

2016-2020 Strategic Plan Wrap-up Report

Thank you for taking the time to complete the 2016-2020 Strategic Direction Plan closeout report. This information will be used by the Strategic Direction Oversight Committee as they plan the 2020-2024 Strategic Direction strategies and implementation. The report will be used for the final 2016-2020 update to the Governing Board Planning Committee. CNM will also archive the information to use in the Higher Learning Commission 2024 Comprehensive Evaluation Report.

1. Why did CNM choose the strategy?

Background

President Winograd signed the Presidential Climate Commitment (Second Nature) in 2008. From this was developed a Sustainability Task Force to develop institutional goals (operational and academic). After goals were developed, the Task Force transformed into the Sustainability Curriculum Committee (during the 2013-2014 academic year), which shifted their focus to academics (CNM implements separate operational goals, which sometimes overlap). Increasing sustainability in both academics and operations also helps with sustainability accreditation through 3rd party Organizations such as AASHE—The Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. This accreditation is important to all community college stakeholders, but students are of paramount consideration.

Looking forward (2016-2020)

Students look to educational institutions for example-setting and to learn about solutions to global and local sustainability-related crises that they are reminded of every day. One approach is to provide educational opportunities in the classrooms so that students may learn about the issues, potential solutions, and how to apply these solutions. This supports our reputation as an institution of excellence, but also lessens the stress students feel about the future. In order to progress sustainability in academics with a clear objective, the strategic direction to *Increase Sustainability in the Curriculum by 25%* was created.

A. What data did we have in 2016?

The baseline data showed that 55 courses, or 5% of CNM courses included sustainability in the classroom.

2. What did the team do?

The Sustainability Curriculum Committee (SCC) promoted sustainability education to students by providing certificate offerings for college-specific sustainability service, hosting annual college-wide events (Recyclemania and Water in the Desert), and providing student learning opportunities through sustainability learning projects. The SCC promoted sustainability education to faculty by hosting workshops designed to help faculty provide student learning opportunities for sustainability in the classroom. During these workshops, faculty were provided with example assignments from various disciplines that focused on sustainability. Faculty were also provided with a template (designed and written by the SCC) for writing their own sustainability focused assignments, and workshops focused on brainstorming ideas for sustainability focused

assignments in various disciplines. Workshops were hosted once a semester as well as during Faculty Focus Day.

The SCC also reviewed and analyzed the current curriculum at CNM for sustainability related and sustainability focused courses. Once a sustainability related or sustainability focused course was identified, a leaf icon (blue for sustainability related, green for sustainability focused) was added to the catalog for students to easily identify courses that involved sustainability. During semester meetings, the SCC also reviewed new courses to determine if they were sustainability related or focused. If they were, they were properly identified in the catalog. It is important to note that a course was only added as sustainability-related or sustainability-focused if all sections contained sustainability in the curriculum. If an instructor had a sustainability related assignment in their section of a course, but it was not in the other sections of the course, the course was not included in the count.

A. What data showed we were effective?

The baseline data showed that 55 courses, or 5% of CNM courses included sustainability in the curriculum. At the time of this report, we now have 15.4% (154 courses) of CNM courses that include sustainability in the curriculum.

B. What institutional lessons were learned? (roll-out, implementation, buy-in, etc.)

It is the opinion of the former and current chairs of the SCC that for the strategic direction of increasing sustainability in the classroom to be successful, the following need to occur:

- More support from Deans and Departmental Chairs – during our workshops the idea of academic freedom and potential for conflict was often discussed. The SCC asked participants if they felt comfortable encouraging peers to adopt sustainability assignments in their courses and many did not feel comfortable doing so. With more support from the Deans and/or Departmental Chairs, we feel faculty may feel more comfortable encouraging the incorporation of a sustainable assignment into a course. We also feel that an active Dean needs to be in the committee. Attendance in the committee was minimal and having an active Dean will not only provide support but also encourage participation of committee members.*
- Additional monetary resources and support staff would further promote the implementation of this strategic direction. This includes having a staff member position dedicated to sustainability curriculum enhancement under Academic Affairs and support staff for college-wide events. The college-wide events were often planned, advertised, set up, and ran by 1 to 3 individuals on the SCC with little hierarchical support.*

3. What work (if any) is left to be done? *We are still 9.6% away from the original strategic direction goal of increasing sustainability in the curriculum by 25%. In order to achieve this goal we will need additional support from Deans and Departmental Chairs, as well as Academic Affairs to increase interest and buy in from faculty members.*

- A. Is there a suggested timeline? 25% by 2020
- B. What data should be tracked for the remainder of the project? Courses (at course-level) that have changed learning objectives/assignments with the objective of increasing sustainability in the curriculum. A course may not be recognized in the course catalog as sustainability focused or related if it is not at the course-level (opposed to section-level). Section-level sustainability incorporation is too difficult to track because it is not static; many instructors are part-time and/or free to change these assignments at any time. However, any change in curriculum that adds sustainability related or focused assignments, should be assessed by the SCC for consideration towards the strategic direction.
- C. Do you recommend the current team continue work? (or create a new team, or has the work been operationalized). This is difficult to answer. The work has been operationalized to an extent, by using the SCC as a touchstone to vet current courses for sustainability, as well as to encourage sustainability in the curriculum by hosting workshops and outreach events (and those recognized courses are handed off to OPIE and AA for incorporation into the course catalog). However, both the workshops and events are poorly attended as there is no directive from higher academic staff for faculty members to consider these opportunities. Additionally, general SCC membership has been trending downwards. This may be because there is no longer an active dean on the committee (Paula Smith-Hawkins was originally the support-dean), nor anyone from Academic Affairs. Therefore, sustainability in the curriculum doesn't translate to faculty as an institutional priority, even though it is a strategic direction.

The SCC is again in transition and its most active chair (Jessie Smith) plans to resign from her role on the committee before fall 2019. In order to successfully meet the 25% goal of the strategic direction by 2020, it is recommended that a Dean join immediately and that this dean also helps to appoint a new committee chair. These actions would both empower the existing committee and also those being considered to chair the committee. It would encourage more faculty to join the committee and more active participation among current members. If this does not occur, it is recommended that the committee consider its work complete under the strategic direction so that it may organically dissolve or evolve as a solely faculty-led initiative.