



President's Sustainability Council Charter

*Approved by President Sabah Randhawa
September 25, 2024*

Charge

The President's Sustainability Council is the body charged with expressing, upholding, and advancing the institution's commitment to sustainability, resilience, and adaptability.

***Mission:** The President's Sustainability Council will advance sustainability throughout Western's academics, administration, engagement, and operations.*

***Vision:** Every staff, student, and faculty member at Western has responsibilities and opportunities that directly improve sustainability at our university and in our community.*

In recognition of the current climate crisis, the President's Sustainability Council (PSC) advises the President and/or their designees on sustainability and resilience at Western Washington University (WWU), including but not limited to the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) and STARS, the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (a program of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)). Both the SAP and STARS/AASHE focus on a commitment to modeling sustainability across operations and programs, with sustainability defined in an inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods, and a better world for all generations. WWU operationalizes this commitment through sustainable practices that address the institution's environmental, social, and economic impacts.

The Council further recommends specific actions to engage the university in developing and updating Western's Sustainability Action Plan. This includes collaborating across University divisions and with surrounding communities to generate support for and take action on issues related to sustainability and resilience. The Council, in conjunction with the President and/or their designees and relevant departments, ensures WWU monitors progress toward implementation of the 2017 Sustainability Action Plan over time.

The Sustainability Action Plan is a dynamic document with a five-year planning window within the context of longer-term goals. It will change over time and necessitates annual reporting to keep the university community and public informed of progress made and to inform future iterations of each chapter. The Council serves in an advisory role to analyze sustainability metrics, prioritize and identify new action items, and work with assigned staff writers or

consultants to update the plan every five years or less. All recommendations shall be made to the President and/or their designees. Council members are responsible for engaging and representing their university constituents in this work. The Council will work in collaboration with the Sustainability Engagement Institute (SEI) to develop a stakeholder engagement and public communication structure to ensure the entire university community has the opportunity to have their perspective represented in developing sustainability initiatives.

Background

Western has been a leader in many areas of sustainability since it established the nation's first College of the Environment in 1969. Our students voted to collectively fund the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits in 2005, making Western the first university in the U.S. to offset 100% of its carbon emissions from electricity usage with a self-imposed student fee. In 2007, Western became one of the first 50 signatories of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. In 2015, Western established the Institute for Energy Studies, an interdisciplinary program that brings together science, technology, public policy, business, and economics to prepare graduates to address complex issues in sustainable energy. In 2017, the Sierra Club recognized Western as one of the top 30 sustainable schools in the U.S. WWU students launched one of the first residence hall compost programs in the country. Western continues to innovate through its academic programs, student programs, and staff enterprises to create innovative solutions to antiquated practices.

With this tradition of environmental leadership, one might ask why Western needed a Sustainability Action Plan or a Sustainability Council. As President Randhawa shared in his letter to the university in 2017, when the SAP was adopted, "Western's path to a sustainable future will be determined by our students, staff, and faculty, and it must be bold. The Sustainability Action Plan is the product of voices from all sectors of the University, and I am grateful for the passion, commitment, and hope that they have invested in this comprehensive and aspirational document. It reflects our values and vision, not only for what we hope Western will become but for the kind of world we want to live in and help create." The SAP was the result of two years of work with contributions from ten content-specific teams as well as the Sustainability Advisory Committee. They worked not only with university-specific departments and committees but with affiliated offices and departments at Western, as well as off-campus organizations and business and government agencies.

Timeline:

April 2014: The Office of Sustainability hosted a university-wide input event to offer an opportunity for students, staff, and faculty to share their ideas for making a more sustainable Western.

January 2016: The Office of Sustainability hosted an administration input event to provide an opportunity for department decision-makers and university executives to comment on the first draft of the SAP.

April 2016: In conjunction with Earth Day, the Office of Sustainability hosted a second university-wide input event to allow an opportunity for students, staff, and faculty to comment on the second draft of the SAP.

Spring 2017: Every chapter was reviewed by each chapter lead for content, including a review for social and economic equity topics in need of consideration. The final draft of the SAP was submitted to the Sustainability Advisory Committee for review and comments.

Summer 2017: Community input meetings were held. They were opportunities for local organizations, business, and governmental agencies, identified by each of the chapter teams, to discuss:

- a. where their goals overlap with ours and where we can collaborate,
- b. what strategies they think we can implement to reach our goal, and
- c. if there is something that we may have missed.

July 2017: President Randhawa and university administration reviewed and approved the final draft of the SAP.

Western remains committed to the vision of every member of the Western community assisting with putting sustainable practices into action at the university and in our community. We recognize sustainability is interconnected with our core values of social and economic justice. A global and informed perspective clearly shows that a truly sustainable world must be as just as it is green.

Membership

President's Sustainability Council membership is intended to be representative of all university units and includes students, faculty, and staff. All members are expected to represent the interests of their identified constituents as well as the broader university community. Members gather input and report back to identified constituencies and are required to serve on a sub-council. Sub-councils will be formed to carry out SAP and STARS work. Council members are expected to attend council meetings regularly. Participation by non-Council University and community members is encouraged as needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the Council. Meetings of the President's Sustainability Council are open.

Chair(s) – Appointed by the President

Faculty

Recommended by Faculty Senate for three-year staggered terms

- Three faculty from different colleges with expertise, experience, and/or commitment to sustainability, resilience, and social and economic justice.

Students

Appointed by ASWWU Executive Board for one-year terms renewable up to three (3) times.

- Three students with expertise, experience, and/or commitment to sustainability, resilience, and social and economic justice.
 - Associated Students Vice President for Sustainability
 - Two_at-large student representatives with expertise, experience, and/or commitment to sustainability, resilience, and social and economic justice.

Staff

Appointed by Vice President for University Advancement

- Community Engagement designee
- Development designee

Appointed by Provost/Executive Vice President

- Library designee
- Dean designee
- Sustainability Engagement Institute designee

Appointed by Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs

- Transportation Services designee
- Facilities Development and Operations designee
- University Utility Manager

Appointed by Chief Diversity Officer

- ADEI designee

Appointed by Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services

- University Residences designee
- Student Engagement designee
- Dining Services designee

Appointed by President's Office

- Tribal Liaison

Staff – Individuals who, by nature of their position, should help support the work of the Council. These individuals staff the Council and are not appointed Council members.

Student terms are for one year, with an opportunity for an extension for up to three years. All other appointed terms are reviewed annually by the Cabinet and adjusted as appropriate.

Meetings Schedule

The full Council meets up to four times during the academic year. Sub-councils are expected to work outside of the regular meetings. For groups whose work occurs year-round, meetings will occur during the summer as needed and desired. Council members are expected to attend meetings regularly.

Goals/Tasks

Establish, review annually, and maintain a vision and mission that informs the work of the Council and Western's SAP.

1. Establish, review annually, and maintain a governance structure guiding attendance, member expectations, communication mechanisms, and other procedural matters.
2. Develop and execute a plan to create sub-councils to support the implementation of the SAP.
3. In collaboration with SEI, develop and submit a report on the Sustainability Action Plan 2017 which includes progress made on existing goals in the plan and steps necessary to update the plan to identify the relevant goals for the coming-five years, expected completion by December 2024. The plan should be updated every five years with annual reports to the President on progress.
4. Review the Greenhouse Gas inventory and ensure it is completed and maintained.