

**General Sustainability Vision:**

*With a deep sense of responsibility, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to progressively reducing its ecological footprint and working through its academic mission to fashion a durable world with resilient, prosperous, and just communities.*

**History:**

In 2002, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh signed the Earth Charter (EC), thereby pledging to pursue a course of sustainability. The EC asks signatories to advocate “respect and care for the community of life” by supporting efforts that protect “ecological integrity,” advance “social and economic justice,” and promote “democracy, nonviolence and peace.” For UW Oshkosh, this means infusing sustainability in all that it does from academics to student affairs, research, outreach, facilities and administration. Building on this pledge, UW Oshkosh signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in 2007, which obligates campuses to strive for climate neutrality by mid-century or sooner.<sup>1</sup> A year later, UWO released its first campus sustainability plan (CSP), which catalyzed many efforts that have helped move campus toward sustainability.

The Campus Sustainability Council (CSC) has just completed an updated CSP that holds to the principles expressed in the university’s mission, sustainability vision and commitments and will continue the progress of the past – *e.g.*, the biodigesters, the University Studies Program, Fair Trade Campus designation, and national sustainability recognition. The update adopts an organization that places all UW Oshkosh functions into a “campus as a living, learning lab” (CL3) framework with goals and objectives grouped accordingly: 1) the university’s mission, 2) impacts, and 3) the administration of sustainability. Objectives and goals related to the “mission” involve academics, research, outreach, and student affairs. The “impacts” group considers goals and objectives that pertain to eliminating and/or minimizing our negative impacts on people and the planet (*e.g.*, achieving climate neutrality, improving human health with cleaner water and more nutritious food). The administration group involves goals that will further institutionalize sustainability at UW Oshkosh (*e.g.*, including sustainability in campus strategic planning and in job descriptions). An overarching objective is to engage and empower students using the campus, off-campus sites, the curriculum, and co-curricular activities.

At present, the CSP contains more than 170 specific goals. Responsibilities for implementing most of the goals fall under the domain of functional units on campus (*e.g.*, Facilities, Dining, and Academic Departments). Specific planning goals will undergo feasibility studies as appropriate before implementation. The plan is housed in sections on the Campus Sustainability website and will remain open to input from the community. The plan will be updated at least annually. The CSC soon will begin the process of moving the CSP into strategic planning as a Key Operational Plan that will both stand alone and cut across other Key Operational Plans in a way similar to Inclusive Excellence, thereby infusing sustainability into all university affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Climate neutrality* means that the institution operates with a net of zero fossil greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which may be achieved by minimizing such emissions to the extent possible and by using carbon offsets and renewable energy credits to mitigate any remaining emissions.

At this time, the CSC asks the Faculty Senate to endorse the following:

- The continued commitment to the principles of the EC and the ACUPCC
- The General Sustainability Vision
- The sustainability planning process that includes:
  - an ever-evolving sustainability plan
  - the inclusion of the CSP as a Key Operational Plan
  - the use of the CSP for Master Planning purposes.

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