

## Environmental Sustainability – a Policy Development Model

Environmental Sustainability can be defined as the ability to meet the needs of today's people and environment without compromising that of subsequent generations. When a program seeks to create sustainability, it aims to create an environment that can renew itself without damage to future stakeholders. Sustainability means long-term cultural, ecological and economic health and vitality. Environmental Sustainability is a process that maintains and enhances economic opportunity and community well-being for every segment of society while protecting and restoring the natural and social environment upon which people and economies depend. Sustainability so defined calls for actions which are ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially just and humane.

As a public institution, Everett Community College has an ethical and civic obligation to safeguard a critical public resource – the natural environment. The College also has a duty to establish physical environments and organizational practices that are conducive to student learning and the health, well-being, and effectiveness of all people within the College. Everett Community College can have an impact on environmental sustainability and environmental justice by insuring that principles and core concepts of environmental sustainability are a driving force in our partnerships with the community-at-large and a key factor in every aspect of our operations and implementations.

This purpose of this policy is to pursue responsible environmental sustainability as a matter of public policy consistent with the College's primary educational mission.

### **A. Community**

Everett Community College is committed to playing a constructive and collaborative role in the life of the surrounding community, including those who are underserved and underrepresented. We shall maintain a positive and proactive role in communicating with the surrounding community regarding our environmental activities and performance including an annual report on efforts made by the College prepared by the President or his/her designee.

By modeling good environmental practices, providing forums for the community, and helping to prepare the workforce for an environmentally sustainable economy, we shall partner with the community towards an ecologically sound future. With sustainability in mind, we shall also partner with the business community (especially green businesses and green economy industries) to help insure 1) that we are training workers for the coming wave of green jobs and 2) that these jobs will provide good pay, good benefits, and healthful working conditions.

### **B. Operations**

Everett Community College shall integrate the values of sustainability, stewardship, and resource conservation in the way we interact with our physical environment. We shall make decisions to improve the long-term quality and regenerative capacity of the environmental, social, and economic systems that support the College's activities and needs. We shall engage in pollution prevention activities and develop and promote practices that maximize beneficial effects and minimize harmful effects of operations and activities on the surrounding environment.

Where possible, these efforts shall be carried out in a way that saves significant financial resources through energy and other resource conservation efforts and that also enhances our working and learning environments, thereby improving productivity on many levels.

To this end, the College will establish the following:

**1. Maximum resource efficiency and materials conservation:**

- a. Everett Community College is committed to maximizing energy efficiency throughout the College, but particularly in heating, cooling, lighting, information technology, mechanical, and water systems. It is the goal of the College to reduce dramatically our energy consumption for existing buildings and for all new buildings to exceed the State of Washington Building Code Title 24 energy efficiency requirements by no less than 35%.
- b. The College is committed to the goal of maximum use of renewable-energy sources and the reduction of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. To this end, the College will create a plan to reduce its current greenhouse gas emissions caused by energy consumption and establish a plan and a timetable to meet concrete, achievable goals and targets.
- c. The College is committed to the reduction of water consumption for all uses, including for irrigation and domestic purposes. The College shall carry out a water-use audit and establish appropriate but aggressive water reduction goals and measures.
- d. The College is committed to waste source reduction, the reduction of consumption and the re-use of materials and shall establish and implement appropriate procedures consistent with these commitments.
- e. The College is committed to comprehensive recycling (when reduction and re-use are not effective) and as a means to transform waste into a resource. A comprehensive recycling plan (including a community education component) for paper, cardboard, bottles and cans shall be funded and implemented.
- f. The College is committed to the elimination of solid waste— primarily through reduction of consumption and waste source reduction, secondarily through reuse, and finally through recycling. It is the goal of the College to reduce our solid waste output from current levels.
- g. The College is committed to composting food waste and biodegradable bio-mass material and shall establish and implement appropriate procedures consistent with these commitments.

**2. Sustainable design principles in land-use, transportation, landscape and building planning and maintenance.**

- a. All bond, facilities and instructional equipment expenditures shall comply with this policy.
- b. Everett Community College is committed to sustainable landscaping and grounds design, construction and maintenance practices which promote integrated pest management and use of drought tolerant, fire safe, and native vegetation types and shall establish and implement appropriate procedures consistent with these commitments.
- c. The College is committed to pedestrian travel, bicycle use, public transportation and otherwise minimum environmental impact modes of transportation and shall implement policies, procedures and practices promoting such.



- d. The College is committed to utilizing LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or equivalent certification criteria in all of its renovation over 10,000 square feet and in existing and all new-building construction. All new building projects shall qualify for at least LEED NC Silver certification and shall strive for higher levels of certification, especially where overall long-term building operations, student learning, and worker productivity savings can be realized through doing so. All renovation projects over 10,000 square feet shall meet basic "LEED Existing Building" (LEED EB) certification standards. The College will adopt this policy and create a plan to meet a minimum of LEED EB Basic certification for all existing buildings within the College, except those buildings primarily used for storage or other structures with minimal energy and environmental impacts. All buildings shall be maintained and/or regularly re-commissioned to insure the integrity of their environmental sustainability standards.
- e. The College is committed to maintaining an environmentally friendly and healthful campus environment, including the maintenance of well-ventilated, chemical-free indoor airspaces that take into consideration and mitigate the adverse sensitivity experienced by students, employees and members of the community to chemicals, perfumes, colognes, soaps, and other artificial scents and strong odors. Procedures and practices consistent with this commitment shall be established dealing both with institutional practices (e.g., use of low and no VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints and low-toxicity cleaning supplies, establishing clear construction protocols with contractors, etc.) as well as the personal behavior of individuals (e.g., discouraging instructor or student use of strongly scented products, implementation and enforcement of no-smoking policies).
- f. The College shall establish a system to promote environmental sustainability in our contracts and purchasing by including environmental sustainability as a criterion for the point evaluation of vendors and contractors doing business with Everett Community College and including environmental sustainability criteria in all of our RFP/bidding processes.
- g. Operations and Facilities planning shall be tightly coordinated with Educational Master Planning in general and with sustainable educational programming in particular so as to maximize both apprenticeship and job training opportunities for our students as well as to maximize environmental sustainability teaching and learning opportunities in our educational programs.

### **3. Environmentally Responsible Purchasing Policies:**

- a. Everett Community College recognizes that environmentally responsible purchasing will help create and sustain markets for environmentally sustainable products.
- b. The College is committed to and encourages the procurement of products and services that have a lesser or reduced adverse effect on human health and the environment when compared to other products and services that serve the same purpose with comparable efficacy. The long-term goal of this policy is to purchase products with zero waste, high recycled content, produced and delivered in an environmentally sustainable manner, and which demonstrate, through lifecycle accounting, maximum durability or biodegradability, reparability, energy-efficiency, non-toxicity, and recyclability.
- c. The College shall purchase remanufactured products such as toner cartridges, tires, furniture, equipment and automotive parts whenever practicable, but without reducing safety, quality or effectiveness.

- d. All paper procured for use in Everett Community College publications, promotional materials copies, classroom and office reproduction shall have a minimum of 30% Post-Consumer Waste or of comparably sustainable alternative fiber sources. Bulk copy paper for black-and-white document reproduction (e.g., printing and photocopying) shall be of 100% Post-Consumer Waste content or of comparably sustainable alternative fiber sources. Further, all bulk copy paper purchases shall minimize environmentally harmful bleaching agents. Within one year of the adoption of this policy, the College shall have a plan to reduce or eliminate the use of petroleum-based inks in all contracted printing for Everett Community College.
- e. Because the College does not have the resources to independently verify the environmental merits of many products purchases, the College will grant preference to products that are certified by independent third-party environmental auditing and certification organizations (e.g., FSC certified lumber, Energy Star rated equipment and Green Seal approved chemicals).
- f. The College is committed to making available locally sourced, organic and/or sustainably grown food to students, employees and community members in food-services establishments throughout the College.
- g. Food services programs, caterers, vendors, departments and programs at Everett Community College are: 1) required to use recyclable utensils and serving containers unless such are not available for the purposes for which they are required; and 2) prohibited from spending College funds to procure or use polystyrene food containers, plates, and cups or glasses.
- h. It is the policy of Everett Community College to discourage the use of bottled water served in non-recyclable containers and to provide alternatives for the provision of fresh drinking water in an environmentally sustainable, hygienic, and economically thrifty manner.
- i. The College shall develop and implement procedures consistent with these policies relating to environmentally sustainable purchasing.

### **C. Implementation**

1. Integration: The College shall develop relevant sustainability criteria for processes of budgeting, facilities and land use practices, and administrative staff reviews and promotion. Such criteria, when appropriate, shall be reflected in reports and materials prepared for Board consideration.
2. Budgeting: In designing implementing procedures for this policy, the College shall look comprehensively at the project of creating an ecologically sustainable environment rather than treating it as a series of piecemeal projects. The College shall without delay prioritize such sustainability projects that promise more large-impact financial and environmental benefits. The types of long- and short-term savings shall be reflected in the overall budget for each project. As a matter of policy, we are committed to reviewing the entire long-term program and dedicating a minimum of one-third of the savings generated from long and short term cost efficiencies to pay for aspects of the program that either do not generate savings or require net expenditures by the College.
3. Participation: Consistent with the spirit of shared governance, the College recognizes that the highest quality environmental policy decisions are also the most participatory. Therefore, the College will encourage community, student, faculty, staff and administration participation in College sustainability with convenient meeting scheduling, course credit, staffing, stipends, and other incentives as can be funded.
4. Review: The College is committed to the assessment and review of the implementation of this policy and we will develop and track measures of our progress. The President, working in concert with affected stakeholders, shall establish appropriate working

committees to develop and implement strategies to further College sustainability goals. These policies shall be reviewed and updated every three years after adoption.

5. Reporting: An annual report on environmental programs and the implementation of this policy shall be presented to the Board by the end of the first calendar quarter of each year by the President or his/her designee. This report shall include quantifiable measures of major sustainability goals including but not limited to electricity and gas use, water conservation, solid waste reduction and diversion, recycling implementation, LEED building and renovation certification, greenhouse gas reductions, environmentally preferred purchasing, community relations, and the provision of environmentally sustainable food services within the College.

#### Recommended Resources

[www.planning.org/policyguides/sustainability.htm?project=Print](http://www.planning.org/policyguides/sustainability.htm?project=Print)

[www.aashe.org/resources/resource\\_center.php](http://www.aashe.org/resources/resource_center.php)

<http://www.peralta.edu/apps/comm.asp?Q=352>

<http://sustainability.uoregon.edu/>