

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

UW SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

GUIDING THE SUSTAINABILITY
ACTION PLAN



UW SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY



WELCOME TO THE UW SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Since establishing the UW Climate Action Plan in 2009, the University has made good progress with reducing its carbon footprint and institutionalizing sustainability. But even as a third-time gold-rated university recognized by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), our work is not done. We have opportunities to improve our sustainability performance and lay out actionable goals that involve all campuses.

Today, we expand our vision beyond the Climate Action Plan with a new Sustainability Strategy built on five Guiding Principles addressing student learning outcomes, research impact, diversity equity & inclusion, responsible use of our resources, and of course, decarbonization of our energy sources. The Sustainability Strategy balances our sustainability goals with the University's overall priorities to ensure we can execute these actions in a measurable manner. As such, we are applying a financial lens for setting our mid-term targets and adherence to measurable outcomes that we will track annually.

Our community of students, faculty and staff recognizes the importance of guiding our sustainability work in a framework of diversity, equity and inclusion. This first year we embark on integrating the commitment to equity and inclusion into UW's Sustainability Strategy, while reflecting on the changes our world is facing today. Our goal is to engage with groups who are already modeling the best

work of diversity, equity and inclusion on our campuses. Through these partnerships the UW community will foster a sustainable global future through our teaching, research and operations.

At an unprecedented time in our history, the emergent COVID-19 pandemic has influenced our pathway toward this Sustainability Strategy. We have the opportunity to incorporate what we are learning from teaching, researching, and operating a public research university in the context of the pandemic with the implementation of this plan. Five planned, annual Action Plans will actualize the UW Sustainability Strategy, advance our commitment to a sustainable UW, and expand our innovation, discovery and inclusion within our campuses, communities and beyond.

PLAN STRUCTURE

UW's approach to sustainability is structured as a three-tiered system. At the top level, five Guiding Principles are intended to be permanent, directional beacons that ensure we don't lose touch with our primary vision and intentions. The second level consists of quantitative Targets that call for increases or reductions of measurable performance indicators, over 2- to 10-year time horizons. Finally, within

each Target a collection of Actions is designed to induce achievement of the Target.

This Sustainability Strategy articulates the Guiding Principles, as well as ten Targets. Under the Sustainability Strategy's guidance, a series of five annual Action Plans will launch and course-correct the various Actions that achieve each of the Targets over time.

The Action Plans operate within a fiscal year, beginning with FY2021 (July 2020 to June 2021).

During the latter two quarters of the fifth Action Plan, January 1 – June 30 2025, progress toward all Targets will be evaluated; Targets will be accordingly adjusted, retired, or supplemented; and a new Sustainability Strategy will guide the next five years of Action Plans.

STRUCTURE

UW SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY



THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES



THE TEN TARGETS

OVER THE NEXT 2-10 YEARS		
I. Double Student, Staff and Faculty Sustainability Engagement by 2024	V. 5% Lower Emissions from Professional Travel by 2025	VIII. 15% Lower Energy Usage Intensity by 2025
II. One UW-Wide Sustainability Framework by 2022	VI. 35% of Food Is From Local Sources by 2025	IX. 10% Less Solid Waste by 2025
III. Double Sustainability-Oriented Research Projects by 2025	VII. 6% Decrease in Single-Occupancy Commuting Rate Per Campus by 2028	X. 45% Reduction of GHG Emissions by 2030
IV. Comprehensive Equitable Purchasing Targets by 2022		

CONCRETE, YEARLY ACTION PLANS



THE FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Ensure Students Achieve Sustainability Literacy



The University of Washington prepares its students for their personal success in the broader world, and for our shared success with respect to the planet, and for advancing and sustaining healthy ecosystems. We live in a time of intensive globalization: an increasing global population means we need to carefully share available resources; technology is connecting people across continents with incredible ease; and climate change presents risks that can only be solved through international collaboration.

Every UW student's education should be organized around their place in the global network. We will ensure that UW graduates have considered and discovered how their personal passions and skills fit into the framework of activity the globe needs to thrive far into the future.

Choose our Research Conscientiously



UW philosophers, economists, urban planners and many others help the changing world organize itself around the challenges of our changing planet. UW is a world leader in advancing scientific understanding of climate change. We are at the leading edge of building the knowledge, and initiating the changes necessary, to make the world a better place.

Just as we must encourage our students to place their focus carefully in the framework of sustainability, so must our researchers know the place that their work occupies in the social-economic-environmental matrix. Each researcher's program and projects contributes in its unique way to the organization of human life on this planet, and our researchers

must ensure that the work they do contributes to our shared prosperity. We will continue to support groundbreaking research and enable innovations that bring sustainability faster, more widely, and equitably.

Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center



In the five decades since the first Earth Day, a focused environmental rescue effort has focused on saving species, protecting ecosystems, and stabilizing the climate. However ecological losses and climate change have impacts beyond the natural world, calling for more equitable sharing of burdens and benefits. The University of Washington will center equity and inclusion as fundamental pillars of sustainability.

Advancing efforts on climate justice make it urgent to design inclusive strategies that strengthen the capacity of all communities to respond effectively to climate change. As UW implements this Sustainability Strategy, equity and inclusion will guide every step that we take in partnership with communities both locally and around the world. We will work with UW's global position in mind, attempting to benefit the widest possible constituency, recognizing our impact beyond borders and keeping an eye towards social responsibility.

Use Resources Responsibly



Keeping the planet healthy means living within our ecological means. A growing global population needs to consume raw materials for production, freshwater, topsoil, energy, arable landscape and other resources at rates no greater than they can be replenished or recycled. Future generations – all future generations – must have enough as well.

UW will model environmental stewardship and sustainability with efficient, cost-effective practices throughout its operations. We will reduce consumption of energy, reduce consumption of materials, shift to renewably-produced materials, and increase reuse, recycling, and composting. As a leader in implementing best practices we will demonstrate flexibility in adapting to new information, changing approaches, and emerging technologies. All University operations will be participating, including: planning, design, construction, and performance monitoring of buildings; commuting and professional travel; land use; information technology; and the cycle of procurement, consumption, and disposal of commodities.

Decarbonize



In 2007 then-UW president Mark Emmert signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, committing UW to "achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible." In the thirteen years since, we have seen growing awareness and increasing compliance requirements in our own cities of Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell, and the state of Washington. Our local and global landscapes require innovation, cooperation and hope. As an institution of higher education and research, we can and must work together on multi-sector solutions.

UW intends to be a leader in decarbonization, and our path toward carbon-neutral campuses will be accelerated accordingly. Successfully integrating the social, economic and environmental forces that define sustainability can set a shining and positive example for future leaders.

THE TEN TARGETS

UW's Sustainability Strategy includes ten Targets aligned in various ways with the five Guiding Principles. All Targets are measured relative to their levels in 2020 except the greenhouse gas reduction target, which is measured against a legally-mandated 2005 baseline.

I.

Double Student, Staff and Faculty Sustainability Engagement by 2024

Impacts Guiding Principles: Ensure Students Achieve Sustainability Literacy, Choose our Research Conscientiously, Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center.

This Target is about increasing the visibility of, and access to, sustainability in campus life. Implementing actions include a wide range of education programs, collaborations, and volunteerism that touch the lives of nearly every student, staff and faculty member, as well as community members in the neighborhoods surrounding UW campuses. The 2021 Action Plan will include actions that promote innovative collaborations between UW's existing healthy living and environmental sustainability efforts; expanded professional development; and community engagement programs.

II.

One UW-Wide Sustainability Framework by 2022

Impacts Guiding Principles: Ensure Students Achieve Sustainability Literacy, Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center.

A clear, common definition of sustainability is necessary for effective communication and coordination around learning and action across campus. This Target invokes a campus-wide definition and standardized reporting of existing sustainability courses. To successfully facilitate this goal and others, an Academic Sustainability Manager will be hired. The 2021 Action Plan will also lay foundations for the development of a UW-wide sustainability course or other general requirement, and begin work toward a common, minimum sustainability learning outcome by 2025.

III.

Double Sustainability-Oriented Research Projects by 2025

Impacts Guiding Principle: Choose Our Research Conscientiously.

Sustainability evolves at the intersection between society and the environment. Much of scientific research is aligned along this same interface, so a more refined attention to sustainability illuminates our thinking about how we engage in research. We start toward this Target simply by understanding these parallels through a comprehensive sustainability research inventory. We will also vigorously expand our work beyond the walls of academia, making our campuses and surrounding communities living laboratories that provide rich collaborations and shared positive outcomes.

IV.

Comprehensive Equitable Purchasing Targets by 2022

Impacts Guiding Principle: Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center.

Procurement comprises a significant portion of UW's spending. With its purchasing decisions UW can endorse suppliers who are practicing sustainability; we aspire to have 100% of them aligned with our Supplier Code of Conduct. We are quickly working to incorporate students' voices in purchasing decisions. As we work with campus units and departments to develop equitable purchasing targets, we will follow the state's goals for minority- women- and veteran-owned businesses under the Results Washington strategic framework.

V.

5% Lower Emissions from Professional Travel by 2025

Impacts Guiding Principles: Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center, Use Resources Responsibly.

Collaboration is a central activity of academic research, and UW faculty travel for networking, researching, learning and reporting. Until sustainable aviation fuels are widely deployed there are no meaningful low-emissions alternatives to jet travel. However, the COVID-19 crisis has kick-started rapid and successful deployment of videoconferencing technologies that UW staff and faculty can leverage by being aggressive adopters and by taking initiative to organize events online. Simultaneously, we will establish a bank of high-quality greenhouse gas (GHG) offsets that travelers may use when there is no viable alternative to air travel.

VI. 35% of Food Is From Local Sources by 2025

Impacts Guiding Principles: Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center, Use Resources Responsibly.

Our food is particularly emblematic of sustainability, a personal and literal symbol of the connection between the social and the environmental. The physically closer we are to the original sources of our food, the greater our ability is to affect positive change. At all three campuses, focusing on local food sources means we are engaging with, investing in, and providing support to our local food systems while reducing the carbon footprint of our community.

VII. 6% Decrease in Single-Occupancy Commuting Rate Per Campus by 2028

Updated for FY22 plan from original target text "12% or less of commutes are single-occupancy by 2028."

Impacts Guiding Principles: Keep Equity and Inclusion at the Center, Use Resources Responsibly, and Decarbonization.

Transportation accounts for 45% of total carbon emissions in the state of Washington. Reducing the campus drive alone rate reduces greenhouse gases and other impacts on our transportation system, but also increases accessibility for those moving around the community. At all three campuses, the University is committed to developing policies and programs to increase use of sustainable commuting while advocating for increased transportation options with our local, regional, and state agencies. The target has been updated to reflect a reduction for Bothell, Seattle and Tacoma campuses.

VIII. 15% Lower Energy Usage Intensity by 2025

Impacts Guiding Principles: Use Resources Responsibly.

80% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions come from combusting fossil fuels to generate energy, including electricity. We need to do our part toward reducing energy consumption. Achieving this goal will require accelerating the implementation of energy conservation projects, targeting older and less efficient buildings for deep retrofits, and ensuring all new buildings meet the UW Green Building Standard to minimize water and energy consumption. The expanded use of utility metering and monitoring based commissioning will keep buildings operating optimally.

IX. 10% Less Solid Waste by 2025

Impacts Guiding Principles: Use Resources Responsibly, Decarbonization.

Everything we throw away is something that we don't need. That may seem self-evident, but combined with life-cycle thinking it means an opportunity to reduce manufacturing emissions, energy consumption, transportation, and even raw materials extraction associated with whatever object we didn't need. "Reduce, reuse, recycle" remains a powerful hierarchy of solid waste management, but there are even more details of product and materials management, economics, and urban ecology that can receive both our research attention and our operational attention.

X. 45% Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030

Impacts Guiding Principles: Decarbonization.

Climate change is the environmental issue of our time. The UW is a world-class research center in climate-related topics; in fact climate change's centrality to our academic life is reflected in a Guiding Principle of this Sustainability Strategy. We're going to follow through on our sustainability commitment by embarking on a major energy planning process to drastically reduce the Seattle Campus district heating system's demand for fossil fuels, and reduce our dependence on utility energy with solar photovoltaic power on all our campuses.

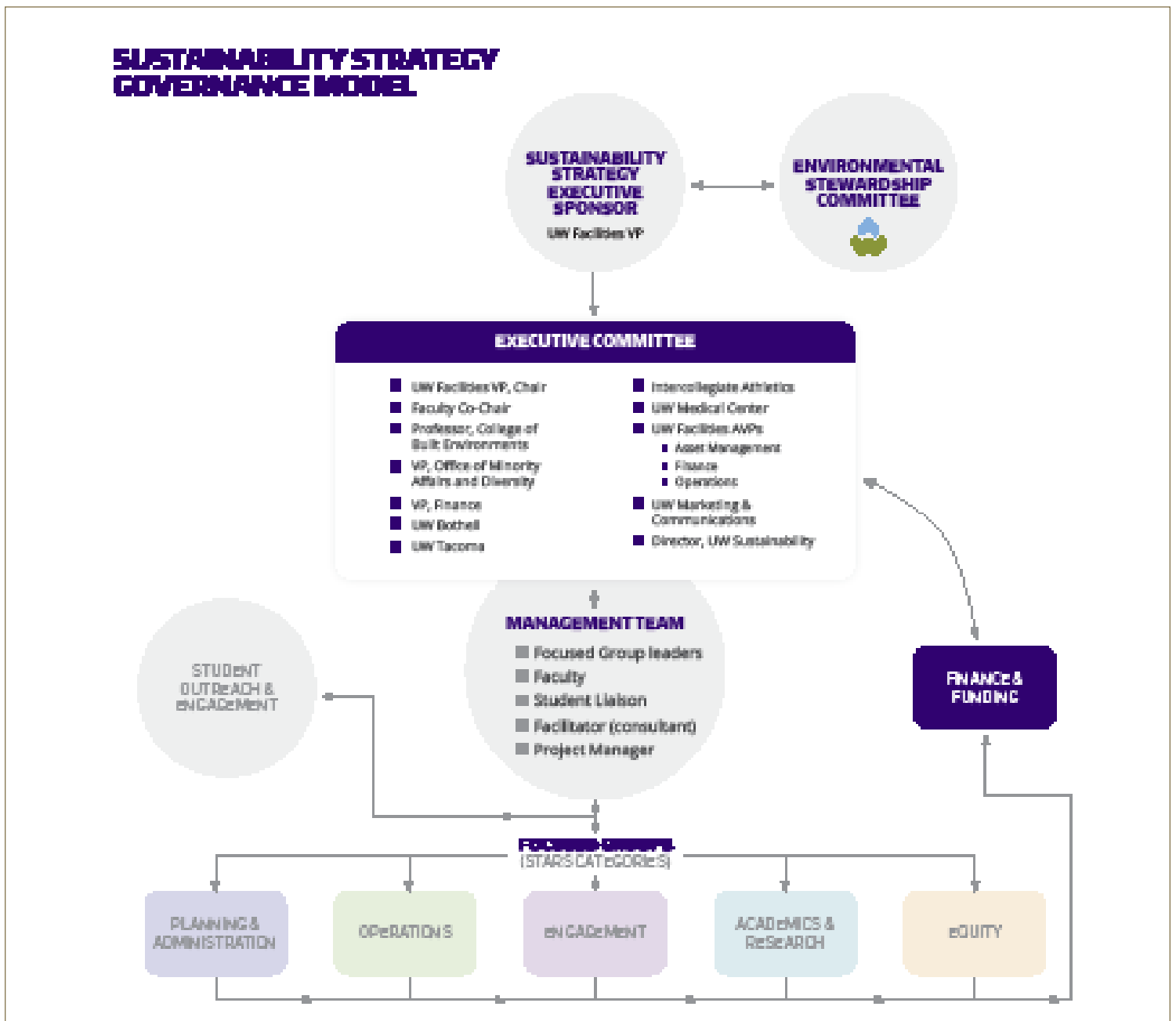
OUR PROCESS

At the University of Washington responsibility for stewarding and monitoring sustainability at the institution lies with the Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC). ESC reports to the President and Provost and is composed of student, staff and faculty representatives from the Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma campuses; UW Medicine; Housing & Food Services; and Intercollegiate Athletics. ESC provides institutional governance and oversight

of our commitments and goals. Great breadth and depth of membership allows for diverse viewpoints, integration of academic and operational expertise and collaboration among generations.

The Sustainability Strategy's Guiding Principles and Targets were developed through consultation with the ESC, the Plan's Executive Committee, and the Plan Management Team. Plan

Management Team members are assigned to five different focused groups, to ensure attention is given to all components of a successful university sustainability strategy: diversity equity & inclusion; academics & research; engagement; operations; and planning & administration. A separate finance & funding committee guaranteed that this practical lens was applied to all actions being considered under each Target.



OUTREACH & ALIGNMENT

The UW Sustainability office has been committed to inclusive engagement of diverse stakeholder groups throughout the development of this Sustainability Strategy.

In Autumn quarter of 2019 UW Sustainability began with tabling sessions during Dawg Days and the Sustainability Fair, followed by listening sessions, tabling at events and meetings with numerous Registered Student Organizations, the Presidents of the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Senates, and the Student Regent. An outreach and brainstorming event organized by student groups attracted over one hundred students; the event led directly to the a proposal of a feasibility study for a Student Sustainability Hub for research and engagement that will be included in the Sustainability Strategy's first annual Action Plan.

Our focus on equity, diversity and inclusion led to meetings with the Office of Minority Affairs for Diversity followed by additional outreach events at the Ethnic Cultural Center, the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students, and meetings with the American Indian Student Commission and UW Native Life & Tribal Relations. UW Sustainability will build on these efforts during the first year of the Sustainability Strategy to ensure we are truly keeping equity at the center.

In addition to person-to-person outreach, various internet media were used as well, including a universitywide survey during early development of the Sustainability Strategy; a website with the survey link, upcoming events, and other ways to stay involved; messages on digital boards across the University; and departmental newsletters and social media feeds. Regular social media posts by UW Sustainability also included links to the Sustainability Strategy website and survey. A draft of the Plan was released on Earth Day 2020 with a University-wide survey to collect feedback on the Targets and Actions for sustainability.

★ AASHE STARS ★

UW is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). AASHE leadership and staff have collectively devoted thousands of hours to considering the definition and meaning of “sustainability” in the context of higher education. AASHE has codified this accumulated wisdom in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). UW currently holds a score of 77.18 in the STARS system. With a thorough gap analysis we identified, numerically, areas where UW can improve its sustainability performance within the context of AASHE's sophisticated sustainability framework.

In crafting the most effective possible Sustainability Strategy, UW gave the greatest weight to following the Guiding Principles, but supported by the substantial momentum under our existing Climate Action Plan, and the gap analysis relative to AASHE STARS. STARS Version 2.2 is also mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that our reporting and actions are easily applicable to a global standard.

