onset, Sala's team has overseen the development and implementation of the Campus Framework, which articulates and seeks to achieve considerable progress as it relates to the University's sustainability initiatives.

In addition to this new team, representatives from Syracuse University and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry are discussing how the two schools can further elevate their collective sustainability efforts. Cathryn Newton, special advisor to the Chancellor and provost for faculty engagement, has been leading those conversations and says an announcement about the expanding partnership is forthcoming.

“Significant advances on the part of both faculty groups and the two universities have occurred during the past several months,” says Newton. “I am grateful to my colleagues here at Syracuse and at ESF for their commitment to strengthening our partnership, particularly as it relates to protecting our natural resources and expanding the use of alternative energy solutions.”

Once the new academic year is underway, students, faculty and staff – at both Syracuse and ESF – will be encouraged to provide input on the future of the partnership.

