The UI Office of Sustainability and the Environment (OSE), housed within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), provides a base for coordinating programs across the campus community and brings greater emphasis to the mission of sustainability education and research.

The OSE supports connections among existing academic programs, faculty research, and outreach efforts, as well as coordinates initiatives for a more sustainable community.

**OUR MISSION**

**CHALLENGE** and **INSPIRE** the greater University of Iowa community in striving for excellence in systems-based solutions for the GRAND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES of the 21st century through impactful transdisciplinary education, research, and service.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The UI Office of Sustainability and the Environment (OSE), housed within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), provides a base for coordinating programs across the campus community and brings greater emphasis to the mission of sustainability education and research.

The OSE supports connections among existing academic programs, faculty research, and outreach efforts, as well as coordinates initiatives for a more sustainable community.
The OSE Program Managers contribute to campus-wide sustainability-focused education, research and engagement programs, relevant at local, regional, national, and global scales. This role supports the development of faculty and student related education, research, outreach, and internships around sustainability and environmental themes (e.g. environmental justice, energy-water-food, public health, business, engineering, arts and humanities, urbanization and climate change; environmental, economic, and cultural resiliency).

Other duties include leading involvement and engagement in UI sustainability initiatives; coordinating capacity-building activities for faculty and research partners; assessing the impact and effectiveness of sustainability education, research, and engagement at The University of Iowa; as well as supervising student interns in order to support goals of the OSE.

The OSE supports three full-time staff employees along with a number of project lead interns. These roles include a full-time Program Director, two full-time Program Managers, and upwards of ten project lead interns.

**Program Director**

The OSE Program Director supports initiatives, programs and services related to sustainability and the environment; counsels and provides liaison with appropriate individuals and agencies regarding sustainability programs and services; administers the operational and financial activities of the OSE; directs and evaluates the OSE’s sustainability programs and services; and analyzes data for sustainability quality improvement initiatives.

**Program Managers**

The OSE Program Managers contribute to campus-wide sustainability-focused education, research and engagement programs, relevant at local, regional, national, and global scales. This role supports the development of faculty and student related education, research, outreach, and internships around sustainability and environmental themes (e.g. environmental justice, energy-water-food, public health, business, engineering, arts and humanities, urbanization and climate change; environmental, economic, and cultural resiliency).

Other duties include leading involvement and engagement in UI sustainability initiatives; coordinating capacity-building activities for faculty and research partners; assessing the impact and effectiveness of sustainability education, research, and engagement at The University of Iowa; as well as supervising student interns in order to support goals of the OSE.

**Project Lead Interns**

The Project Lead interns act as ambassadors for the OSE; identifying, planning and leading campus sustainability projects; meeting with students concerning OSE operations, or interest in programs; maintaining relationships with student organizations and relevant campus and community stakeholders; assisting the Program Managers and Director with relevant tasks; collaborating with OSE staff to create appropriate metrics to measure sustainability efforts on campus; and collecting and compiling relevant data for the University's sustainability goals.
The following departments, committees, and boards directly support, advise, and/or assist the OSE to advance the OSE’s mission.

**Facilities Management**

The University’s Facilities Management (FM) Department created the Office of Sustainability in 2010 and led the University in developing a campus-wide vision for sustainability. After seven years of heavy focus and significant progress towards operational sustainability goals, FM collaborated with the Provost’s Office to shift the focus of the Office of Sustainability and put greater emphasis on integrating sustainability into academics and research. FM continues to provide support to the OSE, primarily by funding 50% of one Program Manager position.

**Sustainability Charter Committee**

The Presidential Sustainability Charter Committee (SCC) was created in order to independently advise the UI President and Administration on the integration of sustainability with existing campus programs in education, research, operations, and community outreach. The Committee assists in engaging the campus in an ongoing dialogue about sustainability and instilling a culture of sustainable long-range planning and forward-thinking design through their respective constituencies.

The SCC also advises and makes recommendations to the President on the development and implementation of campus sustainability action plans. Members include staff, faculty, and students representing various colleges and departments on campus, as well as administrative liaisons. The SCC meets once per month. While the OSE and SCC are not linked administratively and have no formal obligations to each other, the two maintain a close relationship and collaborate on various initiatives. OSE staff and interns often hold seats on the SCC committee.

**OSE Advisory Board**

The OSE Advisory Board (AB) hosts representatives from across campus, including faculty, staff, research center leaders, and academic advisors. This AB reviews OSE progress, discusses issues, identifies long-term strategic plans, short-term goals, and key educational and outreach opportunities for the OSE. The OSE AB meets once per semester.
The OSE FY 2020-2021 Strategic Plan is assigned to the OSE team members, noted above, who are responsible for advancing plan values and elements. In the team’s various roles, their functions with regard to this Plan are to:

- Provide oversight for implementation of the Strategic Plan
- Work to make certain that efforts across the plan are aligned, communicate planning information to campus stakeholders
- Set outcomes
- Communicate and approve strategic planning initiatives and associated budgets
- Conduct and review evaluation of initiatives to determine next steps
- Utilize campus partners to develop and meet specific outcomes
- Utilize proven policies and practices to ensure progress is being made toward the strategic objectives and goals

The OSE will provide project suggestions, updates, and solicit advice of campus partners, including the Sustainability Charter Committee and Advisory Board, as the OSE seeks to ensure University-wide coordination of initiatives. The OSE assists the SCC, AB, and campus partners with ensuring and promoting wide-reaching collaboration across Colleges and departments within the University in pursuit of initiatives to ensure broad communication and alignment of sustainability initiatives.
In the summer of 2020, the OSE acknowledged that it is impossible to pursue environmental priorities, such as climate change and environmental justice, without recognizing and rectifying the deep racial and social inequalities that exist within our society, especially inequalities that stem from a legacy of systemic racism and its continued effects on Black and non-Black People of Color.

Our Strategic Plan has been updated to reflect what actions our office will take to end these inequalities. Though our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals are outlined in their own separate section, it is our intent for all OSE goals, objectives, programs, projects, office operations, and decision-making to embody our DEI goals.
Our Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Goals

- **DISMANTLE** the constructs of systemic racism within the field of sustainability, on our campus, and in our community
- **CREATE** space for Black, Indigenous and People of Color at our university, offer our tools and resources to uplift communities, and provide tangible assistance in the fight against systemic racism
- **ADOPT** and implement the goals outlined in the UI’s 2019-2021 Excellence through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan:
  - **CREATE** and sustain an inclusive and equitable campus environment
  - **RECRUIT**, retain, and advance a diverse campus community of faculty, staff, and students
  - **INTEGRATE** diversity, equity and inclusion into the university’s core academic mission of teaching, research, and service
  - **ENHANCE** campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion accountability effectiveness, and collaboration

**Critical Objectives**

- Focus on recognizing and amplifying the work and voices of Black, Indiginous, and People of Color to broaden and expand the face of the environmental movement to reflect those facing the brunt of environmental issues
- Ensure that OSE staff (including interns) are effective at promoting, modeling, and implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion core values (DEI Action Plan)
- Clearly and boldly communicate the OSE’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion via OSE programs and services (DEI Action Plan)
- Increase partnerships to develop programs that engage underrepresented groups on and off campus
- Strengthen initiatives that address students’ needs for food, clothing, safety, well-being, and financial security (DEI Action Plan)

**Outcomes & Successes**

- Expand the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) section of the OSE Strategic Plan and create a DEI action plan that is reviewed and audited annually
- Expand funding opportunities for students from underrepresented populations to partner with the OSE
- Partner with the Center for Advancement on the creation of scholarships for underrepresented students to study sustainability
- Collaborate with CLAS and other College academic departments to develop resources and advocate for inclusion of the work of activists of color in syllabi to avoid white washing sustainability history
- Dedicate space on the OSE website and social media platforms to share and promote environmental and social justice resources for students, faculty, and staff
- Communicate DEI expectations to OSE staff and incorporate DEI education and skill building opportunities into staff onboarding practices and ongoing office operations
- Develop K-12 programming focused on environmental justice and build opportunities for UI students, staff, and faculty to engage with and mentor underrepresented K-12 students
- Create environmental and social purchasing guidelines for the OSE to follow when making office purchases
- Support initiatives of the Sustainability Charter Committee specifically related to inequities in the 2030 Sustainability goals to ensure equity for all members of our university
Our Curriculum & Teaching Goals

• **ADVANCE** and improve grand challenge solutions research, scholarship, and creative activity on campus and in the wider Iowa community
• **INCREASE** student, faculty, and staff exposure to OSE efforts by improving targeted student educational engagement: community college, incoming, current, and alumni
• **CULTIVATE** and strengthen a “sustainUI” culture across programs
• **TRANSFORM** the University’s teaching and learning culture so that sustainability competency and literacy becomes a universal learning outcome

**Critical Objectives**

• Create, increase, and improve campus living laboratory opportunities
• Promote pilot programs and scalable, innovative solutions that translate grand challenge research and teaching into practice
• Ensure success of a new generation of grand challenge problem solvers by supporting mentorship opportunities, leadership opportunities, and promoting networking
• Identify and support faculty champions to lead the integration of sustainability into the curriculum with each college

**Outcomes & Successes**

• Facilitate or support the creation, improvement, or development of 2-3 campus living laboratory opportunities
• Challenge courses with project outcomes to propose engaging projects, complete actionable items to advance grand challenge solutions on greater UI Campus
• Support the creation and dissemination of formal grand challenge/systems thinking coursework, workshops, seminars
• Maintain and promote high-quality, diverse student enrollment figures for Bachelor of Science and Certificate students
• Host lectures and/or speaker series on campus for critical events
• Leverage campus partners to support research interns in grand challenges research areas
• Develop ongoing network of sustainability scholars and scientists for campus and community engagement
• Develop and disseminate culture and learning best practices for peer institutions at local, regional, and national conferences
• Assist with administering campus Sustainability Literacy Test annually to a representative sample of the undergraduate, graduate student body to demonstrate growth in student sustainability awareness, attitudes and knowledge
Our Student Life & Co-Curricular Learning Goals

- ADVISE campus partners in developing intentionally-designed programs and activities with measurable learning outcomes that are connected to explicit educational objectives of the University
- HARNESS the power of diversity and the strength of integrated knowledge to promote and support equity and inclusion
- ASSIST in creating and promoting student opportunities to develop skills and competencies as sustainability leaders

Critical Objectives

- Engage with student organizations and student groups to increase student exposure to, and involvement in, sustainability efforts
- Engage students with colleges and auxiliary units to increase staff and faculty exposure to, and involvement in, sustainability efforts
- Collaborate with Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and non-traditional sustainability student orgs to expand networks and representation in sustainability
- Connect and engage with campus, community, and industry partners to create networks and natural pathways for student professional development opportunities

Outcomes & Successes

- Host trainings, workshops or other events for all student org leaders
- Advance the integration of sustainability themes into student orgs
- Collaborate with and support sustainability-focused student orgs to advance common goals
- Engage UISG and GPSG leaders to advance student-focused sustainability initiatives
- Collaborate with UI Division of Student Life to develop and expand co-curricular experiences that achieve sustainability learning objectives
- Support new student engagement efforts with Success@Iowa, OnIowa!, Move In, and other opportunities
- Engage student interns to advance campus momentum in grand challenges projects key to OSE’s core mission
- Maintain, support, and promote student placement post-degree by hosting sustainability career forums, assisting in sustainability career fairs on campus
Our Research & Discovery Goals

- **CREATE**, advance, and excel in innovative and collaborative interdisciplinary research
- **ADVANCE** transformative knowledge capital of grand challenge theories, practices, and solutions with positive societal impacts
- **BUILD** and improve partnerships that work towards a sustainable Iowa and responds to the needs of the green economy
- **INCREASE** opportunities for advancing interdisciplinary research in health sciences to address the human health consequences of climate change and environmental degradation

**Critical Objectives**

- Coordinate and promote interdisciplinarity in use-inspired research and innovation on campus and in broader campus community
- Expand multi-disciplinary living laboratory research programs by engaging faculty and student partners for piloting and sharing innovative solutions to real-world challenges
- Compile and disseminate funding opportunities for faculty, staff and students conducting use-inspired research innovation
- Increase opportunities for more inclusive community-engaged teaching and research
- Increase support for grant development and career advancement
- Compile and disseminate research opportunities related to air quality, temperature-related death and illness, disastrous weather events contributing to infection, food and water insecurity, and overall destabilization of the global ecosystem
- Elevate climate change as the greatest health threat facing humanity and a major concern for the practice of medicine

**Outcomes & Successes**

- Develop ongoing network of sustainability scholars and scientists for campus and community engagement
- Conduct unique funding proposal search annually for the Interdisciplinary, Scalable Solutions for a Sustainable Future (ISSSF) fund
- Ensure equitable distribution of OSE initiative funds
- Support and promote ISSSF Fund project allocations, ICRU Fund project allocations, other opportunities
- Optimize and improve ICRU allocations, other student research opportunities
- Leverage campus partners, research centers, other research partnerships to increase and improve student internship, research, discovery opportunities
- Create centralized resource for sustainability research, discovery, education funding, disseminate opportunities to larger UI Community
- Conduct meaningful research into larger funding opportunities as opportunities arise
- Expand and utilize collaborative tools, such as the scientists and scholar’s database, to build and promote research networks
- Connect and leverage campus research in broader Iowa communities through Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities, Latham Science Engagement Fellowship Program, ICRU, others
- Expand connections to UI Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and other DEI groups on campus to broaden scope of engagement in research and discovery opportunities
- Communicate the health challenges posed by climate change and other environmental concerns
- Advocate for, and assist with, incorporating the human health consequences of climate change into medical school curriculum
- Increase healthcare administration knowledge and understanding of how climate change will affect the practice of medicine
Our Community Outreach & Engagement Goals

**PROMOTE** OSE and OSE-partner advancements in use-inspired research for grand challenges locally, state-wide, and nationally

**EXPAND** and leverage corporate and non-profit funding and partnerships

**DEVELOP** programs that accelerate and expand the commitment to sustainable practices in the public and private sectors

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**Critical Objectives**

- Expand use-inspired research initiatives with campus partners such as: CHEEC, PPC, CGRER, IISC, IIHR, IFC, LACMERS and others
- Maintain robust, focused and sustained local, regional and global partnerships
- Conduct strong alumni engagement and maintain communication networks for improved job placement opportunities
- Engage sustainability professionals to ensure on-campus training and initiatives are appropriately anticipating post-degree professional advancement landscape

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**Outcomes & Successes**

- Increase student engagement with use-inspired work via organized field trips to farms, rivers, prairies, other corridor locations to promote importance of use-inspired work
- Create, optimize, and promote student-alumnus mentorship programs
- Create and expand engagement opportunities of University research and educational efforts locally, within the state, and the region
- Incentivize and recognize faculty and staff participation in sustainability initiatives, mentorship programs, partnership building opportunities
- Strategically promote courses with integrated community sustainability engagement (project-based, living laboratory ideas, etc.)
- Renew focus on improving Kirkwood/UI 2+2, 1+3 opportunities to ensure student success
- Engage College, Unit and Center opportunities to explore the expansion of 2+2 to community colleges in the Corridor, Eastern Iowa communities
- Engage campus programs excelling in student-driven K-12 outreach programs to include sustainability, use-inspired research, living laboratories, other opportunities
- Promote accessible ways to be sustainable on and off campus to engage larger campus group sustainability involvement
Our Campus Environment Goals

- **ADVOCATE** for changes that enhance our operations to adapt and combat the effects of human-induced climate change
- **SUPPORT** and promote University 2020 Sustainability goals
- **ENGAGE** with campus stakeholders to assist in developing the next set of Campus Sustainability Goals that will deliver the greatest impact through focused acceleration
- **SERVE** as a catalyst, coach, consultant, and convening place for designing and piloting sustainability solutions
- **ASSIST** in administration of P3 utility related activities

**Critical Objectives**

- Assist the University in maintaining a long-term commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the maximum practicable rate, aligned with the United Nations IPCC recommendations to reduce emissions
- Promote “green” university energy portfolio, reaching aggressive percent renewable energy consumption statistics on campus
- Support colleges and other campus units in creating and owning their sustainability programs and activities
- Engage the Sustainability Charter Committee and leadership to advance institutional sustainability programs and initiatives

**Outcomes & Successes**

- Engage, assist, and collaborate with colleges and auxiliary unit leadership in making appropriate, meaningful, cost-efficient changes
- Assist in reaching University 2020 goals and aid in promoting successes across campus community
- Track and report 2020 Sustainability Goals, report on areas of success and areas of needed attention
- Create mechanism to draft, publish, and support new University Sustainability goals, create system to track and report new goals
- Aid Sustainability Charter Committee in areas as requested (i.e. conducting a University-wide on-site renewable energy study to inform goal setting by the Energy Management Committee of the SCC)
- Compile and share best practices resources for managing and operating in a sustainable manner in order to assist facilities teams in meeting sustainability-related goals, standards, and commitments.
Critical Objectives

- Develop and implement strategies for incorporating sustainability into employee onboarding, staff professional development and employee outreach
- Increase support for grant development and career advancement
- Finalize “rebrand” of the Office of Sustainability and the Environment in new reporting, admin structure
- Engage with University and College Staff Councils to develop and distribute staff resources and to advance college/departmental programs and activities

Outcomes & Successes

- Engage internal and external advisors to identify, expand, and promote sustainability course offerings across interdisciplinary departments
- Maintain increased, consistent, thoughtful and impactful digital presence on all platforms
- Develop a brand manual and best practices for “sustain UI” brand and culture
- Provide and promote opportunities for staff, faculty, and student recognition of excellent and impactful research, pedagogy, and engagement
- Create and disseminate annual sustainability report to leadership and greater University community
- Engage OSE Advisory Board to review progress, discuss issues, identify long-term strategic plans, short-term goals, and key educational and outreach opportunities
- Develop a communications plan and master list of communication networks and contacts