The Senate Sustainability Committee 2011/2012 Report

Senate Sustainability Policy File Charge

Sustainability, Committee on
1.0 Sustainability refers to practices designed to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It encompasses teaching, research, and practice in a variety of areas including but not limited to policy development, building design and construction, waste management and recycling, energy production and use, water use, and transportation.

2.0 Membership (15): five faculty, with no more than two from any one college; one staff member; Vice President for Student Affairs or designee; Dean of Undergraduate Studies or designee; Director of Facilities Planning, Design & Construction or designee; Associate Vice President for Enterprise Operations or designee; SDSU Research Foundation Director of Facilities or designee; General Manager, KPBS or designee; CEO of Aztec Shops or designee; two students.

3.0 Functions. The Committee shall
- 3.1 study sustainability issues related to the campus and make recommendations to improve sustainable practices.
- 3.2 receive copies of Executive Orders or other instructions to the campus dealing with sustainability and report on them to the Senate.
- 3.3 Serve as the resource to faculty wishing to undertake research or propose curriculum in sustainability
- 3.4 coordinate with the Committee on Environment and Safety and the Campus Development Committee to ensure that sustainability is taken into consideration in the deliberations of those bodies.

Vision Statement

During the 2010-2011 academic year the Senate Sustainability Committee (SSC) developed the following SDSU Sustainability Vision Statement: Through its operations, management of facilities, curriculum, research practices, and community involvement, San Diego State University will become a prominent leading institution that will guide the way to a more just, equitable, and sustainable world by integrating vital environmental, social, and economic needs of the present while ensuring future prosperity.

Purpose

In order for an institution like SDSU to identify ways to have a positive long-term impact on the future, it is important that we take stock of and inventory current practices and all the ways in which individuals throughout the campus are striving to be more mindful of the long-term consequences of their current actions. Such efforts have already been underway through work and collaboration between the SSC, CRS, Physical Plant, Business Services, Associated Studies and the like. However, the vast majority of the faculty, staff, and students remain unaware of the
growing concerns about sustainability, what activities have been undertaken on campus, what
course or research provide academic grounding in topics of sustainability, and do not know what
entities they should contact to share or inquire about such information. **The SSC seeks to support the communication, coordination, assessment, and implementation of sustainability practices at San Diego State University.** The committee will recommend and support initiatives that foster the development of sustainability knowledge and implementation of sustainable practices.

**2011-2012 Accomplishments**

**Sustainability Course Designation.** Students seeking practical exposure to sustainability issues and academic grounding in this domain requested that the University identify courses with sustainability content. The SSC conducted background research regarding sustainability course designations rubrics at schools such as ASU and GE minor tracks at schools such as Portland State, Western Washington State, UBC, Chico, and University of Michigan. The SSC convened a faculty group to review rubric ideas. A rubric draft was developed presented to faculty and SSC committee members. The SSC voted on a sustainability rubric to designate courses with a sustainability focus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Faculty</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trent Biggs</td>
<td>4-0902</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Elkind</td>
<td>4-0930</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Rahn</td>
<td>4-5386</td>
<td>College Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Gersberg</td>
<td>4-2905</td>
<td>Graduate School of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinod Sasidharan</td>
<td>4-4726</td>
<td>Hospitality and Tourism Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Beck</td>
<td>4-5753</td>
<td>Hospitality and Tourism Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sustainability Course Evaluation Rubric**

Sustainability is the harmonious and equitable interaction among ecological, social, and economic systems that provides resources for current generations and leaves future generations with no less access. Sustainability curriculum provides the necessary breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and critical and creative thinking to implement solutions for, and adapt with, the interconnected ecosystems for present and future generations. Courses designated as sustainability-related shall contain at least one module of lessons addressing one of the following criteria and courses designated as sustainability-focused shall contain modules of lessons
addressing more than one of the following criteria or focus the majority of the lessons on one criterion from the rubric below:

Examines how changes in the natural environment affect people and their communities, ecological systems, or economic systems

Examines how human actions impact or change the natural environment and ecological processes

Explores how people experience, express, or think about nature and the relationship between humans and nature

Explores the aesthetic, ethical and philosophical dimensions of sustainability

Analyzes the interconnected relationships among human, natural, and economic systems

Develops skills to assess and communicate the interrelated socioeconomic and environmental challenges and design solutions to manage natural, human and fiscal resources that are compatible with the constraints on these resources

**Campus-wide Stock Take and Sustainability Tracking/Assessment.** There were a number of activities that supported the assessment and identification of opportunities related to sustainability at SDSU. A consultant was hired to develop a GHG inventory and mitigation cost estimate. Data collection and reporting for the first STARS report was submitted. The collective insight from these different efforts will be used to develop an overview of the current state of sustainability at SDSU, this stock take will be shared with campus stakeholders during the 2012-2013 academic year to solicit input regarding potential sustainability initiatives and help the SSC determine recommendations for sustainability initiatives to support.

**Community Involvement, Campus Recognition, Campus Commitments.** The University received a STARS silver rating.

The SSC was charged to make a recommendation to President Hirshman signing the ACUPCC. The Committee recommends a long-term goal of establishing a SDSU Strategic Planning Group. The Committee’s official recommendation regarding the ACUPCC is that more immediately the President would form a Climate Action Plan Council responsible for assessing the feasibility of solutions and commitments regarding carbon emissions and climate change. The Council would report to campus on current GHG emissions, evaluate the feasibility of different options to mitigate emissions and recommend appropriate commitments as well as actions such as signing the ACUPCC.

The recommendation for the Council structure is as follows:

Alumni advisors (for intermittent feedback)
50% staff Liaison Representative from:
Associated Students
Aztec Shops
VP Student Affairs or designee
Academic Affairs
Business Affairs (at least 1 representative, maximum 3: Physical Plant, Finance, Facilities Planning Design and Construction)
SSC representative
VP University Relations and Development

The Committee will provide an official recommendation letter to President Hirshman in October 2012.