Our World, Our Future
The Sustainability Plan for the University at Albany
2020-2023
Message From The Co-Chairs

We are united in our concern over the impacts of climate change and ecological degradation on our planet and global health. The inequitable impacts of these conditions are distressing. Now is the time, in this UN Decade of Action, to create systemic constructs that are in line with nature.

Since forming an Environmental Sustainability Task Force in 2005, the University at Albany has been progressively implementing academic and operational initiatives to address the challenges we face. *Our World, Our Future* was developed by four working groups: Curriculum and Access, Operations, Research and Advancement, and Engagement and Planning.
From the opening launch, through several working group meetings and a final summit, over 100 campus members contributed to the plan contents. We synthesized all of the ideas into six main goals and crafted our draft plan. We then embarked on presentations to campus groups throughout the fall of 2019 for further feedback before presenting to the President's Executive Council, culminating in the plan’s adoption in April of 2020.

Despite the daunting challenges we face, we are inspired by the way our community came together to chart a path for a more sustainable future and we look forward to the impact we will make as we turn our ideas into action.
New York State Commits to Sustainability

The University at Albany is part of the State University of New York (SUNY), the nation’s largest comprehensive public system of higher education. The SUNY System and NYS have partnered to create the most aggressive climate goals in the United States including a targeted 40% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2030 and 85% by 2050 and 100% carbon free sourced electricity by 2040 while ensuring that our investments in a green economy are just and equitable.

Our World, Our Future brings together the elements of our campus strategic plan: facilitating STUDENT SUCCESS by focusing on our student’s ecological literacy, conducting innovative and impactful sustainability RESEARCH, embracing DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION by creating equal access to opportunities, facilities and resources, fostering INTERNATIONALIZATION through our advocacy of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and participating in global efforts and conducting ENGAGEMENT and SERVICE activities that support the sustainability efforts in the community.
Our sustainability efforts were established under this guiding principle:

"As a public higher education institution, the University at Albany has both an obligation and an opportunity to be a leader in environmental sustainability. Our institution can and should serve as a model for other colleges and universities as well as for our own students and the community around us."

Our Sustainability Mission

To serve the common good by ensuring that our campus works collaboratively to foster a culture of sustainability, embody the UN Global Goals, support our regional ecosystem, model sustainable development and create a sustainable way of life on Earth.

Our Sustainability Vision

The University at Albany is a model of sustainability in public higher education.
Our World

Sustainability entails recognizing one's membership in the broader social and ecological community, exhibiting appreciation of and respect for others and the natural world, and acting justly to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of human communities and natural systems. At UAlbany, this translates into supporting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) created by the United Nations. These goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote well-being while protecting the planet.

*Our World, Our Future* embodies the phrase Think Globally, Act Locally by incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals alongside components of state and regional plans to identify actions our campus can take to address the sustainability challenges we face today.
Our Future

The University at Albany has identified six goals around which we will structure our actions:

• Develop students' **Ecological Literacy**;
• Conduct **Impactful Research** to forward knowledge;
• Ensure **Equal Access** to facilities and opportunities;
• Contribute to **Community Leadership** on sustainability issues in the region, nation, and world;
• Align our infrastructure to meet **Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resiliency** goals of the state;
• Create a **Culture of Sustainability** that embodies practices that lead to a sustainable way of life for people and the planet.
Our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see.
~ Elijah Cummings
Goal 1: Ecological Literacy

Prepare UAlbany students to address 21st century sustainability challenges by integrating ecological literacy and the UN Global Goals into the curricular and co-curricular experience.

1. Increase the number of students receiving sustainability instruction and participating in programming by 10% annually.
2. Establish a Faculty Learning Community with a minimum of 20 members working to incorporate the UN Global Goals into their curriculum and assessing students’ ecological literacy.
3. Expand student leadership and career development opportunities in sustainability and engage an average of 300 students annually.

Lead entities: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs

Sample Metrics: Number of students graduating from a program that has sustainability related learning objectives • Number of students who complete a sustainability/ecological literacy assessment • Number of students enrolled in the minor • Number of students enrolled in sustainability related/focused courses • Number of students attending sustainability themed programming and events • Number of faculty participating in learning community • Number of new sustainability-related/focus courses developed • Number of students participating in the sustainability leadership opportunities • Number of career opportunities made available to students • Evaluations of students participating in programs

Aspirational Goal for 2030: All UAlbany students graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary to address the 21st century sustainability challenges in both their personal and professional lives.
How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

~ Anne Frank
Goal 2: Impactful Research

Enhance our current sustainability research strengths and increase the number of faculty and students participating in organized research specific to the UN Global Goals.

1. Increase the number of faculty and departments participating in organized research related to the UN Global Goals to 20% of faculty and 75% of department.
2. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a sustainability research institute focused on the UN Global Goals
3.Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students engaged in sustainability-related research and receiving externally funded scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships by 10%.

Lead entities: Academic Affairs, Division of Research

Sample Metrics: Number of faculty and departments identified as conducting research related to sustainability and the UN Global goals • Number of opportunities that are offered to students in an academic year • Number of students participating in sustainability related research projects

Aspirational Goal for 2030: Be recognized as a leader in innovative interdisciplinary sustainability organized research focused on the UN Global Goals.
When everyone is included, everyone wins.
~Jesse Jackson
Goal 3: Equal Access

Foster an inclusive learning environment through equity and eliminate physical and financial barriers in our curricular and co-curricular opportunities

1. Advance the **environmental justice collaborative**.
2. Increase the **diversity composition** of people involved in teaching, research, operations and administrative programs to reflect the composition of the undergraduate population and continue to assess and monitor the campus cultural competency.
3. Track participation in the **financial aid programs available** for low and middle income families and no-cost services available.
4. Employ practices that address the **accessibility needs of all community members** in our campus buildings, operational procedures and teaching methodologies.

Lead entities: Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, Student Affairs, Office of Diversity & Inclusion

**Sample metrics:** Number participating in collaborative ●Campus climate survey results ● Faculty, student and staff diversity composition ● Number of students participating in programs providing free goods/services ● Number of faculty using Open Educational Resources in their courses ● University ranking on the CollegeNET's Social Mobility Index Actions ● Number of Blackboard courses compliant with the ADA requirements ● Percentage of campus purchases from minority and women owned businesses

**Aspirational Goal for 2030:** Enable individuals to pursue learning, research, service and well-being regardless of economic, societal, or physical factors, and to value diversity of all forms and the rights, dignity, and perspectives of all.
If you want to travel fast, go alone.
If you want to travel far, go together.
~ African Proverb
Goal 4: Community Leadership

Cultivate and strengthen community partnerships focused on the UN Global Goals and communicate UAlbany’s sustainability story to recruit and engage students, faculty, and staff.

1. Increase the participation of our subject matter experts in sustainability-related associations and groups to advocate for and participate in activities that advance the UN Global Goals.
2. Create avenues for students to engage in coordinated sustainability-related efforts at the local, regional, national and international level.
3. Incorporate alumni and the Capital District community in campus sustainability activities and increase external financial support by 20%.
4. Integrate sustainability in the campus brand, marketing, and communication strategies to increase awareness and recruit students, faculty and staff.

Lead entities: Finance and Administration, Government and Community Relations, University Advancement, Student Affairs

Sample metrics: Participation in regional, national and international partnerships focused on sustainability ● Number of students participating in sustainability related community engagement and service-learning activities ● Number of students enrolled in sustainability themed education abroad opportunities ● Number of alumni participating in activities ● Amount of donations to sustainability fund ● Number of corporate/foundation sponsorship opportunities developed ● Number of programs that are marketed with using the UN Global Goals ● Number of internal/external stories and University account social media posts on sustainability

Aspirational Goal for 2030: The University at Albany is regarded as the premier community partner in sustainability. As a leader in the field, students will seek to study in our institution.
We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.
~ Native American Proverb
Goal 5: Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resiliency

Reduce our overall carbon emissions by 10% from fiscal year 2017-2018 levels and develop a contingency plan for threats posed by climate change.

1. **Reduce campus energy** use by 20%.
2. **Source 30% of our electricity** from on- and off-site renewable energy systems and develop a roadmap for a **non-carbon heating source** for our buildings.
3. Develop a **contingency plan** related to emergencies and operational challenges posed by **climate change** in the Capital Region.
4. **Reduce carbon emissions** from the **campus owned fleet and equipment** by 10%.
5. **Reduce carbon emissions** from the **waste generated** on campus by 10%.
6. **Reduce carbon emissions** from **water use, food purchases, commuting** and university related **travel** by 5%.

Lead entity: Finance and Administration; sustainable practices by the rest of campus

Sample metrics: ● Greenhouse gas emissions ● Amount of expenditures on utilities ● Percentage of EPEAT computer equipment purchased ● Amount of renewable energy generated ● Amount of expenditures on gas and diesel ● Amount of waste sent to landfill ● Percentage of waste diverted from landfill ● Percentage of local, sustainable and plant-based food purchased ● Amount of waste sent to landfill ● Percentage of waste diverted from landfill ● Amount of University-related travel in miles ● Expenditures on water

**Aspirational Goal for 2030:** Reduce carbon emissions by 40% from the University fiscal year 2017-2018 levels, source 100 percent of electricity from zero-net carbon sources and divert 100% of our food waste from the landfill.
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

~ Margaret Mead
Goal 6: Culture of Sustainability

*Institutionalize administrative processes, governance practices and social networks that will steward the planet and support well-being in campus operations and services.*

1. **Increase** the number of students, faculty, and staff engaged in **environmentally responsible practices** and behaviors that align with the UN Global Goals by 20%.
2. Establish a **Sustainability Advisory Council**.
3. Create **professional development opportunities** related to sustainability.
4. Adopt **investment practices** that align with the University’s environmental and socially responsible operations while maximizing financial gain.
5. Incorporate strategies that promote the **health and well-being** of our campus **community** and the **environment**.

Lead entities: President’s Office, Academic Affairs, Research, Finance and Administration, Government and Community Relations, Student Affairs, Advancement, Diversity & Inclusion, Athletics

**Sample metrics:** Number of employees and students participating in a peer-to-peer outreach program • Number of offices that are Green Workspace certified • Percentage of recycled office and janitorial paper and green cleaning supplies purchased • Results of campus sustainability culture assessment • Performance in sustainability rankings • Percentage of staff participating in sustainability professional development • Percentage of direct investment in fossil fuel companies • Percentage of investments in socially/environmentally responsible funds • Campus area managed under an integrated pest management program

**Aspirational Goal for 2030:** Sustainable practices are the standard operating procedures and all campus members engage in a culture that reinforces sustainability as a core University value.
Our World, Our Future

"We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change."

~ Mahatma Gandhi

We must all come together and emulate the concept of “be the change you want to see in the world” inspired by Gandhi’s words. Only then can we fully embody our university values.

• ACCESS: To enable individuals to pursue learning, research, and service regardless of economic, societal, or physical factors.
• INTEGRITY: To be committed to - and expect from all - honesty, transparency, and accountability.
• INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE: To value diversity of all forms, academic freedom, and the rights, dignity, and perspectives of all individuals.
• COMMON GOOD: To work collectively and collaboratively to benefit our communities - and create a sustainable way of life on Earth.
Our World, Our Future Plan Participants

Thank you to all the campus members who contributed to the formation of this plan and especially those that participated in our working groups.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Zakhar Berkovich, Director of Undergraduate Student Services, Rockefeller College
Indu, Energy Officer
Mary Ellen Mallia, Director of Sustainability
Meghan Popcun, Assistant Director, Student Activities and Orientation
Dylan Card, Graduate Assistant
Brad Hershenson, Graduate Assistant
Rayna Orsino, Undergraduate Intern
# Our World, Our Future Plan Participants

**CURRICULUM AND ACCESS COMMITTEE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chair</strong></th>
<th><strong>Members</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zakhar Berkovich, Director</td>
<td>Steven Doellefeld, <em>Institutional Research</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Undergraduate Student Services,</em> Rockefeller College</td>
<td>Ron Friedman, <em>Psychology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelby Giaccarni, <em>Registrar</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irina Holden, <em>Science Library</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Krzykowski, <em>Student Engagement</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jim Mower, <em>Geography</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Penny Ng, <em>School of Education</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kendra Smith-Howard <em>History</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chair</strong></th>
<th><strong>Members</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indu, <em>Energy Officer</em></td>
<td>Jeff Kurto, <em>Sodexo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jason Jones, <em>Parking and Mass Transit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andriana LaMendola, <em>Undergraduate student</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve Lampedusa, <em>Mail Services/Rapid Copy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carly Lindsay, <em>Undergraduate student</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dave Mason, <em>Accounting</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brent Meredith, <em>Grounds</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Errol Millington, <em>Campus Planning</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jay Minkler, <em>AECM</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jessica Moran, <em>Life Sciences</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Randy Olocki, <em>AECM</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russell Patterson, <em>Campus Center Management</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve Pearse, <em>University Auxiliary Services</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Recore-Migirditch, <em>University Libraries</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen Reinhold, <em>Mathematics and Statistics</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stacy Stern, <em>Facilities Management</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pete Spoor, <em>Physical Plant</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Townsend, <em>Residential Life</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mike Vadney, <em>Physical Plant</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dave VanVranken, <em>Facilities Management</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roxanne Welch, <em>Sodexo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cara White, <em>Athletics</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Zelenak, <em>Information Technology Services</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>AECM = Architecture, Engineering and Construction Management</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.
~ Chinese Proverb