

Sustainability Task Force Report: Executive Summary

In recent years, the challenges of diminishing global resources and current and future climate change have become part of everyone's consciousness. Creating and promoting a culture of sustainability has emerged as an important and growing part of the educational and outreach missions of San Jose State University and is one of President Whitmore's key goals for our campus. The Sustainability Task Force was charged with: 1) assessing best practices in higher education regarding sustainability, and to survey current sustainability practices, educational programs and research at SJSU, and 2) making recommendations to the Academic Senate and the President to build SJSU's sustainability programs and position SJSU to be a leader among universities in sustainability. Here we summarize our general recommendations for embedding sustainable practices in the culture of the university as well as our list of specific, top-priority action items to undertake relatively quickly.

General Policy Recommendations:

1. Establish a Sustainability Council as a permanent committee of the Academic Senate, charged with establishing sustainability goals, evaluating campus practices to promote sustainability, and recommending new goals, actions, and policies on an annual basis.
2. Fund a full-time Sustainability Director to oversee the implementation of sustainability directives and to seek external funding and community and corporate partners for sustainability initiatives. The sustainability director should have ties to both the academic and operational sides of the university and report at a high level to each.
3. Establish a Sustainability Faculty-In-Residence in each college, and parallel positions within non-academic units.
4. Use expert panels of SJSU faculty and external experts to bring information on specific topics to the Sustainability Council and to engage faculty and students in research, community service, and internship opportunities focused on sustainable themes.
5. Establish a Sustainability Research Institute as an Organizational Research and Teaching Unit (ORTU) that will serve as a vehicle to promote interdisciplinary research in areas such as environmental policy, sustainable practices in industry, agriculture, and transportation, and that will serve as a nexus for the ongoing creation of curricula and experiential educational experiences aligned along sustainable themes.
6. Regularly conduct environmental audits of university operations to assess sustainability of energy and materials use, lower costs, and provide direction for new operational policies.
7. Promote full implementation of existing CSU and SJSU sustainability policies such as CSU Executive Order EO 987 and Associated Students Board of Directors Resolution 08-09/02.
8. Sign the Talloires Declaration and the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment.
9. Identify resources to support programs to develop campus awareness on sustainability practices and ways to become involved. A fully functional and regularly maintained sustainability web site would be an integral part of this effort.
10. Promote continued collaboration on sustainability focused curriculum including interdisciplinary courses, minors, and degree programs.
11. Establish an interdisciplinary environmental literacy requirement for all undergraduate students, requiring students to take at least one Core GE or SJSU studies course with sustainability as a central course focus.
12. Establish certificates, professional masters degrees, and other professiona

