

The University of North Carolina Policy on Sustainability

A proposed policy was presented to the August Budget and Finance Committee outlining sustainable practices to meet the UNC Tomorrow Commission's recommendation that the University of North Carolina assume a leadership role in addressing the state's environmental challenges. The practices, identified by the Sustainability Committee, would be applied to eight specific areas:

- Systematic Integration of Sustainability Principles
- Master Planning
- Design and Construction
- Operations and Maintenance
- Transportation
- Recycling and Waste Management
- Climate Change Mitigation and Renewable Energy
- Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)

In accordance with the Board's procedures, the policy was presented for review at the August meeting and is now presented for approval. Pursuant to the Board of Governors' guidelines, the policy will be presented to the Board at its October meeting for final consideration.

It is recommended that the Committee on Budget and Finance approve the policy which identifies the sustainable practices to be implemented.

Proposed Sustainability Policy

The University of North Carolina (“The University”) is committed to leading the State of North Carolina as an environmental steward that endeavors to proactively and effectively manage its impact on energy, water and other natural resources. Further, The University is obligated to ensure full compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal environmental laws and regulations. Therefore, it is the policy of The University’s Board of Governors (“The Board”) that The University, including General Administration, the constituent institutions, and affiliated entities, shall establish sustainable development and resource management, or “sustainability” as a core value of institutional operations, planning, capital construction, and purchasing practices.

Budgetary constraints, capital improvement and modernization requirements, and training and management needs required to facilitate the implementation of these sustainable practices are limiting factors and, as such, the University’s General Administration, in collaboration with the constituent institutions and affiliated entities, shall pursue the appropriate enabling legislation and funding to implement this policy. The Board recognizes that the goals of this policy range from short-term to long-term and adds further emphasis on the importance of the aspirational nature of the highest ideals of sustainability. In addition, the Board values Return on Investment (ROI) as a factor in institutional resource planning and decision making and requires an ROI calculation for any new project.

The Board delegates authority to the President to implement the following sustainable practices to apply to each constituent institution and, when appropriate, General Administration and affiliated entities;

Systematic Integration of Sustainability Principles: Systematically incorporate sustainability throughout the institution by integrating the policy goals into the institution’s processes, administration, teaching, research, and engagement.

Master Planning: Sustainability principles related to infrastructure, natural resources, site development, and community impact shall be incorporated into comprehensive master plans.

Design and Construction: Capital project planning and construction processes shall meet statutory energy and water efficiency requirements and deliver energy, water, and materials efficient buildings and grounds that minimize the impact on and/or enhance the site and provide good indoor environmental quality for occupants.

Operations and Maintenance: The operation and maintenance of buildings and grounds shall meet or exceed statutory requirements to reduce energy and water use, provide excellent air quality and comfort, improve productivity of faculty, staff and students, and minimize materials use. Further, priority shall be given to the purchase and installation of high-efficiency equipment and facilities as part of an ongoing sustainability action plan following life cycle cost guidelines where applicable.

Climate Change Mitigation and Renewable Energy: The University shall develop a plan to become carbon neutral as soon as practicable and by 2050 at the latest, with an ultimate goal of climate neutrality.

Transportation: The University shall develop and implement a comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan designed to reduce carbon emissions and dependency on single occupant vehicles.

Recycling and Waste Management: The University shall develop policies and programs that work toward achieving zero waste.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP): Any purchasing shall, to the extent practicable, improve the environmental performance of its supply chain with consideration given to toxicity, recycled content, energy and water efficiency, rapidly renewable resources, and local production and shall also improve the social performance of its supply chain with consideration given to working conditions and historically underutilized businesses.

The President shall develop and implement best practices, guidelines, and implementation plans necessary to achieve the goals of this policy to the constituent institutions and affiliated entities. This policy shall be reviewed every two (2) years by the President, and any necessary revisions and modifications shall be recommended to the Board of Governors for their consideration.