

**University of Wisconsin-La Crosse**  
**Joint Committee on Environmental Sustainability**  
**2024-2025 Annual Report**

# **UW-La Crosse Sustainability Mission Statement**

Prepared and approved by the UW-La Crosse Joint Committee on Environmental Sustainability December 6, 2013. Also approved by the UWL Student Association (December 11, 2013), Academic Staff Council (December 10, 2013), and Faculty Senate (February 13, 2014).

## **Mission**

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse will provide students, faculty, staff and the community with the knowledge and skills to be environmentally responsible and involved citizens who understand and consider the global effects of their actions and the actions of others. The University will strive to use and implement sustainable best practices while minimizing its carbon footprint.

## **Vision**

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is a campus where:

- Education and research prepare students, faculty, staff, and surrounding communities to engage in dialogue and positive action around sustainability.
- University leadership is committed to sustainability and will direct adequate resources toward the development of sustainability expertise and best practices on campus.
- Minimizing adverse social, economic, and environmental impacts of university operations is a priority.
- The understanding and concern for sustainability issues provides the foundation for dynamic campus collaboration and community for students, faculty, and staff.

### **Committee Membership:**

- Andrew Ericson – Chair - Sustainability Program Manager
- Brian Pompeii – Vice Chair – Geography and Environmental Science Department
- Audra Ferguson – Students for Sustainability Rep.
- Jordan Sowle - Students for Sustainability Rep. (Fall Only)
- Ann Cambell – Students for Sustainability Rep. (Spring Only)
- Felicia Ritzke – Student Association Sustainability Director
- Hannah Duke – Student Senate Rep (Fall Only)
- Avery Britz Brown – Student Senate Rep. (Fall Only)
- Caroline Ingwell – Green Fund Coordinator (Fall Only)
- Hannah Eitland – Green Fund Coordinator (Spring Only)
- Adam Driscoll – Faculty Senate Rep. (Fall Only)
- Barrett Klein – Faculty Senate Rep. (Fall Only)
- Lisa Pitot – Faculty Senate Rep
- Dan Plunkett – Faculty Senate Rep.
- Todd Will – Faculty Senate Rep.
- Daniel Sambu - Faculty Senate Rep
- Taylor Wilmoth – Academic Staff Council Rep.
- Hannah Dull – University Staff Council Rep.
- Erin Teegan - University Staff Council Rep.
- Margot Higgins – Sustainability and Environmental Studies Department
- Sadie Kuhl – Division of Access, Belonging, and Compliance
- Lisa Walker – Office of Residence Life
- Scott Brown – Facilities Management

\*Note that the committee utilized a rotating meeting recorder.

### **Committee Charges**

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, JCES received a memorandum from Chancellor James Beeby. This memorandum outlined charges for the committee. Those charges are listed below:

1. Please revise the bylaws to indicate that the Sustainability Program Manager will serve as the convenor for the committee.
2. Please review the bylaws for the committee membership and explore options for reducing the size of the committee with a focus on a combination of the roles on campus individuals enact in addition to the traditional governance representation.
3. Research the carbon emission reduction goals of UWL's peer institutions and review and evaluate options and make potential recommendations to the Chancellor regarding potential campus carbon emission reductions. Please work with institutional research to garner a list of peer and aspirational institutions and please include cost estimates associated with emission reduction plans.
4. Identify opportunities and needs related to the 2024 Climate Implementation Plan and suggest to the Chancellor action steps associated with specific goals.
5. Prioritize the list of the year-end's report for "additional ideas for continued work" and 2-4 items for this coming year to the Chancellor.

## **Statement of Charge Work**

JCES allocated much of the committee's time and resources to achieving or advancing its assigned charges.

### **Bylaws:**

The JCES bylaws were updated with a final vote on April 11, 2025. These changes addressed items outlined in Charge #1 and Charge #2. A copy of the updated bylaws is included at the end of this document and available on the JCES website.

The overall committee size was reduced by five members. This was achieved by eliminating some specifically named representative positions and removing one student and one faculty spot. Membership changes are outlined below:

"Committee appointments should prioritize faculty, staff, and students with demonstrated ties to sustainability. This includes those engaged in sustainability-related research, teaching sustainability-focused courses, overseeing programs or spaces with sustainability potential, or holding roles that advance sustainability initiatives.

### **Committee Composition:**

- **Five students**
  - Two selected by Students for Sustainability

- Two selected by the Student Association
- Green Fund Coordinator(s)
- **Four faculty or instructional academic staff** (appointed by Faculty Senate)
- **Three non-instructional academic staff** (appointed by Academic Staff Council)
- **Two university staff** (appointed by University Staff Council)
- **Sustainability and Environmental Studies faculty/staff representative** (appointed by the Director of Environmental Studies)
- **Geography and Environmental Science faculty/staff representative** (appointed by the Chair of the Department)
- **Sustainability Coordinator or equivalent**
  - If unfilled, the position shall be filled by the Green Fund Advisor”

### **Carbon Emissions Reduction Goal:**

JCES dedicated substantial time to exploring emissions reduction goals across higher education and beyond. The committee provided general recommendations to campus leadership, including a review of peer and aspirant institutions, community goals, estimated costs, obstacles, and justifications for emissions reduction. Discussions remain ongoing, and continued work on this topic is recommended for the 2025 Charge.

### **2024 Climate Implementation Plan:**

Throughout the year, JCES reviewed the 2024 Climate Implementation Plan to identify opportunities and unmet needs. On October 18, 2024, the committee voted to send a letter to Chancellor Beeby supporting the continuation of a full-time sustainability position. This position is listed as a catalytic action in the plan and was under discussion due to the expiration of a memorandum of understanding about the funding split expiring.

### **Continued Work:**

JCES reviewed the continued work outlined in the previous year’s report and prioritized two efforts:

1. Inventorying and auditing sustainability-focused and sustainability-related classes.
2. Collaborating with Dining Services to further embed sustainability into operations.

Brian Pompeii is leading a small group focused on conducting a sustainability course inventory. This project will begin over the summer of 2025, and continue through the 25-26 academic year. Brian and colleagues are expected to provide progress updates at each JCES meeting.

Students affiliated with the Student Association's Green Advisory Committee have been working with Lizzy Haywood (Associate Director of Business and Dining, University Centers) on dining sustainability. Both efforts are ongoing and should continue into the next academic year. Both initiatives related to the prioritization of last year's annual reports "ideas for continued work"

## **Additional Committee Work**

JCES plays a key role in the review and approval of Green Fund projects. The committee may approve or deny mini grants (under \$5,000) and serves as the first step in the approval process for large grants (over \$5,000). During the 2024–2025 academic year, the committee approved the following grants:

- **REC LED Lights** – Fall 2024 – Large Grant
- **Drake Hall Steam Traps** – Fall 2024 – Large Grant
- **UWL Drift Cycle** – Fall 2024 – Large Grant
- **Sustainability Program Manager** – Spring 2025 – Large Grant
- **Garage 529** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Social Media and Marketing Intern** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Earthapalooza Supplies** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Peter Annin** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **HJNŲKŲAS Tree Trail** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Sustainable Food Pantry Products** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Bad River Film** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Sustainability Interns and Students Professional Development** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Reduce Reuse Reimagine Supplies** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Water Filling Station in Student Union** – Spring 2025 – Mini Grant
- **Green Bikes** – Spring 2025 – Large Grant

JCES hosted three guest speakers over the course of the 24-25 academic year, those being:

- Chancellor James Beeby
- Vice Chancellor Stephanie Pope
- Associate Director of Business and Dining Lizzy Haywood

During each of the guest speakers' appearances, the discussions outlined perceived opportunities as well as challenges. The committee members identified these discussions as an important aspect of the committee's work, as these discussions were believed to provide informal opportunities for bidirectional feedback, and elevated sustainability.

## **Recommendations for 2025 Charge**

- Continue work on a carbon emissions reduction goal for UWL and provide a formal recommendation to the Chancellor regarding a campus carbon reduction commitment.
- Identify opportunities and needs related to the 2024 Climate Implementation Plan, and act where possible to advance its goals.
- Review Green Fund processes to ensure efficiency and ease of use for applicants. This should include review of the applications, approval process and standard procedures. JCES should make any formal recommendations to the Green Fund Coordinators and Green Fund Advisor.
- Continue to explore additional avenues for progress on sustainability, including but not limited to those items outlined in the 2023-24 annual report's "ideas for continued work."
- Provide input to current or future planning efforts at UWL, including the Strategic Plan, a long-range facilities plan and more.

## **General Committee Feedback**

- Appreciated having a hybrid structure for all meetings (in-person/virtual)
- Recommended to continue to get Green Fund grants as early as possible to provide ample time for the committee to review.
- Enjoyed guest speakers' appearances and recommended that more guest speakers be invited to JCES in the future including individuals on- campus with responsibilities that have influence on sustainability progress, as well as community members who are working on sustainability.