Introduction to the Strategy Framework for Sustainability

Colleges, campuses, and administrative units will develop strategies within five primary areas. Each unit is able to address each area differently and that is understood and embraced by this framework.

As you go through these five areas, the key question for units is:
What is our unique contribution to the university’s sustainability vision and mission?
Overview of the Strategy Areas

Teaching & Co-curricular
This refers to opportunities to infuse sustainability into student learning: both curricular and co-curricular programs. This area also is home to goals aimed at increasing the capacity and capability of faculty through faculty development workshops and changes in promotion and tenure practices.

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<tr>
<th>Examples for Academic Units</th>
<th>Examples for Support Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability is added to new student orientation to highlight opportunities and stories within your unit and at Penn State. Your college or campus convenes a workshop or roundtable for faculty to integrate sustainability into their courses. A Student Sustainability Summit is organized to highlight career and grad school opportunities, on-campus activities, and community resources.</td>
<td>A group of staff hires an intern to help assess opportunities to reduce resource use (energy, water, material waste). Facilities staff work with a faculty member and her class to develop on-campus project proposals for applied research. Energy managers work with a writing class to develop a report on all the energy efficiency projects and results on campus.</td>
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Research
This refers to the addition or enhancement of sustainability in undergraduate, graduate, and faculty research conducted by your unit. Perhaps there are opportunities to better link existing sustainability research or start a new research program.

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<td>Collaborative team forms to conduct a pilot study using regional/campus data to inform the development of a larger proposal. A new initiative to help identify sustainability-focused funding opportunities and publications is initiated.</td>
<td>A team trying to figure out the most sustainable product for a particular purpose (computer or cleaning supplies for example) partners with a faculty member with relevant expertise who can conduct the proper analysis.</td>
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Service and Community Engagement

This refers to the blending of sustainability into existing or new community partnerships that provide learning opportunities for students, applied research opportunities for faculty, and benefit to the community. What problems exist in the community that your unit’s expertise could help to solve? What changes—new incentives or the removal of barriers—would need to made to allow for the sharing of this expertise?

Examples for Academic Units
Staff conduct a sustainability assessment of the region to identify new market opportunities. A meeting is convened with local and regional government, business, and non-profit partners. Faculty and student teams work with local social service and environmental agencies to create a job skills program focused on sustainability.

Examples for Support Units
Staff members work with local partners to arrange for a farmer’s market to be held on campus. The waste management team and dining services work with local government and businesses to develop a composting program.

Operations

This refers to the integration of sustainability into the management and use of the physical facilities, vehicles, and grounds of your unit, including classrooms, labs, sports facilities, offices, and service vehicles as well as at events, conferences, and meetings. What are ways your unit can reduce resource use such as in fuel, electricity, water, materials, etc.?

Examples for Academic Units
Faculty members convene a panel of facilities and operations staff in order to understand their environmental and human health and safety challenges. Following the panel, faculty and students create proposals to offer solutions.

Examples for Support Units
A group works with professional development and training staff to create a sustainability-focused educational program. A director creates a new policy for sustainable purchasing which makes requirements for all major contracts and purchase orders.
Governance and Administration
This refers to the ways a unit has integrated sustainability into its organizational structure, systems, and policies. Have formal structures been put into place like a sustainability working group or committee with representatives from various departments?

Examples for Academic Units
Leadership appoints a well-respected leader to be the college or campus’ sustainability chair. An awards program is created to recognize sustainability leaders among students, faculty, and staff at an annual event. A task force is appointed to explore how the promotion and tenure criteria can support applied work on campus and in the community.

Examples for Support Units
A new policy is developed for sustainable purchasing in order to reduce packaging and the resource efficiency of products. A section is created in the newsletter to highlight sustainability projects and their results. A sustainability management system is developed with IT faculty and students to track and report on sustainability measures.

At this point, we recommend your planning team brainstorms about:
“For our unit, what strategies would be mission-relevant for each of the 5 areas?”

Think about your unit or department mission. Based on your mission, what might be your unit’s unique contribution to the university’s sustainability strategy? Prioritize your brainstormed list and then go to the SMART Strategy Builder on the next pages.
What are SMART strategies? SMART strategies are:

1. **Specific**: Is the strategy detailed enough that someone who isn’t a part of our team would know what needs to be done and how?

2. **Measurable**: Is there a clear way to measure success?

3. **Actionable**: Is there a clear series of steps to take to accomplish your strategy?

4. **Realistic**: Is it possible to reach this strategy considering the resources available to your team?

5. **Time Bound**: When will the strategy be accomplished?

Two sample SMART Strategies:

1. **Academic College X**
   - will double the number of research collaborations and funding proposals focused on sustainability by June 2015.
   - This strategy is **SPECIFIC** since it is clear what needs to be done.
   - This strategy is **TIME BOUND** because it describes when the strategy needs to be complete.

2. **Support Unit Y**
   - will create and pilot a new sustainable purchasing program for at least two commodities by August 2014.
   - This strategy is **MEASURABLE** because it defines success quantitatively.
   - This strategy is **REALISTIC** because it considers available resources.
   - This strategy is **ACTIONABLE** since it implies a clear series of steps.
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2. Use the table below to help you focus on your strategy. Refer back to page 8 for leading questions and an example.
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3. Use the sample SMART Strategy statements on page 8 to help you write your unit’s SMART Strategy.

You can write drafts of your strategy statement here. Keep trying different versions until it is clear and meets the SMART Strategy framework. Finally, be sure to decide who is responsible for making the strategy happen.
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