



UVU Sustainability Plan

25 goals for 2025

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Executive Summary

This Sustainability Plan was written at the direction of President Astrid Tuminez to build on the framework for sustainability at UVU established by the 2018 Faculty Senate Resolution. The main goal in developing this plan was to lay out actionable short-term goals for sustainability at UVU and to frame sustainability within the existing institutional mission, values, and objectives.

In the past UVU's sustainability efforts have been primarily focused on the issues of recycling and energy efficiency. These issues are both critical to sustainability but are only part of the sustainability picture. UVU has made great progress with its electricity efficiency and electricity sourcing with a steady decrease in consumption, despite the University's growing size, and a projected 90% renewable electricity profile by 2023. But even with these successes it is not time to sit back and congratulate ourselves, it is time for UVU to challenge ourselves to tackle sustainability holistically and progress past this limited scope approach to sustainability.

This new Sustainability Plan lays out actionable short-term goals for that will enhance sustainability at UVU through operations, transportation, nature and ecosystems, culture and learning, and community. Each of these five categories has five goals for a total of twenty-five goals. Each goal has several associated action items and tracking metrics.

The goals proposed in this plan will set UVU on the course towards being a holistically sustainable university. These goals broadly align with what other universities, nationally and within Utah, are doing for sustainability and with the Association for Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) framework. By adopting this plan UVU will start down the path towards achieve STARS certification and calling some of the top performing sustainable universities our peers.

After adoption of this plan, implementation for some goals can start immediately while other goals may require further planning. The actions set out in this plan lay the groundwork for UVU to holistically address sustainability now and into the future. This plan will serve as a central touch stone for the various sustainability actions being take across UVU's campuses and departments allowing for collaboration and emphasizing the systems approach necessary for tackling sustainability and the climate crisis successfully.

Letter from the President

Introduction

UVU's historic sustainability efforts have been primarily focused on energy efficiency and recycling. While these are both important issues, they alone do not make for a comprehensive sustainability strategy. UVU has made great achievements in energy efficiency and acquisition of clean energy. The campus has seen steady declines in electricity consumption, despite increasing campus size, and, thanks to a recently signed solar agreement, expects to achieve over 90% renewable electricity by 2023. Development and adoption of a Sustainability Plan is the next step towards establishing Utah Valley University as a holistically sustainable university.

Utah Valley University is committed to educating our students for “success in work and life through excellence in engaged teaching, services, and scholarship.” As the issue of sustainability becomes a more prominent issue in the 21st century UVU has the opportunity to prepare our students to rise to this challenge. Preparing our students to face this challenge is supported by our core values of Exceptional Care, Exceptional Results, and Exceptional Accountability which support sustainability as follows:

- **Exceptional Care:** Utah Valley University is committed to caring for the success of our students and the well-being of our faculty, staff, and community stakeholders, without compromising the well-being of future generations and global communities.
- **Exceptional Results:** Utah Valley University aspires to be a sustainability leader in Utah. The challenge of sustainability is an opportunity for our students and our communities.
- **Exceptional Accountability:** Utah Valley University is committed to exemplifying sustainability in our practices, policies, and structures, using resources responsibly and reducing our carbon footprint, even as we continue to grow.

From these core values Utah Valley University derives our action commitments as outlined in Vision 2030: Include, Engage, and Achieve. Just as UVU's core values can be framed to support sustainability our action commitments can support sustainability as follows:

- **Include:** Utah Valley University is committed to balancing ecological values with other values such as inclusion, access, and educational success.
- **Engage:** Utah Valley University is committed to facilitating sustainability projects that directly impact local communities and foster cooperation between students, community stakeholders, faculty, and staff on sustainability-related projects and practices
- **Achieve:** Utah Valley University is committed to preparing all our students for the challenges of the 21st century. Sustainability literacy is an essential part of this.

Planning Approach

This plan was developed at the direction of UVU President Astrid Tuminez. President Tuminez requested an actionable plan with short term (3- to 4-year goals) with input from the Sustainability Coordinator, faculty, and community stakeholders. The Sustainability Plan writing team was composed as follows (listed in alphabetical order):

- Sarah Bateman (Sustainability Specialist and Chair of Utah County Sustainability Coalition)
- Thomas Bretz (Environmental Studies Program Coordinator and Sustainability Committee Co-Chair)

- Hillary Hungerford (Environmental Studies Program Coordinator, Faculty Senate President (2021-2023), and Sustainability Committee Co-Chair)
- Genevieve Richards (Sustainability Coordinator and Sustainability Committee Co-Chair).

In addition to the writing team being primarily composed of Sustainability Committee leadership, the plan was developed with input and feedback from the Sustainability Committee. The Sustainability Committee consists of students, faculty, and staff that are interested broadly in sustainability across campus. Within the larger Committee there are subgroups that focus on specific issues (Water Conservation, Waste Reduction, Community and Native Gardens, Bicycle Friendly University, Tree Campus, and Carbon Neutrality). Each subgroup proposed goals, often based on previous discussions within the Sustainability Committee, which were then integrated into this document by the writing team.

In addition to soliciting input from sustainability stakeholders at UVU the writing team also performed a literature review of other universities' sustainability planning documents and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking and Ranking System (STARS) framework. This review gave the writing team a starting point in terms of how to structure the plan, overarching themes/categories to include, and specific goals or actions that the team or subgroups may have missed.

The writing team organized goals into five broad categories: Operations, Transportation, Nature and Ecosystems, Culture and Learning, and Community. These categories were selected to unify groups of goals thematically and to communicate the truly broad nature of sustainability in a higher education context.



1 Operations

As Utah Valley University looks to the future, operating, maintaining, enhancing, and expanding facilities sustainably at our 228-acre main campus and numerous satellite campuses is key to achieving our goals. Running and maintaining a campus is an energy- and resource-intensive task; by taking a sustainable approach UVU will mitigate our environmental impact and honor our resources.

Goals

1.1 Plan for Carbon Neutrality

Action Items:

- Develop a comprehensive plan to achieve carbon neutrality, engaging stakeholders from across the university and community
- Include regular re-targeting into Carbon Neutral Plan
- Begin process of campus electrification, starting with identifying opportunities in FY23 projects
- Develop training course on sustainable travel for business and education by 2022

- See goals 2.1-2.5 for transportation related goals and actions

Tracking:

- Publish actionable Carbon Neutral Plan by 2024
- Publish annual Greenhouse Gas Reports

1.2 Invest in Energy Efficiency Projects

Action Items:

- Expand campus internal energy metering to cover all owned and/or operated buildings for applicable energy streams by 2023

- Continue to work with our energy suppliers to identify opportunities for energy savings
- Develop a financial structure to re-invest energy incentives and utility bill savings into energy saving projects by 2022

Tracking:

- Collect energy consumption data from all energy streams at building and campus level
- Track energy savings (actual energy and energy costs) from energy saving projects

1.3 Commit to Sustainable Building Practices

Action Items:

- Prioritize adaptive reuse over new construction
- Integrate sustainability into every phase of projects from infrastructure applications and review to operations and maintenance
- Adopt Utah High Performance Building Standards on projects other than capital development as applicable
- Develop plan for metering indoor water use by 2023

Tracking:

- Collect data on Energy Use Intensity on a building-by-building basis
- Collect data on interior water use on a building-by-building basis

1.4 Reduce Waste

Action Items:

- Complete a waste audit to determine the makeup of UVU's waste stream by 2023
- Use waste audit results to communicate the state of waste at UVU and prioritize areas for action by 2024
- Assess options for implementing recycling at non-Orem campuses
- Develop training course on recycling for all new employees and students by 2022

Tracking:

- Collect data for hauled weight and contamination rates of waste streams

1.5 Partner with Vendors to Promote Sustainability

Action Items:

- Encourage food vendors to offer sustainable packaging and/or develop a program to incentivize students to use reusables or select vendors that already do during contract renegotiations or RFP process
- Work with vending machine vendors to optimize number of vending machines on campus
- Work with beverage vendor to reduce proportion of containers with low recyclability

Tracking:

- Collect data on beverage vending machine sales by packaging type



2 Transportation

Utah Valley University offers no on-campus housing making transportation critical not only to sustainability but also accessibility. As UVU and the surrounding metropolitan area continue to grow, UVU, along with our partners, will need to develop transportation options that are low-cost, low- or no-emission, and that reduce congestion.

Goals

2.1 Increase UTA Ridership

Action Items:

- Work with UTA and local governments to develop routes and transportation modes that meet the needs of the UVU community
- Investigate feasibility and possible options for changing parking permit cost structure to incentivize UTA ridership

Tracking:

- Collect Tap On, Tap Off data for UVU associated electronic fare cards
- Track parking lot utilization

2.2 Achieve Bicycle Friendly University Status

Action Items:

- Submit initial BFU application for review by 2022
- Develop plan to improve bicycle friendliness of UVU based on results of BFU application by 2023

- Improve process for communicating pedestrian route disruption from construction
- Work with SLWC to investigate options for bicycle commuters to have access to showers and locker space
- Investigate feasibility and possible options for changing parking permit cost structure to incentivize bicycle commuting

Tracking:

- Consider using a cellular GPS data aggregating service to track bicycle commuting to and from campus
- Track bike parking utilization
- Track parking lot utilization

2.3 Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure

Action Items:

- Complete UVU’s exterior sidewalk network such that all parts of main campus are accessible easily, safely, and intuitively by foot or mobility assistance device
- Improve process for communicating pedestrian route disruption from construction
- Investigate feasibility and possible options for changing parking permit cost structure to incentivize active transportation

Tracking:

- Consider using a cellular GPS data aggregating service to track active transportation commuting to and from campus
- Track parking lot utilization

2.4 Expand Electric Vehicle Charging Capacity

Action Items:

- Ensure at least one charging station is available at each satellite campus (excluding CRFS)
- Enforce turnover by using available features from ChargePoint by 2022
- Maximize installations by seeking grants and incentives to reduce funding burden

Tracking:

- Track usage via ChargePoint

2.5 Reduce UVU Owned Fleet Emissions

Action Items:

- Explore and test electric options for UVU Aviation Science instructional fleet
- Conduct assessment of UVU road vehicle fleet focusing on opportunities for rightsizing and electrification by 2023
- Conduct assessment of UVU utility vehicle, low-speed vehicle, and golf cart fleet focusing on opportunities for rightsizing and electrification by 2023
- Investigate options to mitigate idling in fleet vehicles
- Make new UVU fleet purchases in compliance with Energy Policy Act (EPA Act) guidelines (75% use Alternative Fuel)

Tracking:

- Track UVU fleet fuel consumption by fuel and vehicle type
- Track MPG trends on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis



3 Nature and Ecosystems

UVU’s campuses contribute to the larger, interconnected ecosystems where we are located. How we design our landscapes and the choices we make have lasting effects for our campuses and our surrounding communities. Furthermore, we can set a model for the surrounding communities in how we steward our natural landscapes.

Goals

3.1 Reduce Water Consumption

Action Items:

- Develop plan to meter outdoor water use by 2023
- Continue to install drip lines for watering landscapes
- Identify areas where grass can be reduced, removed, or replaced with species that require less water
- Integrate water-wise landscaping into new construction projects

- Develop partnerships between Facilities and academic programs to identify further areas of action

Tracking:

- Define goals for water reduction based on consumption assessment
- Publish actionable water reduction goals by 2025
- Track water savings

3.2 Increase Use of Native Plants

Action Items:

- Expand and invest in native garden spaces
- Integrate native plants into existing low-water landscaping
- Develop watering and monitoring plans for native plants
- Incorporate educational components in native plant spaces
- Encourage native plants in all new landscaping

Tracking:

- Monitor plant health and water needs
- Create and maintain list of endangered and vulnerable species on UVU's campuses

3.3 Expand Tree Cover

Action Items:

- Continue Tree Campus Higher Education certification
- Identify areas to plant new trees
- Preserve UVU's urban forest using mapping software to track trees & their health
- Replace each removed tree with two new trees
- Ensure a diversity of trees across campus
- Encourage trees in new construction projects

Tracking:

- Ensure campus tree map is continuously updated

- Collect data on tree health
- Calculate tree cover impact on carbon storage, value, and energy use

3.4 Build Community Gardens

Action Items:

- Integrate community gardens into food pantry operations by 2022
- Support community garden initiatives across campus
- Engage the campus community through education, research, service-learning, and experience at community gardens

Tracking:

- Track community garden contributions to UVU Food Pantry
- Collect data on student and community involvement in community gardens

3.5 Expand Composting

Action Items:

- Expand green waste composting facility
- Develop a plan for food waste by 2024
- Work with Culinary Institute, food vendors, and Dining Services to separate food waste to add to composting facility
- Use compost in community gardens

Tracking:

- Collect weight of composting inputs and weight of compost generated
- Collect data on cost savings from UVU-generated compost



4 Culture and Learning

As the largest institution of higher education in Utah, Utah Valley University plays an important role in Utah's higher education landscape. As such, increasing sustainability literacy among Utah Valley University's students, faculty, and staff is a key part of preparing our students for the challenges of the 21st century. Leading by example through a culture of sustainability among UVU students, faculty and staff is a central to this educational mission.

Goals

4.1 Increase Employee Sustainability Literacy

Action Items:

- Develop a sustainability workshop series for faculty and staff by 2022
- Develop and launch a Green Offices program by 2022
- Integrate sustainability into new hire training by 2023

Tracking:

- Track enrollment for workshop series

- Track enrollment in Green Offices program
- Regularly assess sustainability literacy of UVU employees

4.2 Integrate Sustainability into UVU's Mission, Vision, and Image

Action Items:

- Integrate sustainability into UVU's Vision 2030
- Broaden reach of sustainability resources and programs

- Make performance indicators available to the public and the UVU community via the UVU Sustainability website by 2024
- Install interactive building performance dashboards by 2024
- See goals 5.1-5.5 for community engagement related goals and actions

Tracking:

- Regularly assess internal and external perceptions of sustainability at UVU
- Track sustainability website engagement
- Track building performance dashboard engagement

4.3 Develop New Academic Programming

Action Items:

- Expand sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive course offerings
- Develop a Sustainability Certificate
- Develop an Environmental Studies Major

Tracking:

- Track number of sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive courses and enrollment
- Track enrollment for programs
- Track employment for program majors
- Regularly assess sustainability literacy of UVU students

4.4 Increase Student Involvement in Sustainability

Action Items:

- Develop the “campus as a lab” approach for sustainability
- Encourage sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive capstone projects
- Integrate sustainability into new student orientation
- Explore potential student initiative to introduce a sustainability student fee

Tracking:

- Track sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive student projects and collaborations
- Regularly assess sustainability literacy of UVU students

4.5 Report to AASHE STARS

Action Items:

- Maintain Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) membership
- Enroll in AASHE Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS)
- Form a working group to review AASHE STARS credits and assemble documentation for submission by 2023
- Identify areas to target for higher STARS ranking

Tracking:

- Track progress on STARS reporting using tools provided by AASHE



5 Community

Central to Utah Valley University’s values as an institution is a commitment to “address the intellectual and practical needs of our service area and the larger community.” Within this framework UVU has the opportunity to advance sustainability in our communities, local to international, by developing and enhancing partnerships with them. These mutually beneficial partnerships will provide students with engaged learning experiences in the complex, interconnected, and dynamic world of sustainability and provide UVU’s community partners with innovative solutions to the most pressing challenge of the 21st century.

Goals

5.1 Host the Utah County Sustainability Coalition (UCSC)

Action Items:

- Provide space for monthly UCSC meetings
- Develop, in partnership with UCSC, a database of collaboration opportunities
- Work with UCSC to provide engaged learning opportunities on, or in service to, the UCSC

Tracking:

- Track usage and outcomes of collaboration database

- Track number of students directly involved with UCSC

5.2 Engage Local Citizens and Governments

Action Items:

- Invite local elected officials to sustainability events and workshops, as participants and/or guests
- Work with interested academic programs and centers to engage with governments on sustainability
- Identify and promote opportunities for civic engagement to students

- Promote UVU students, faculty, and staff as sustainability educators
- Develop Community Education courses focused on or inclusive of sustainability
- Market UVU Sustainability workshops and events to the public
- Incorporate sustainability in STEM outreach programs

Tracking:

- Track engagement with UVU Sustainability programming by those outside the University
- Survey local attitudes towards sustainability, possibly in partnership with the Center for Social Impact SIMLab

5.3 Outreach to Business Community

Action Items:

- Continue to engage with sustainability business groups like the Utah Sustainable Business Coalition and the Utah Climate Action Network
- Expand number of sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive courses offered at the Woodbury School of Business
- Consider including sustainability track to future WSB-sponsored or -hosted conferences
- Work with Career Development Center to identify and promote employment opportunities in sustainability to students

Tracking:

- Track employment of students and alumni in sustainability positions
- Track enrollment in WSB sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive courses

5.4 Collaborate with Other Higher Education Institutions

Action Items:

- Work with other Utah HEIs to share resources and institutional knowledge to promote sustainability in higher education in Utah
- Develop partnership with BYU to promote sustainability in Utah County
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with other HEIs on sustainability research

Tracking:

- Track number of active sustainability research projects in collaboration with other HEIs

5.5 Foster Global Engagement

Action Items:

- Continue to support the Office for Global Engagement's work with the UN and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Incorporate UN SDGs into UVU Sustainability messaging and communications
- Integrate sustainability into global topics courses
- Develop sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive international programs

Tracking:

- Track engagement with Office of Global Engagement's SDG programming
- Track enrollment in international sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive programs

Conclusion

Sustainability is one of the grand challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. Utah in particular has many challenges related to sustainability, such as a growing population and environmental limitations, which make sustainability goals even more pressing. This Sustainability Plan outlines five priority areas of action, each of which contribute to UVU's core values of Exceptional Care, Exceptional Results, and Exceptional Accountability. Through these goals we commit to our students and our communities to be responsible stewards of our resources and to ensure prosperity for future generations. This plan aligns our many campuses, campus programs, operations, and academics around a shared vision of sustainability and commitment to our students and our communities, both local and global.