

# Austin College Campus Sustainability Plan

## Table of Contents

- Austin College Campus Sustainability Plan ..... 1**
- Purpose, Vision, & Mission .....2**
- History of Austin College Center for Environmental Studies & Sustainability Efforts .....3**
- Sustainability Plan Structure.....6**
  - Plan consultation, maintenance, and updating ..... 6
  - Summary of progress as of 2017 ..... 6
- Campus Sustainability Goals .....8**
  - Energy and Climate ..... 8
  - Education and Engagement ..... 11
  - Waste and Resource Management..... 13
  - Buildings & Grounds ..... 15

## Purpose, Vision, & Mission

The Austin College Campus Sustainability Plan was adopted in April 2018 to organize and direct our past, current, and future environmental sustainability initiatives. This plan was drafted by the Center for Environmental Studies, approved by the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee, and approved by the President and Vice Presidents. The plan will be updated as necessary.

This initial plan focuses on environmental sustainability. Austin College makes tremendous efforts on behalf of social and economic aspects of sustainability, as sustainability is often defined. For example, the college devotes a major fraction of college resources to affordability for students from all backgrounds, encourages and creates a diverse, welcoming campus community, seeks to appropriately compensate employees, and works in concert and cooperation with the local community and larger region, but this plan focuses on environmental sustainability because the Center for Environmental Studies is responsible for the plan's development (though not its approval), and current societal practices are degrading the ability of the planet to support life, without which other sustainability objectives become moot. Subsequent versions of this plan may incorporate social and economic aspects of sustainability.

Austin College will strive for continual progress toward environmental sustainability and demonstrate what can be achieved to members of the campus community, other institutions of higher education, the local community and others.

Through collaborative efforts of Austin College students, faculty, and staff we will continue to assess and improve our environmental stewardship by inspiring and facilitating attitudes, behaviors, actions, infrastructure, and policies that serve to reduce the environmental impact of the campus. These efforts will always be mindful of the necessity of maintaining the financial health of the college, the financial demand on students and compensation of employees, and the social implications of both current practices and future changes.

We seek to accomplish these modifications in ways that routinely and directly engage students (and are often led by students), and to encourage lasting appreciation for and commitment to sustainability in all members of the Austin College community. We encourage involvement of all students, but will work most closely with Environmental Studies majors and minors, and students involved with the Student Sustainability Fund, Austin College Thinking Green, and Student Assembly.

This sustainability plan serves as an organizational tool and guiding document. Proposals for future greening actions will come from many sources, but especially students, faculty, and the staff of the Physical Plant. That said, we encourage suggestions from all members of the college community. Each noteworthy step towards sustainability will be recorded in this Sustainability Plan.

## History of Austin College Center for Environmental Studies & Sustainability Efforts

- 1997 Formation of the Center for Environmental Studies under the direction of Dr. Michael Imhoff, Professor of Chemistry
- Creation of Center for Environmental Studies faculty steering committee
- Creation of Environmental Studies minor and two new courses, Fundamentals of Environmental Studies and Environmental Policy, to complement existing disciplinary courses
- New faculty position created (now jointly held by K. Kisselle and P. Schulze, who also have appointments in biology)
- First introductory course assignment of student-initiated proposals for reducing campus impact. (Continued every semester since. The college has adopted some 30 student-initiated proposals.)
- Initiation of Sneed Prairie Restoration
- 1998 Creation of Center for Environmental Studies External Advisory Board
- First meeting of External Advisory Board
- Dr. Jean-Claude Bonzongo hired (position now held jointly by Kisselle and Schulze)
- 1999 First Sneed Prairie prescribed fires
- Second meeting of External Advisory Board
- 2000 Director Imhoff promoted to Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Peter Schulze appointed Director of the Center for Environmental Studies
- With help from students and faculty, the City of Sherman adopts curbside, commingled recycling, greatly expanding college recycling opportunities
- 2001 John Jennings hired as Physical Plant Director. Beginning of comprehensive resource use efficiency monitoring, record-keeping, rigorous maintenance, and, when feasible, equipment upgrades.
- 2002 Jan Beckert hired as first Center for Environmental Studies Coordinator
- Initiation of formal, replicated prairie restoration experiment at Sneed Prairie
- Beginning of regular offering of Sneed Prairie Restoration field trips for school children, led by Austin College undergraduates
- 2003 Hiring of Dr. Keith Kisselle (replaces Dr. Jean-Claude Bonzongo)
- Third meeting of External Advisory Board
- Mobley scientific equipment endowment created
- 2004 Initiation of Environmental Studies major

- First year of organized, widely available records for electricity and gas consumption.
- 2005 Fluorescent lighting systems upgraded to T-8 and incandescent bulbs replaced with fluorescent bulbs.
- 2007 Fourth meeting of External Advisory Board
- 2008 President Oscar Page signs the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (now the Second Nature Carbon Commitment)
- Sarah Stevens hired as Center for Environmental Studies Coordinator
- First greenhouse gas inventory (completed during 2009 by honors student Jade Rutledge under the direction of Dr. Peter Schulze)
- 2010 Annual October residence hall energy conservation competition initiated
- Annual spring green service day GreenServe initiated
- Second greenhouse gas inventory (completed during 2011 by honors student Katie Masucci under the direction of Dr. Peter Schulze)
- Board of Trustees adopts initial Climate Action Plan
- College begins conversion to wind generated electricity (through purchase of renewable energy credits (RECs))
- 2011 President Marjorie Hass and the Board of Trustees launch Austin College Thinking Green
- Student Sustainability Fund initiated by Student Assembly
- Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee created to advise senior staff on environmental sustainability initiatives
- Fifth External Advisory Board meeting
- Princeton Review first recognizes Austin College as a green school
- 2012 Center for Environmental Studies growth and growth of Austin College Thinking Green requires division of administrative tasks among three faculty members [Schulze (Director), Kisselle (Academic Chair), and Smucker (Chair of Thinking Green Campus Awareness)]
- Third greenhouse gas inventory
- Cargill endowment created
- Princeton Review recognizes Austin College as a green school
- 2013 Dr. Mari Elise Ewing joins faculty (new faculty position)
- Environmental studies curriculum grows substantially
- Katie Masucci hired as Center for Environmental Studies Coordinator
- LEED Gold certified IDEA Center (science lab building) opens

- (Princeton Review does not recognize AC as a green school because the college did not submit a Princeton Review questionnaire for 2013)
- 2014 Fourth greenhouse gas inventory  
Princeton Review recognizes Austin College as a green school
- 2015 Environmental Studies major and minor redesigned to take advantage of new courses  
Alejandrina Ocañas hired as Center for Environmental Studies Coordinator  
Princeton Review recognizes Austin College as a green school
- 2016 10,000<sup>th</sup> schoolchild visits Sneed Prairie  
1,000<sup>th</sup> student, faculty member, or staff member participates in the Sneed Prairie restoration (approximate date)  
College joins EPA Green Power Partnership  
Fifth greenhouse gas inventory  
Second climate action plan adopted  
First Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) submission completed.  
College achieves ~99% wind-generated electricity  
Greenhouse gas emissions reduced 44% since 2008  
Improvements in electricity and natural gas use efficiencies now save the college \$430,000 per year compared to 2004 efficiencies.  
Diggs endowment created  
Physical Plant Director John Jennings retires  
Princeton Review recognizes Austin College as a green school
- 2017 President Marjorie Hass signs “We Are Still In” statement declaring support for Paris Agreement climate goals. <https://www.wearestillin.com/>  
Dr. Mari Elise Ewing takes over as Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness  
Kelby Archer hired as Center for Environmental Studies Coordinator  
David Turk appointed as Director of the college’s Physical Plant  
Austin College Sustainability Plan formalized  
Ardell endowment created  
Princeton Review recognizes Austin College as a green school

## Sustainability Plan Structure

### *Overarching goals/values*

This plan seeks to advance the mission of Austin College Thinking Green:

*The mission of Austin College Thinking Green is to facilitate attitudes, behaviors, policies, and technologies that promote environmental responsibility, reduce resource consumption, and minimize waste production.*

Approved by President Marjorie Hass, 3 February 2014.

This plan addresses objectives in the following areas:

- Energy and Climate
- Education and Engagement
- Waste and Resource Management
- Buildings and Grounds

### Plan consultation, maintenance, and updating

*This plan will be routinely consulted as we consider new initiatives and improvements to existing initiatives, and will be reevaluated every three years.*

*The Director of the Center for Environmental Studies is responsible for shepherding adherence to this plan and updating of the plan as necessary.*

### Summary of progress as of April 2018

College greenhouse gas emissions declined 44% from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2016 as a result of conversion to wind-generated electricity and improvements in energy use efficiency. We do not expect to maintain such rapid progress. We have set a goal of an additional 4% reduction in emissions by 2020.

Since 2004 the college has increased its energy efficiency so much that, without those improvements, the annual cost of electricity and natural gas would be \$430,000 higher. During the period 2005-2015 improvements in energy efficiency and conservation saved the college nearly \$3,300,000.

Since 1997 the college has adopted some 30 student-initiated greening projects and policies, some modest and some more substantial. We have not maintained a precise chronology of when each was adopted, but the list includes the following.

*Student-initiated\** actions adopted before 2010:

- Addition of towel hooks in residence hall bathrooms to reduce paper towel waste
- Composting of food preparation plant waste with wood chips
- Conversion of building roofs from black to light grey
- Elimination of aluminum foil from food service burritos
- Elimination of incandescent bulbs
- Establishment of Sherman Community Garden on campus property
- Improvement of lawn watering system: replaced inefficient above-ground pipes with underground system, added automatic controls to underground system, added weather monitoring override of underground system
- Improvement of paper recycling and initiation of recycling of cardboard & paperboard, most plastics, aluminum, glass bottles, tin cans, batteries, printer cartridges, and cell phones
- Installation of low flow showerheads
- Installation of modular carpet
- Limitation of free printing per student
- Mulching, rather than landfilling, of landscape waste
- Reduction in lawn mowing frequency
- Removal of excess light bulbs in excessively bright rooms
- Replacement of campus printers and copiers with models that allow double-sided printing
- Replacement of incandescent exit signs with LED exit signs
- Switch to low volatile organic compound (VOC) paint
- Switch to single-napkin dispensers
- Switch to unbleached, ink-free napkins

Student-initiated actions adopted during and since 2010:

- Construction of LEED Certified IDEA Center (science lab) building
- Conversion of campus housekeeping contractor to various greener cleaning systems
- Initiation of annual residence hall energy saving competition
- Initiation of student green fee for Student Sustainability Fund; formation of Student Sustainability Fund Committee (both by student 2/3 referendum vote)
- Initiation of GreenServe spring service day
- Installation of IDEA Center rainwater & air conditioner condensate collection/landscape irrigation system
- Installation of water bottle filling stations
- Provision of some organic and local food in the dining hall
- Planting of native vegetation around IDEA Center and in two other campus locations
- Upgrading of outdoor lighting to LED lamps
- Initiation of reusable to-go containers in the dining hall

\* We consider an action student-initiated if the college took the action at a date after one or more students made a formal, public proposal while enrolled in the course Fundamentals of Environmental Studies, or in some other capacity.

## Campus Sustainability Goals

### Energy and Climate

#### Energy and Climate Goals:

On an ongoing basis, we will assess the college’s energy consumption and aim to make adjustments in tools, techniques or habits that will lead our campus toward carbon neutrality as described in our climate action plan (online [here](#)).

As a signatory of the Second Nature Carbon Commitment we will strive to achieve the goals of our Climate Action Plan, and monitor our progress with annual greenhouse gas emissions inventories and progress reports, both of which are publicly available on the Carbon Commitment website [here](#).

Our 2016 Climate Action Plan specifies continued purchase of renewable energy credits equal to 100% of electricity consumption; 0.75% annual reduction in electricity and natural gas consumption; and purchase of an incrementally increasing number of carbon offsets beginning in fiscal year 2025, to achieve carbon neutrality in fiscal year 2035.

#### Energy and Climate Completed Objectives:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Overseeing Office/Official</b>	<b>Date</b>
Comprehensive upgrades to electricity and natural gas power, power monitoring, lighting, and maintenance systems, including steps such as adding metering, converting to more efficient, less harmful refrigerants, adding variable speed drives, developing maintenance schedules, installing a new boiler and various more efficient valves, hiring external consultants to identify opportunities, upgrading lighting to eliminate incandescent bulbs and replace inefficient fluorescent lighting with more efficient models, and developing a comprehensive data collection and analysis (energy management) system.	Physical Plant Director	2002-2006
Continual evaluation, and, when funds permit, implementation of energy savings opportunities. Ongoing.	Physical Plant Director	2004 -
Organized, widely available records for electricity and gas consumption	Physical Plant & Center for Environmental Studies Directors	2004



President Oscar Page signs the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (now the Second Nature Carbon Commitment)	President and Center for Environmental Studies Director	2008
Previously biennial, now annual, greenhouse gas inventories submitted to Second Nature	Center for Environmental Studies	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016
Removal of excess lighting (delamping)	Physical Plant Director and Center for Environmental Studies Faculty	2010
Complete transition to wind-generated electricity	Physical Plant & Center for Environmental Studies Director	2010 - 2016
Climate Action Plans adopted	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2010, 2016
Conversion of outdoor lighting to light emitting diode bulbs (LEDs)	Physical Plant Director	2016
College joins EPA Green Power Partnership	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2016
Installation of "no idling" signs at major delivery locations	Physical Plant & Center for Environmental Studies Directors	2016
Greenhouse gas emissions reduced 44% since 2008	Physical Plant & Center for Environmental Studies Directors	2016
Gradual conversion of indoor lighting to light emitting diode bulbs (LEDs)	Physical Plant Director	2017-

Energy and Climate Objectives Under Consideration:

We continually seek additional improvements. The following table lists only those under present, active consideration

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Overseeing Office/Official</b>
Adjustment of building temperature settings to reduce excessive air conditioning and building energy consumption	Physical Plant & Center for Environmental Studies Directors

Complete conversion of interior lighting to LEDs	Physical Plant Director
Create an accounting system to dedicate a fraction of money saved from conservation initiatives to be invested in further conservation initiatives	Center for Environmental Studies Director and VP for Business Affairs
Refine procedures for data collection and reporting to Second Nature Carbon Commitment and AASHE/STARS	Center for Environmental Studies Director
Evaluation of the suitability of additional environmental sustainability policies compatible with the college's mission and finances	Center for Environmental Studies Director and VP for Business Affairs

**Education and Engagement**

Education and Engagement Goal: Ensure that each member of the campus community is exposed and connected to the ideas and efforts of sustainable behaviors and innovations both on and off campus.

Education and Engagement Completed Objectives:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Overseeing Office/Official</b>	<b>Date</b>
Fundamentals of Environmental Studies course assignment of student-initiated proposals for reducing campus impact	Center for Environmental Studies Director	1997-
With help from students and faculty, the City of Sherman adopts curbside, commingled recycling	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2000
Approximately biweekly environmental seminars open to the public (lunch provided to those not on meal plan)	Center for Environmental Studies Academic Chair	~2000-
Annual recycling information campaign	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness	~2000-
Field trips for area schoolchildren at Sneed Prairie Restoration (10,000 children to date)	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2002-
Partner with leading environmental organizations to offer paid internships to students	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2002-
President Marjorie Hass and the Board of Trustees launch Austin College Thinking Green	President, Board of Trustees, and Center for Environmental Studies Director	2010
AC Unplugged, annual residence hall electricity saving competition	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness	2010-
GreenServe (annual community green projects service day)	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness	2010-
Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee created to advise senior staff on environmental sustainability initiatives	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2011

Student Sustainability Fund annual projects (solicit ideas from entire student population, evaluate and implement annually)	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness	2011-
Occasional on or off campus “Stump the Chumps” climate change education events (Panel of faculty fields climate change questions from audience)	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2011-
Princeton Review recognizes Austin College as a green school	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2012- save 2013
Self-guided tours of LEED Gold certified IDEA Center (science lab building)	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2013-
Austin College Sustainability Plan formalized and adopted by President Steven O’Day	Center for Environmental Studies Director, Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee, and President	2017

Education and Engagement Objectives Under Consideration:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Overseeing Office/Official</b>
Include IDEA Center LEED qualifications in campus tours	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness
Add remote alumni speakers to lunch seminar series to further develop career exploration and guidance	Center for Environmental Studies Academic Chair
Improve publicity regarding Student Sustainability Fund	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness
Develop new student-led sustainability projects	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness

**Waste and Resource Management**

Waste and Resource Management Goals: Use/waste less water and other resources

Waste and Resource Management Completed Objectives:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Overseeing Office/Official</b>	<b>Date</b>
Campus-wide convenient, commingled recycling of paper, paperboard, corrugated cardboard, plastics 1-7 except Styrofoam and similar, glass bottles, aluminum containers, tin containers	Center for Environmental Studies Director	~2000
Cardboard recycling dumpsters located around campus during student move-in	Physical Plant Director	Several years ago
Collection of items for donation to thrift stores at student move-out	Service Station Director	Several years ago
Limited free student printing	Director of Information Technology	Several years ago
Successive improvements in campus irrigation (above ground to below ground pipes, automated schedules, rainfall overrides, rainwater and air conditioner condensate collection from LEED Gold certified IDEA center)	Physical Plant Director	
AC Think volunteers assist incoming freshman in properly disposing of waste/recycling during move-in	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness	2007-
Compost plant-based food preparation waste from cafeteria with wood chips provided at no charge by local tree service companies	Center for Environmental Studies Director/Physical Plant Director	~ 2010
Course list and college catalog conversion to electronic only	Registrar	2010
Recycling containers added at tennis courts	Physical Plant Director	2010
Campus paper printed on recycled paper, smaller pages, fewer copies	Campus Newspaper	2010
Install water bottle refill stations across campus	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness	2015-2017
STARS reporting	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2016-

Waste and Resource Management Objectives under consideration:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Overseeing Office/Official</b>
Reuse residence hall grey water for irrigation	Physical Plant Director
Increase recycling opportunities at Apple Stadium (football)	Physical Plant Director
Expand native vegetation	Physical Plant & Center for Environmental Studies Directors
Expand food waste composting beyond plant-based food preparation waste	Physical Plant and Center for Environmental Studies Director

**Buildings & Grounds**

Buildings and Grounds Goals: Continual reduction in the environmental impact of buildings and grounds infrastructure and maintenance.

Buildings and Grounds Completed Objectives:

**\*\*\*Note\*\*\*: Numerous completed items involving campus buildings and their operation are listed in other sections of this document and not repeated here.**

Objective	Overseeing Office/Official	Date
LEED Gold certified IDEA Center (science lab building) opens	Physical Plant and Center for Environmental Studies Director	2013
Additional native plantings at the IDEA Center (to replace failed initial plantings completed during final phase of construction)	Center for Environmental Studies Director	2016

Buildings and Grounds Objectives under Consideration:

Objective	Overseeing Office/Official
Install water bottle refill stations elsewhere across campus	Director of Thinking Green Campus Awareness

Last updated: 10 April 2018