

**President's Working Group on Sustainable Education, Research, and Operations
Recommendations for undergraduate and graduate sustainable education**

December 2019

Sustainability education and research at USC aims to advance understanding of the threats posed by climate change and other dangerous environmental trends to the well-being of people and planet.

UNDERGRADUATE

Recommendation for Two Foundational Undergraduate Courses in Sustainability

Objective – To equip every undergraduate student to chart their own course of education and civic engagement with sufficient awareness of the threats posed by climate change and other dangerous environmental trends to the well-being of people and planet.

Strategy: Require all undergraduates to take two Foundational Sustainability courses that focus on how the existential threat of climate change is understood and approached through the lens of the school/field/discipline offering the course(s).

Implementation:

1. Introductory Sustainability Course

- *Require* every student to take an introductory course in Sustainability in their freshman year/first two semesters.
- *Allow* Sustainability introductory courses to be “GE tagged” (double counted) if they satisfy an existing GE or freshman-writing requirement.

2. Experiential Learning Sustainability Course

- *Require* every student to take a Sustainability experiential learning course or a supervised Sustainability research activity as a condition of graduation during their tenure at USC

3. General Provisions for Foundational Sustainability Courses

- Enrollment in Sustainability introductory and experiential courses should be seamless (*no D clearance*).
- Introductory and experiential Sustainability courses offered jointly across schools/fields/disciplines with joint-attribution should be encouraged.
- Joint-school/field/discipline introductory courses should be supported by school(s) and the university.
- Class size for experiential learning courses should be limited to 20-25 students.
- The pedagogy of experiential learning will vary, including though not limited to team projects and research on campus and in the community, field-based projects and research, client-sponsored projects and research, service-focused projects and research, individual directed field projects and research.
- Sustainability designated courses should be prominently displayed and accessible for enrollment by all USC undergraduate students.
- The number, name, and enrollment of undergraduate Sustainability-designated courses should be collected annually by the offering schools and shared with the Provost.

Recommendations for Advanced Undergraduate Sustainable Education

Objective – To create options that allow interested undergraduates to pursue majors and minors focused on sustainability, unconstrained by the various administrative/budgetary boundaries of departments and schools

Strategy: Create incentives and support for USC schools that are committed to providing in-depth sustainable education and co-curricular activities. Schools that make this commitment should be

recognized through designation as a *USC Sustainability School*. The designation would ensure the School of recognition and priority in university support and funding.

Implementation:

- Request for Sustainability School designation should be approved by the faculty and administration of the school, and university governing bodies.
- Sustainability Schools should be required to provide:
 - A Vision Statement
A school-relevant definition of sustainability as it relates to its fields/disciplines to guide faculty, students, and class creation, approved by the Provost.
 - Sustainability Minors
Provide one or more Sustainability minors within the school as extension of the foundational Sustainability courses in the school.
Participate in joint-school/field/discipline Sustainability minors.
 - Sustainability Majors
Develop as many Sustainability majors as feasible.
Develop as many joint-school and joint-fields/discipline majors as feasible.
 - Sustainability Co-Curricular Activities
Provide within school and participate in joint-school sustainability co-curricular activities, e.g., symposia, conferences, speaker series, artistic displays and performances, school-community activities.
- Sustainability Schools should be required to submit a 5-year *Sustainability Educational Plan* with a summary of existing activities within the school and cross-school, and new/proposed within and across schools for review and approval by the Provost.
- Approved Sustainability education 5-year school plans should undergo an internal review in the 3rd year, submitted to the Provost.

Recommendations for University Support of Sustainability Undergraduate Education

Convening and Outreach

- Host an annual USC President’s sustainability campus/community event highlighting the richness of the experience in sustainability learning at USC – courses, research, co-curricular activities, Clubs, community engagement activities, etc.
- Reach out to public, private, and non-profit communities in Sustainability educational and engagement activities, within the Los Angeles region and beyond.
- Enhance USC sustainability education through participation in multi-university sustainability groups and associations.
- Reach out to other universities in collaborative sustainability efforts within the Los Angeles region and beyond.

Internal Support and Activities

- Support the development of “new” sustainability introductory and experiential learning course; joint-school, jointly taught Sustainability introductory and experiential course, and; joint school Sustainability minors and majors curriculum plans.
- Secure scholarships for sustainability majors with demonstrated commitment to sustainability in courses, co-curricular activities, and in the community.
- Encourage USC administrative to engage and mentor students, e.g. housing, residential education, orientation programs, etc.
- Produce enrollment modules for undergraduate applicants and admitted students focused on student engagement in sustainability activities/courses/research/outreach
- Produce an annual university summary of undergraduate student activities including a survey of student awareness and enrollment in sustainability courses, participation in sustainability co-

curricular activities, involvement in faculty sustainability research, and level of concern with sustainability issues.

GRADUATE

Curricular Requirements

The Working Group does not recommend any university-wide courses or curricular requirements for graduate-level sustainability education or programs. This is based on the belief that the graduate curriculum should be the purview of professional and doctoral programs commensurate with market demands in their area of expertise and specialization.

University Support

The university should support development of graduate-level sustainability courses, certificates, degrees, and co-curricular activities that span two or more schools, fields or disciplines.

It should also seek student scholarship for those enrolled in multi-school Sustainability masters and doctoral degree programs as the university strives to be a place where students and faculty are at the leading edge of sustainability scholarship.