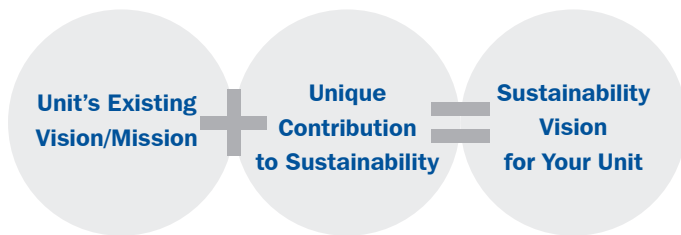


STEP 4 Create a Vision for Sustainability

Strategic planning is done in order to identify where a unit wants to go, how it will get there, and what measures will indicate when it has arrived. Whereas previous steps have oriented your team to the task at hand, this step now invites you to step back and figure out where you want to go. At the end of this section, you will have:

- A vision for sustainability for your unit
- Connections between your vision for sustainability and existing initiatives



Your vision will evolve over time as you experiment with various approaches and learn what works. But specifying a vision early in the process can save a lot of time down the road.

Your unit or department probably already has a vision and mission statement. In this section you're going to look at your mission and vision, what you've done so far in the guidebook, and create a sustainability vision for your unit or department. This is where you can be unconstrained, creative, and aspirational.

Why do we need a vision for sustainability for our unit or department?

Creating a clear and inspirational vision of sustainability for your unit can be one of the most powerful steps you take. This is because a vision tells us where we want to go. A good vision keeps people focused and leads to efficiency and high levels of collaboration because everyone knows the destination.

The characteristics of an effective vision are that it is a:

- ...vivid description...
- ...of a future state that your unit has helped create...
- ...that inspires and guides decision-making.

Tip for the Facilitator

Creating a vision should be energizing and engaging. Make sure it is aligned with your unit's core mission. Ask people to brainstorm a vision statement and write without judgment on their own for 10 minutes. Or brainstorm as a group. Make sure everyone has the chance to participate. Focus on big, aspirational visions that you aren't even sure you can achieve. Someone will need to collate the responses and draft two - four vision statements for the group to react to.

Above and beyond: Come up with an engaging method for involving your whole unit and external partners in the crafting of your unit's vision for sustainability. Review the visions of sustainability developed by others. Search "sustainability vision" online and see what you find. This will spur ideas and creative thinking.

The key is to focus on your unit's unique capabilities. When someone in your unit reads the vision for sustainability, they should feel strongly that it is something that they are uniquely a part of.

As the saying goes, "for a ship without a destination, any harbor will do." A vision sets everyone's eyes on the right destination.

Smeal developed a vision that *every student will graduate knowing how to make the business case for sustainability*. This vision is vivid, inspirational, and specific enough to guide decision-making.

Connecting your vision to other strategic initiatives

The vision will be bolstered through strong connections with other major strategic initiatives. In many cases, it can make sense to tie sustainability to an existing effort that already has momentum, focus, resources, and staffing.

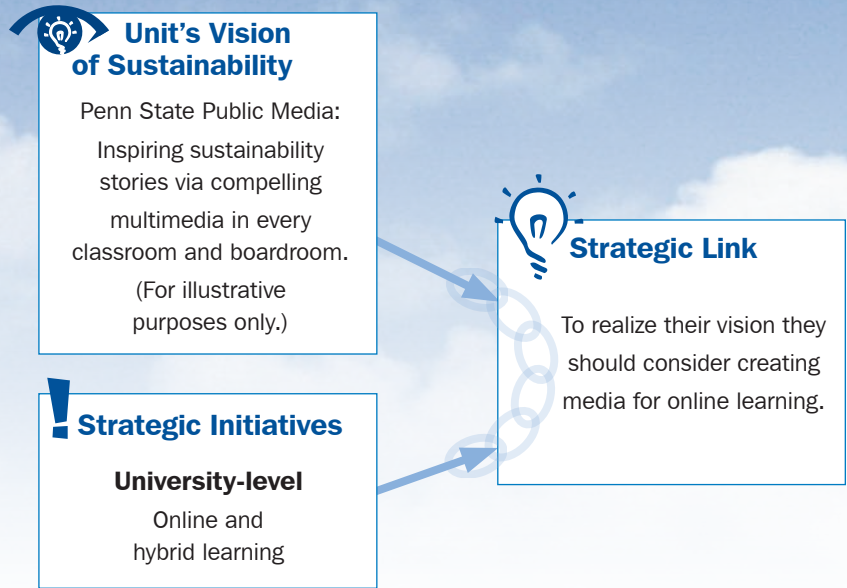
To find these points of strategic overlap, we recommend creating what we call a *Strategic Linking Diagram*. In the Linking Diagram (next page), list other substantive strategic initiatives already taking place and look for ways to integrate your unit's vision of sustainability.

Worksheet

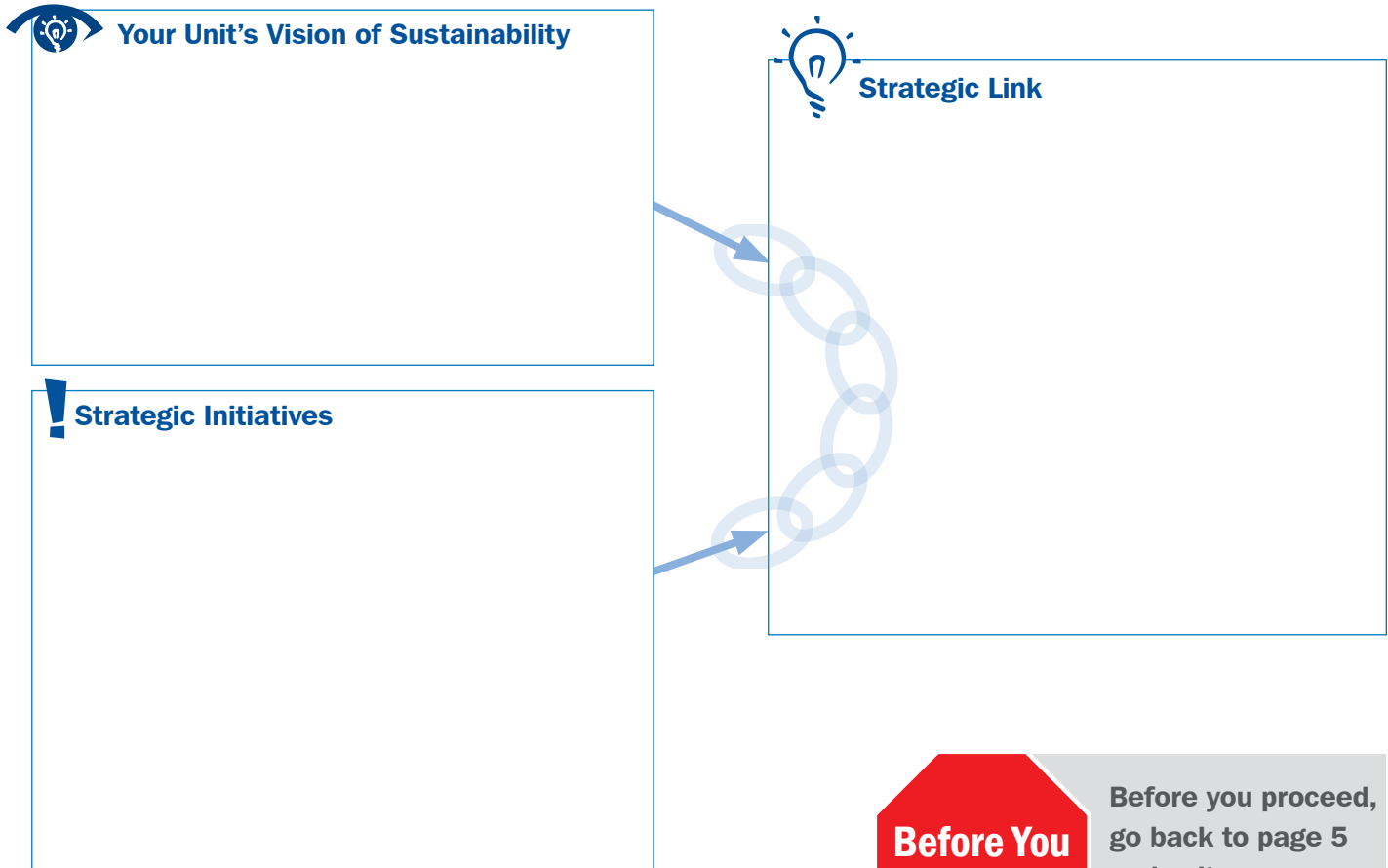
Strategic Linking Diagram

Connecting your unit's vision for sustainability to existing strategic initiatives at the university and/or unit levels creates efficiencies and multiplies its impact.

Example:



Try your own:



Before you proceed, go back to page 5 and write your answer in Step 4.