

Introduction and Background

Oregon State University has become a nationally-recognized leader in sustainability, ranked in the top 25 nationally every year since 2008 for its sustainability-related efforts. OSU's strengths include co-curricular education, research, institutional coordination and planning, human resources, public engagement and several other areas. As Oregon's premier research institution, and with its land, sea, space and sun grant status, OSU makes tremendous contributions toward environmental, economic and social progress in the State and beyond. Phase II of the OSU Strategic Plan sets the stage for even greater collaboration in order to solve complex societal problems. There are numerous groups that work on various educational, research and outreach dimensions of sustainability. The focus of the Sustainability Advisory Council will be on OSU's built and live environment and it will serve as advisory to the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration and to the Sustainability Office.

The Need for a Sustainability Advisory Council

Progress in embedding sustainability in OSU's living environment thus far has come in part due to the coordination efforts of the Sustainability Office. Maintaining and improving OSU's position as a sustainability leader will require institution-wide increases in attentiveness, greater investment in coordinating capacity, and weaving a sustainability-minded culture into the fabric of the institution. OSU leadership recognizes this shift will take time, but is essential for the institution to fulfill its sustainability goals and to serve as a role model for other institutions. The Sustainability Advisory Council will guide institutional efforts and help the institution to better address sustainability gaps.

Council Objectives

Prioritizing actions toward improvement in areas like student engagement, operations and investment will be a primary function of the Sustainability Advisory Council. Other topics include:

1. Set and refine a broad range of institutional goals and priorities like carbon neutrality, service learning targets, and community relations
2. Recommend actions and resources to achieve goals and priorities, including internal funding and leveraging external funding
3. Implement sustainability elements from the Strategic Plan and help inform the next round of strategic planning
4. Support the work of existing sustainability professionals across the university
5. Represent a diverse array of OSU stakeholders on sustainability issues
6. Increase visibility of sustainability-related initiatives
7. Provide advice and help formulate programs, policies, concepts and strategies as they are sought by the Vice President for Finance and Administration and senior administration.

Council Operations

The Sustainability Advisory Council will:

- Report to the Vice President for Finance and Administration and provide a brief update on progress every 6 months on key initiatives and create an annual report on overall progress using existing indicators
- Communicate regularly but meet at least quarterly, with appropriate Coordination Teams (see below) meeting more often as needed
- Operate transparently by posting progress, reports and other pertinent information online

As needed, the Council will establish Coordination Teams to address priority issues. Teams will be led by a member of the Council and may add members from the university community as needed. Team members will be appointed by the Council. Teams will focus on advancing initiatives that address Sustainability Council objectives. Coordination Teams report to the Council on a regular basis.

Potential Opportunities for Coordination Teams

1. Investment
2. Civic engagement
3. Greenhouse gas emissions reduction
4. Purchasing and materials
5. Sustainability metrics data collection improvement
6. Academic interface

Council Membership

In order to bring resources, expertise and decision making to the Sustainability Advisory Council, members will represent a mix of university leadership and sustainability professionals. This will allow the Council to move quickly and with flexibility on important issues. The Council will be co-chaired by the Sustainability Coordinator and a member from the Council, appointed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

Members of the Sustainability Council

- 2-3 Academic representatives
- Athletics
- Business Services
- Facilities Services
- Information Services
- Student Affairs
- Student Sustainability Initiative
- Sustainability Coordinator
- University Outreach and Engagement