

“THE BEST TIME TO PLANT A TREE WAS 20 YEARS AGO. THE SECOND BEST TIME IS NOW.”

- CHINESE PROVERB

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR PROPOSAL

According to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), there are nearly 1000 institutions across the U.S. (including 146 two-year colleges) working to make their operations and curricula more environmentally and socially sustainable. Some of these colleges began to champion sustainability education in the 1980s. Others joined the movement more recently in response to the 2009 American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. Although Central Oregon Community College has made a number of commendable investments in “green” infrastructure over the years, members of the COCC Sustainability Committee – as well as many other campus stakeholders – believe that we can and should do more.

The purpose of this proposal is to encourage the college to finance a dedicated, part-time Sustainability Coordinator position. Based on our experience, such a position is necessary to maximize the success of COCC’s existing sustainability-related investments, cater to the educational and career needs of our student body, and contribute to a culture of sustainability across the college and community. A significant portion of funding for this position will come via energy and water conservation efforts and grant writing responsibilities. It is important to note that this proposal is supported by the Associated Students of Central Oregon Community College (ASCOCC). Together, we propose a minimum of 0.5 FTE with benefits, for a trial period of at least three years.

WHAT DOES A SUSTAINABLE COLLEGE LOOK LIKE?

In 2008, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) launched its Green Campus Campaign in order to provide a roadmap for “greening” college campuses. According to USGBC, a sustainable college “...focuses on more than the life cycle of buildings, grounds, and infrastructure. It encourages research, promotes advocacy efforts, develops curriculum, and supports academic and mission-based goals that further sustainability on-campus” (UGBC *Roadmap to a Green Campus*, 2010).

AASHE and USGBC propose the following best practices for sustainable colleges:

- Auditing environmental impacts
- Adopting green operations and maintenance practices
- Developing alternative transportation strategies
- Coordinating procurement efforts
- Establishing recycling programs
- Evaluating food purchasing procedures
- Organizing student and staff education programs to reduce energy and water consumption

HISTORY OF THE COCC SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Following is a list of projects and events that the committee has organized since its creation in 2010.



2010-2011

COCC Sustainability Committee inception, under direction of the Vice-President of Instruction, Dr. Karen Hilgersom, and Science faculty member, Kevin Grove; Campus Trash Awareness Day

2011-2012

Pilot Phase I Composting in the Science building; Campus Green Awards; Green recycling office signage; Recycling bin signage

2012-2013

Pilot Phase II Composting in the Science and Culinary buildings; Campus Retreat sustainability presentation; COCC Sustainability Certificate created; Sustainability Committee logo developed

2013-2014

John and Joan Casey Grants established; Cascade Culinary Institute wins Café Green College Award; Vermicomposting installation begins; COCC Collaborative Garden installation begins

2014-2015

COCC Sustainability Committee website developed; John and Joan Casey Grants awarded; Blue Sky Funds allocated to Sustainability Committee; Higher Ed Sustainability Conference; COCC Culinary/Garden composting program; Reduce Paper campaign; Commute Options Partnership and bike workshop; COCC Farm-To-Work Share; COCC Collaborative Garden grand opening; Sustainability Chat Sessions (BTBS)

2015-2016

AASHE STARS research and membership application; COCC SUSTAIN event series, in collaboration with The Environmental Center; John and Joan Casey Grants awarded; COCC energy audit; Funded Boyle LED light conversion; The Alchemy of Air – Thomas Hager presentation; Bike repair kiosk installations on Redmond and Bend campuses; ASCOCC Garden Club Spring Farm and Food Faire; Attended OHESC – Oregon Higher Education and Sustainability Conference; COCC Farm-To-Work share; COCC Culinary/Garden composting

2016-2017

Centralized Trash and Recycling in Mazama Building; Energy Trust of Oregon energy reduction program proposal; Food recovery program coordinated with Sodexo Dining Services; AASHE membership; COCC Energy Audit information published to website; Second annual COCC Student Garden Club Spring Farm and Food Faire; Sustainability Coordinator job description created; City Of Bend Sustainability Coordinator – Gillian Ockner presentation; Native plant installation project proposal; COCC Farm-To-Work share; Website updates

Despite the COCC Sustainability Committee's efforts over the years, we have yet to achieve long-term continuity or stability with regard to campus sustainability projects. More importantly, we have not been able to instill a lasting *culture* of sustainability. As an institution of higher education, we feel that it is COCC's responsibility to provide our students and our community with a greater emphasis on sustainability moving forward.

SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM PEER INSTITUTIONS

In order to determine how our peer institutions have embraced and promoted sustainability, we surveyed four regional community colleges in Oregon and northern California. Following are highlights from each college, including financial savings associated with sustainability initiatives when such data was shared or readily available.

Chemeketa Community College

Chemeketa Community College (CCC) hired a part-time Sustainability Coordinator in 2012. In the past five years, the coordinator position has managed CCC's energy conservation efforts, created a comprehensive Campus Environmental Stewardship Plan, and promoted various curricular and operational sustainability initiatives.

- CCC, with more than 50 buildings on its Salem Campus, is one of the largest organizations to be EarthWISE™ certified.
- Since 2012, CCC has received over \$800,000 in rebates from the Energy Trust of Oregon. With building remodels and energy-saving investments like LED lights, CCC anticipates saving more than 600,000 kWh per year, equivalent to \$125,000 per year. \$100,000 of these savings will be re-invested each year to fund future campus sustainability projects.
- CCC was awarded a \$40,000 Marion County "matching" grant to improve their campus recycling efforts. Combined with a \$40,000 contribution by the college, CCC was able to create highly visible and standardized campus recycling signage and bins. During the 2014-2015 academic year, CCC recycled and composted an estimated 3,048,659 pounds of material, representing an estimated annual savings of \$150,000 alone in hauling fees (at 2016 hauling costs). Not only does the recycling program save the college money but it helps sustain the Community Transition Program which offers job training for students with disabilities; the program keeps the 5-cent deposits from recycling cans and bottles.
- CCC has over 40 courses with a focus on sustainability or environmental topics, including environmental science, sociology, and science. The college also offers two sustainability-related certificates in Business Management and Renewable Technology.

- In 2015, CCC partnered with the Marion Polk Food Share Youth Program on a three-acre campus garden space. The program grows food for the Marion-Polk Foodshare while providing valuable work experience for area youths and students.
- Quotes from CCC's Sustainability Coordinator, Steph Fregosi:
 - With regard to the intersection of sustainability education and institutional practices... "Chemeketa takes its mission to educate students seriously and part of that education extends to how the college operates. It's important that students see that sustainable practices are not only important to Chemeketa, but also cost effective."
 - With regard to campus operations... "It's important to achieve a 'tipping point' for some sustainability initiatives in order to actualize meaningful financial savings. For instance, it's nice to reduce waste across campus, but you have to achieve enough of a reduction to eliminate an entire dumpster in order for it to make a positive financial impact."

Lane Community College

Lane Community College (LCC) invested in a Sustainability Office, Sustainability Coordinator, and a Recycling Coordinator in 2004. In 2005, LCC hired an Energy Analyst tasked with developing and implementing plans to save energy, add renewable energy, and save money through conservation and use of on-site renewables. In 2012, the Sustainability Office and the academic programs that offer LCC's sustainability themed Associate degrees, joined together and formed the Institute for Sustainable Practices.

- LCC established a fund for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in 2006. The fund realizes savings when current year electricity and natural gas expenditures are less than current year budget. Rebates and other incentives for energy-focused projects can be deposited into the fund, helping to fund future sustainability projects.
- In 2014-2015, LCC achieved their lowest energy and water use indices in ten year. Compared to their 2004-2005 baselines, LCC has lowered their campus energy usage by 6% and their water usage by 1%.
- LCC has achieved a recycling rate of 53.5% on their main campus, and a 49.5% average recycling rate across all campuses.
- LCC established a Learning Garden in 2006. The garden grows organic food for the LCC community while providing learning, service, and leadership opportunities for students.
- LCC has sustainability-focused two-year degrees in Energy Management, Renewable Energy Technology, Resource Conservation Management, Water Conservation Technology, and Sustainability Coordinator.

Portland Community College

Portland Community College (PCC) is one of the leading colleges in the nation with regard to sustainability. The following data highlights are from PCC's 2015 Facility Management Report.

- Over the past ten years, PCC reduced energy consumption even as the college's size increased. Expressed per square foot of building space, PCC has realized a 45% decrease in energy use since 2006. PCC is working to achieve a greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 40% below 2006 emissions by 2030.
- PCC has received over \$820,000 in incentives from the Energy Trust of Oregon since 2010.
- PCC practices centralized trash and recycling, which encourages employees and students to take ownership of their waste and helps reduce consumption of resources. For example, eliminating large trash can liners saves the college over \$30,000 a year and diverts almost 20,000 pounds of plastic waste from the landfill. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in solid waste contributing to less than 1% of the college's overall greenhouse gas footprint.

Butte Community College

Butte Community College (BCC) and COCC share similar campus settings and student body sizes. Our respective commitments to campus sustainability have also followed a similar trajectory – from student and faculty-driven proposals, to an officially-recognized Sustainability Committee, to (hopefully) a funded part-time Sustainability Coordinator position.

- BCC includes "Modeling Sustainability" as one of six initiatives in their college Strategic Plan and they have an established Board Policy on sustainability. Additionally, BCC is a signatory of the Talloires Declaration and the President's Climate Commitment.
- From 2013-2015, BCC reduced their annual water usage from 73,321,900 gallons to 44,123,900 gallons – a 40% reduction in less than two years.
- BCC has installed 20 electric charging stations between its three campus sites, with plans to install at least 10 more.
- BCC promotes a robust carpool system and issues approximately 500 carpool parking passes each semester.
- BCC has co-funded a full-time Climate Corps Fellow for two years (2016-2018) to work on sustainability curriculum development and the creation of a student internship program. The Fellow is part of the Energize Colleges program coordinated by Strategic Energy Innovations.
- The Associated Students of BCC fund a Sustainability Resource Center with three student staff that loans out educational resources, hosts guest presentations, provides free used school supplies, and plans campus events.
- Quote from Kim Jones, BCC Director of Facilities Planning and Management, with regard to the importance of a sustainability coordinator position: "Record keeping is critical, but due to no dedicated staff our records are not always kept up to date. That is where a person who had the position you are trying to create would be

very handy. Doing the construction and work is the easy part; it is the on-going tracking that is challenging.”

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS AMONG PEER AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

COLLEGE	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COLLEGE GOALS OR POLICIES	SIGNATORY OF NATIONAL OR GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN	FUNDED SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR POSITION
BUTTE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (CA)	Y	Y	N
CENTRAL OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Y	N	N
CHEMEKETA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Y	Y	Y
LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Y	Y	Y
LINN BENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	N	N	N
MT HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Y	Y	N
OREGON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	Y	Y	Y
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY	Y	Y	Y
PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Y	Y	Y
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY	Y	Y	Y
ROGUE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Y	Y	N
SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY	Y	Y	Y
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON	Y	Y	Y

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Following is a proposed list of job tasks and responsibilities for a 0.5 FTE Sustainability Coordinator position. Responsibilities would increase as the position becomes established and/or expanded.

#	COCC Sustainability Coordinator Tasks and Responsibilities	Approx. % time per task	Hours per week
1	Coordinate Energy Trust of Oregon savings opportunities	5%	1
2	Create centralized energy dashboard and monitor college submeters	10%	2
3	Program and monitor the existing Residence Hall energy dashboard	5%	1
4	Monitor and publish college electrical, gas, and water usage	5%	1
5	Set up energy savings competitions across campuses	10%	2
6	Provide students with utilities data for class projects (e.g., energy, gas, water)	3%	0.5
7	Monitor and publish the number of water plastic bottles saved weekly	3%	0.5
8	Organize sustainability-themed campus and community outreach events	5%	1
9	Work with dining services to minimize food waste, buy local	5%	1
10	Assist faculty in promoting sustainability in their curriculum	5%	1
11	Pursue sustainability-themed grants (e.g., recycling, solar, electric vehicles)	3%	0.5
12	Coordinate and track college waste reduction and centralized trash efforts	10%	2
13	Maintain college recycling containers and signage	5%	1
14	Assist with purchasing decisions to reduce packing materials, buy local	5%	1
15	Maintain the COCC Sustainability website and online resources	8%	1.5
16	Engage students via Bobcat orientation, Residence Hall, internships	5%	1
17	Manage AASHE STARS data collection and reporting	5%	1
18	Assist with "green" campus certifications (e.g., Tree Campus USA)	5%	1
Total time		100%	20

CAMPUS STAFF AND STUDENT SURVEY

In November of 2017, the COCC Sustainability Committee surveyed students, staff, and faculty about campus sustainability. The purpose of the survey was to understand the awareness of and participation in current sustainability projects and events on COCC campuses by these audiences. The committee also sought to capture the overall level of support for campus sustainability. One of the survey questions directly addressed the level of support for a Sustainability Coordinator position to aid in managing sustainability efforts on COCC campuses. A total of 398 respondents completed the survey, including 261 students, 38 faculty, and 99 staff members.

- 86% of respondents reported that it is important to “have a strong sustainability presence” at COCC.
- Only 19% of students reported that they have “directly learned about sustainability topics” in classes.

- 78% of respondents reported that that they would be “supportive of a sustainability coordinator to help facilitate a larger sustainability presence at COCC”.

CENTRAL OREGON COMMUNITY BENEFITS

COCC’s Sustainability Committee believes that the proposed Sustainability Coordinator position will provide a broader impact for the greater Central Oregon Community. Benefits will include serving as a direct liaison to the City of Bend, Deschutes County, Knott Landfill, Bend Garbage & Recycling and others as true partners in our shared goals. Collaborations with community organizations such as Commute Options and the Environmental Center, to name two, have great potential to increase awareness of our college efforts as well as pursue new opportunities to implement cost saving measures (e.g., The 2016 Bend Energy Challenge). Working with local farms, food shelters, and our own Sodexo food services will help minimize food waste, improve efficiencies, and provide student, faculty and staff with information, education and awareness in this area which is both timely and appropriate in 2017. We believe that the Sustainability Coordinator will allow COCC to pursue meaningful opportunities for both public and private partnerships, and build strategic relationships across the district in order to implement best practices on our campuses. Most of all, we believe this position will allow COCC to serve our own O’hana and be a true community partner in these important endeavors.

SUMMARY

In summary, the COCC Sustainability Committee believes that a dedicated Sustainability Coordinator is the next logical and necessary step to fulfill our college commitment to the environment, our student body, and our community.

May 2018 update: *This position request was submitted via the 2017/2018 FIAT cycle. It was ultimately declined due to budget constraints, but the COCC Sustainability Committee will continue to coordinate with students, staff, and administrators to champion campus sustainability. Please contact us if you have any questions about this proposal or the committee.*
