

# Environmental Sustainability at the University of West Florida

Approved by Faculty Senate  
May 9, 2008

**Purpose and Overview:** Throughout the nation, college and university campuses are embracing sustainability goals to ensure the environmental stewardship, health and maintenance of facilities and business processes to include campus energy use, landscapes, food service and waste streams. Sustainability means supporting development and lifestyles within campuses, communities, regions and countries that “meets the needs of the current needs of UWF are without compromising the mission, longevity and prosperity of the institution or the ability to meet their future needs. Sustainability takes into account the long-term view that recognizes the interactions between the environment and its ecosystems, human society and economic activities. Sustainability is not an end, but a process that must involve active participation by students, administrators, staff and faculty to become better stewards of our campus and community environment.

The University of West Florida, a U.S. Green Building Council Member, has begun to address sustainability and has undertaken several ongoing initiatives in support of that goal. The institution has an opportunity and an obligation to exercise leadership in promoting and reinforcing environmental responsibility by integrating the ethical, social, economic and ecological values of environmentally sustainable development into institutional policy and practice.

## **Sustainability Initiatives**

- Design and Construction (L.E.E.D., energy efficiency, durability, sustainable land use)
- Energy (reduced use of electricity, and natural gas consumption)
- Grounds and Land Use (use of plants, irrigation methods, reduce water run off & reduce chemical use)
- Hazardous Materials (printer toner cartridges, fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts; electronics).
- Operations (custodial cleaning chemicals).
- Purchasing (commodity office supply program; printing paper)
- Recycling (increase as economically feasible and include campus awareness and participation food service and waste stream sustainability initiatives)
- Transportation/Parking (on-campus shuttle, Park & Ride locations, increase bike paths)
- Water (irrigation methods and sensible usage)

UWF has an obligation to operate in a manner that is ecologically and socially sound, within available economic resources. We will act in a sustainable manner when planning for and developing operational decisions with these initiatives:

1. **Design and Construction:** The Campus Master Plan (CMP) recognizes the need for facilities and services to support the academic, research, and housing communities of UWF. Through the implementation of the CMP, a well-planned University physical environment will support and enhance the academic and co-curricular excellence, social responsibility, personal growth, and educational opportunities at our great University. The University has recognized the importance of incorporating high performance design standards when constructing buildings to comprehensively address environmental impact and energy efficiency. The University’s “Building Design and Construction Standards” includes a minimum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (L.E.E.D.) Silver Certification rating for new construction. The U.S. Green Building Council has developed L.E.E.D. standards for new commercial, renovation of existing buildings, and residential construction. The standard encourages the creative use of resources available to produce sustainable buildings.
2. **Energy Consumption Program:** The campus initiated energy saving projects beginning in 2002, and developed a formal “Energy Consumption Program,” in 2006 that reduced electricity consumption <http://uwf.edu/facservices/SOP/FM6.001.pdf> and <http://www.uwf.edu/president/announcements/>. There is a

myriad of both high and low tech ways to reduce campus energy use, limited only by the availability of funds. The most economically sound way to use green power is to first ensure that our campus has achieved a high level of energy efficiency. Reducing energy consumption through high efficiency will lead to reductions of green house gas produced and reducing operating costs. Significant reductions of energy consumption can be achieved by the use of both high and low tech strategies. High-tech solutions involve ensuring that all equipment purchased is ENERGY STAR certified. The University of West Florida has replaced most incandescent lighting with florescent lighting. Low tech strategies can be just as effective. New construction and selected component replacement ensure that a buildings envelope is properly insulated in order to reduce the energy required for cooling and heating. We have a prioritized replacement plan to ensure that all windows and doors are properly weatherized and sealed. Small cracks in weather stripping can lead to substantially higher energy consumption.

3. **Grounds and Land Use:** The University of West Florida will continue preserving green spaces and existing native foliage where possible. When landscaping the campus, plant species that are indigenous to the area will continue to be planted. These species promote the integrity of the local ecosystem and require little or no watering as they are adapted to local climate conditions.
4. **Hazardous Materials:** UWF will continue to ensure the university community is well aware of any potential hazards posed by materials used on campus. We will continue to educate all employees who may need to handle toxins. The institution will take steps to ensure that the campus understands how to properly dispose of these materials that may prevent unnecessary and costly retroactive measures to correct problems.
5. **Purchasing:** UWF will continue purchasing more efficient technologies. To further reduce environmental impact UWF has begun an “Environmentally Friendly/Green Purchasing” initiative to procure environmentally friendly products. The campus currently purchases 100 percent recycled-content paper and paper manufactured with the best available technologies for environmental sustainability. The institution will use plant derived inks and glues to lessen impacts on the environment. **Example** – Install low VOC carpeting to reduce the amount of indoor air pollution that can make a more enjoyable work environment.
6. **Recycling:** The University of West Florida will try to further reduce waste output. Whenever a department or residence hall has a higher than average waste contribution, the cause will be determined. The university currently recycles corrugated cardboard, aluminum, steel, and a variety of mixed paper such as: white paper, color paper, magazines, catalogs, paper bags, phone books, shredded paper, junk mail, electronics, oil filters, batteries, folders. The Escambia County Department of Solid Waste Management provides labeled Truck Roll-off Containers at two (2) locations on the UWF campus, near the UWF Water Tower and near Martin Hall. UWF has retained a recycling consultant to identify new opportunities for recycled materials. Their fee will be based upon a percentage of recycled materials that will avoid placement in a landfill.
7. **Transportation and Parking:** Carpooling and use of bicycles are encouraged to minimize emissions and save money. Parking and Transportation Services encourages parking at a remote site and riding the trolley. Bike racks are located throughout campus. Additionally, the Trolley has a bike rack for your convenience. The current Trolley is bio-diesel powered. Conversion to natural gas has not been affordable by the transit contractor. The Trolley Service experiment will be evaluated for continuation.
8. **Water:** Sustainable technology on campus gives real meaning to best practice when focusing on a sustainable campus. Dripping faucets can waste a lot of water. Campus users should contact the Facilities Management Work Control Desk at extension 6000 to report leaks.

### **University Sustainability Guiding Principles:**

The best steps taken to an approach to sustainability that addresses challenges at the source is “the cultural practice of sustainability,” the university which is about creating new ways to study, teach, perform research, live and prosper while ensuring an equitable, healthy future for all people and the planet.

Sustainability is defined as meeting our current needs in ways that ensures future generations can also meet theirs needs. It is about living intelligently and paying greater attention to our decisions affecting the environment. Based on this definition the university has established these Guiding Principles, limited only by the availability of funds:

1. The institution will set an example of environmental responsibility by establishing and/or improving practices of resource conservation, recycling, waste reduction, and environmentally sound operations. The institution will look “upstream” to solve “downstream” problems, look for interconnection, and try to understand a solution’s impact on the ecological system at large.
2. The campus is a place where lifelong relationships are established, ideas are tested, and learning is inspired. A beautiful, safe, and accessible campus is indispensable in the building of a common sense of place and enthusiasm for learning. We will establish a comprehensive plan to improve and expand our university facilities keeping mindful of our responsibility to environmental sustainability and campus safety. Design, Construction, Operations, and Maintenance functions will promote long lasting, cost effective and socially and environmentally responsible solutions within resource availability to foster sustainability solutions reflecting the core values of the university.
3. The university realizes sustainability is a journey and will take time to become more sustainable. The institution benchmark Best Practices with national governmental and environmental organizations to promote efforts toward a sustainable future.
4. The institution will acknowledge accomplishments along the path toward sustainability, externally as well as internally, giving life to programs through publicly that celebrates progress.
5. The institution will recognize that solutions will come from the passion and creativity through a collaborative effort from all our people.

**Environmental Conservation and Beautification Committee (Subcommittee of Facilities Planning Committee):**

It is envisioned this Committee will include this topic within a modified Charter and responsibilities.

**Website Links:**

1. [EPA Environmentally Preferred Purchasing](#)
2. [EPEAT – Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool](#)
3. [Green Building Council \(LEED\)](#)
4. [Responsible Purchasing Network](#)
5. [Green Building](#) – P2 Links
6. <http://uwf.edu/facservices/SOP/FM6.001.pdf> - Current UWF Energy Standard Operating Procedures
7. <http://www.uwf.edu/president/announcements/> - January, 2006
8. <http://uwf.edu/procurement/RecycledProducts.html> - Environmentally Friendly/Green Purchasing