POLICY 1.48 – Environment and Sustainability

Policy Category: General
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PREAMBLE

A sustainable campus is one that promotes the smallest possible ecological footprint by promoting a healthy ecosystem and supporting the values of conservation.

The University of Western Ontario is a signatory to the COU Statement on Creating a Sustainable Environment and to the Talloire Declaration, an action plan signed by many university presidents from around the world. The COU statement acknowledges that Ontario’s universities have special responsibilities on three fronts:

- To assist in finding solutions to the challenges of environmental sustainability
- To share knowledge about environment and sustainability
- To incorporate principles of sustainability into our own operations wherever possible

As a postsecondary institution, Western has the intellectual capacity to solve pressing environmental problems; it has a moral obligation to minimize its impact on the environment; and it has the opportunity to educate students who will become global leaders in the environment and sustainability movement.

A. SCOPE

This policy applies to all areas of the University that support the delivery of teaching, research and services at Western. It provides an overarching framework for creating an institutional culture of sustainability that draws upon the abilities and expertise of the University community.

B. PRINCIPLES

The University of Western Ontario subscribes to the following principles of sustainability:

1. **Engagement:** Environment and sustainability is the responsibility of everyone at Western. Success requires the collective action of the University community through long-term planning, shared learning, grassroots activities, and institutional leadership.

2. **Institutional Ecology:** The University commits to developing institutional practices that promote sustainability while reducing the use of resources and the production of waste and hazardous materials.

3. **Efficacy:** The University will continue to provide quality education and services while progressively reducing negative environmental, health and economic impacts.
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4. **Accountability**: The University will establish measurable sustainability goals and monitor, evaluate and report on performance.

5. **Innovation**: The University will encourage a climate of creativity, inquiry, research and collaboration that fosters new ideas and approaches to sustainability questions and challenges.

6. **Community**: The University recognizes that it is part of a larger community and will engage with that community to promote sustainable practices and to identify and address opportunities and challenges that may have impact beyond our campus boundaries.

C. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The principles identified in this policy will encourage:

- Incorporating sustainability into our academic programming, to contribute to an educated citizenry and develop future leaders
- Engaging in research across the disciplines into issues of environmental sustainability
- Reducing our use of inputs
- Reducing outputs through recycling and reuse
- Focusing on life cycle management of resources and waste products
- Utilizing ecological landscaping methods and preserving green space
- Building and renovating facilities in accordance with energy efficiency and sustainability principles

D. STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Vice-Presidents**

Each vice-president has responsibility to ensure that the University complies with all applicable legislation and regulations related to sustainability within his or her operational mandate.

2. **President's Advisory Committee on Environment and Sustainability (PACES)**

(a) **Mandate**

The President's Advisory Committee on Environment and Sustainability has primary responsibility for developing and recommending strategic plans to put into practice the principles enunciated in this policy. The expectation is that, for each part of its mandate, it will build on the work that is already being done by staff and organizations involved in sustainability initiatives within academic and administrative units across the University. It will:

(i) Establish specific goals for sustainability.

(ii) Develop performance indicators for and regularly measure progress toward established goals.

(iii) Develop communication tools to:

- Inform the University community in general of programs and activities relating to sustainability
- Assist with information dissemination in order to reduce duplication of effort and enhance efficiencies
- Educate individual members of the community with respect to how they can contribute to a sustainable campus
(iv) Advise the President and senior administration on policy and procedural changes that need to be made.

(v) Report annually to the University community at large, the Senate and the Board of Governors.

(b) Membership

The President’s Advisory Committee on Environment and Sustainability is composed as follows:

- The Provost and Vice-President (Academic) (Co-Chair)
- The Vice-President (Resources & Operations) (Co-Chair)
- The Associate Vice-President (Housing & Ancillary Services)
- The Associate Vice-President (Facilities Management)
- The Associate Vice-President (Communications & Public Affairs)
- The Director of the Centre for Environment and Sustainability
- Three faculty members appointed by the President
- Three staff members appointed by the President
- One dean appointed by the President
- One undergraduate student appointed by the USC
- One graduate student appointed by the SOGS

Appointed members will serve for two-year terms, renewable.