



CURRICULUM, CO-CURRICULAR EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

As an institution of higher education, West Chester University's primary roles in meeting the challenges of sustainability and climate change are to educate, conduct research, and provide public service. Through these efforts we have an opportunity to instill the knowledge and values of sustainability within our campus and community. At West Chester University, we promote the stewardship of an Earth on which life flourishes into a future of increasing prosperity and opportunity, without reducing the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations of humans and other life. Sustainability requires an understanding of the inter-connected relationship of environmental, societal, and economic issues and resources at both the local and global levels. West Chester University graduates will be prepared to transform their understanding of those connections into a life-long commitment to environmental sustainability and responsible local and global citizenship.

GOALS

Curriculum: Ensure that all WCU students develop a deep understanding of sustainability and climate change. We will foster systems thinking through an integrated curriculum that makes connections across colleges and programs. We will provide an experiential education that develops in all students the practical knowledge and skill to address the challenges of sustainability and climate change in their personal, civic, and professional lives.

Co-Curricular Education and Training: Engage the entire West Chester University community in learning about climate change and sustainability. We will involve all students, staff, faculty, and administrators in learning about and creating a sustainable future. We will integrate sustainability into the campus culture by providing WCU students with co-curricular sustainability learning experiences that enable them to deepen and apply what they have learned in the formal curriculum. We will also provide training opportunities for administrators and staff to deepen their understanding of sustainability and support their ability to become sustainability and climate change leaders in their own departments.

Research: Expand research and creative work that address the challenges of climate change and sustainability. We will promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives and collaborations to develop and implement solutions in our local, regional, and global communities.

Public Engagement: Advance sustainability within the larger society. We will fulfill West Chester University’s public mission by pursuing, developing, and promoting partnerships that respond to the needs of our community, region, and Commonwealth.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. Curriculum

Definitions: Sustainability-Focused and Sustainability-Related

Objective 1.1 – Incorporate Sustainability into General Education

Objective 1.2 – Create Sustainability Majors, Minors, and Certificate Programs

Objective 1.3 – Adopt Sustainability and Climate Change Learning Outcomes

Objective 1.4 – Develop Opportunities for Experiential Sustainability Learning

2. Co-Curricular Education and Training

Objective 2.1 – Establish a Student Sustainability Educators Program (Eco-Reps)

Objective 2.2 – Establish an Earth Ally Program

Objective 2.3 – Incorporate Sustainability into New Student Orientation

Objective 2.4 – Produce Campus-Wide Sustainability Events

Objective 2.5 – Develop Campus Sustainability Tours

Objective 2.6 – Create a Model Sustainable Room in a Residence Hall

Objective 2.7 – Create Sustainability Themed Housing

Objective 2.8 – Establish a ‘Sustainability’ House

3. Research

Objective 3.1 – Increase Incentives for Sustainability Research/Creative Activity

Objective 3.2 – Create a Center for Sustainability Studies & Research

4. Public Engagement

Objective 4.1 – Increase Formal Sustainability Partnerships

Objective 4.2 – Increase Sustainability-Related Student Internships

Objective 4.3 – Increase Sustainability-Related Service Learning & Volunteering

Objective 4.4 – Increase Sustainability Collaborations with Colleges/Universities

Objective 4.5 – Increase Sustainability-Focused Adult/Continuing Ed Courses

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. Curriculum

DEFINITIONS

Sustainability-Focused: A course is sustainability-focused if the main goals and objectives of the course include any of the following topics:

- The impact of human activities (e.g., energy, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, development, recreation) on natural systems (e.g., biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, soil erosion, etc.)
- The relationship of population, consumption, culture, social equity, and the environment
- Technical, design, and scientific strategies that foster sustainable development, e.g., promote energy efficiency, conserve natural resources, prevent and control the generation of pollution and waste, remediate environmental problems, and preserve biological diversity
- Social, cultural, legal, and governmental frameworks for guiding environmental management and sustainable development
- The causes, consequences, and severity of climate change
- How to apply principles of sustainable development in the context of professional and personal activities.

Sustainability-Related: A course is sustainability-related if any of the following topics are addressed in the course, but were not part of the main goals or objectives in the course:

- The impact of human activities (e.g., energy, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, development, recreation) on natural systems (e.g., biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, soil erosion, etc.)
- The relationship of population, consumption, culture, social equity, and the environment

- Technical, design, and scientific strategies that foster sustainable development, e.g., promote energy efficiency, conserve natural resources, prevent and control the generation of pollution and waste, remediate environmental problems, and preserve biological diversity
- Social, cultural, legal, and governmental frameworks for guiding environmental management and sustainable development
- The causes, consequences, and severity of climate change
- How to apply principles of sustainable development in the context of professional and personal activities

OBJECTIVE 1.1 – INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO GENERAL EDUCATION

Sustainability in General Education Outcome: By 2017 sustainability will be incorporated into General Education with course identifiers. Require all students to complete, at minimum, a “sustainability” approved course or sequence of courses.

- Action Step: Formalize a definition of sustainability in the curriculum that distinguishes ‘sustainability-focused’ courses from ‘sustainability-related’ courses and ‘sustainability immersive’ courses. Make the sustainability course inventory publicly available on-line.
- Action Step: Conduct a sustainability literacy assessment of students focused on knowledge of sustainability topics and climate change.
- Resources Needed:
 1. A 6-Credit AWA for an Education for Sustainability Coordinator Note: WCU’s Sustainability Coordinator is currently a half-time position (6-credit AWA) and is responsible for overseeing sustainability initiatives across the entire campus. Successful implementation of this goal and objective will require a position focused exclusively on curriculum, co-curricular education, research, and public engagement.
 2. Stipends for seven college-based Faculty Sustainability Ambassadors. Note: This is the continuation of a proven program. CAS will have two Ambassadors, one from the sciences, one from the humanities; CBPA will have two Ambassadors, one from the public affairs/social sciences and one from business; COE, CVPA, and CHS will have one Ambassador each.
 3. Incentives for course and program creation: Secure funding from the Dean to conduct Ponderosa model workshop training in May of 2014. The Ponderosa model is a summer program that allows faculty members in any department to develop detailed plans explaining how they will integrate Sustainability into their classes. Faculty who develop a successfully approved proposal receive a stipend.
- Implementation time frame: By 2017
 - 2013: Initiate discussion among faculty, CAPC, and academic affairs administrators about the prospects and timeline for changes in general education
 - 2013-2014: Continue General Education discussions with an emphasis on incorporating sustainability, climate change, and systems thinking (aka integral thinking) in any reformulation of General Education. Reconfirm/identify Sustainability Ambassadors and charge them with tasks to assess and encourage faculty interest in and motivation towards sustainability goals.
 - 2015-16: Establish college-based forums/workshops that draw faculty to integrate sustainability into the curriculum, especially into introductory courses.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 – CREATE SUSTAINABILITY MAJORS, MINORS, AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Sustainability Programs Outcome: Create and implement sustainability-focused undergraduate majors, degree programs, minors, and/or certificate programs; Create and implement sustainability-focused graduate degree programs and certificates. Note: The nature and number of new programs created will depend on the interest of faculty, departments, and colleges, and on the availability and effectiveness of incentives.

- Action Step: Initiate discussion among faculty, CAPC, departments, and academic affairs administrators about the prospects and timeline for developing new sustainability-focused majors, minors, and certificates (2013-14)
- Action Step: Establish targets in consultation with faculty, departments, et al: By (date) X new degree programs, minors, and certificates will be created. (2014)
- Action Step: Pursue the targets for new programs, minors, and certificates.
- Action Step: Identify curricular areas that would benefit from new hires in areas of sustainability and pursue those hires.
- Resources Needed: 6-Credit AWA for Education for Sustainability Coordinator
- Incentives for program creation: Institute an ongoing program that offers incentives for faculty in multiple disciplines and departments to develop new sustainability programs or to incorporate sustainability into existing programs

OBJECTIVE 1.3 – ADOPT SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcomes: WCU will establish targets and dates for ensuring that all students graduate from programs with climate neutrality and sustainability learning outcomes. The number of programs that adopt sustainability and climate neutrality learning outcomes will depend on the interest of faculty, departments, and colleges, and on the availability and effectiveness of incentives.

- Action Step: Initiate discussion among faculty, departments, colleges, CAPC, and academic affairs administrators about the prospects and timeline for incorporating climate neutrality and sustainability learning outcomes into programs (2013-14).
- Action Step: Continue discussions with an emphasis on incorporating sustainability and climate change learning outcomes in all programs. (2014-15)
- Resources Needed: Funding for sustainability course development and for programs in related training for faculty.

OBJECTIVE 1.4 – DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENTIAL SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING

Experiential Sustainability Learning Outcome: Increase opportunities for sustainability-related experiential learning among students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

- Action Step: Build on WCU's successful 2012 sustainability curriculum and pedagogy conference by providing leadership for an annual experiential learning conference aimed at students, faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Action Step: Investigate sustainability-related Alternative Spring Break experiences
- Resources Needed: Establish a planning committee for the annual conference, and provide faculty with resources for incorporating sustainability-related experiential learning.

CO-CURRICULAR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

OBJECTIVE 2.1 – ESTABLISH A STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATORS PROGRAM (ECO-REPS)

Eco-Reps Outcome: WCU will select students to serve as peer sustainability educators, provide formal training in peer-to-peer sustainability outreach, and provide faculty, staff, and/or financial support for the program.

- Action Step: Begin planning during the 2013-14 academic year.
- Action Step: Charge the first cohort of Eco-Reps with 1) developing sustainability-related outreach campaigns (directed at students) that yield measurable, positive results in advancing sustainability, and 2) integrating sustainability immersive experiences into all residence halls (e.g. energy conservation).
- Resources Needed: Stipends for Student Sustainability Educators

OBJECTIVE 2.2 – ESTABLISH AN EARTH ALLY PROGRAM

Earth Ally Program Outcome: WCU will develop an Earth Allies program, modeled after the LGBTQA Allies program. Professors, staff, and students will be able to participate in a training program facilitated by qualified students, faculty, and staff. Participants will learn about sustainability efforts on campus, the progress and projects of the climate action plan, as well as how they can play their part to reduce West Chester University's carbon footprint and environmental impact. Those who complete the training will be designated an Earth Ally and will be encouraged to promote sustainability efforts on and off campus.

OBJECTIVE 2.3 – INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

New Student Orientation Outcome: By Fall 2014 WCU will incorporate sustainability themes into New Student Orientation
Action Step: Investigate the feasibility of including the Awakening the Dreamer Symposium during the Year One component of new student programming.

OBJECTIVE 2.4 – PRODUCE CAMPUS-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS

Campus-Wide Events Outcome: WCU will develop and/or highlight common events that bring together students, faculty, and staff to explore themes in sustainability that correlate with academic objectives.

- Action Step: Establish a committee within the Sustainability Advisory Council to explore options. (Year or Semester of Sustainability; Poetry Conference Sustainability Day; Frederick Douglass and Environmental Justice; Everybody Reads program; Arts Festival; Integrative Health Conference, etc.)