



Office of Sustainability
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Planning and Administration Focus Areas for Review




At its next four meetings, the Sustainability Advisory Council (SAC) will prioritize focus areas for sustainability at UW-Madison. Here is the schedule:





December 2020	Academic & Research focus areas
January 2021	Engagement focus areas
February 2021	Operations focus areas
March 2021	Planning and Administration focus areas




The focus areas identified (so far) for our March meeting are in Table 4. These were identified through a review of peer best practices, results of UW-Madison’s Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) report, Office of Sustainability staff experience, and feedback from the campus community during public listening sessions.

Additional focus areas may be defined by the SAC members. Before initial prioritization, the SAC will review, discuss, and identify resources that support the implementation of initiatives or challenges that could stall initiative progress.

Source(s) of focus areas are identified by the following:

- ★ = STARS & Peer Best Practices
-  = Office of Sustainability Experience
-  = Listening Sessions
-  = SAC Members

Focus Area	Issue(s) to Address	Example Initiative(s)	Example Action items
Institutional Structures for Sustainability 	UW-Madison lacks an upper leadership position focused on sustainability and will need structures and support to implement SAC recommendations	Institutional structures and/or staffing to advance the priorities defined by the SAC Continuity plan for SAC and the Student Subcommittee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop resources to build leadership in sustainability for students, staff, and faculty • Assess bi-divisional reporting and budgeting structure for Office of Sustainability • Maintain student and shared governance participation throughout implementation • Develop and maintain channels for feedback on implementation and/or reassessment of sustainability priorities • Report regularly to campus community through passive (e.g., online dashboard) and active (e.g., presentation to shared governance) channels
Sustainability Integration 	UW-Madison lacks the consistent inclusion of sustainability in upper leadership communications and strategic decision-making	Processes to ensure consideration of the priorities defined by the SAC in strategic decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create educational opportunities and materials to build the sustainability capacity of leadership • Define relationship of SAC priorities with the strategic framework • Include sustainability domain experts in relevant decision-making
Sustainable Investments 	UW Foundation and other university affiliated funds offer limited transparency on the makeup of investment portfolios and no policies that promote sustainable investment decisions	Greater transparency in investment portfolios Sustainable investment policies and sustainability-focused investment options for donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a committee on investor responsibility • Create transparency by gathering detailed disclosures for the WFAA, WARF, and ETF investments • Join industry trade group such as Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (https://www.fsb-tcfd.org/) • Assess climate risk in investment portfolio • Divest endowment funds from fossil fuels • Create impact investing portfolios for donors
Green Revolving Fund 	UW-Madison lacks a source of internal or gift funding to support investments in sustainable campus improvements	Large (>\$1M) revolving fund for university sustainable operational improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source seed funding and investment criteria • Analyze current Green Fund projects for rate of return and ability to scale • Create process for funding expansion of “campus as a living lab” projects • Prioritize a Green Revolving Fund for future fund raising efforts

Focus Area	Issue(s) to Address	Example Initiative(s)	Example Action items
Systems-based Decision-making 	UW-Madison lacks enterprise-wide systems that align sustainability-related policy, planning, and strategic decision making at all levels	Evaluation and implementation processes to ensure alignment of sustainability related policies, planning, and strategic decisions with enterprise-wide priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include triple-bottom line impact analysis in decision-making • Incorporate internal carbon pricing in financial analysis • Require sustainability measures and climate change adaptation in all departmental strategic plans • Add sustainability tag to applicable campus systems (e.g., HR, grants, policy library, etc.) • Incentivize innovative collaborative (between disciplines, departments, schools, etc.) strategic planning
Social Sustainability 	UW-Madison cannot advance sustainability and resilience priorities without advancing social justice and equity	Processes to ensure that equity, inclusivity, and justice are core to all programs that advance sustainability and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate monetary support and develop administrative systems and/or training that cultivate diversity in hiring • Remove historical campus markers of racism • Create a coordinated infrastructure to respond to acts of structural oppression • Support flexible work options including on-going work-from-home opportunities • Fund land reparations and/or scholarships for Ho-Chunk and/or indigenous communities • Continue to build support system for marginalized students • Incorporate a Just Transition framework into climate action and adaptation planning (https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/) • Develop and set up resilience hubs across campus • Consider and/or mitigate student affordability impacts of sustainability and/or resilience programs • Integrate sustainability opportunities into UWell and other campus wellness efforts • Work with campus units to strengthen and support ongoing communications channels with community stakeholders on sustainability programs (or develop channels where none currently exist)
Employee Engagement 	UW-Madison does not leverage sustainability achievements and efforts to improve employee engagement	Programs to empower employees to engage with sustainability on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create honors and recognition for sustainability related team-building and/or community events • Host campus-wide events for employees (e.g., Earth Day) • Expand wellness coordinators and budget for events and programs, including outreach and engagement to teaching and graduate assistants

Other Focus Areas with Planning and Administration Impact

- **Campus as a Living Lab:** Living lab activities could be green fund opportunities that provide proof of concept for green revolving fund investment
- **Sustainability Institute:** A Sustainability Institute could serve the key institutional structure for sustainability
- **Honors & Recognition:** Recognition can also include achievements in advancing sustainable planning and administration
- **Sustainability Leadership and Advocacy:** Advocacy can include social sustainability issues
- **Sustainable Events:** Consistent sustainability components in campus events can support an employee sense of community
- **Alumni Engagement:** Alumni may appreciate greater transparency in the investment of donation dollars and/or donate to a green revolving fund
- **Sustainability Co-curricular Learning:** Student participation in sustainability strategy and planning is an example of a co-curricular learning opportunity
- **Sustainability Onboarding and Training:** This is a key moment in building an authentic community and models for employee engagement
- **Sustainable Planning and Design:** How spaces are designed is important to building a welcoming environment
- **Sustainable Landscape Management:** Sustainable landscape management requires processes that respect and honor the land our university sits upon and the peoples who were here before UW–Madison
- **Sustainable Procurement:** Sustainable procurement includes assessing equity in the campus supply chain

Table 4. Planning and Administration focus areas