Charge of the President’s Council on Sustainability at Knox College

1. History and Mission Statement
2. Charge
3. Participation
   3.1. Chair
   3.2. At-Large Members
   3.3. Liaisons
   3.4. Invitation
   3.5. Rights of participation
   3.6. Removal from service
4. Subcommittees and Task Forces
   4.1. Subcommittees
   4.2. Task Forces
5. Meetings
   5.2. Communication regarding meetings
   5.3. Structure of the meeting
   5.4. Roles in the meeting
   5.5. Special meetings
6. Making and Communicating Decisions
7. Amendments to this Document
1. History and Mission Statement

Created in 2008 as a Presidential Task Force, The President’s Council on Sustainability took on its current form in August of 2014. The Council is tasked with nurturing a culture of sustainability at Knox. At Knox, we define a sustainable culture as one characterized by:

- Recognition that humans are part of nature and need to live in balance with Earth's ecosystems.
- Reduced consumption of natural resources to a replenishable rate.
- Reduced generation of waste to a rate at which the environment can assimilate it.
- Decision-making that gives equal weight to natural, social, and economic systems.
- Commitment to place, including conservation and equity in distribution of local resources.

(This definition was adopted in May 2014 by consensus of the Presidential Task Force on Sustainability. The process of its formation was based on a campus-wide survey of faculty, staff, and students.)

2. Charge

The President’s Council on Sustainability (from here on to be referred to as “the Council”) is responsible for:

- Considering new sustainability initiatives for the campus (including those pertaining to education and strategic planning) and making recommendations to the College President regarding institutional strategies, resources, and priorities
- Working closely with the Director of Campus Sustainability Initiatives to identify, support, promote and communicate new and ongoing sustainability initiatives.
- Considering ideas presented by members of the Knox community relating to campus sustainability initiatives
- Annually reviewing campus sustainability commitments, progress reports, and compacts to ensure that the campus is meeting its commitments and targets
- Approving the theme of the EquiKnox events, and the choice of presenter(s)

3. Participation

All meetings of the Sustainability Council are open to participation by any member of the Knox College Community. The Council is comprised of At-Large Members and official Liaisons.

3.1. Chair

The Director of Campus Sustainability Initiatives will serve as the chairperson of the Council
3.2. At-Large Members

At-Large Members of the Sustainability Council are concerned members of the Knox College community who volunteer their time to advance sustainability efforts by attending and contributing to Council meetings and outcomes. For purposes of this document, “members of the Knox College community” includes students, staff, faculty, and alumni/ae.

Per their request, any member of the Knox College community will be added to the listserv that is the communication channel for this group (sustainability-list-user@knox.edu).

3.3. Liaisons

Twelve official liaisons (from here on to be referred to as “Liaisons”) to the Sustainability Council are invited by the President to serve yearly renewable terms, to ensure that a connection is maintained to the following constituencies of the College:

- Athletics
- Communications
- Custodial Services
- Dining Services
- Eco House
- Faculty (2 members)
- Facilities
- Information services (IT+Library)
- Resident Assistants
- Student Development
- Student Senate Sustainability Committee

The role of the Liaisons will be to bring news and ideas back and forth between their constituency and the Council. Liaisons will:

- communicate the issues and outcomes of Council meetings to their constituency as a whole
- represent the interests and concerns of their constituency to the Council concerning issues being discussed

3.4. Invitation

When a vacancy arises among the Liaisons, the head of the relevant constituency will ask members to self-nominate for the position. Selection from among the nominees will be at the constituency’s discretion.
3.5. Rights of participation

At all times, every person present at the table, At-Large Member, Liaison, or Chair, will have equal participation in discussion and consensus-building.

3.6. Removal from service

If a Liaison misses four meetings in a term, the Chair will open a conversation with the Liaison about whether the Liaison is able and willing to continue participation in the Council. If they jointly decide the Liaison is either unable or unwilling, the Chair will contact the head of the Liaison’s constituency to seek a new Liaison.

4. Subcommittees and Task Forces

4.1. Subcommittees

Standing subcommittees can be designated in response to specific ongoing needs that become evident as the Council progresses. Charges of these subcommittees will be considered and added to this document through the process of amendment described in section 7: Amendments to this document.

4.2. Task Forces

At various times, the Council may find it efficient to designate a smaller group to address specific questions and bring a recommendation back to the group. At such times, a task force will be convened.

The following guidelines will apply to task forces of the Sustainability Council:

- Task force members will self-nominate.
- The number of individuals may vary. The council will agree on the appropriate number of members on an as-needed basis.
- Task forces are encouraged to invite parties from outside the Council to participate in their work, where the perspective of a given office, department, or individual is important to the issue at hand. Where appropriate, individuals from outside the Knox Community can be invited to participate in a task force.
- Task forces will report weekly on their progress at the regular Council meeting.
- Task forces may choose to continue their work during weeks when the council is not convening.

5. Meetings

5.1. Frequency of meetings
The council will meet weekly for one hour when classes are in session. However, it will not meet on reading days or during final exams.

5.2. Communication regarding meetings

Before each meeting, the chair will send an agenda to all members of the sustainability-list-user email list.

After each meeting, the chair will distribute the minutes of the meeting to all members of the sustainability-list-user email list.

5.3. Structure of the meeting

- Review minutes of previous meeting
- One scheduled five-minute presentation (To increase the perspective of all participants in the Council, meetings will begin with a five-minute presentation by a selected participant. The participant may present an issue for consideration, a sustainability-related current event, or a sustainability-related topic of particular interest to them. Any participant interested in presenting can make a request of the chair at least one week in advance. If the presentation slot is not booked on a given meeting date, the meeting will begin with a five-minute topical presentation by the Director of Campus Sustainability Initiatives.)
- Update from Student Senate Sustainability Committee
- Request for updates from any ongoing task forces, active subcommittees, and Liaisons
- Old Business
- New Business
- Other announcements

5.4. Roles in the meeting

Chair: Meetings will be chaired by the Director of Campus Sustainability Initiatives. When the Director cannot be present, the Chair will designate an alternate chair. The Chair is responsible for distributing minutes, agendas, and other supporting materials at least 48 hours before meetings. The Chair is also responsible for archiving meeting minutes and other important materials.

Secretary: A member other than the Chair will serve as secretary for a trimester-long renewable term. The Secretary will record important decisions and motions at each meeting, and forward them to the Chair in the form of written meeting minutes within 48 hours of the end of the meeting. When the Secretary cannot be present, the secretary will designate an alternate for the meeting.
5.5. Special meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Council Chair, at the request of the College President or in response to a time-sensitive topic of great import.

6. Making and Communicating Decisions

The Sustainability Council strives to make all decisions on a consensus basis. All those present at the meeting have privileges of full participation in the discussion.

Recommendations to the College President will be presented in the form of a written letter, signed by all participants who wish to be represented on the recommendation.

When consensus cannot be reached on a recommendation to the President, the participants of the Council will draft letters to the President representing the Majority Opinion and any Minority Opinions. The Chair will distribute the drafts to all participants via the Council listserv, and all participants will be given one week to suggest minor edits and assign their signature to one of the documents.

7. Amendments to this Document

Suggested amendments to this charge can be placed on the agenda of the Council by any Knox Community member. Amendments will be adopted based on a supermajority vote of 75% of those present at the meeting. Section 4.2 (Task Forces) may also apply.