

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability implies a cross-generational commitment to environmental stewardship and its economic, political and social dimensions. It is a practical approach toward making decisions that lessen environmental impacts, while at the same time improving social equity and economic prosperity for all. EKU's sustainability efforts aim to reduce the University's environmental impacts by integrating sustainability principles into existing and new programs, research, outreach, and operations.

EKU Office of Sustainability Mission:

The Office of Sustainability will lead the integration of sustainability into all aspects of the operation and educational experience at Eastern Kentucky University.



EKU Office of Sustainability Vision:

EKU will become a vibrant, productive living and learning community that exemplifies best practices in environmental stewardship through holistic application of sustainability principles across its functions as an academic institution. EKU will foster a culture of environmental responsibility on campus and in the community and become recognized as a leader in sustainability in higher education.

Organizational Structure:

The following departments and organizations have been identified as key participants in delivering the sustainability vision at EKU. As the sustainability program matures, other departments and groups may need to be highlighted for their specific involvement in programs, projects, and goals as they relate to both the university's sustainability commitment and their department function.

Office of Sustainability – responsible for establishing a sustainability strategy for EKU and spearheading initiatives that put it into action. The Office of Sustainability initially will consist of the Sustainability Manager, Student Sustainability Coordinator, and Student Sustainability Communication Coordinator. The Office of Sustainability will report to the Office of Finance and Administration.

Sustainability Manager – is responsible for initiating and providing overall leadership to strategic sustainability initiatives at EKU. The Sustainability Manager will be responsible for the integration of sustainability into all facets of EKU.

Student Sustainability Coordinator – will be responsible for assisting in the organization and coordination of sustainability initiatives, research, projects, and other related duties as appointed by the Sustainability Manager.

Student Sustainability Communication Coordinator – will be responsible for helping to develop, lead, and execute sustainability communications, designing creative imagery for digital and print

communications, promoting sustainability sponsored events, and managing sustainability social media accounts and webpages.

Responsible Environmental Stewardship Committee (RESC) – will serve as a steering committee responsible for providing guidance on sustainability related matters to the Sustainability Manager and serve as initiative and/or project leaders related to the execution of the Sustainability Strategy.

RESC Mission:

In accordance with EKU's ongoing commitment to sustainability and to reducing our environmental impact, the Responsible Environmental Stewardship Committee serves to: (a) Increase and improve the praxis and teaching of sustainability and environmental stewardship across all university areas (e.g., teaching, research, service, programs, operations), including but not limited to energy diversification, transportation, and waste management; (b) Assist, advise and support the Office of Sustainability's initiatives.

RESC Vision:

EKU will be an active and productive living and learning community where environmental sustainability is a core value, and where the University models best practices in all of its planning, design, operations, and learning endeavors.

- *This core value is reflected in the University's use of all energy and materials.*
- *The University maximizes the use of renewable natural resources, replicates natural systems, and acts as stewards of those resources.*
- *EKU fosters environmentally literate and responsible citizenship through its teaching, scholarship, and service.*
- *Through community partnerships, research, education, and technology transfer, the University acts to improve environmental sustainability throughout the region*

Sustainability Network – is a group of faculty, staff, students, and community members with a specific interest in the outcome of EKU's Sustainability Strategy. Members of the Sustainability Network will be explicitly invited to attend RESC meetings and be recruited for participation in Sustainability Teams to help drive goals in relationship to the Sustainability Strategy. This group will evolve via direct recruitment and/or interest expressed in getting involved in sustainability initiatives by the individual.

Green Crew – is a student organization focused on promoting environmental stewardship on campus. The Green Crew is comprised of student sustainability ambassadors who will be relied upon to work synergistically with the Office of Sustainability on initiatives and projects that improve the student experience at ECU.

Facilities Services – will be relied upon for sharing operational data and for adopting and incorporating policies and procedures that will help promote a more sustainable campus. Facilities Services will also be integral for the development and execution of operational and infrastructure-related sustainability projects, such as energy and water efficiency, waste minimization, and sustainable grounds management.

Office of Parking & Transportation – will be responsible for the development and ownership of vanpooling, car sharing, pedestrian and bicycle programs and infrastructure on campus. The Office of Parking & Transportation will also be collaborative partners in identifying new solutions to improve transportation sustainability at ECU.

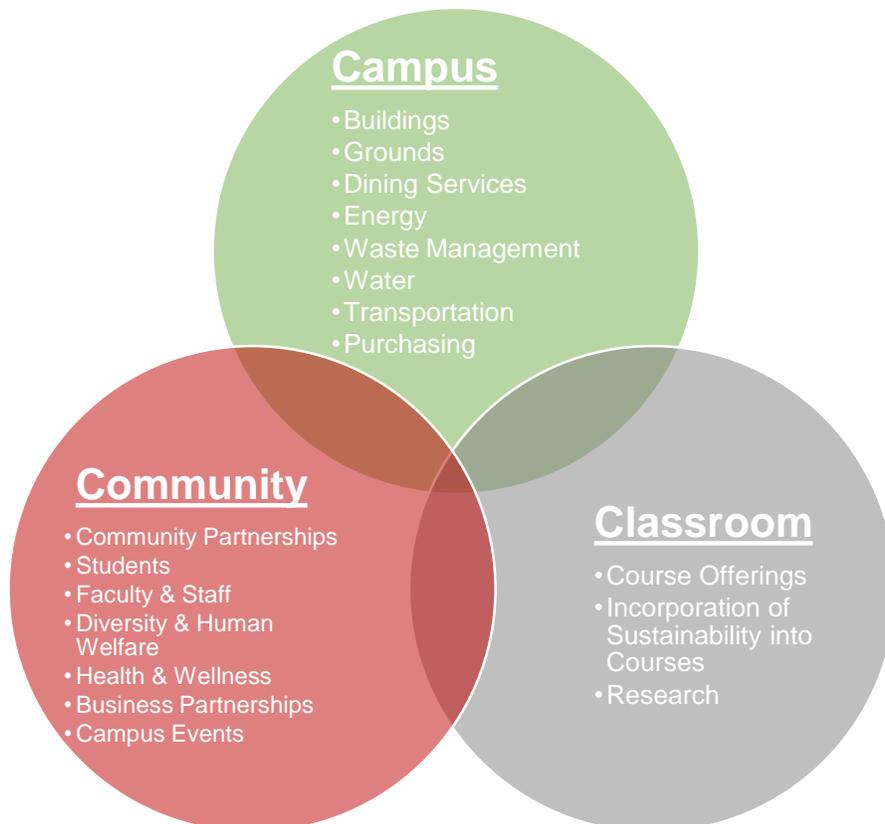
Office of Capital Construction – will be relied upon to collaborate with the Office of Sustainability in the creation and adoption of sustainability guidelines and performance goals for all new construction and building renovation projects.

The following chart helps to visualize how these departments and organization will work together to execute EKU's Sustainability Strategy.



Sustainability Strategy:

In order to meet the sustainability vision, EKU will organize its sustainability efforts into *three strategic focal areas* within which programs, initiatives, projects, and goals will be managed. This triumvirate approach will build upon the value of *stewardship of place* outlined in [EKU's Strategic Plan](#). The sustainability strategy will also align with the framework outlined by the [AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System \(STARS\)](#).



1. **Campus** – including all buildings, infrastructure, lands, and resources, utilized or operated by ECU and the human interactions that occur on or with them. ECU will aspire to have a net-zero impact on the environment related to its campus and campus activities. By improving the environmental performance of the campus, ECU will become a more attractive and productive learning institution for students and employees.
2. **Community** – including all students, employees, and community members involved with or impacted by ECU's existence. ECU will actively engage its students, employees, and community members in productive educational outreach activities that increase awareness of local and global sustainability issues and elicit action. As a result, ECU will be recognized as an active and responsible community partner.
3. **Classroom** – involving educational experiences inside and outside of the physical classroom and research supported by ECU. ECU will expand upon its number of sustainability focused courses, programs, and research while providing the educational framework for all students to enter their careers as informed, responsible environmental stewards. As a result, all ECU graduates should possess at least a general awareness and understanding for relevant environmental issues and develop into socially responsible decision makers.

Managing Progress:

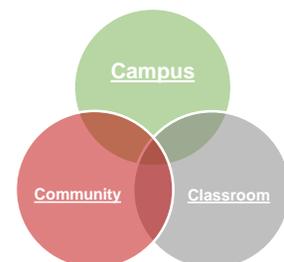
The following hierarchical approach will be followed in order to initiate, organize, and manage actions specific to advancing the sustainability at ECU.

1. **Initiative** – an act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation; a fresh approach to something. Within each strategic focus area, initiatives will fall into a range of sub-categories. The first level will be known as the initiative level. This is the highest level for organizing a focused improvement effort.
2. **Aspect** – includes all aspects of an initiative area that have the potential to impact the environment in a positive or negative way. Within each initiative area there can be myriad aspects pertaining to that category and/or subcategory worth addressing. Goals should be established for improving each of these aspects within an initiative.
3. **Goal** – For each aspect, there will be a tangible goal or outcome to which progress will be regularly monitored.

Example:

1. Campus (Strategy level)

1. Air & Climate (Initiative level)
 - a. Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Aspect level)
 - i. GHG Inventory & Report (Goal level)



Goal Setting:

Sustainability goals will be established with the ultimate Sustainability Vision in mind. Goals will be established and defined by *short*, *medium*, and *long-term*. Goals and progress toward them will be made public on the www.sustainability.eku.edu webpage.

- A short-term goal will be considered attainable within 1-2 years.
- A medium-term goal will be a goal considered attainable within 5 years.
- A long-term goal will be a goal considered attainable within 10 years.

*Any goal with a target completion date beyond 10 years should only be considered for University executive commitments.

Goal setting will involve establishing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bounded (SMART) objectives. Each *Initiative* outlined within the *three strategic focus areas* should have *at least* one short, medium, and long-term goal.

One goal (three in total) will be selected from each of the *three strategic focus areas* as a priority goal for the year.

1. Goal Year Timeline –will coincide with the university fiscal year, July 1 – June 30. Short-term goal setting should be conducted annually beginning in *February* of the current year with final decisions on new goals being made by *April 30th*. Goal setting will be initiated by the Sustainability Manager and will utilize *RESC* as the steering committee. Formal approval of Sustainability Goals will be made by the VP of Finance & Administration and the President.
2. Mid-Year Progress Check-In – will occur in December, before mid-semester break, with University leadership and the Office of Finance & Administration.
3. Year End Review – At the end of each fiscal year (June 30), progress toward all sustainability goals will be presented to University leadership and evaluated by the Office of Finance & Administration and President. The Year End Review presentation will be also be open to the campus community and public.

EKU Sustainability Initiatives & Aspects List:**Campus**

1. Air & Climate
 - a. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - i. GHG Inventory & Report
 1. Scope I, II, & III Emissions Management
 - b. Outdoor Air Quality
 - i. Coal Plant
 - ii. Vehicle Emissions
2. Buildings
 - a. Building Design
 - i. ECU High Performance, Sustainable Building Standards
 - ii. Green Purchasing Policy/Materials Sourcing
 - b. High Performance Sustainable Building Construction & Renovation
 - i. Construction Practices
 - ii. Construction Waste
 - c. Building Operations
 - i. Optimization of Controls
 - ii. Optimization of Building Utilization
 - d. Building Maintenance
 - i. Green Cleaning Policy
 - e. Indoor Air Quality
 - i. Standards for Performance
3. Dining Services
 - a. Food & Beverage Sourcing
 - i. Local Sourcing Expectations
 - ii. Low Impact Sustainable Dining
 - b. Food Service Operations
 - i. Dining Ware Purchasing
 - ii. Cafeteria Waste Management
 - iii. Appliance Purchasing
4. Energy Management
 - a. Energy Purchasing Practices
 - b. On Site Generation
 - i. Coal Plant
 - ii. Natural Gas
 - iii. Renewable Energy
 - c. Building Energy Consumption
5. Grounds
 - a. Landscape Management
 - i. Fertilizer Application
 - ii. Pesticide Application
 - iii. Xeriscaping & Native Planting
 - iv. Yardwork Practices
 - b. Biodiversity
 - i. Habitat Preservation & Restoration
 - ii. Reintroduction of Native & Endangered Species

- iii. Bioremediation of Polluted Sites
 - c. Accessibility of Green Spaces
 - i. Collaborative Connected Green Spaces
 - ii. Pedestrian Friendly Infrastructure
- 6. Purchasing
 - a. Green Purchasing Policy
 - b. Guidelines for Business Partners
 - c. Inclusive & Local Purchasing
 - d. Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of Purchased Goods
 - e. Product Packaging
 - f. Electronics
 - g. Cleaning Products
 - h. Paper
 - i. Office Furniture
 - j. Vending Machines
 - k. Business Contracts
- 7. Transportation
 - a. Campus Fleet
 - i. Fuel Efficiency
 - b. Business Travel
 - c. Athletics & Club Travel
 - d. Sustainable Transportation
 - i. Bicycling
 - ii. Ridesharing
 - iii. Vanpooling
 - iv. Public & Mass Transportation
 - v. Low Emissions & Electric Vehicles
- 8. Waste Management
 - a. Waste Minimization
 - b. Reuse/Repurpose
 - c. Construction & Demolition Waste
 - d. Recycling
 - e. Composting
 - f. Landfill Waste
 - g. Hazardous Waste
- 9. Water Management
 - a. Water Usage
 - i. Irrigation & Agricultural Usage
 - ii. Building Water Usage
 - b. Rainwater & Stormwater Management
 - c. Wastewater Management

Community

1. Community Partnerships
 - a. Community Service Projects
 - b. Sustainability Education & Awareness
2. Faculty & Staff
 - a. Diversity & Equity
 - i. Underrepresented Groups
 - b. Workplace Health & Safety
 - c. Wellness Program
3. Students
 - a. Resident Students
 - a. Student Life
 - b. Commuter Students
 - c. Online & Remote Students
4. On Campus Community Events
 - a. Athletics
 - b. Arts
 - c. Other

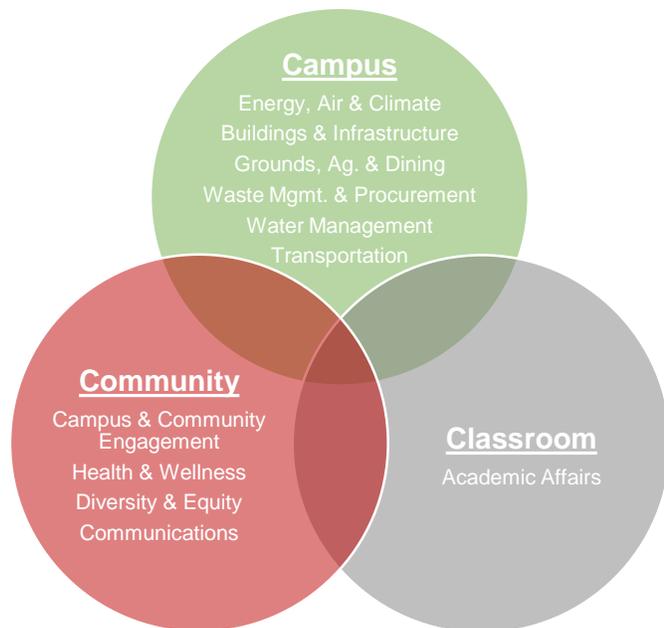
Classroom

1. Academic Courses
 - a. Undergraduate Programs
 - b. Graduate Programs
 - c. Incorporation of Sustainability Into Courses
2. Research
 - a. On Campus Research
 - b. Support for Research
 - c. Campus as a Living Laboratory
 - d. Research in Service Region

Sustainability Teams

In order to execute the sustainability strategy, teams of individuals with positions and/or expertise in initiative areas will be recruited and organized by the Sustainability Manager. Members of the RESC and Sustainability Network will have the opportunity to select a Sustainability Team with which to participate for the goal year. At the end of each goal year, team membership will be re-assessed with the potential for continuation into the following year, or to be replaced as needed. Each team should select a leader to initiate team-meetings and serve as the reporter during biennial progress reviews. Teams will work with the Sustainability Manager to set and achieve goals within their *Initiative* area. Sustainability Teams should meet monthly at a minimum to plan for execution and to review progress toward goals in their *Initiative* area.

1. Energy, Air & Climate
2. Buildings & Infrastructure
3. Grounds, Agriculture & Dining
4. Waste Management & Purchasing
5. Academic Affairs
6. Engagement & Communications
7. Transportation
8. Water Management
9. Health & Wellness
10. Diversity & Equity



Conclusion

With this approach of Campus, Community, and Classroom, the Office of Sustainability will successfully embed sustainability into the decision-making process and daily function of EKU's operation as an institute for higher learning.