SUU SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY

Rev. 10/14/2021

Facilities Management Sustainability Standards and Statement of Intent

Objective: *To provide overarching direction and support towards implementing sustainability projects and practices on the campus of Southern Utah University.*

As a commitment to address climate change and other ecological pressures, Facilities Management is dedicated to supporting sustainability-oriented projects as they relate to the best practices of maintaining a university campus. Sustainability is a component of many conversations as campus improvements are planned. Both one-time projects and ongoing operational practices are reviewed regularly for opportunities to implement more sustainable solutions on campus, to be applied as resources permit.

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to establish a consistent and effective approach to addressing the key issues and concerns surrounding the subject of sustainability on campus, as influenced by Facilities Management. This statement is not intended to speak for those entities outside of Facilities Management who have an impact or unique approach to sustainability initiatives on campus. Facilities Management embraces participation in sustainability solutions from any of the facets of the institution. Any initiative that has an impact on the physical facilities of campus must be coordinated with Facilities Management.

This statement defines sustainability as any practice, product, method, or solution that contributes to the preservation of financial, natural, and human-made resources. A primary objective is to reduce the consumption and disposal of those resources that are especially harmful to the well-being of the local and global environment and may contribute to global warming or other planetary ailments. All sustainability projects and practices are evaluated against the financial impact of implementing and maintaining the programs. A positive and relatively short return on investment is desirable. Projects with a return on investment longer than five years typically need other supporting benefits to be justified for financial investment.

Facilities Management at SUU will continue to monitor the progress of sustainable practices as they apply to higher education and will follow suit with those practices that have been established as especially impactful and cost-effective. This Statement of Intent is to be construed as an ongoing commitment from Facilities Management that, as a department and influential force on campus, will continue to actively pursue sustainable solutions that make a real impact and exhibit judicious use of public resources.

Background

Students and others in the area of SUU expressed concern that SUU, as an institution, was not doing enough to curb the impact of human activity on climate change and environmental degradation. More than a decade ago, Facilities Management listened to this message and launched various initiatives to reduce energy consumption and boost sustainable practices related

to our department and the support of the greater institution. These initiatives have resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars saved in energy costs and contributed to a reduction of the University's overall carbon footprint.

Measurement and verification are draining endeavors when attached to a sustainable project that otherwise struggles to meet the mark financially. In the early years of implementing sustainability projects, the leadership of Facilities Management made the strategic decision to minimize post-implementation measurement and verification when industry standards of reduction had already been established. This practice makes the human and financial resources, otherwise used for measurement and verification, available for additional projects that will further reduce the University's impact on global degradation. Furthermore, SUU has established a practice of adopting tried-and-true sustainable initiatives as a means to ensure the benefits of implementing any given project are real. Most of the sustainable projects and methods used on campus follow recommendations made by State Energy Office leaders and have been proven to reduce consumption and carbon output.

Given our successful history of implementing conservation-oriented projects, Facilities Management will continue to follow this established path toward reducing the impact of campus on global environmental systems.

Review/Approval Requirements

The following entities are responsible for the design, review, and installation of sustainable projects and practices as related to the physical facilities of campus:

Facilities Management:

- Evaluates, approves, and coordinates all campus installations, including design and permitting. Part of this evaluation process is to determine if others on campus should be involved in the evaluation or implementation process.
- Maintains all systems and installations that are related to campus facilities.
- Often helps to secure funding for the initiation and ongoing support of all projects; however, Facilities Management is not obligated to fund or provide ongoing support to these initiatives outside the arena of those with an operations and maintenance application, as defined by the State.

SUU Administration:

- Provides input to proposed project designs and installations based on an administrative and political perspective
- May give funding to projects with a unique impact on the core mission of the institution

SUU Student Organizations:

- Provide ideas, operational and business plans, feasibility analyses, empirical data, marketing, labor, and other support requested by SUU leadership.
- Play a key role in working toward real solutions and providing order to the process. Student-led initiatives are a welcome addition to the overall effort. Still, they must

recognize that projects follow a process and will be weighed against other priorities and financial commitments on campus.

General Project Guidelines

Before being reviewed by Facilities Management and others, the following general guidelines must be met, as related to the presentation, evaluation, design, and implementation of all campus sustainability projects:

1. Consider energy conservation and sustainability, as commonly defined, as a primary objective.
2. Adequately address the personal safety requirements of students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors as recommended by the Safety and Risk Management division.
3. Preserve campus aesthetic qualities.
4. Restrict residual trespass into adjoining areas or activities on campus, including surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Ensure that projects are cohesive with best practices, applicable codes, and the standards set forth by the State of Utah Energy Office and other authorities having jurisdiction. This includes preserving an acceptable level of reliability and maintainability of systems installed. Sustainability or energy projects affecting building systems that do not convey a level of reliability and maintainability required by university personnel will not be approved.
6. Provide well-thought-out plans; have a defined return on investment or a defensible justification for using public funds; and have a plan for succession, if applicable.
7. Maintain the relationship between campus systems and sustainability efforts. The placement and design of projects need to be carefully coordinated and involve affected entities in the planning process.
8. Recognize that extra time spent planning and analyzing an initiative will reap sustainability benefits by resolving as many unforeseen circumstances as possible. Projects that are not appropriately planned will not meet our objectives and will end up being a step in the wrong direction.

Prioritized Plan for Sustainability Initiatives

The creation of a prioritized plan for sustainability initiatives will help achieve the items described above by helping to provide the greatest impact for the resources expended. Sustainability initiatives should be prioritized based on the actual result being provided. This must be assessed beyond the benefit to campus or the immediate end-users. Total carbon footprint must be considered as a project is prioritized, based on the overall cradle-to-grave pathway of components. Shifting carbon production off campus is not an acceptable solution. All projects must be prioritized based on their ability to reduce carbon generation.