

Proposal for a Sustainability Council in TCNJ governance.
Brian Potter December 2018

The College's institutions and resources to promote environmental sustainability have not kept pace with the societal need for education and for reducing the campus's carbon footprint. Particularly strikingly, TCNJ's sustainability measures consistently have lagged behind those of peer institutions. Transforming the ad hoc "President's Climate Commitment Committee" (PC3) to a council within formal governance is one straightforward yet efficient means of improving TCNJ's sustainability measures and public profile. While PC3 was created in 2007 with the scant resources available at the time and has made notable achievements, continued progress towards environmental sustainability and towards student education around sustainability requires a change in its structure and mandate.

Placing the committee in charge of sustainability into formal governance has three important advantages. First, PC3 currently reports to the President alone, alienating it from the many campus constituencies that play a role in promoting sustainability. Environmental issues are a concern of numerous units across campus and present opportunities for engaged learning, yet these possibilities remain unrealized. Second since individual's membership in PC3 is voluntary yet unrecognized, faculty members lack an incentive to join and this deprives the committee of campus expertise. Finally, the mission of PC3 is formally limited to reducing emissions yet the committee finds itself advancing other programs and policies of sustainability by default. Incorporating these efforts into the formal governance system will allow for better decisions on the proper scope of sustainability efforts while also recruiting members with diverse expertise and improving accountability.

This change is one of several complementary efforts to improve sustainability efforts on campus. PC3 is reassessing its role on campus and the resources to fulfil that. The hiring of a Sustainability Coordinator recently has become viable. The College may embark on writing a Strategic Sustainability Plan. Together with the creation of a Sustainability Council, these actions can energize campus efforts to match those of peer institutions and national expectations.

The objectives of the Sustainability Council will be to:

1. Promote sustainable practices, policies, and programs across the TCNJ campus community;
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
3. Achieve cost savings through rational use of energy and other resources;
4. Assess the vulnerability and resiliency of different groups on and off campus to environmental risk;
5. Publicize student opportunities for engaged learning experiences (i.e. research, internships, services to community) that improve sustainability using faculty and staff expertise;

6. Report successful sustainability practices and metrics to national accounting agencies (i.e. Second Nature) and to local and national public to improve TCNJ's green profile. Relatedly, providing a formal structure for TCNJ's sustainability efforts will allow Council members and others to join the national and global network of sustainability professionals.

The Sustainability Council would report to the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP) in a way similar to the other four councils. More than any other committee, CSPP recommends to the president strategic choices especially concerning on issues of budgets and cost-savings, facilities, engaged learning and other signature experiences, and the differentiated impact of the environment on societal groups. Such decisions are directly tied to the college's current strategic plan (Goal 4 under Priority 4: Incorporate sustainability practices into all academic, administrative, recreational and residential operations of the college) and hopefully to future plans.

The Sustainability Council will be co-led by the Vice President for Facilities and a faculty member. Additional voting members will include:

Faculty: Science and Engineering representatives (two representatives from the two schools);
Policy representative (faculty member from Political Science, Economics, or Sociology);
Equity representative (a faculty member from Public Health, WGS, African-American Studies, or a Humanities discipline can analyze how sustainability impacts different populations);
Education (specifically the Environmental Sustainability Education minor program);
Environmental Studies minor.

Staff: Sustainability Coordinator;
CEL Director;
Director of Energy and Central Utilities;
Director of Dining Services;
Representative from Occupational Safety and Environmental Services (recycling);
Representative from Grants and Sponsored Research;
Representative from Information Technology;
Representative from the Sustainability Institute (maybe).

Students: Representative from Student Government;
Bonner interns funded the Council;
Members of the Environmental Club and other relevant clubs.

The structure above represents an initial proposal that can be improved upon deliberations. Additional faculty, staff, and students who wish to participate may attend and participate in the discussions at the Councils meetings, most of which will be open to the entire campus community. The main objective is to improve TCNJ's sustainability performance by incorporating the governing committee into the formal governance structure.

Appendix: Names of Sustainability Councils at other universities.

<u>Committee Names</u>	<u>College/University</u>
Princeton Sustainability Committee	Princeton University
Rutgers Climate Institute	Rutgers University
Energy and Sustainability Steering Committee (ESSC)	Rider University
Carbon Commitment	Florida A&M University
Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment	Columbia University
The Climate Action Plan (CAP)	Cornell University
William Paterson University Green Team	William Paterson University
Center of Environmental Public Policy (CEPP)	UC Berkeley
Hofstra University Center for Climate Study (HUCCS)	Hofstra University
St. John's Sustainability Initiative (STJSI)	St. John's University
Vassar Sustainability	Vassar College
Colgate's Sustainability and Climate Action Planning	Colgate University
The Campus Environment Committee (CEC)	Skidmore College
Bard College Sustainability Council	Bard College
Second Nature's Carbon Commitment	St. Lawrence University
Creation Care	Houghton College
The Baltimore Environmental Exchange (BEE) Network	Stevenson University
Student Environmental Alliance (SEA)	Washington College
Climate Action Steering Committee	University of Maryland
Climate Leadership Commitment	Bowie State University
University Sustainability Taskforce (UST)	Coppin State University
Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC)	University of Pennsylvania
President's Environmental Sustainability Committee (PESC)	Villanova University
Lehigh University Climate Commitment	Lehigh University
Carbon Leadership Commitment	Swarthmore College
Committee on Environmental Responsibility (CER)	Bates College
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	College of the Atlantic
City of Portland's Sustainability Plan	University of South Florida
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)	Berry College
Climate @ Emory	Emory University
The Center of Sustainability	Aquinas College
Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy System	Syracuse University
Sustainability Committee (ACES)	Linfield College
Sustainability and Climate Change Task Force	New Mexico State University
Ecological Stewardship Committee	Goshen College
Campus Sustainability	University of Wyoming
The Study Group on Climate Change (SGCC)	Smith College
Environment and Sustainability	University of Colorado
The Climate Leadership Network Steering Committee	Virginia Wesleyan University