

Sonoma State University

Resolution on the Establishment of Structure to Support Sustainability Efforts (4/26/12)

Resolved that the Academic Senate of Sonoma State University endorse the attached Sustainability Structure Recommendations forwarded by the Sustainability Work Group and the Structure and Functions Subcommittee; and

Resolved that the Academic Senate instruct the Chair of the Faculty to engage with the Presidents of the University and Associated Students to establish the Sustainability Executive Committee described in the recommendations and to request the designation of a Sustainability Director.

SSU Sustainability Structure Recommendations

The SSU Sustainability Work Group (SWG) has met as an ad-hoc effort since approximately 2006. In February, 2008, the SSU Academic Senate approved a resolution, Sustainability at Sonoma State University, which called on the Structure and Functions subcommittee “to explore the appropriateness of, and charge to, a Committee on Sustainability,” and charged the SWG to continue to function in the interim.

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined Sustainable Development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Today, the sustainability of an organization is assessed on economic, environmental, and social criteria, together constituting a “comprehensive set of criteria for evaluating the development of organizations and societies – economically, ecologically and socially” (UNEP, 2011, Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication).

SWG discussions have reinforced the need for more formal support on campus to advance sustainability goals identified in SSU strategic plans. To facilitate and coordinate these efforts, the SWG and the Structure and Functions subcommittee recommend a two-part structure, consisting of a Sustainability Director and an Executive Committee for the SWG. Specifically, the SWG recommends that:

1) SSU designate a Sustainability Director who is responsible for:

- serving as a primary SSU contact for long-term or complex sustainability initiatives, including coordination with community partners
- convening, working with, and undertaking priorities of a Sustainability Executive Committee (see below)

- keeping track of, communicating, and advertising sustainability activities on campus fostering cross-school curriculum needed to address sustainability issues
- encouraging, soliciting and enhancing active participation among students, faculty, staff, and community partners in achieving sustainability goals
- seeking external funding for priority initiatives
- collaborating with diversity and community engagement initiatives.

The Sustainability Director should report to the Provost, in order to enhance coordination with the Director of Diversity and Inclusive Excellence and of the Center for Community Engagement.

The nature of this position—faculty release, or staff or administrator assignment—is an administrative decision. At a minimum, a four-unit faculty assignment or .33 staff appointment would be necessary to begin to address the responsibilities above. Sustainability is a very fundable goal right now, and it is likely that grant funds could contribute to the position.

2) SSU establish a Sustainability Executive Committee (SEC). The Executive Committee shall initially be convened by the Sustainability Director, and shall be co-chartered by the President of SSU, the Academic Senate, and the Associated Students Senate.

The responsibilities of the Sustainability Executive Committee are to:

- provide recommendations to all campus units with regards to goals, priorities and opportunities for sustainability activities and initiatives at SSU (faculty members of the SEC have authority to forward recommendations for Academic Senate action through the Academic Planning Committee)
- coordinate sustainability initiatives that engage academics, facilities, and co-curricular programs
- support faculty, students and staff interested in undertaking sustainability projects
- seek funding, and implement projects to achieve sustainability goals in accordance with the SSU strategic plan
- convene working groups (with representation of individuals outside the committee) to undertake needed reports, summaries and investigations in the area of sustainability.

Executive Committee Membership:

OPERATIONS

1. Facilities Director
2. One of the Directors in Enterprises, Purchasing, and Police & Parking Services (appointed by the President)

CO-CURRICULAR

3. Associated Students representative, appointed by AS Senate
4. Campus Life Member: Rotating or elected member from Directors Residential Life, Campus Rec, Health Center, SAEM (appointed by the President)

ACADEMICS

5. Executive Committee Member (appointed by Academic Senate Executive Committee)
6. Faculty member with expertise in curriculum development (appointed by Academic Senate Executive Committee)
7. Chair of Department of Environmental Studies and Planning or designee:

ADDITIONAL KEY POSITIONS

8. Director of Sustainability
9. Director of the Center for Community Engagement
10. Senate Subcommittee on Diversity:
11. Director of SSU Field Stations and Preserves :