



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2017-2022

DRAFT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL



PATHWAY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

NC State's 2017-2022 Sustainability Strategic Plan is a five-year roadmap that builds upon the university's strengths, momentum, and decades of sustainability progress. The campus-wide Sustainability Council and its working groups – with extensive involvement from the university community – developed the Sustainability Strategic Plan. The plan has been endorsed at the highest levels of university leadership and is in effect from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2022.

VISION

NC State develops leaders and innovations that create a more sustainable world.

MISSION

Engaging campus and community in creating a more sustainable future.

GOAL 1: STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Engage students in initiatives that promote leadership and service in sustainability.

GOAL 2: ACADEMICS

Integrate sustainability into education, experiences, and research.

GOAL 3: OPERATIONS, PLANNING, AND DESIGN

Model sustainability through efficient, innovative facilities and operations that educate the campus community and improve the quality of life.

GOAL 4: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Accelerate a culture of sustainability, inclusivity, and well-being on campus and in the community.

GOAL 5: COMMUNICATIONS

Propel awareness and sustainability at and beyond NC State.

WHY SUSTAINABILITY?

Our communities, state, nation, and world face increasingly complex challenges that impact our environment, our economy, and our society. Successful sustainability pursues balanced, ethical solutions that are economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just so that current and future generations may thrive.

The environment was the primary focus of NC State's early sustainability efforts. In the development of this strategic plan, the university community expressed a desire to broaden NC State's scope of sustainability to include economic and social dimensions that address complex challenges such as human health and well-being, poverty, equity, and justice. Implementing the strategic plan provides opportunities to demonstrate the tradeoffs inherent with making sustainable decisions. With this multidimensional approach, NC State will engage campus and community in creating a more sustainable future.

SUSTAINABILITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

There are unprecedented challenges facing our increasingly connected world, and sustainability leaders and innovations have never been more vital. Institutions of higher education are crucial to preparing graduates equipped to lead, to serve, and to solve complex social, environmental, and economic problems.

Through implementation of the Sustainability Strategic Plan, sustainability will be integrated into NC State's education, experiences, and research. More NC State students will be engaged in initiatives that promote leadership and service in sustainability. Campus will model sustainability through efficient, innovative facilities and operations that educate the campus community and improve quality of life. A culture of sustainability, inclusivity, and well-being will be accelerated on campus and in the community. These initiatives, plus active communication efforts, will propel sustainability at and beyond NC State. NC State will emerge by 2022 as one of the nation's leading universities for sustainability education, operations, and engagement.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND BACKGROUND

This plan builds on decades of progress that has established NC State as a sustainability leader. The university is a frequent recipient of local, regional, and national sustainability honors, including the 2016 achievement of a Gold rating in the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) offered through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

Much of this progress was catalyzed by the university's inaugural Sustainability Strategic Plan (2011-2016) led by the university-wide Campus Environmental Sustainability Team (CEST). Innovations in energy, water, transportation, purchasing, waste reduction, land use, and buildings created ongoing opportunities for campus to become a living classroom, where NC State students learn and conduct research. These advances solidified the university's sustainability commitment, leading to the adoption of a University Sustainability Policy in 2014.

NC State began developing the 2017-2022 Sustainability Strategic Plan in 2015 under the leadership of the Sustainability Council.

ALIGNMENT WITH NC STATE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Sustainability Strategic Plan and the university's Strategic Plan, *Pathway to the Future*, are vitally linked. Sustainability contributes toward the university plan's success and is foundational to accomplishing the university's five major strategic goals:

1. Enhance the success of our students through educational innovation.
2. Enhance scholarship and research by investing in faculty and infrastructure.
3. Enhance interdisciplinary scholarship to address the grand challenges of society.
4. Enhance organizational excellence by creating a culture of constant improvement.
5. Enhance local and global engagement through focused strategic partnerships.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Each fiscal year, the Sustainability Council's five working groups will create and implement annual tactics to drive progress toward the plan's goals, strategies, and objectives. Tactics will be created based on feasibility, cost and potential impact to ensure sound stewardship of the university's resources.



Working groups meet regularly and welcome participation from anyone on campus or in the community. Each working group has a chairperson(s) who leads the group and is part of the Sustainability Council's steering committee.

Each working group has been assigned a specific goal, and collaboration across working groups is vital as the plan's five major goals are interdependent. Success in one area can springboard success in another, and the Sustainability Council's steering committee will create mechanisms for regular communication among working groups. In some cases, multiple working groups are pursuing similar strategies, making collaboration even more crucial.

Working groups will track both quantitative and qualitative measures of progress, which will be monitored through the university's Annual Sustainability Report, published during the fall semester.

September 2015

The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration established the Sustainability Council to lead development and implementation of NC State's second Sustainability Strategic Plan.

January 2016

Campus and community members provided online and in-person feedback on sustainability progress and desired future goals.

September - December 2016

Campus and community members provided feedback on the draft plan. The Sustainability Council steering committee evaluated all comments and incorporated common themes.

July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2022

Implementation of the plan.

2015

2016

2017

February - August 2016

Five Sustainability Council working groups with campus-wide representatives formed and used campus feedback to develop the draft plan.

Spring 2017

The plan was finalized and approved by university administration.

GOAL 1: STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Engage students in initiatives that promote leadership and service in sustainability.

Enhancing student success is one of NC State's foundational goals, and that success extends beyond the classroom.

Sustainability provides an ideal backdrop for creation of high-impact educational experiences that reinforce academic excellence, while equipping students to serve and to lead. These efforts help develop successful NC State graduates who are well prepared for impactful careers and lives.

Sustainability strategies in Student Leadership contribute to fulfilling the university's strategic goal of enhancing the success of our students through educational innovation.

AT NC STATE

About **34,000** students in 12 colleges representing all major academic fields. NC State is the largest university in the state, educating more North Carolinians than any other university.





STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy 1: Increase student involvement with sustainability through high-impact student programs. ■

- A. Increase student engagement in sustainability-focused student trips.
- B. Provide sustainability-related competitions for students.
- C. Increase the diversity of student organizations engaged in sustainability initiatives, events, and programming.
- D. Engage more students in sustainability-related service learning and community service.
- E. Increase the resources and support available for sustainability-related student organizations.
- F. Engage more students in sustainability-related student organizations.

■ Shared strategy with Academics (strategy 3)

Strategy 2: Expand sustainability training and outreach for students.

- A. Create a sustainability workshop series that contributes toward student leadership development.
- B. Include sustainability education in New Student Orientation, University Housing facilities, and Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Strategy 3: Provide students with sustainability-related professional development opportunities.

- A. Engage students with sustainability-related professional organizations.
- B. Connect students to sustainability-related internships and job experience.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Coming soon
- Coming soon
- Coming soon

GOAL 2: ACADEMICS

Integrate sustainability into education, experiences, and research.



Society's grand challenges require leaders who can recognize complexities and create innovative solutions to sustainability challenges.

Sustainability experiences inside and outside the classroom contribute to NC State's first priority: enhancing student success and equipping students for impactful careers and lives. Sustainability bridges academic disciplines and transcends their boundaries, bringing together the varied skills and diverse

perspectives required to tackle complex challenges.

Sustainability is a fundamental perspective for enhancing the critical and creative thinking that NC State fosters in students. Sustainability is already present in many academic programs and co-curricular activities. There is opportunity for more robust integration of sustainability so that NC State becomes the first choice for incoming students who seek to create a more sustainable future. Campus-wide coordination of sustainability programs will ensure that every student has access to sustainability-related learning experiences. A multidisciplinary emphasis will lead to more sustainability-related research breakthroughs at NC State.

Academic sustainability goals contribute to the university's first strategic goal of enhancing the success of our students through educational innovation, the second strategic goal of enhancing scholarship and research by investing in faculty and infrastructure, and the third strategic goal of enhancing interdisciplinary scholarship to address the grand challenges of society. Sustainability research discoveries, real-world learning, and extension also contribute toward additional university goals to enhance organizational excellence and community engagement.

STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy 1: Enhance cohesion among academic programs that address sustainability.

- A. Establish and support an administrative framework that coordinates academic sustainability programs.

Strategy 2: Ensure that every NC State undergraduate student engages in coursework with critical and creative thinking and substantive learning outcomes focused on sustainability.

- A. Develop a sustainability general education program (GEP) category or group of classes.
- B. Develop a coordinated NC State annual sustainability theme to be incorporated into the curriculum. ■
■ Shared objective with Community and Culture (strategy 1B)

Strategy 3: Facilitate opportunities for NC State students to participate in high-impact academic experiences in sustainability. ■

- A. Develop a sustainability co-curriculum.
- B. Better coordinate and communicate immersion programs focused on sustainability.
- C. Create team-taught courses or seminars focused on topical sustainability issues that are in the news.
■ Shared strategy with Student Leadership (strategy 1)

Strategy 4: Increase the demographic and disciplinary diversity of the NC State community engaged in sustainability academics.

- A. Create diversity through high school recruiting into sustainability-oriented academic programs, with a focus on attracting students from groups traditionally underrepresented in such programs.
- B. Continue to develop courses and course modules in environmental justice and equity. ■
- C. Partner with regional minority-serving institutions in student service and action research projects.

- D. Foster the development of multidisciplinary scholarship and research by faculty focused on sustainability.
- E. Support and reward faculty in developing and teaching multidisciplinary courses that address sustainability across departments and colleges.
■ Shared objective with Community and Culture (strategy 2A)

Strategy 5: Establish NC State as an institution that develops sustainability stewards and leaders.

- A. Engage faculty and students from across the university with real-world, community-identified projects to meet the partnering community's sustainability priorities.
- B. Develop a sustainability leadership certificate.

Strategy 6: Establish NC State as the first choice for prospective students committed to sustainability.

- A. Engage with high school faculty/administration and students about sustainability education and programming at NC State.

Strategy 7: Engage external stakeholders in supporting NC State's academics sustainability initiatives.

- A. Bring external stakeholders to campus for sustainability activities and programs, such as presenting lectures and seminars, advising students and faculty engaged in sustainability projects, judging student presentations and posters in classes, and campus research events. ■
■ Shared objective with Community and Culture (strategy 3B)

Strategy 8: Establish new sustainability student scholarships and fellowships.

- A. Create a funding program to which student teams can apply for support for sustainability research. ■
■ Shared objective with Community and Culture (strategies 1F)

Strategy 9: Increase the university's profile in sustainability-related research.

- A. Solicit external funds for research seed funding in sustainability. ■
■ Shared objective with Community and Culture (strategy 1F)

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Coming soon
- Coming soon
- Coming soon

GOAL 3: OPERATIONS, PLANNING AND DESIGN

Model sustainability through efficient, innovative facilities and operations that educate the campus community and improve the quality of life.

A university campus has more value than ever as a place for real-world learning in today's technology-rich world.

The university's role is to teach, showcase, and challenge our community's understanding of the complex cost and benefit tradeoffs associated with decisions. When NC State minimizes environmental impacts in our community, state, and world and models best practices in areas including energy, water, air quality, waste reduction, purchasing, computing, and food, it improves the sustainable quality of life on campus.

NC State practices what it teaches, creating a campus community that values stewardship, embodies excellence, and enhances quality of life. The university's simultaneous pursuit of environmental, economic, and social sustainability demonstrates the leadership required to address society's grand challenges.

Operations, Planning, and Design sustainability strategies contribute toward the university's fourth strategic goal of enhancing organizational excellence by creating a culture of constant improvement.



STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy 1: Reduce NC State's total greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent from the 2008 baseline.

Strategy 2: Reduce existing building annual energy use per square foot by 40 percent from the 2002 baseline.

- Optimize building energy usage through retro-commissioning, continuous commissioning, and occupant education.
- Explore and develop best practices for intelligent infrastructure and energy generation use in campus buildings.
- Reduce energy use within the five Central Utility Plants by 5 percent from the 2015 baseline.

Strategy 3: Expand the amount of renewable energy used to meet NC State's needs.

Strategy 4: Reduce campus water consumption by 65 percent from the 2001 baseline.

- Expand the use of reuse (reclaimed or non-potable) water on campus.
- Reduce water use in campus buildings.
- Implement landscaping that reduces potable water consumption.

Strategy 5: Enhance and coordinate stormwater efforts to ensure water quality for the university's growing campus.

- Develop a master plan for providing watershed-based regional stormwater treatment for new and future development and retrofits.
- Improve the stormwater control measure program by providing feedback on devices under construction and involving students in ongoing water quality monitoring.

Strategy 6: Reduce single-occupancy vehicles on campus by 5 percent for employees and 7 percent for students from the 2015 baseline.

- A. Renew NC State's designation as a Bicycle Friendly University.
- B. Enhance Wolfline bus system service delivery in order to build annual ridership to 3.5 million by 2022.
- C. Increase and enhance campus walkability by realizing a 2.5 percent increase in intra-campus walking travelers from the 2015 baseline.
- D. Increase student and employee use of carpooling by 3 percent over the 2015 baseline.
- E. Promote alternative fuel usage for commuting by aiming for 0.5 percent of permitted vehicles to hold an electric vehicle (EV) permit by 2022.
- F. Work with community partners to make data-driven decisions about alternate transportation modes.

Strategy 7: Reduce the consumption of and demand for petroleum products in the university fleet.

- A. Create a process to ensure that 75 percent of all new light-duty vehicles acquisitions are alternative fuel capable.
- B. Implement section 2.6.2 (vehicle fleet) of the Sustainability Standard Operating Procedure.
- C. Establish a fleet management and best operating practices for the university's fleet.

Strategy 8: Achieve a 70 percent landfill diversion rate from the 2006 baseline toward zero waste.

- A. Complete and communicate a Zero Waste Management Plan that will guide the vision for zero waste management practices, define meaningful targets, and address education and research needs.
- B. Utilize the 2015 Waste Characterization Study to develop focused educational and training plans that will reduce the amount of recyclable material from entering the campus waste stream.

- C. Develop a robust campus-wide, on-site composting program that creates a closed-loop system for food waste generated on campus.

Strategy 9: Implement source reduction and environmentally-preferable purchasing initiatives to decrease waste before it occurs.

- A. Create a sustainable purchasing initiative with experts to guide waste diversion and sustainable sourcing.
- B. Instill the values of total cost of ownership and total life cycle cost in purchasing and decision-making.
- C. Develop a system to track and quantify sustainable purchases from MarketPlace, the university's material management and purchasing system and in large bids and contracts.
- D. Develop incentives for making environmentally sound purchases for externally-funded research projects.

Strategy 10: Exemplify a sustainable food system from origin to plate by adding capacity to grow food on campus land for campus dining facilities.

- A. Increase production to more than 7,000 pounds per year at the Agroecology Education Farm in year one and a 10 percent increase in each subsequent year.
- B. Introduce culinary gardens accessible to campus chefs for incorporating ingredients into meals.
- C. Increase NC State's use of North Carolina produce by 20 percent from the 2013 baseline.
- D. Further promote the availability and benefits of healthy food.

Strategy 11: Continue to raise awareness for Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing.

- A. Expand investment strategies as NC State's SRI Fund assets continue to grow.
- B. Offer another option for philanthropic funds to the university's alumni and for other donors.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Coming soon
- Coming soon
- Coming soon

Strategy 12: Utilize information technology to reduce resource use across campus.

- A. Increase on-campus partnerships to help students, faculty, and staff reduce use of paper by increasing digitization.
- B. Increase use of virtual meetings to reduce travel and costs and increase efficiency.
- C. Evaluate additional energy efficiency efforts with data centers, equipment purchases, and data storage options.

GOAL 4: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Accelerate a culture of sustainability, inclusivity, and well-being on campus and in the community.

Sustainability becomes part of NC State's culture as more people champion sustainability efforts at every level of the university.

The greater the involvement, the greater the impact – both on campus and in the community. NC State's integration of sustainability into university planning, decision-making, and operations exemplifies sustainability leadership and contributes toward continued economic, environmental, and societal prosperity.

This goal contributes toward the university's fifth strategic goal of enhancing local and global engagement through focused strategic partnerships while also contributing toward enhanced student success, which is the university's first strategic goal.



STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy 1: Actively promote, encourage, and celebrate a culture of sustainability among the university's leadership.

- A. Encourage division and departmental ownership and action to make sustainability accessible to the entire campus community with the expectation that all programs and events incorporate sustainability.
- B. Establish a coordinated NC State annual sustainability theme to promote awareness and action across all campus units and to be incorporated into the curriculum to brand the university as a sustainability champion. ■
- C. Infuse an institutional commitment to sustainability in all aspects of campus and community life such as programming, event planning, transportation to meetings, everyday language, and orientation and hiring processes.
- D. Create incentives for all campus stakeholders to embrace and celebrate sustainability and to establish clear accountability methods and standards across departments and programs in order to ensure compliance.
- E. Enhance and/or create campus traditions that encourage sustainable change through personal or team challenges.
- F. Include sustainability as part of university campaign and top-level fundraising priorities and strategies so that funding is secured for student high-impact experiences, undergraduate research, awards, curriculum development, scholarships and grants, programming, immersion experiences, residence life, and research seed funding. ■■
- G. Explore how to scale and replicate our work and lead across the University of North Carolina system and the state.

■ Shared objective with Academics (strategy 2B)

■■ Shared objective with Academics (strategy 9A)

Strategy 2: Embrace an expanded definition/vision of sustainability that includes improving the human condition, respect for all members of the community, social justice, diversity and inclusion, work-life balance, workplace and



campus safety, and wellness.

- A. Develop and implement a social and environmental justice narrative for NC State so that as a campus community, we acknowledge and embrace a culture of inclusion. ■
- B. Integrate concepts of entrepreneurship and social innovation into our understanding of sustainability and encourage areas of related research and practice.
- C. Collaborate with and support the efforts of the University Wellness Task Force to create and maintain a culture that supports and promotes the overall wellness of NC State students, faculty, and staff.

■ Shared objective with Academics (strategy 4B)

Strategy 3: Develop the connective tissue with our campus and Triangle community in order to bridge our collective vision to “think and do” as we address society’s grand challenges.

- A. Develop a thriving network/community of external partners committed to advancing the university’s sustainability goals and vision. ■
- B. Facilitate communication and engagement with external stakeholders to leverage sustainability efforts for larger collective impact, such as intentionally sharing knowledge and resources. ■

■ Shared objective with Academics (strategy 7A)

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Coming soon
- Coming soon
- Coming soon

GOAL 5: COMMUNICATION

Propel awareness and sustainability at and beyond NC State.

Effective communication is foundational for the success of NC State's Sustainability Strategic Plan.

Communication about the plan and its progress will help raise the profile of sustainability, prompting more people to consider their individual and collective impact.



STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy 1: Raise awareness of sustainability at NC State among internal and external stakeholders.

- Incorporate sustainability into the NC State brand.
- Gain national recognition for NC State's sustainability successes.
- Promote awareness of NC State's Sustainability Strategic Plan.

Strategy 2: Better integrate sustainability communications across campus to improve frequency and consistency of sustainability communications.

- Develop a network of communications professionals across campus to encourage two-way communications about sustainability issues.

Strategy 3: Provide communications resources and tools to promote and support sustainability at NC State.

- Develop a messaging strategy and framework for how to communicate about sustainability.
- Develop a toolkit for incorporating sustainability into communications
- Develop a set of sustainable communications best practices for communicators.

Strategy 4: Make communications a key part of sustainability planning and execution.

- Identify sustainability programs, projects, or progress that require outreach efforts and/or meet institutional qualifications for promotion to internal or external audiences.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Coming soon
- Coming soon
- Coming soon

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Presentations

The following received a presentation about the draft Sustainability Strategic Plan during Fall 2016.

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Campus Enterprises Sustainability Committee
Capital Project Management
Climate Reality Project
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University Housekeeping
Utilities and Engineering
Wellness Task Force
Waste Reduction and Recycling

Join NC State in preparing for a more sustainable future.
Get involved in helping implement the university's
2017-2022 Sustainability Strategic Plan.

go.ncsu.edu/ssp

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