

Declaration of Support for Sustainability at Portland State University

We, the students, faculty, staff, and administration of Portland State University hereby commit to helping create a more sustainable world. We believe we must act now to address interconnected environmental, social and economic problems in this region, the nation, and abroad. Through collaboration with partners in business, government, and other organizations, we aim to discover innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for all today and for future generations. Portland State University recognizes its public responsibility to lead by mobilizing university and external resources to create educational, research, and operations programs that are demonstration models. As such, we pledge to undertake the following actions:

ACTION #1 Infuse sustainability into all colleges, schools and programs. We will be an internationally recognized university known for excellence in student learning, innovative research and community engagement that helps simultaneously achieve economic vitality, environmental health, strong families and communities, and stakeholder involvement in open processes.

ACTION #2 Develop a sustainable physical campus that is an example to other institutions. PSU will 'walk its talk' by developing and implementing leading-edge sustainable practices in its operations, on campus, and in its purchasing. Initiatives in energy conservation, transportation, green building, native landscaping, recycling and waste reduction, and storm water management are underway. We intend to build significantly upon these efforts to develop innovative approaches for all areas of operations.

ACTION #3 Make Portland State University a demonstration model of sustainable processes and practices. Working closely with the university's many collaborators, we will devote our energies to multidisciplinary research, instruction, inclusive discussion, and operational practices to create a more sustainable way of life. PSU will become a leading academic laboratory for the testing and evaluation of sustainable process and practices that apply to both the public and the private sectors.

ACTION #4 Develop core multidisciplinary research competencies in key sustainability areas related to pressing real world problems. Initial priorities include:

- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Integrated Water Resource Management
- Sustainable Urban Design
- Sustainable Business Processes and Practices
- Green Science and Technology Development

We plan to build upon our emergent capacity in other areas of high importance, such as community food systems. Each area of developed research competency will contain integrated environmental, social and economic components to promote a full understanding of sustainable development challenges and opportunities.

In all actions, PSU will expand its community partnerships with business, government, and non-profit organizations that share our passion for furthering sustainable development. We also will partner with leading research institutions in the U.S. and abroad. The collaborations will bring our partners' expertise together with PSU's intellectual resources to develop and implement sustainable processes and practices that foster real world problem-solving.

We believe that these actions are a natural extension of PSU's core mission and values, and hereby declare our commitment to the challenge of creating a more sustainable world.

FACTSHEET

What is the declaration?

The declaration of support for sustainability is the work of a diverse group of PSU students, faculty, administrators, staff and members of the Portland community who came together in the fall of 2004. Their goal was and still remains to harness the talent and energy of PSU towards a vision of sustainability in both our academics and our operations, and to build support among all parts of the institution for this vision.

What is sustainability?

Sustainability is a promise that present and future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy productive and rewarding lives. Picture a healthy environment that supports a thriving economy, strong families and vibrant communities, a place where all citizens are valued and engaged in governance. Imagine that these opportunities extend equitably to those in the present generation and are also available for future generations. The environmental, social and economic realms function as an interconnected dynamic system, not as separate parts.

Who should support the declaration?

All PSU students, faculty, administrators and staff are being invited to support the declaration. Since sustainability infuses all that we do as a university and as a society, and since its principles touch all colleges, schools and programs, everyone has a stake in seeing it adopted as part of the university's overall vision and mission.

Why should PSU focus on sustainability?

There is a growing recognition that our way of life as a society is not sustainable. Serious problems face the region and the planet, including increasing pressure on natural resources, a lack of quality jobs, widening disparity in incomes and inadequate access to education and other public services. Many of the problems are interconnected

and require 'systems' approaches to find lasting solutions. PSU is positioned to address these issues by providing intellectual and pragmatic leadership in the ongoing transformation of businesses, governments and communities towards more sustainable practices.

To some degree, the university is already focusing on sustainability, although current sustainability-related projects, research and teaching are occurring in isolation from each other. This declaration is a way of linking what is happening and providing common goals to ensure our efforts build upon each other.

Some examples of sustainability at PSU

- PSU students and faculty are already doing outstanding work in urban planning and land use. We are bringing our expertise in these disciplines to bear in a multi-year project with the Chinese Ministry of Land and Resources to train officials in China on the techniques of sustainable land management.
- Our campus buildings are being recognized for their incorporation of green building techniques, including the LEED Silver certification for Epler Hall, which recycles rainwater for toilets and irrigation.
- PSU was the winner of two prestigious City of Portland BEST awards in April for increasing the use of alternative transportation among students, faculty and staff and for stormwater management at Epler Hall and at the LEED Silver Broadway Building.
- Our professional certificate in sustainability program attracts students from large and small businesses and public sector organizations, providing rigorous instruction in the principles of sustainability and hands-on training on how to apply those principles in the real world.