Sustainable Development Task Force

Charter

1. Purpose

The State System Sustainable Development Task Force (SDTF) provides leadership and advisement for state system initiatives related to the conservation of System resources, support of environmental, climate and social justice issues, and the preparation of System students to become the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and entrepreneurs needed to help the Commonwealth face a myriad of profound environmental challenges. The SDTF also provides information and advisement regarding current and future environmental crises, specifically those impacting the System and the Commonwealth. The SDTF supports the universities in developing and delivering their collective and individual sustainability outcomes, and will work together to develop collaborative strategies and share best practices that foster desired outcomes and remove real or perceived obstacles that impede change, students' success, and the ability of the State System to meet the mitigative and adaptive needs of the future.

Objectives

This group has the following major objectives:

- Strategic Direction
  1. Develop SDTF goals/objectives and coordinate with the strategic direction of the State System to ensure that actions of the SDTF support the vision and values established by the Board of Governors.
  2. Act as advisors by providing current environmental data, climate projections, and sustainability recommendations for use in State System Strategic Planning.

- Interdependent Accountability
  1. Propose initiatives that have promise and, if existing initiatives at any university in the System are progressing appropriately towards their stated goals and outcomes, share these best practices.
  2. Support individual university and State System agreed-upon sustainability goals; recommending, when necessary, action(s) to maintain success and/or to improve performance.
  3. Help leverage System talent and resources, and align the efforts of different teams, by identifying, communicating, and coordinating major sustainability actions taken by groups across the System.
  4. Communicate risks, issues or matters of concern encountered by the various groups, along with recommendations for change, to the Chancellor.

- System Operations Management
  1. Serve as good stewards of the State System and the planet, recommending decisions that balance efficiency, consistency, and desired outcomes with environmental and human health.
  2. Recommend strategies that benefit the State System budget and the environment coincidently.
  3. Identify opportunities to improve the State System environmental and wellness practices through the recommendation of new policies or modification to existing ones for Board consideration.
  4. Recommend programmatic initiatives to improve sustainable development.
  5. Consult and advise with each other on initiatives, best practices, and lessons learned while actively sharing ideas.

- Leadership Development
  1. Recommend, design, and expand professional opportunities to support environmental sustainability initiatives within our State System.

2. Model, promote, and recognize behaviors that strengthen our State System, surrounding communities, and our environment.
3. Maintain and implement initiatives that foster environmental, climate, and social justice to ensure that our State System is protecting the environment and human health.

- Organizational Culture
   1. Model and promote a culture of collaboration, inclusion, innovation, and transformation throughout our State System.
   2. Identify opportunities to improve our State System's response to climate change.
- System Redesign
   1. Support System redesign and champion the adoption of a sharing system to promote university success, student success, collaborative governance, and environmental sustainability.
   2. Develop recommendations or work products produced through System Redesign.

3. Guiding Principles
The following guiding principles will drive decision-making activities of the SDTF:
- Balance the needs of individual universities and the needs of the State System with the reality of how Earth's profound environmental challenges will likely impact the System in the future.
- Improve the financial position at each university by recommending cost saving, environmentally friendly, and justice-oriented changes.
- Encourage (where appropriate) standardization and consistency.
- Support and champion the sharing-system operating model.

4. Membership
Membership of this group consists of the following:
- Chancellor or designee (as appropriate) as a non-voting member.
- Representatives of individual universities who volunteer to assist the task force with researching, sharing and recommending academic and facilities best practices and other sustainability-related initiatives.
- Students, who are encouraged to participate as members.

5. Roles and Responsibilities
a. Chair Responsibilities - The chair of the SDTF shall be determined by a majority vote of the SDTF members.
   - Work with members to develop the agenda.
   - Facilitate meetings appropriately, with minor decisions approved by a majority vote of the SDTF members in attendance at the meeting.
   - Report (with fidelity) to the Chancellor's Office and other groups the issues, meeting outcomes, recommendations, and other substance as is deemed necessary to facilitate effective leadership of the State System, with such reports being approved by a majority vote of all SDTF members.
   - Ensure follow up on all action items with appropriate feedback processes.
   - Ensure administrative support to the SDTF, including documenting notes, decisions and action items.
   - Identify information that is confidential and not to be shared with other groups.
   - The Chancellor, at the Chancellor's sole discretion, may add any other item that the Chancellor deems appropriate for seeking the input of the SDTF.
b. SDTF Member Responsibilities (SDTF Members are Designees of the Presidents of each university):
   - Balance the needs of one's own individual university, the State System, and the planet.

- Attend meetings and actively participate in deliberations and policy decision-making.
- Prepare and fully engage in meetings, contribute to dialogue, make recommendations and assess outcomes.
- The SDTF recognizes that each university is a separately accredited institution and as such, university presidents have obligations to their respective institution. Moreover, nothing in this Charter is intended to conflict with or otherwise diminish the statutorily defined powers and duties (as set forth in Act 188 of 1982) or Board of Governors' policies of the presidents and the Chancellor.
- Any president may, with the approval of the Chancellor, request other matters be brought to the SDTF for discussion and input.
- Exhibit the values and behaviors as referenced in the section below.

6. **Group Actions**
   This group will function as an advisor to the Chancellor's Office and will provide leadership, input, advice, and guidance to the Chancellor on matters as outlined in this charter. Every member of the group has an equal voice at the table and every member should work collaboratively to fully engage in meetings and document decisions that are made by the group.

7. **Interactions with Other Groups**
   The Sustainable Development Task Force will interact with the following:
   - Individual University Facilities Groups, Sustainability Departments, Academic Departments, Contracting Officers, Procurement Departments, PASSHE technical consultant Penn State Facilities Engineering Institute (PSFEI), APSCUF faculty union, and other university and PASSHE support groups, as well as independent consultants, as necessary to provide sound recommendations the Chancellor's office.

8. **Meetings**
   The Sustainable Development Task Force will meet *monthly* or more frequently as necessary.

Values, Behaviors, and Member Commitments

Values and Associated Behaviors

1. **Show Respect**
   We approach relationships with inclusion, compassion, intellectual curiosity, and humility, and will:
   - Value diversity of thought and include viewpoints from all levels and locations in decision making
   - Listen to gain understanding
   - Encourage rigorous, respectful debate and demonstrate support for resulting decisions
   - Assume that every member of the team is operating with good intent
   - Engage all ideas and opinions, contributions, or expertise, in public and private, before coming to a decision
   - Support decisions after they are made

2. **Offer Trust**
   We enable collaboration, risk-taking, empowerment, growth and accountability to:
   - Create a safe place in the SDTF to work, discuss, debate, invite, and support courageous conversation
   - Treat each other with respect and civility

- Treat feedback in the spirit in which it is given. Give it with empathy, seek and receive it with humility
- Make time for personal connections
- Have the courage to be vulnerable, to admit to not knowing the answers, to uncertainty, even to fear
- Work towards the common good *i.e. the broader interests of the whole and the planet*

3. **Be Transparent**
We work in a manner that is open, honest and positive to:
- Spot areas where confusion exists and become part of the solution to clarify
- Address yourself directly in a timely manner to people with whom you have issues or questions
- Share information that is critical in framing and supporting discussion, decision making, or might be helpful to another member
- Work to minimize surprises
- Present challenges to an issue before the decision is finalized
- Ask questions if there is ambiguity, concern, or misunderstanding
- Rein in rumors and toxic narratives
- Seek ways to diffuse tension and conflict before problems and concerns become crisis. Be proactive.

4. **Create Positive Energy**
We engage each other in the joyful, continuous pursuit of becoming our best, authentic selves and will:
- Interact with people more than devices (*Personal interaction over using technology, phone call over email, zoom with video if possible)*
- Show **genuine** interest in others and their ideas
- Invest in others' success
- Engage in conversation, mentally and physically – (be mindful that body language and tone impact team dynamics)
- Bring optimism and be willing to suspend disbelief in our ability to succeed
- Search out strengths in people and ideas and build upon them
- Engage with good will when challenging an idea
- Direct our work toward the future and solutions while understanding our history and challenges
- Accept the fact that not all ideas are feasible or best, and focus efforts on those that are most likely to succeed and have the largest environmental/human benefit

5. **Use Analytical Rigor, Judgment, & Experience**
We engage in rigorous analysis of issues through discussions and <u>science</u>, not opinion, personality or political positioning, to drive our recommendations, and:
- Wherever possible, offer input to discussion based on data or testable hypotheses
- Support efforts to standardize metrics and data definitions in order that discussions and recommendations are informed by meaningful analyses
- Understand that the data for your campus may differ from other universities

Our Commitments to One Another
- We recognize that we will have triple responsibilities – to our universities, our System, and our Earth – that is, the 14 universities and the Chancellor's office operating as part of a single corporate

entity - that exhibits commitment to, and transparency in, executing environmental, social responsibility, and good governance ("ESG") standards

- We work together to ensure leadership teams are safe, inclusive places to share
- We trust the process, uphold confidentiality, and use thoughtful discretion in what we share
- We commit to being fully present, to engaging in conversations, to having the courage to admit to uncertainty, not knowing, etc.
- We are analytically rigorous in our work and data-driven in our discussions and decision making
- We have a collective responsibility to the team's health, energy, and progress, and to listening to, caring for and supporting its members
- We are committed to understanding each other's institutional circumstances and pressure points
- We value and rely on each other's skills, capabilities, and perspectives
- We try to keep each other informed of major concerns, issues of a cross-cutting nature by looking around corners and sharing what we see
- We use each other as sounding boards
- We fulfill commitments or communicate stumbling blocks before they become larger issues
- We commit to mentoring, supporting, and orienting new members of the group
- We openly share best practices and offer advice and assistance to each other
- We call each other out when we think there is bad behavior or that we are acting outside our values
- We aspire to do what is right as opposed to doing what is politically expedient
- We are clear about the purpose of any discussion, about how decisions are made, and when decisions are made about how and to whom they will be communicated
- When a debate is over, we speak with <u>one</u> voice in support of the decision and enforce decisions that are made