



# Charge of the President's Council on Sustainability at Knox College

(updated winter 2018)

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## 1. History and Mission

Created in 2008 as a Presidential Task Force, The President's Council on Sustainability (referred to as "the Council" or "Sustainability Council") was formed in August of 2014.

The Council's mission is to advance a culture of sustainability at Knox. At Knox, we define a sustainable culture as one characterized by:

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

This definition was developed through a campus-wide survey of faculty, staff, and students and adopted in May 2014 by consensus of the Presidential Task Force on Sustainability.

The Council serves as an educated and informed representative advisory body, and thus will advance campus initiatives considering 1) the above guiding sustainability statements, 2) the impact and connection to the Knox campus, and 3) the constituents that members represent.

## 2. Charge

The President's Council on Sustainability is responsible for:

1. Considering, evaluating, and endorsing new sustainability initiatives for the campus presented by any members of the Knox community.
2. Making recommendations to the College President regarding institutional strategies, resources, and priorities.
3. Supporting the work of the Director of Sustainability Initiatives aligning with the Office's goals and ongoing sustainability initiatives.
4. Supporting and reviewing campus sustainability commitments, progress reports, and compacts to ensure that the campus is meeting its commitments and targets.

## 3. Participation

All meetings of the Sustainability Council are open to participation by any member of the Knox College Community. Representatives from the key areas of campus outlined in section 3.3 are highly recommended.

### **3.1. Chair**

The Director of Campus Sustainability Initiatives will serve as the chairperson of the Council.

### **3.2. Members**

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 ([sustainability-list-user@knox.edu](mailto:sustainability-list-user@knox.edu)) that is the communication channel for this group.

### **3.3. Key Campus Areas**

The following areas have been identified as key campus areas where representatives should attend Council meetings. These areas represent where campus changes will often have the greatest impact. They are also key locations that may be affected by sustainability programming. If specific subjects will be discussed during meetings, key representatives will be directly invited, but they are encouraged to attend all meetings. Campus representation is not limited to these areas:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Athletics          | Information Services (IT & Library)     |
| Communications     | Staff Council                           |
| Custodial Services | Student Development / Campus Life / RAs |
| Dining Services    | Student Senate Sustainability Committee |
| Faculty            | Sustainability-focused Student          |
| Facilities         | Organizations and Houses                |

### **3.4. Invitation**

To ensure representation from the key campus areas, the head of the relevant constituency will be asked to ask members to self-nominate to attend Council meetings. Selection from among the nominees will be at the discretion of the constituency.

### **3.5. Rights of Participation**

At all times, every person present at the table will have equal participation in discussion, voting, and consensus-building.

The members of the listserv ([sustainability-list-user@knox.edu](mailto:sustainability-list-user@knox.edu)) will be alerted of any upcoming votes, so that they may plan to attend or submit comments ahead of the meeting time.

## **4. Task Forces**

The Sustainability Council is an advisory body, but at times ideas and initiatives that are presented to the Council will be of interest to enough members or of a certain level of importance that a need will arise for the Council to work on that initiative. At this point 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 and will depend on interest.
- 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 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 every month 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 and a link to the previous meeting's notes to all members of the sustainability-list-user email list.

### 5.3. Meeting Goals

Meetings goals will support the charge in the following ways:

**CHARGE 1** - Meetings will review any ideas submitted to the Council. These ideas will be solicited via email, online form, or verbal communication. Also, any proposals to be submitted to the Student Senate Sustainability Fund must be reviewed and approved by the Council. Therefore, meetings will be used to review these proposals.

Goals will be to:

- a) brainstorm suggestions and resources for how the submitter can best move forward with their idea,
- b) endorse the proposed initiative and suggest to whom in the administration it should be presented
- c) set up a Task Force inspired by any proposed ideas, and
- d) review Sustainability Fund proposals and provide additional items to include or final Council approval.

**CHARGE 2** - If any of the ideas presented to the Council have inspired Task Forces, the meetings will hear reports from those groups. When the group has determined next steps, the Council will prepare recommendations to present to the President. Meetings will also brainstorm responses to any questions received from the College President or Administration.

Goals will be to:

- a) hear updates from Task Forces,
- b) prepare recommendations to the President, and
- c) prepare advisory responses to questions proposed by College Administration.

**CHARGE 3** - The Director of Sustainability can use meetings to present ongoing work from the Office of Sustainability, with the expectation of receiving input or assistance.

Goals will be to:

- a) stay up to date on the work of the Office of Sustainability and
- b) serve as a representative sample of the Knox Community and provide feedback on behalf of the representative constituents.

**CHARGE 4** - The Council will consider any and all sustainability commitments and compacts it has agreed to when making decisions for the campus. The group will periodically review our commitments and confirm that our programming and efforts are on track and in line with these agreements. The Council will also serve as a reviewing committee of any new commitments and provide any necessary feedback and input required of these commitments.

Goals will be to:

- a) review Knox's commitments and keep programs on track and
- b) support new commitments that maintain the stated culture of sustainability.

#### **5.4. Roles in the Meeting**

Chair - 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 Council member other than the Chair. The Secretary will record key discussion points, decisions, and next steps. When the Secretary cannot be present, the secretary will designate an alternate for the meeting.

### **6. Making and Communicating Decisions**

The Council strives to make all decisions through consensus. All present at the meeting have privileges of full participation in the discussion. The members of the listserv ([sustainability-list-user@knox.edu](mailto:sustainability-list-user@knox.edu)) will be alerted of any upcoming votes or decisions, so that they may plan to attend or submit comments ahead of the meeting time.

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, participants will draft letters representing the Majority Opinion and any Minority Opinions. The Chair will distribute the drafts to all participants via the 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.