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SUSTAINABILITY

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Subject to Change Without Notice

Authorized by [Regents Policy 3.1 "Responsibilities of the President"](#)

1. General

The University of New Mexico recognizes its profound relations with other entities both near and far; past, present and future. The University encourages a diverse campus culture that harmonizes UNM's sustainable goals of environmental protection, social equity, and economic opportunity within the context of its education, research, and public service missions. The University aims to improve performance in all areas of operations thereby meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the prospects of future generations. As a demonstration of this commitment, the University is an active member of the Association for the [Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education](#) (AASHE) and the [American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment](#). In all activities present and future, the University shall develop systems to manage environmental, social, and economic wellbeing with specific goals, objectives, priorities, processes, and milestones by which to verify performance. This policy applies to all University property and activities, including branch campuses.

2. Sustainability Principles

The intention of this sustainability policy is to maintain healthy relationships throughout the network of interactions that satisfy the basic needs of health, shelter, food, and transportation. Thus, it adopts the Principle of Holism in which the system as a whole determines in an important way how the parts behave. The system includes physical, biological, chemical, social, economic, and cultural elements among others.

- Holism encourages strategies that couple desired outcomes to incentives.
- Holism includes accounting for environmental and social impacts beyond the geographic confines of the campus. Ecologically ethical practices that may entail relatively long payback periods are favored over decisions based solely on up-front costs alone.
- Holism views waste as potential resources and thus favors strategies that follow the hierarchy of waste prevention, recycling/reuse, treatment, and disposal.
- Holism requires transparency via participatory planning practices, open documentation, visible implementation, and effective communication to students, faculty, staff, and the public.

3. Governance

Colleges and universities have the unique ability to not only incorporate the values of sustainability into all aspects of operations, but they are also positioned to educate and prepare future leaders, employers, and workers in sustainable values and practices that are critical to the future of society and the environment.

3.1. Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

The University is committed to an integrative, collaborative approach to sustainability reflected in curriculum and operations with involvement by all University stakeholders. To accomplish

this objective the Provost will appoint a UNM Sustainability Council chaired by the Director of Sustainability (to be appointed and report to the Director of the Physical Plant). The overarching goal of the Council will be to develop and monitor a comprehensive sustainability plan for UNM. The Council will consist of members of the Provost's Sustainability Committee, the Director of the Sustainability Studies Program, two (2) ad hoc students, and members representing the ASUNM, GPSA, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Executive Vice President for Administration, Executive Vice President for the Health Sciences Center, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Human Resources, Vice President for Advancement, Chief Information Officer, the City of Albuquerque, and the New Mexico Climate Change Action Council.

The UNM Sustainability Council will appoint committees to review campus proposals and programs and make recommendations to the Council regarding initiatives for operations, curriculum, research, and community service that the University should pursue in order to meet its sustainability goals of environmental protection, social equity, and economic opportunity.

3.2. Campus Culture

The University will build a campus culture of sustainability which addresses the three key components: environmental protection, social equity, and economic opportunity with involvement from its three primary stakeholder groups: students, faculty, and staff.

3.2.1. Students

Students can play a powerful, dual role not only through academic studies pertaining to sustainability, but also by working with staff and faculty to implement campus sustainability programs and working with the broader community on sustainability issues thereby making the University a clearinghouse for sustainability in New Mexico. To ensure student involvement, the Director of Sustainability will initiate a collaborative program between student organizations and operational departments which provides opportunities for students to be directly involved in sustainability initiatives, through internships and/or volunteer opportunities. In addition, the Director of Sustainability will work with academic areas to provide the opportunity for student involvement in sustainability projects and programs as part of their academic studies.

3.2.2. Faculty

Faculty has a powerful impact on the future of sustainability by preparing students for their roles as future leaders, employers, and workers. Faculty also play a valuable role in creating academic and research knowledge pertaining to environmental protection, social equity, and economic opportunity issues and sharing that information with students, staff, and the community. In addition, faculty will work with staff to identify ways to incorporate UNM's sustainability operational programs into academic and research projects.

3.2.3. Staff

Staff members play a critical role in helping UNM achieve its sustainability goals as front-line advocates for and practitioners of sustainability principles and practices in the day-to-day operations of the University. Staff will review and

evaluate their departmental activities to identify ways to reduce energy use, reduce waste, reuse materials and supplies, recycle whenever possible, and take innovative actions which help UNM meet its sustainability goals.

3.2.4. National and International Sustainability Initiatives

UNM will join other colleges, universities, and organizations in committing to sustainability initiatives that align with our sustainability goals. Some of these current initiatives include the [Talloires Declaration](#), the [American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment](#), and [Architecture 2030](#).

3.3. Environmental Protection

In accordance with the [American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment \(ACUPCC\)](#) the Sustainability Council will:

- develop an action plan for achieving carbon neutrality,
- be responsible for implementing and monitoring progress on the other requirements of the ACUPCC, and
- set quantifiable goals for reductions in energy use, water use, resource use, wastewater emissions, and solid waste emissions. _

3.4. Social Equity

UNM should consider the principles of environmental justice in its operations, activities, and research, and avoid inequitable and disparate impact where possible. The University is subject to [New Mexico Governor's Executive Order 2006-001](#), which will serve as a guide to the Sustainability Council in implementing sustainability programs.

3.5. Economic Opportunity

The Campus Sustainability Council will identify funding for sustainability projects proposed by students, faculty, and staff and provide work-study opportunities for students. The University will also help boost the State's sustainability industry by increasing demand for clean energy, clean cars, recycled products, and green building materials.

4. Operations

A broad network of University employees supports the educational and research activities of the University. The network provides the facilities, transportation, landscape, utilities, communications, and administrative foundation necessary to operate the University. University operations expend the majority of the overall resources consumed by UNM; therefore the following goals have been developed to incorporate sustainability into University operations.

4.1. Campus Culture

Operations personnel are encouraged to develop an understanding of how their activities are related to sustainability and will be encouraged to develop more sustainable practices. Management will provide employees with access to organizations and resources promoting sustainability and will incorporate sustainability into the University Values Section of employee

performance reviews. The Sustainability council will develop a recognition and award program specifically to promote sustainability. Internships and volunteer opportunities will be offered to students to assist with the implementation of operational projects.

4.2. Environmental Protection

The Director of Sustainability will develop a greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction plan with milestones for every five (5) years.

4.2.1. Facilities

The maintenance and operation of campus buildings is the single largest source of campus greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at UNM. Substantial reduction of campus GHG emissions can only be achieved with campus facilities that are designed with consideration for the environmental impact over the life of the facility. To achieve this objective all construction or renovation projects at UNM will be designed to emphasize the life cycle costs associated with the operations and maintenance of the facility over initial capital costs and to meet or exceed the [U. S. Green Building Council's \(USGBC\) LEED](#) Silver standard per the Governor's Executive Order 2006-001.

4.2.2. Transportation

Transportation to and from the Albuquerque campus, the largest trip generator in the metro-area, is a large community-wide source of GHG emissions. Substantial reduction of transportation related GHG emissions should be achieved by providing incentives and convenient accommodation for low emission transportation options.

4.3. Social Equity

Campus consumption of resources and products shall not knowingly put people elsewhere at significant risk for environmental contamination or diminished social welfare. Products, building materials, furnishings, and food used at the University impact communities elsewhere in the course of resource extraction, manufacturing, distribution, and disposal. Procurement will favor suppliers that demonstrate sustainability practices. When purchasing these items, departments should select vendors that strive to minimize negative impacts on all communities affected.

4.4. Economic Opportunity

The green economy favors energy efficiency, reduced use of materials, minimized waste and pollution, and corporate responsibility for fates of materials over product lifetimes, so whenever possible departments should support the local green industry. In addition, UNM will continue to build a creative materials management program that promotes reuse, reduces consumption, minimizes waste, and maximizes recycling.

Substantive changes to University operations will require dedicated resources. This can be achieved with a specific annual source of funding for sustainability projects and the reinvestment of realized savings from previous projects. Thus, UNM will provide an annual source of funding for sustainability projects and each project that has economic savings will identify the beneficiary of the savings with 50% of the realized savings utilized for future sustainability projects.

5. Curriculum and Research

Education and research are core missions of the University. The curricula in each department were developed over the history of the University as knowledge expanded and external needs evolved, and represent the collective wisdom of generations of educators. As a consequence, changes to the curriculum should not be approached lightly. Nevertheless, we now find ourselves in a situation where sustainability is a moral imperative, not a choice, and special efforts must be made by faculty, administrators, and students alike to ensure that curricula and research evolve rapidly to reflect sustainability issues relevant to each particular area.

Society is challenged to provide the basic needs of health, water, energy, food, shelter, and transportation now and for future generations. To address these societal challenges, each college and school at UNM will strive to integrate sustainability knowledge and methodologies from the sciences, humanities, and arts into curricula and research in order to provide students with educational opportunities and support pertaining to sustainability. In addition, these programs will prepare students for rapidly growing career opportunities in business, education, government, and the non-profit sector linked to sustainability. The Sustainability Studies Program can assist and support colleges and schools as they develop sustainability curricula.

5.1. Campus Culture

A campus culture of sustainability requires a holistic and systemic approach that can be encouraged via the development of interdisciplinary courses, programs, and projects. Flexibility in curricula should be increased so that students can increase their knowledge about sustainability issues of interest. Guest lectures on relevant topics by faculty from different disciplines should also be encouraged to promote awareness of far-reaching impacts of a particular discipline. Performance reviews will reward faculty who make an effort to include sustainability in their teaching. Similarly, awareness of sustainability issues should be part of the assessment of student work.

5.2. Environmental Protection

The professional practice of most disciplines impacts the environment. In each discipline with direct or indirect links to environmental protection, the curriculum should incorporate discussion of impacts on the environment and promote sustainable practices. The development of dedicated common courses in the context of broad areas of study (e.g. engineering, arts and sciences, law) addressing environmental protection and sustainability will be included as part of UNM's core curriculum.

5.3. Social Equity

Social equity is an often overlooked but integral component of any approach to sustainability. The impacts of each discipline on social equity should be considered in curriculum development. Different disciplines impact social equity to different extents. Course content should include concepts of social equity as a consequence of its relevance to the subject matter.

5.4. Economic Opportunity

- Curricula should be forward looking, and highlight the potential for continued economic development afforded by sustainable practices.
- Economic development should be viewed long-term and in a way that accounts as best as possible for true costs.

- The concept of externalities should be used to compare sustainable practices with traditional ones.
- Courses focusing on future technologies and sustainable practices should be developed by 2012. Current courses should be revised by 2010 to reflect a changing economic environment.

6. Community Service

UNM will serve students, faculty, and staff, as well as the community at large, by providing leadership and setting an example of how to achieve the triple bottom line of environmental protection, social equity, and economic opportunity. UNM will export this knowledge through community programs such as UNM Continuing Education, the Research and Service Learning Program (RSLP), Areas of Public Engagement (APE), and internships. In addition, UNM will serve as a clearing house of sustainability information and resources through the Sustainability Studies Program for the wider community.

6.1. Campus Culture

UNM will foster a campus culture of community members initiating and participating in activities that support the University in achieving sustainability through its governance, operations, and curriculum and research.

6.2. Environmental Protection

All campus community members should be aware of the extent to which their actions can negatively or positively impact the environment. In that the University shall strive to establish the lead for environmental protection in New Mexico, it should encourage engagement by faculty, staff, or students in community service projects that positively impact the environment and discourage those that impact the environment negatively.

6.3. Social Equity

University community service projects or activities shall strive to ensure that all members of the community benefit, and that none are left worse off through community service actions.

6.4. Economic Opportunity

In striving to fulfill its mission to provide increased economic opportunity for New Mexicans, the University will consider the environmental and social impacts of proposed community service proposals and business plans as well as profitability. To do so, cross disciplinary approaches to planning will be encouraged.

7. Related Documents

- UNM Sustainability Smart Objectives

Comments may be sent to UBPPM@UNM.edu
<http://www.unm.edu/~ubppm>

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