MacEwan University
UNIVERSITY

MacEwan University's
Strategic Campus Sustainability Plan
2017-2021

Approved – Board of Governors – February 23, 2017

Defining Sustainability in Higher Education

The overarching goal of sustainability is to contribute positively towards the well-being of individuals, communities, and ecosystems. To this end, sustainability in higher education balances environmental responsibility, economic health, social equity, and cultural vitality.

In 1990, twenty-two presidents, rectors, and vice chancellors of universities from around the world convened at the Tufts European Centre in Talloires, France, where the Talloires Declaration (TD) was created to define the sustainable university. The TD is a ten-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations, and outreach at universities and colleges. The gathering defined the role of the sustainable university in the following way:

> *"Universities educate most of the people who develop and manage society's institutions. For this reason, universities bear profound responsibilities to increase the awareness, knowledge, technologies, and tools to create a sustainable future. Universities have all the expertise necessary to develop the intellectual and conceptual framework to achieve this goal. Universities must play a strong role in the education, research, policy development, information exchange, and community outreach to help create an equitable and sustainable future."* [1]

It has now been signed by over 350 university presidents and chancellors in over 40 countries. MacEwan demonstrated its leadership and commitment to sustainability by signing the Talloires Declaration in 2009.

Sustainability in higher education is considered a distinct but interdisciplinary specialization of study and practice.[2] Through advancing knowledge, educating leaders and furthering social process and engagement, institutions of higher education are positioned to be powerful leaders in sustainability innovation and excellence.[3] University campuses are laboratories that provide the lived experience of sustainable communities:

> *"As major contributors to the values, health and well-being of society, higher education has a fundamental responsibility to teach, train and do research for sustainability. We believe that the success of higher education in the twenty-first century will be judged by our ability to put forward a bold agenda that makes sustainability and the environment a cornerstone of academic practice."* [4]

Sustainability should be purposefully integrated into the institution through academics, operations, engagement, and leadership. Integration and support from the institution as a whole will help create more informed, engaged, and responsible citizens.

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[1]University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (1990). Report and Declaration of the Presidents Conference - Talloires Declaration. Tuffs University. www.ulsf.org/programs_talloires_report.html. Accessed June 2, 2016.

[2] Lozano R., et.al (2011) *Declarations for sustainability in higher education: Becoming better leaders, through addressing the university system. Journal of Cleaner Production*. Vol 48 (p. 10-19).

[3] Clugston, R. (1999) *Introduction* in *Sustainability and University Life*. Frankfurt.

[4] University Leaders for a Sustainable Future. (2012) Mission Statement. www.ulsf.org/about.html. Accessed August 20, 2016.

A Context for Sustainability

Issues of sustainability constitute a critical area of discourse reflecting global concerns about the environment, economic well-being, cultural appropriation, social and political disruption, and health. That universities should be foremost in shaping this discourse goes without saying, and there is considerable evidence to suggest that more emphasis needs to be placed by universities addressing what many consider the greatest challenge of our times. There are several developments which have particular relevance for MacEwan University:

1. A study conducted by the Higher Education Academy (2014) demonstrates that students are asking for a greater commitment to sustainability from their institutions. The research shows that:
   - Over 80% of students want their institution to incorporate and actively promote sustainability
   - 75% want to learn more about sustainable development
   - Over 65% believe that sustainability should be incorporated into their university courses[5]

   The study also found that an increasing number of students are looking at institutional commitment to sustainability as one of the factors when choosing which university they will attend.

2. *The Princeton Review* conducted a survey entitled "2016 College Hopes & Worries Survey" to which nearly 10,000 college-aged teens responded. The majority (61%) of respondents said having information about institutional commitment to environmental issues would contribute to their application decisions.[6]

3. Recent changes to the provincial and federal government have provided new areas of focus and one of the underlying themes is sustainability. In the 2016 Government of Alberta Strategic Plan [7], there are five strategic priorities that closely align to the areas of sustainability:
   a. A diversified economy that creates jobs and opportunities for all Albertans,
   b. Demonstrated leadership on climate change,
   c. Education and training to enable Albertans to succeed in the global economy.
   d. Safe and inclusive communities that embrace fairness and equality of opportunity,
   e. Sustainable and accessible health care services and social supports.

4. The Federal Government has released the draft 2016-19 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy which is organized around five goals, all of which MacEwan University can proactively and positively contribute. The goals include:
   a. Action on climate change,
   b. Clean technology, jobs and innovation,
   c. National parks, protected areas, and ecosystems,
   d. Freshwater and oceans,
   e. Human health, well-being, and quality of life.[8]

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[5] National Union of Students (2015) Attitudes and Skills for Sustainable Development http://www.nus.org.uk/en/greener-projects/greener-research/attitudes-and-skills-for-sustainable-development/. Accessed August 20, 2016

[6] The Princeton Review (2016) The Princeton Review 2016 College Hopes & Worries Survey Report. http://www.princetonreview.com/college-rankings/college-hopes-worries. Accessed August 20, 2016.

[7] Government of Alberta (2016) 2016-19 Government of Alberta Strategic Plan. http://finance.alberta.ca/publications/budget/budget2016/goa-strategic-plan.pdf. Accessed August 20, 2016.

[8] Government of Canada (2016). Planning for a Sustainable Future – A Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada 2016-2019. http://www.fsds-sfdd.ca/downloads/3130%20-%20Federal%20Sustainable%20Development%20Strategy%202016-2019_.pdf Accessed August 20, 2016.

5. According to the Economic Policy Institute, green jobs have been identified as one of the fastest growing employment industries in North America. While it is difficult to estimate the numbers due to differing definitions of 'green jobs', it is safe to say they are in the tens of millions and will continue to grow.[9] Universities are in the unique situation where they can equip students with the knowledge to enter one of the fastest growing new industries. The Alberta government has also identified the creation of green jobs as the number one priority in their Sustainable Development Strategy.

6. Universities are being called on as leaders and innovators to drive society into a more resilient future. The University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, in addition to creating the Talloires Declaration, have also taken the position that Sustainable higher education

> *"…implies that the critical activities of a higher education institution are ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable, and that they will continue to be so for future generations. A truly sustainable college or university would emphasize these concepts in its curriculum and research, preparing students to contribute as working citizens to an environmentally healthy and equitable society. The institution would function as a sustainable community, embodying responsible consumption of energy, water and food, and supporting sustainable development in its local community and region."[10]*

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[9] Economic Policy Institute (2012). *Counting up to Green: Assessing the Green Economy and its Implications for Growth and Equity*. http://www.epi.org/publication/bp349-assessing-the-green-economy/ Accessed August 20, 2016.

[10] Waas, Tom, et. al. (2012). *Sustainable Higher Education – Understanding and Moving Forward.* Flemish Government – Environment, Nature and Energy Department, Brussels.

Strategic Campus Sustainability Plan

MacEwan's Campus Sustainability Plan is intended to provide a positive direction forward while maintaining flexibility to respond to many new challenges and opportunities. It provides a comprehensive framework to help guide MacEwan towards a sustainable and resilient future.

The Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) and associated sub-committees act as advisory bodies to the Office of Sustainability. The SAC supports and endorses this plan.

To engage members of the MacEwan community in the sustainability conversation, an in-depth, multifaceted public-engagement process was conducted from January 2016, to April 2016. During this time the Campus Sustainability Plan Team heard from over 1,700 staff, students, faculty, and community members who shared over 2,100 ideas about the desired future state of sustainability at MacEwan. In this way, the MacEwan community participated in, advised on, and helped to shape the direction of sustainability at MacEwan.

MacEwan University's Strategic Sustainability Plan comprises four areas:

1. Academic Program, Teaching and Research

2. Engagement, Outreach and Communications

3. Campus Operations

4. Leadership

The Strategic Campus Sustainability Plan demonstrates how the university will engage the campus community in our shared future. Some strategies involve quick wins and incremental changes to existing practices. Other strategies require deep changes to policy and practice. All decision making regarding the strategies will give consideration to environmental, economic, social, and cultural factors.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Goal: To promote the growth of sustainability-related opportunities for student learning, faculty research, and academic collaboration.

Strategies:
1. **Academic Program and Teaching**
   i.   Increase the number of sustainability-related courses.
   ii. Ensure that graduating students have an understanding of sustainability concepts and principles.
   iii. Develop a sustainability credential at MacEwan University.
   iv. Establish multiple pathways for students to learn about sustainability-related topics in their field of study and beyond.
   v.   Create an environment where faculty are supported and encouraged to integrate sustainability into teaching and learning.
   vi. Facilitate collaborative projects that link the operational and academic aspects of the university.

2. **Research**
   i.   Encourage and support research in sustainability.
   ii. Promote sustainability projects and research through providing open access to the public via online tools.

3. **Academic Collaboration**
   i.   Promote and help facilitate innovative partnerships and collaboration between academic departments to research and propose solutions to sustainability challenges.
   ii. Provide sustainability-related opportunities in community-based teaching and work-integrated-learning.
   iii. Strive to connect research programs with the external community to contribute to, and learn from, sustainability solutions locally and globally.
   iv. Create formal partnerships with the community to help co-develop innovative solutions to sustainability related problems and accelerate knowledge transfer.
   v.   Encourage collaboration on research related to campus-specific and community-specific priorities related to sustainability.

ENGAGEMENT, OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

Goal: To create a community where sustainability matters and is lived, shared, and celebrated.

Strategies:
1. **Internal Engagement**
    i. Develop innovative and participatory experiences to educate staff, students, and faculty about sustainability.
    ii. Create opportunities for staff, students, and faculty to work together collaboratively on projects to further sustainability at MacEwan.
    iii. Employ campus-as-a-living-lab principles to provide interactive and experiential sustainability learning.
    iv. Build internal partnerships to foster collaboration through co-development and delivery of programs and initiatives.
    v. Provide students with sustainability learning experiences outside the classroom.
    vi. Provide information and opportunities to communicate the culture of sustainability and how to get involved to new staff, students, and faculty.
    vii. Expand MacEwan's sustainability programming to encourage peer-to-peer learning and mentorship for students, staff, and faculty.

2. **External Engagement**
    i. Improve the public's knowledge of sustainability by offering accessible education and engagement opportunities.
    ii. Provide non-credit educational opportunities to community members.
    iii. Increase sustainability-related course offerings and programs through continuing education.
    iv. Engage the local community in MacEwan's sustainability initiatives.
    v. Collaborate with other post-secondary institutions to help further inter-campus sustainability and build a collective body of knowledge.
    vi. Utilize sustainability as a recruitment tool to attract and retain high-quality staff, students, and faculty.
    vii. Advocate for sustainability in policies on a municipal, provincial, national, and international scale.
    viii. Expand MacEwan's relationships with Edmonton partners through increasing community partnerships and community service agreements.
    ix. Strengthen awareness of sustainability and citizenship through community service.

3. **Communications**
    i. Increase visibility and access of the university's sustainability features, practices, and resources to the campus and community.
    ii. Engage with media channels to help enhance MacEwan's sustainability profile.
    iii. Develop, promote, and distribute a variety of publications to communicate relevant sustainability information.
    iv. Elevate the sustainability profile of MacEwan, celebrating campus-wide collaboration and engagement, by sharing our story.
    v. Create a dynamic and engaging online presence for the Office of Sustainability.
    vi. Communicate and celebrate the Campus Sustainability Plan's progress through a variety of different communications mediums.

CAMPUS OPERATIONS

Goal: To create a model sustainable campus that fosters well-being for individuals, communities, and ecosystems.

Strategies:

1. **Energy, Emissions & Climate Change**
   i. Design and update buildings so they use less energy and emit fewer greenhouse gases.

2. **Building Design, Construction & Operation**
   i. Apply best practices in low impact development throughout the entire building process.
   ii. Reduce the negative impacts of the built environment and employ sustainable practices during design, construction, and operations.
   iii. Participate in benchmarking programs to help drive best practices and innovation in the built environment.

3. **Indoor Air Quality & Building Wellness**
   i. Employ best practices for indoor air quality management.
   ii. Construct and design buildings to protect and promote health.

4. **Grounds**
   i. Plan and maintain grounds with positive contributions to the local ecosystem health, including biodiversity, native species, food production, and pollinator habitat.
   ii. Reduce the negative environmental impact of hardscapes.
   iii. Improve social interaction and cultural expression through the installation of public art.

5. **Transportation**
   i. Maintain a pedestrian friendly campus that promotes multi-modal transportation to campus that reduces transportation related emissions.
   ii. Ensure the availability of viable, safe, and convenient low-impact modes of transportation to and from campus.
   iii. Create a bicycle friendly campus that is connected to the larger municipal transportation plan.
   iv. Utilize a campus vehicle fleet that uses clean, efficient fuels, or alternate energy sources.

6. **Waste**
   i. Reduce the amount of waste on campus.
   ii. Decrease the amount of hazardous waste on campus and ensure that it is safely and efficiently managed.

7. Water
      i.   Design and operate buildings, facilities and grounds to use less potable water though employing sustainable water management practices.

8. Food & Dining Services
      i.   Promote and support sustainable food practices for on-campus dining and catering.
     ii.   Support innovative pilot programs that increase food security at MacEwan.
    iii.   Promote sustainable-event management practices for all on-campus events.

9. ITS & Print Services
      i.   Ensure print services are delivered with responsible procurement, energy management and waste reduction in mind.
     ii.   Implement pilots and programs to reduce the use of resources across campus.

10. Purchasing & Asset Management
      i.   Support socially equitable and environmentally responsible businesses through procurement and asset management.
     ii.   Ensure all custodial services comply with the Green Housekeeping Program.

11. Campus Spaces
      i.   Improve energy efficiency, water conservation, sustainable purchasing, and waste management in all campus spaces.

LEADERSHIP

Goal: To guide, coordinate, and inspire sustainability planning, initiatives, and innovation across the university.

Strategies:
1. **Strategic Planning**
   i. Provide institutional leadership through integrating sustainability concepts, language, and criteria within strategic planning.
   ii. Encourage further integration of sustainability concepts and actions across campus by empowering and facilitating departmental sustainability planning.

2. **Governance**
   i. Create an inclusive implementation framework for the Campus Sustainability Plan.
   ii. Include sustainability criteria in MacEwan University policies.
   iii. Include sustainability as an evaluation criteria in all decision making for initiatives and programs at MacEwan.

3. **Resources**
   i. Create a Centre for Sustainability that focuses on collaboration, leadership, innovation, professional development, and support for sustainability initiatives on campus and in the community.
   ii. Improve the resource tracking and coordination of campus sustainability resources.
   iii. Resource the Office of Sustainability to meet the needs of the university and the Office of Sustainability Departmental Plan.
   iv. Foster a new generation of sustainability leaders by providing mentorship, networking, and professional development opportunities for students.
   v. Leverage students' commitment to and involvement in sustainability as a resource.

4. **Recognition**
   i. Recognize sustainability accomplishments and leadership.
   ii. Create and highlight opportunities for students to gain recognition for their work in the field of sustainability.

5. **Finance**
   i. Incorporate sustainability as a key component in evaluating investment opportunities.
   ii. Ensure that the Office of Sustainability has diverse, secure, and adequate sources of long-term funding.

6. Wellness

    i.   Create an environment that supports staff, student, faculty and community wellness.

7. Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity

    i.   Support diversity, equity, inclusivity and social justice initiatives for staff, students and faculty on campus and in the community.

    ii.   Improve access to post-secondary education to underrepresented groups.

8. Measurement

    i.   Monitor and report progress of the Campus Sustainability Plan goals.

    ii.   Establish commitment to sustainability as criteria in staff, faculty, and administration evaluations.

Campus Sustainability Plan Governance

Office of Sustainability

The Office of Sustainability works in collaboration with the MacEwan community to advance the economic integrity, cultural vitality, social equity, and environmental responsibility of the institution. The Office of Sustainability is responsible for:

- Overseeing the creation and implementation of the MacEwan University's Campus Sustainability Plan
- Overseeing of the Sustainability Advisory Committee and associated sub-committees and working groups
- Receiving recommendations and advice from the Sustainability Advisory Committee to bring forward for institutional approval and funding
- Reporting annually on progress to Dean's Council
- Creating, communicating and celebrating the annual report with the MacEwan community, including other institutional governing bodies
- Integrating sustainability strategically throughout the institution to support the Institutional Strategic Plan and the MacEwan University Pillars.

Sustainability Advisory Committee

The Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) will advise and support the Office of Sustainability and make recommendations on the strategic actions outlined in MacEwan University's Campus Sustainability Plan (CSP). The SAC is also responsible for:

- Approving the sub-committees' annual work plans
- Providing guidance and recommendations regarding planning, administration and leadership of the CSP
- Providing input into business cases developed by the sub-committees
- Reviewing and recommending for approval Green Revolving Fund applications
- Reviewing and providing endorsements to other governing bodies within the institution
- Providing feedback and advice to the Academic and Operations sub-committees
- Endorsing any projects, policies, initiatives, or reports (e.g. STARS, Annual Reports)

Academic Sustainability Sub-Committee

The Academic Sustainability Sub-Committee will support the Sustainability Advisory Committee and the Office of Sustainability by reviewing, revising and guiding the implementation of, and report on the strategic actions outlined in the Academic section of the Campus Sustainability Plan. The Academic Sub-Committee is also responsible for:

- Co-creating and approving annual work-plans for the academic project-based working groups
- Forming project-based working groups with specific deliverables
- Providing feedback on project-based work from working groups
- Creating an annual report for all accomplishments relative to the academic section of the CSP
- Participating in STARS reporting

Operational Sustainability Sub-Committee

The Operational Sustainability Sub-Committee will support the Sustainability Advisory Committee and the Office of Sustainability by reviewing, revising, and overseeing the implementation of, and report on the strategic actions outlined in the Operations section of the Campus Sustainability Plan. The Operations Sub-Committee is also responsible for:

- Co-creating and approving annual work-plans for the operations project-based working groups
- Forming project-based working groups with specific deliverables
- Providing feedback on project-based work to the working groups
- Creating an annual report for all accomplishments relative to the operations section of the CSP
- Participating in STARS reporting

Project-Based Working Groups

The project-based working groups will consist of members from the sub-committees; however, if others from the university or community are interested in a specific project that the working groups are undertaking, they are also welcome to join the project-based working group. The working groups' work-plans will be determined at the sub-committee level and will be based on priorities outlined in the CSP. The project leads from each working group will present their work to the respective sub-committees for feedback and further guidance.

Sustainability Governance and Operations

The Sustainability Advisory Committee, through the Office of Sustainability, will annually report on progress made in executing the Campus Sustainability Plan. The annual report will be presented by the Office of Sustainability to Deans' Council. In addition, the annual report will be provided to other institutional governing bodies (i.e. Academic Governance Council, Board of Governors, and Executive Committee) as information.

Due to the cross-organizational integration and impact of the Campus Sustainability Plan, the governance structure will be further developed and brought forward at that time to Academic Governance Council and the Board of Governors for approval.