

Library Sustainability 2030 Plan

The [UVA Sustainability 2020-2030 plan](#) prioritizes sustainability as a key component in the "Great and Good" plan and sets ambitious goals for the University to achieve by 2030. Achieving the University's goals will take active participation by organizational and individual stakeholders across Grounds.

In August 2021, the Library Sustainability Working Group (LSWG) received the charge to:

Lead the creation of the University of Virginia Library's Sustainability Plan to support the University's specific goals to "advance sustainability leadership and impact by incorporating environmental, economic and equity considerations in decision-making" by 2030.

In conducting our work, the LSWG worked closely with the Office of Sustainability at the University. Our efforts included:

- Review of previous work done at the Library regarding sustainability, including information gathered by the GreenLib committee, a study done by students, and Delta Force projects within library buildings.
- Review of available data related to sustainability. Much of this data was provided by the Office of Sustainability in partnership with facilities management. While we sought out data related to collections and research support, we discovered that in most cases current Library assessment practices did not support easy retrieval of information related to sustainability (in part due to its complexity and interdisciplinary nature). And certain data such as water consumption and waste production was collected by zone, grouping several buildings, rather than entities, meaning the Library's impact in these areas could not be quantified.
- Scan of the Library literature
- Survey of other Academic Library sustainability plans
- Gathering of stakeholder input
- Brainstorming and idea Mapping
- Vision, Mission, Strategy, and Goal identification

The LSWG is indebted, as well, to the work of the Library Inclusive Excellence committee. Sustainability is inextricably tied to equity. Any sustainability work must be done with an equity lens, and with the awareness that climate change has drastically more impact on local and global communities that are already threatened by racial inequities. The goals stated here should be understood as interwoven with the Library and the University's progress toward diversity and equity, as reflected in the [Inclusive Excellence plan](#).

The LSWG acknowledges that environmental and social sustainability are an important part of the health of our community. Further, we recognize that sustainability is interwoven with the health of individuals and communities. As we enact our plan, we will proceed with the knowledge that "health and sustainability must be conceived as a duality in which each creates and conditions the other." (Kj?rgård, Land, et al., 2014)

The LSWG, in partnership with the Office of Sustainability, has defined a Vision for Sustainability at the Library, as well as a trio of dimensions and subsets of goals that will - among other efforts - embrace, incorporate, and achieve the Library's responsibility of being a strong partner in the University's 2030 Sustainability plan.

Our Vision:

"Positioned at the intellectual and social crossroads of the University, the Library will partner with the University and broader community to better steward our resources; collaborate in sustainability education, research, and outreach; and act responsibly within our environment and our community. We will do this through:

- **Innovative adaptation of our spaces and services**
- **Deep collaboration in research, curriculum, and engagement**
- **Responsible and value-driven stewardship of resources**
- **Consistent and thoughtful reevaluation of our goals, efforts, and outcomes**

To achieve this vision, we have identified goals that fall within three dimensions. These dimensions are Resources, Activities, and Advocacy. Each of these dimensions includes goals, along with identified actions that can be implemented to ensure progress.

Resources

"The Library will become a leader in the sustainable allocation and use of resources through our Facilities and Technologies, our Resource Consumption, and our Collections and Archives." The Resources dimension includes the physical and financial assets of the Library. These include our physical facilities and office spaces, technology, and vehicles that make up most of our "footprint". This dimension most closely aligns to the "Steward" area of the University's 2030 Goals.

- Goal: Reduce energy consumption in Library spaces
 - Action: Request Delta Force analysis of Ivy Stacks and other library spaces to determine energy efficiency and potential areas of improvement such as time of use, hours of operation, and temperature setbacks.
 - Action: Eliminate use of individual heaters, microwaves, refrigerators, and similar equipment
 - Action: Modify environmental conditions within Library spaces to balance collection needs with energy use, following data from Delta Force and/or outside specialists
 - Action: Assess and monitor space use to balance access to Library spaces vs. sustainability

- Goal: Reduce water use. The University seeks to reduce potable water consumption to 30% of 2010 benchmark levels. The Library will seek to achieve the same waste production goal within our spaces and use.
- Goal: Eliminate fossil fuel use
 - Action: Convert all library vehicles to fossil fuel free alternatives by 2050
- Goal: Minimize waste. The University seeks to reduce waste production to 30% of 2010 benchmark levels. The Library will seek to achieve the same waste production goal within our spaces and use.
 - Action: Conduct a waste audit to determine categories and sources of waste produced by each library
 - Action: Decrease production and consumption of paper products
 - Action: Increase availability and knowledge of compost, recycling, and re-use
 - Action: Campaign in public spaces to reduce unnecessary printing
 - Action: Ensure Library events meet the highest standards of sustainability (food choices, composting, reuse, etc.)
- Goal: Prioritize spending with vendors who engage in sustainable practices and on sustainable products
 - Action: Analyze current spending practices and determine methods for assessing the “sustainability” of vendors in various areas of the library (collections, catering, office supplies, technology, etc.)

Activities

“The Library will become a leader in sustainability by advancing sustainability Education, Research, and Outreach across Grounds and our greater community through advanced Engagement & Outreach.” The Activities Dimension includes the variety of roles the library plays in teaching, research, and programming at the University. This area most closely aligns to the “Discover” area of the University’s 2030 Goals.

- Goal: Create a standing committee to coordinate and monitor progress toward sustainability goals
- Goal: Develop an accountability plan to measure and report on progress toward goals
- Goal: Strengthen support for Sustainability research and teaching
 - Action: Facilitate the collection of (and access to) research and documentation of the physical plant of Grounds as a “laboratory” for sustainability
 - Action: Create a “sustainability support team” of subject liaisons and methodological experts to monitor and respond to research and curricular needs
 - Action: Develop strategic partnerships with research and curricular initiatives related to Sustainability
 - Action: Engage in community partnerships to promote Sustainability resources and learning beyond Grounds
 - Action: Provide resources and support for Open Access scholarship and Open Education Resources (OERs)
- Goal: Promote sustainability across Grounds through library spaces and events
 - Action: Develop signage to educate about sustainable building components
 - Action: Collaborate with other departments to showcase sustainability research and educational materials
 - Action: Host exhibits and lectures related to sustainability

Advocacy

The Library, with over 200 employees, 7 buildings, and connections to nearly every academic and administrative office on Grounds, has a unique opportunity to advocate for change. Library staff have indicated a strong desire to see sustainable changes not just within the library, but in the many University functions and services with which they interact. To this end, the Advocacy dimension leverages the position of the Library and the drive of our staff to turn desire to action.

Goal: Develop a reputation across Grounds and throughout the community as an active advocate for Sustainable policy and action

- Action: Advocate for robust Open Access and Open Educational Resource policies
- Action: Request and support sustainable solutions across the University. This includes (but not limited to) employee policies and benefits, facilities, parking and transportation, dining, print services, and procurement.
- Action: Collaborate to enhance use of outdoor spaces adjacent to the Libraries to serve as a highlight sustainability efforts
- Action: Share our sustainability plan and actions with broader Library and University colleagues at other Universities to contribute to a community of learning
- Action: Petition for an amendment to the Library’s 5 year plan that includes sustainability.

Works Cited

Bente Kj?rgård, Birgit Land, Kirsten Bransholm Pedersen, Health and sustainability, *Health Promotion International*, Volume 29, Issue 3, September 2014, Pages 558–568, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/das071>