**Penn State Eberly College of Science Sustainability Council Charter, 2020-21**

**Approved by Dean Tracy Langkilde, December 21, 2020**

**Mission**

The Eberly College of Science Sustainability Council seeks to incorporate the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the concepts of global sustainability and resilience more fully into its teaching, research, outreach, and service activities, to help implement the university’s foundational principle of Ensuring a Sustainable Future and its thematic priority of Stewarding Our Planet’s Resources, and to position the college as a leader in taking actions that build a more sustainable and just future at Penn State and beyond.

**Objectives**

The aim of the Eberly College of Science Sustainability Council is to provide strategic guidance and support to effectively integrate sustainability into the teaching, research, service, and outreach activities of the college, while realizing the college’s aspirations to enhance the positive societal impacts of our research. The Council therefore undertakes the following activities:

1. **Teaching**: Align curriculum with sustainable development goals, teaching capabilities and outcomes as well as emerging trends and best practices in sustainability education in order to make recommendations for improving the college’s teaching and support services for students. Promote the integration of sustainability into the core academic experiences of our students to help inspire and prepare them for fulfilling, productive, and beneficial careers post-graduation.
2. **Research**: Assess scholarly activity, strengths, and opportunities for growth, as well as emerging trends and research expertise in sustainability in order to make recommendations for enhancing sustainability research in the college. Advocate for sustainable research operations across the college. Explore research collaborations with other Penn State colleges, campuses, and intsitutes in sustainability-related areas.
3. **Outreach**: Develop and implement outreach and public education activities. Assess strengths and opportunities for growth in current and planned activities to support sustainability-related outreach for the college.
4. **Service**: Create pathways to realize sustainability practices and advancements in local and worldwide communities. Of particular interest is exploring collaborations with industry, businesses, and government agencies that have expressed active interest in increasing their sustainability practices and investment in Penn State.

**Membership**

1. The Council is composed of a chair and at least one representative from each department in the college. Council members may be faculty, staff, postdoctoral researchers, graduate students, undergraduate students, or alumni.
2. The chair is appointed by the dean of the Eberly College of Science to a 3-year term that is renewable for a second term.
3. One representative is solicited by the dean or the Council chair from each Department Head in the college. The chair may also serve as a representative for their home department.
4. The Council membership term is three academic years. A partial year counts as a full year unless otherwise specified.
5. Consecutive terms may be held at the discretion of the Council membership and as per minimum attendance requirements. A term may be renewed only once (i.e., six academic years in total).
6. Lack of a good-faith effort to fulfill the responsibilities set forth in this charter can be a reason, at the recommendation of the chair with approval by the dean, for removal of a member from the Council. Any vacancy in the Council must be filled as soon as possible in consultation with the appropriate Department Head.

**Council Member Responsibilities**

1. Attend Sustainability Council meetings:
   1. In order to vitalize the collaborative work being done, Council representatives are expected to participate in all meetings if their schedule allows.
   2. A minimum attendance of four Council meetings per academic year is required to maintain membership for the next academic year.
2. Maintain a visible role as a representative of the Council for sustainability efforts in their home department in the areas of teaching, research, outreach, and service. This includes relaying Council activities to their Department Head and faculty members at least once per academic year and relaying their department’s activities back to the Council. Council members will also:
3. **Act as an ambassador** for sustainability leadership in general within and beyond the college, both listening for ideas and input, as well as informing and advocating where appropriate (e.g., at departmental meetings, other committees, professional and academic societies, etc.);
4. **Represent the expertise, unique interests, and needs of each department** while considering how to advance the college’s efforts in sustainability;
5. **Contribute ideas** for new collaborative and cross-disciplinary initiatives that involve faculty, students, staff, and alumni from multiple departments as well as other colleges; and
6. **Connect the college to appropriate people, groups, and resources** in their network to provide expertise, funding, connections, and opportunities to enhance sustainability efforts for faculty, students, staff, and alumni.
7. The Council depends upon every member to actively serve and contribute to Council activities throughout the academic year.

**Chair Responsibilities**

1. Represent the Sustainability Council at the college and university levels.
2. Communicate directly with Department Heads regarding appointment of Council representatives as needed.
3. Schedule meetings with Council members at the beginning of each semester via an online scheduling tool to select the best date and time for the majority of Council members.
4. Remind Council members about meetings via email.
5. Plan and distribute meeting agendas.
6. Lead Council meetings.
7. Follow up with Council members as needed regarding completion of activities.
8. Report Council activities and recommendations to the dean and the Chief Sustainability Officer at Penn State annually, or more frequently if required/requested.

**Council Meetings**

1. **Schedule:** The Council meets on a monthly basis during the academic year but may also meet on an ad hoc basis to address pending activities.
2. **Attendance:** Council members are expected to attend all meetings. If a member may not be able to physically attend a meeting, alternative methods of participation may be configured (e.g., participating via Zoom or having an alternate representative from their department attend).
3. **Agenda and Minutes:** Prior to a Council meeting, the chair prepares and distributes an agenda to all members. The minutes (including any presentations and/or handouts) are recorded by the chair and archived on a cloud platform accessible to all members, the dean, and the Chief Sustainability Officer of Penn State. Minutes may be distributed to others upon request.

**Decision Making**

The Council seeks to make decisions by consensus. To accomplish this, the members work together to create a collaborative, inclusive, and supportive environment. When consensus cannot be reached on a certain issue, voting is undertaken, adhering to the following guidelines:

1. A majority of the Council members must be present to vote.
2. A majority yes is required for a resolution to pass.
3. In the event of an unresolvable tie vote among an even numbered majority, the dean acts as tie-breaker utilizing the perspectives of the group and working in the best interest of the college.
4. The chair determines the appropriate method of voting.

**Review, Amendments, and Changes to the Charter**

1. This charter will be reviewed at the beginning of each academic year.
2. Any member of the Council may propose an amendment to the charter at any time.
3. An amendment may only be ratified by an affirmative quorum vote of the Council. Clerical errors or omissions are not considered amendments and may be corrected at the discretion of the chair, as long as the correction does not change the meaning or intent of the original.

**Attribution**

Portions of this charter were adapted from the Sustainability Charters of the Penn State College of Engineering, Penn State Altoona, and the Smeal College of Business.