

University of Florida
Sustainability Task Force
FINAL REPORT



<i>Section</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.0	Executive Summary	1
2.0	The Case For A Sustainable University	3
3.0	Findings:	5
3.1	Research	5
3.2	Education	6
3.3	Campus Operations:	7
3.31	Land Management & Biodiversity	7
3.32	Buildings	8
3.33	Energy and Resource Use	9
3.34	Transportation	10
3.35	Waste Management	11
3.36	Procurement	12
3.37	Investments	13
3.4	Community Outreach and Integration	14
3.5	Campus Community:	15
3.51	Personnel	15
3.6	Organizational Policies and Practices	16
4.0	Implementation	17
	Membership	18

University of Florida Sustainability Task Force



Final Report

1.0 Executive Summary

This report recommends principles and practices that would “make the University of Florida a global leader in sustainability.” The President and Faculty Senate gave that goal to the 12-member UF Sustainability Task Force as they jointly-empowered the group’s research and report.

Accordingly, the group analyzed UF’s position in a global sustainability context and offers recommendations that:

- Ensure UF is meeting identifiable minimum sustainability standards, and
- Enable UF to implement practices that would lead to its recognition as a global leader.

The recommendations are comprehensive and include:

- Initiatives that can elevate UF’s standing and funding for sustainability-related research
- Practices relating to increased campus sustainability and its integration with educational and research programs,
- Means by which sustainability can be woven into an enhanced educational experience,
- Increased attention to campus climate and campus-community interactions,
- Associated changes in UF’s mission and organizational structure.

The report also offers an analysis of why UF should pursue an advanced sustainability agenda and a review of UF’s leadership potential in a global sustainability context.

The Appendix offers baseline, benchmark, and best management practices information relating to each of the specific subject areas in the report. To the extent possible, baseline data report UF’s current sustainability status. Benchmarking data indicate what other colleges

“

Sustainability means providing for the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to provide for themselves. Decision-making at a sustainable university integrates the pursuit of environmental, social and economic welfare across campus and within the broader community.

”

and universities are doing to implement sustainability. Best management practices provide examples of leading edge practices.

2.0 The Case for a Sustainable UF

Many world-class academic institutions shifted towards sustainable principles and practices in the 1990s. This shift parallels a more pronounced redirection among the world's leading corporations and governments. Accordingly, a comprehensive approach towards sustainability at the University of Florida is needed not only to remain a competitive research-extensive institution, but as an integral tool for achieving world-class prominence.

Benefits of establishing the University of Florida as a global leader in sustainability include: reduced operational costs through innovative sustainable practices, cutting edge educational and research programs with consequent increases in external funding, and improved quality of campus and community life.

The short-term rewards of a strong sustainability agenda are significant as well. For example, a consortium between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, and the University of Tokyo launched in the late 90s is already winning significant sustainability-related funded-research awards. The World Business Council on Sustainable Development that includes over 200 of the world's most respected corporations has formed a partnership with the MIT-led consortium to advance sustainability-related research.

Similarly, institutions like UC-Berkley, Georgia Tech, Brown, Dartmouth, and the University of Michigan have increasingly emphasized their position as sustainability leaders as marketing tool for both research and student recruitment campaigns. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently highlighted 11 American universities' sustainability initiatives; among them are Brown, Princeton, Emory, Dartmouth, UC Davis and Santa Cruz, Tulane, and Michigan.

The corporate and financial world has been leading a global shift towards sustainability that many academic institutions have followed. The Dow Jones Sustainability Index launched two years ago is noteworthy as an affirmation of sustainability's arrival in financial sectors—and because it has outperformed the S&P 500 through recent market downturns. Similar Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) funds are also emerging as the fastest growing sector of investment. Notably, one such fund now manages over \$185 million in assets for over 65 major American universities

“

A

comprehensive approach towards sustainability at the University of Florida is needed not only to remain a competitive research-extensive institution, but as an integral tool for achieving world-class prominence.

“

including the University of California system, Stanford, Columbia, the University of Texas system, and Michigan.

Other indicators are equally promising. Sustainable development is a common theme for many noteworthy major corporations. Sustainability is becoming corporate mainstream.

Many corporations have championed a disclosure and transparency standard, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), that allows consumers and stakeholders to fully evaluate the social and environmental legitimacy of corporate practices. This effort now boasts over 100 of the most respected corporations of the world.

Fortunately, the University of Florida has positioned itself well to emerge as a global player by being the first university to publish its own GRI-compliant report. That move has placed UF among the world leaders in sustainability reporting, along with Penn State, the University of Victoria, Lund, UCLA, and Princeton.

For all these reasons—and because it is the right thing to do—the UF Sustainability Task Force offers the following pathway towards the goal of global sustainability leadership.

3.0 Findings:

3.1 Research

Goals

The University of Florida should stimulate and coordinate its extensive research efforts and promote its achievements to become a global leader in sustainability-related research.

Recommendations

- Through its operations and physical plant, UF should become a model laboratory for sustainability by integrating to the extent practicable UF's operations and academic research.
- Assist departments in developing plans to conduct research in conformance with sustainable principles.
- Encourage colleges to incorporate sustainability as part of their mission and identity.
- Develop UF's "branding" of sustainability research and coordinate and promote such research.
- Create partnerships with sustainability-oriented business and research associations and groups in an effort to elevate UF's standing as a "go-to" source for sustainability-related research.

3.2 Education

Goals

The University of Florida should build bridges among existing sustainability-related courses and programs, strengthen key resources, and stimulate the creation of curricula focusing on sustainability.

Recommendations

- Identify and publicize sustainability-related courses and programs.
- Encourage colleges to incorporate sustainability into their core curricula.
- Explore options for a sustainability-related course as a General Education requirement.
- Promote community service and service learning as an integral feature of education at the University of Florida.



3.3 Findings: Campus Operations

3.31 Land Management and Biodiversity:

Goals

The University of Florida should manage its lands in a sustainable manner to further research, education, and recreation.

Recommendations

- Manage lands so that there is no net loss of biodiversity.
- Promote indigenous species and appropriately limit the use of inorganic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
- Develop educational interpretations to promote biodiversity.
- Set up a land management committee to review and guide sustainable management of UF lands.
- Conserve areas by designing the University's built environment into a denser urbanized center.

3.32 Buildings

Goals

The built environment of the University of Florida should be constructed to very high standards of energy, water, and materials efficiency and its impacts on local ecosystems should be minimized. During the renovation and remodeling of existing building stock, building systems should be upgraded to these same high standards.

Recommendations

- Adopt the U.S. Green Building Council LEED Standard for New Construction, latest version, as one of the construction documents that must be followed for new construction.
- Adopt the U.S. Green Building Council LEED Standard for Existing Buildings, latest version, for renovation and remodeling of existing campus buildings.
- Require state-of-the-art energy and daylighting simulations prior to all new construction and building renovations.
- Develop an alternative, yet compatible architectural form for the University that reflects its location and climate.

3.33 Energy and Resource Use

Goals

The University of Florida should analyze energy and resource consumption patterns, eliminate waste, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Recommendations

- Map all UF-related GHG emissions and develop a strategy for carbon neutrality with an ambitious, yet realistic timeline.
- Accelerate the retrofit of lighting fixtures and lighting control systems in existing university buildings.
- Promote efficient, low emission vehicle purchase and develop a green fleet policy.

3.34 Transportation

Goals

The University should provide and increase incentives for walking, bicycles, buses, and ridesharing, and link transportation planning to land-use planning.

Recommendations

- In collaboration with the City of Gainesville, increase the Regional Transit System (RTS) system to accommodate more locations and service times to move faculty and staff to and from the UF campus.
- Increase the number and quality of bikeways around the campus and improve the bicycling infrastructure, to include bicycle parking and building facilities for bicyclists.
- In cooperation with the City of Gainesville, increase the area of car-free and pedestrian friendly zones on campus and near campus.

3.35 Waste Management

Goals

The campus waste stream, especially paper products and plastics from offices, dormitories, and food operations should be drastically reduced. The long-range goal should be to promote closed-cycle materials practices.

Recommendations

- Implement the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Waste Wise program in all University offices.
- Insure future food service contracts significantly decrease disposable food service products.
- In all future construction and renovation contracts, require significant construction and demolition waste reduction, the deconstruction of buildings, and the stockpiling and reuse of aggregates, brick, masonry, tile, and other suitable materials for reuse as subbase for roads, parking lots, sidewalks and as engineered fill for building construction.
- Excess food from University operations should be redirected to feed the hungry. Food waste should be combined with other organic materials such as wood waste and composted.

3.36 Procurement

Goals

The University of Florida should assess the environmental and social impacts of procurement policies and contracting policies and revise them to reflect a concern for sustainability.

Recommendations

- Appoint a task force to organize a pilot project in sustainable purchasing. The pilot project should develop and establish procurement and contracting practices that consider the full life-cycle costs of products and services.
- Assist departments in developing plans and policies for purchasing and contracting in conformance with sustainable principles.

3.37 Investments

Goals

The University of Florida should explore options to engage in socially and environmentally responsible investing.

Recommendations

- Appoint a committee to make recommendations for adapting UF's investment policies to incorporate sustainability.
- UF should consider offering additional Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) options in its Optional Retirement Plan.
- The UF Foundation should adhere to Global Reporting Initiative transparency standards for investment disclosure.

3.4 Community Outreach and Integration

Goals

The University of Florida should be a local leader in sustainability by coordinating with community members and local governments to make its expertise and resources accessible while addressing local concerns. UF should more fully engage its faculty, staff and students in the community through service learning, traditional community service, community-based research projects and local economic support.

Recommendations

- Create a community section on the UF web site and a community resource center to facilitate increased communication with the community.
- Provide community benefits through service learning, educational opportunities, and access to facilities.
- Provide faculty incentives to work with the community in their areas of expertise.
- Enhance cooperation with Alachua County, the City of Gainesville and surrounding rural counties for joint planning, and provision of UF expertise on community boards.
- Better disseminate information about how to become a vendor or potential employee.

3.5 Campus Community

3.51 Personnel

Goals

The University of Florida should set aggressive hiring and retention goals to ensure the university reflects society's racial, ethnic and gender diversity. The University should also strive to ensure that all personnel are rewarded with at least a living wage with benefits appropriate to a world-class institution.

Recommendations

- Require all academic and administrative units to develop student recruitment, and faculty and staff hiring and retention policies that will bring the University of Florida to a position where its students, faculty and staff reflect the State of Florida's racial, ethnic and gender diversity.
- Increase the levels of gender and equity training of all personnel working at or hired by the University of Florida.
- Ensure that a minimum of a living wage with good benefits is paid to all University employees.
- Engage University faculty and staff in decision-making and formalize this process.
- Increase the level of investment in the training of University employees.
- Take steps to improve campus climate by increasing the campus' exposure to diverse groups.



3.6 Organizational Policies and Practices

Goals

The University of Florida organizational structure should be adjusted to support actions that enhance the attainment of sustainability-related goals.

Recommendations

- Create an Office that would coordinate programs related to sustainability in administrative and academic units.
- Provide incentives for all academic and administrative units to increase participation in sustainability measures.
- Implement a university-wide environmental management system such as the International Standards Organization (ISO) 14001 protocol.
- Revise the University's mission statement to include specific reference to sustainability concerns, including an institutional commitment to diversity.

4.0 Implementation

These goals and recommendations chart a course that will make the University of Florida a global leader in sustainability and help to secure its position as a world-class institution.

To achieve these goals, a consistent message should be created and presented to students, faculty, staff, and the broader community. Accordingly, the recommendations cover the breadth of university life. Taken together, they form the necessary fabric from which a successful sustainability program can take shape.

For the university and the broader community to embrace and achieve these goals, a detailed implementation plan should be created. Academic affairs, administrative units, auxiliary units, and the community should develop this plan collaboratively.

The University of Florida Sustainability Task Force will remain impaneled for another year in order to help craft the implementation plan. The Task Force stands ready to offer the expertise and information acquired in the past year to:

- Identify key stakeholders and assist them with developing specific proposals
- Ensure an integrated systems approach to implementation
- Compare stakeholder proposals with known benchmarks and best management practices

The Task Force appreciates the opportunity to assist the University of Florida become a global leader in sustainability.

“

These goals and recommendations chart a course that will make the University of Florida a global leader in sustainability and help to secure its position as a world-class institution.

”



Membership

Janaki Alavapalati, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conversation

Jean Andino, Ph.D.

Professor, Environmental Engineering Sciences

Gail Baker, Ph.D.

Vice President for Public Relations

Mark Brown, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Environmental Engineering Sciences

Fred Cantrell

Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration

Brian Dassler

Student

Alyson Flournoy, Ph.D.

Professor, College of Law

Joe Glover, Ph.D.

Associate Provost

*** Charles J. Kibert, Ph.D., P.E. *** (Task Force Co-chair)
Chair, School of Building Construction

Nicole Kibert

Student

*** Les Thiele, Ph.D. *** (Task Force Co-chair)
Chair, Department of Political Sciences

*** Elmira Warren *** (Task Force Co-chair)
Director, Alachua County Department of Community Support Services

Executive Staff

Dave Newport

Director, UF Office of Sustainability