Sustainability Strategic Plan 2016-2021

# Executive Summary

Sustainability at Messiah College has largely followed the thematic trends of the United States as early environmentalism of the 60’s and 70’s focused on… has now given way to sustainability, a critical analysis of the overlapping impacts of ecological degradation, poverty and development, and social equity. From the early 1970’s through to today, Messiah has engaged the matter of creation care in a variety of ways. Various disciplines, such as literature, biology and religion have looked intently at humanity’s relationship with the earth and our responsibility in the midst of our “ecological crisis.” Beyond the classroom, students have been involved in all sorts of activity. Earthkeepers, a student club has focused on anything from waste diversion efforts to solar thermal instillations. Messiah’s special interest housing has continued to foster space for education and personal reflection to take shape. The Green house, the special interest house predecessor to the current Restoration house, provided space for like-minded students to engage in practices and discussion related to creation care. Now embodied in the Restoration house, students live in a Men’s and Women’s house where they run programs and reflect on their persona contributions to ecological impacts. Further more, the Grantham Garden has provided space for students to practice agriculture and learn life lessons about the food system for 10 years. The grassroots student leadership and informal spaces were successful in turning the College’s attention to formalizing sustainability efforts on campus.

From 2007 to 2012 the College took many significant steps toward strengthening sustainability practices and education. Below is a brief timeline of significant leadership events that moved sustainability from grassroots student work to institutional adoption.

* In 2007 the Grantham Community Garden outside of the Kline greenhouse. It is initially housed in the Agape Center, not moving to the Sustainability Office until 2010.
* In 2008, the President signed the American Colleges and Universities President’s Climate Commitment propelling the College to pursue plans, policies and structures to build, maintain and operate the campus as an emissions‐reducing institution
* In 2009, alums Francis Eanes and Daniel Webster drafted a “white paper” to aid the college in climate action planning
* In 2009, a Sustainability Studies Committee was established to give governance to the newly created major, and in Fall 2010, the Sustainability Studies major officially launched.
* In the 2009‐2012 “Plan for Messiah,” the President situates sustainability, both through the newly‐formed academic program and operations, as a vehicle to strengthen the College’s mission (Strategic Theme 3, goals 3 & 4)
* In 2010, the Sustainability Committee was established to work with the Sustainability Coordinator to give leadership to advancing related campus‐wide initiatives
* In 2011, the half time coordinator role evolved into a full time position to give programmatic leadership and development to campus‐wide sustainability initiatives
* What else…

Grassroots action, more formal institutional commitment and purposeful leadership has achieved the impact Messiah College has seen up to 2016. At the core Messiah has passionate students and a few campus leaders who see activity around sustainability as a way to live out personal and institutional values. Before the creation of the Office of Sustainability, the campus energy and culture around sustainability was palpable, but sidelined. Since the Office, sustainability has grown to become a top priority of Student Government, campus clubs, and the institution. However, the relatively young Sustainability Office is entering a phase of maturity. What began as a “start-up” with a culture of passion, idealism, creativity and trial and error is now ripening into established space for curricular and co-curricular engagement, community engagement, and a further consideration in the operations of the College. These realities, coupled with increased public scrutiny on environmental degradation and the role of higher education, make 2016 a crucial time to think strategically about Sustainability at Messiah College and the steps it can take to be a leader in sustainability education and practice in the church and society.

## Letter from the VP

# Mission, Vision, Values

Messiah College Mission Statement:

**“To educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society”**

## ****Office of Sustainability Mission Statement:****

**The Office of Sustainability at Messiah College exists to…**

*“cultivate an ethos of ecological citizenship and stewardship through education, sustainability planning, and community engagement to create an environmentally, socially, and economically just world.”*

**Unpacking the Mission Statement:**

**Cultivate**- working, turning, exploring, preparing, using, to grow and create

**Ethos** – an appeal to ethics to persuade to belief and action

**Ecological Citizenship**- an appeal to being a citizen not just of political or social system, but of ecological systems

**Stewardship**- caring for ecological systems in a careful and responsible manner

**Education**- we are an educational institution that values educating adults to be leaders in church and society

**Sustainability Planning** – creating campus systems that operate in a manner which considers the triple bottom line and fosters a culture of sustainability on campus

**Community Engagement** – to be a resource to the community and to learn from the community

**To create an environmentally, socially, and economically just world** – The global economy as it works in the late 20th and 21st Centuries has generated a mass amount of wealth for a lot of people; however, that growth has come at a cost to ecologies and communities. Messiah’s Sustainability efforts wish to educate, promote, and act in a way where our economic activity works to support our communities, our building, grounds and campus systems work to have little or zero environmental impact, and that no one is unfairly burdened with environmental degradation. This is called triple bottom line thinking, where the environment, economy, and people are considered in all of our decision making processes.

## Sustainability Vision Statement:

Sustainability at Messiah College seeks to create a campus culture that will educate, promote, and practice environmental stewardship as it participates in the redemption of people and places. Achieving this vision will mean that every member of the campus community is able to clearly articulate the value of creation care, understand the triple bottom line, and incorporate said value into their daily lives. Furthermore, stewardship will be an important component in institutional decision making, where the College works with, and learns from the natural processes, and works to make whole the broken ecological, economic, and social structures in which it participates. Lastly, the College will be a resource and outspoken proponent of sustainability in the broader public, where leaders in church and society see Messiah College as one of the premier resources for contributing to the knowledge of creation care, and developing sustainable solutions.

## Values and Principles:

### Participate in Redemption – work and live in a way so that the places we live and visit and the people we come into contact with are left more whole. Where places and systems are just as much a part of redemption as people.

### Practice Hospitality– The OS is a place where people feel welcomed, not scolded. A place that values input from diverse areas and where people feel inspired to live in a way that conscious and restorative

### Apply Creativity – Identifying problems is easy; solutions require critical minds that believe things are possible and solutions are to be found through research, hard work, and team input

### Work with Integrity – work honestly and follow through. We do what we say we will do because people are counting on us

### Embrace Collaboration - Work in a way that recognizes the value of colleagues. Few projects are done alone and success is often defined by the work of a committed team

### Exercise Stewardship – We use our resources wisely. Avoid buying or using frivolous items that contribute to resource use and waste

# Organizational Structure

## Sustainability Committee: The Sustainability Committee steers the College’s ongoing sustainability efforts. This committee, comprised of faculty, students and staff, is dedicated to supporting campus projects that demonstrate stewardship, build community and manage costs.

### Reporting: AASHE STARS – Each member of the committee will be responsible for contributing some data associated with sustainability planning or education in order to asses campus sustainability efforts and provide direction for campus sustainability efforts

### Campus Grounds – A subcommittee focused on sustainable management of campus trees, forests, and grounds. This committee plans and executes Required as part of Tree Campus USA.

### Green Revolving Fund – A major role of the Sustainability Committee is to release funds from the GRF, create an RFP for campus projects, and assist in tracking project data related to energy and costs.

## Academic Sustainability Committee: The Academic Sustainability Committee, with representation from Politics & International Relations, Sociology/Anthropology, and Biology, provides governance and administrative oversight for the Sustainability major

## Sustainability Office: The Office is organized around five categories, each of which provides direction and purpose to further efforts and programing. A student leader or group of leaders will be in charge of each of these categories. The Office provides space for the campus community to speak into and engage with campus sustainability by providing clear categories for engagement for faculty, staff, or students.

### *Students* can work on a class project under a specific category where they will receive additional knowledge and support from their peers. In this way, a class project can potentially positively impact the campus or larger community.

### *Faculty* can find ways to incorporate practices or concepts associated with the 5 categories into their classes or faculty can ask students to do course projects in on one of the five categories.

### *Staff* – Staff whose area’s naturally support sustainability should be able to clearly see the goals set out in each category and support student learning in each category and institutional goals. Staff whose areas do not naturally overlap with sustainability should be aware of these categories and adopt office practices and work habits that support goals outlined in each of these areas.

### *Community* members who take an interest in the College’s sustainability efforts can easily understand and identify the goals of the College, and if community partners are interested in getting involved with, or are seeking support from the College, they know who to contact and how we can best support community efforts.

# Themes, Goals & Action Steps

## Organizational Structure: Establish more clear connections with Sustainability on Campus for students, faculty, and staff to know how to connect with work

### Goal: Create and maintain the Sustainability Cooperative for Student Engagement

Key Partner:

### Goal: Restart the Sustainability Committee with clear purpose and clearly defined roles for members.

Key Partners: Division of Operations, Facilities, Dinning Service, Residence Life, School Deans, and Provost Office

### Goal: Increase faculty awareness of Sustainability and the potential for class related projects. This can be done through a beginning of the semester COE email blast, presentation/discussion at May Development Week, and communicating through Provost Seminar.

## Communications: Create and implement a communications strategy focused primarily on internal community with an incremental increase in external audience

### Hire a student communications coordinator

### Increase online following through social media, internal & external blogs, and stronger website presence

### Update static website content to be used as an external and internal resource for information about Sustainability at Messiah. Keep dynamic content updated and changing to encourage repeat visitors and highlight the College

## Academic Integration & Community Engagement

### Create a Sustainability Scholars program to support on and off campus student research initiatives and project based learning through a scholarship fund for outstanding Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Sustainability students.

Key Partners: Office of Development, Admissions Office

### Support national and regional efforts related to education, policy, and sustainable development work. Specific targets: Host conferences, regional meetings, and speakers on campus. Participate in development strategies for the city of Harrisburg through course work, research, and BESS fellowship program.

Key Partners: PA Environmental Resource Consortium, City of Harrisburg, Dickinson College, Sociology/Anthropology

### Host summer Sustainability camps for High school Students to serve as a recruitment tool and a community service for sustainability education

Key Partners: Oaks Museum, School of BESS, School of HUM, Department of Biology

### Engage and collaborate with departments and programs outside of Sustainability to enhance interdisciplinary learning. Target departments: Business and Management, Social Work, and English. Target Programs: Economic Development major, Entrepreneurship Program, Center for Public Humanities

## Carbon Mitigation & energy Efficiency: Establish the Green Revolving Fund to Reduce carbon emissions through increased efficiency measures and alternative energy production

### Green Revolving Fund will seek out new finding sources from operations savings, utility demand response programs, grants, and outside donations to increase the GRF from $28,000 to $250,000 over the course of 10 years

Key Partners: Division of Operations, Facilities, Sustainability Committee

#### The Sustainability Committee will establish a GRF proposal process complete with a committee approved defined dollar amount, a Call for Proposals, and evaluating rubric

#### Award funds for projects and closely track projects using the Green Revolving Investment Tracking System (GRITS)

### Retrofit all outdoor lighting to high efficiency LED lighting and provide resources to students for lighting education and LED lighting options

Key Partners: Division of Operations, Facilities,

### Install a second solar thermal array on South Complex to provide heat and hot water to the south campus residence complex

Key Partners: Division of Operations, Facilities,

### Install EV Charging station(s) on campus to serve student, staff, faculty, and community to support low carbon transportation infrastructure