

To: Purdue University Senate
From: University Resources Policy Committee
Purdue Graduate Student Government
Purdue Student Government
Subject: Resolution in support of a university-wide sustainability task force for Purdue University
Reference: Purdue Student Senate, Resolution 25-10
Purdue Graduate Student Senate, Resolution FA25-R001
Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: While Purdue has won several awards for campus sustainability, we lag behind most of our peer institutions in numerous sustainability metrics. Most of the institutions out-performing Purdue on sustainability have campus-wide offices of sustainability. By contrast, Purdue's Office of Sustainability is housed inside Administrative Operations and has limited public visibility.

Proposal: In order to promote campus-wide participation in discussions of sustainability, and in order to make campus more sustainable, we call for the creation of a university-wide task force, to be commissioned by the President by the end of 2026. We further ask that this committee be populated by a diverse mix of faculty, students, staff and administrators; that this task force be authorized to study any relevant aspects of sustainability on campus; and that this task force report to the campus community on an annual basis.

URPC Committee Votes:**For:****Senators (12)**

Benjamin Dunford
Richard Johnson-Sheehan
Thomas Hacker
Kyle Haynes
Lori Hoagland
Kee-Hong Kim
Paul Mort

Against:**Abstained:****Advisors (2)**

Carl Krieger
Kim Pearson

Absent:**Senators (2)**

Amy Atkinson
Daniel Czicz

Advisors (0)**Students (1)**

Elisabeth Mauermann

Tae-Hong Park
Brian Richert
Donald (Joey) Woodyard
Changyou Wang
Howard Zelaznik

Advisors (0)

Students (2)

Ayooluwa Ojo
Shayne Ryan

WHEREAS, Purdue University has long been recognized as a global leader in innovation, research, and real-world problem solving, named as one of top 50 universities “powering global innovation”¹; and

WHEREAS, Purdue has won several awards recognizing its commitment to sustainability, including being ranked #74 nationally and #5 in the Big Ten by QS World University Rankings² and being named a Tree Campus USA award-winner for sixteen consecutive years³; and

WHEREAS, developing a coordinated sustainability strategy would further reinforce this legacy by aligning operational excellence with long-term institutional resilience; and

WHEREAS, Purdue Office of Sustainability is currently housed within Administrative Operations, where it has low public visibility and lacks jurisdiction over large parts of campus (e.g., Residential Life and Athletics); and

WHEREAS, unlike thirteen of the seventeen other Big Ten Universities, Purdue University currently lacks a presidentially directed, university-wide sustainability task force⁴; and

¹ Fiorini, P. (2025, May 14). *Purdue ranks among top 50 Global Research Universities Powering Innovation*. News. <https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/2025/Q2/purdue-ranks-among-top-50-global-research-universities-powering-innovation/>

² Purdue Today. (2025, February 6). *Purdue ranks no. 5 in big ten for Sustainability*. News. <https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/purduetoday/2025/Q1/purdue-ranks-no-5-in-big-ten-for-sustainability/>

³ Purdue University. (2025, March 10). *Purdue earns 16th consecutive Tree Campus USA Award*. News. <https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/purduetoday/2025/Q1/purdue-earns-16th-consecutive-tree-campus-usa-award/>

⁴ University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. (n.d.). *Sustainability Council*. Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment. <https://sustainability.illinois.edu/campus-sustainability/icap/sustainability-council/>

Indiana University Bloomington. (2022, April 7). *IU renews its commitment to sustainability with New Climate Action Planning Committee*. IU News. <https://news.iu.edu/live/news/27915-iu-renews-its-commitment-to-sustainability-with>

White, L. (2020, February 17). *University of Iowa creates Sustainability Task Force to establish campus sustainability goals*. The Daily Iowan. <https://dailyiowan.com/2020/02/17/university-of-iowa-creates-sustainability-task-force-to-establish-campus-sustainability-goals/>

University of Maryland. (n.d.). *Sustainability Council*. SustainableUMD. <https://sustainability.umd.edu/about/sustainability-council>

University of Michigan. (n.d.). *Sustainability and Climate Executive Leadership Council*. Planet Blue. <https://planetblue.umich.edu/sustainability-council/>

WHEREAS, there is a clear desire among the Purdue community for the university to develop a more robust approach to sustainability, with specific decarbonization targets, as evidenced by two separate petitions with over 10,000 signatures between them⁵; and

WHEREAS, there is a clear desire among the Purdue faculty, staff, and students to have input into decisions involving the sustainability of our beloved campus⁶; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the University Senate endorsed a Climate Action Plan, which was previously endorsed by Purdue Student Government and Purdue Graduate Student Government, that has yet to be implemented by the administration⁷; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated, university-wide sustainability task force, endorsed by President Mung Chiang and the Board of Trustees, would provide the administrative structure to identify cost-saving opportunities, and coordinate efforts in energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable transportation, and operational optimization; and

University of Minnesota Twin Cities. (n.d.). *UMN Twin Cities Sustainability Committee*. UMN Twin Cities Sustainability Committee | Office of Sustainability, University of Minnesota Twin Cities. <https://sustainable.umn.edu/sustainability-committee>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln. (2023, April 17). *Council formed to support university's sustainability goals*. Nebraska Today. <https://news.unl.edu/article/council-formed-to-support-universitys-sustainability-goals>

The Ohio State University. (2019, August 21). *President and Provost's Council on Sustainability Committee Charter*. PPCS. <https://president.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2019/11/PPCS%20Charter%20Updated%208.21.2019.pdf>

Pennsylvania State University. (2025, August 13). *College and Division Sustainability Councils*. Penn State Sustainability. <https://sustainability.psu.edu/about-us/sustainability-councils/college-councils/>

University of California Los Angeles. (n.d.). *Sustainability Committee*. UCLA Sustainability. <https://sustain.ucla.edu/sustainability-committee/>

University of Southern California. (2025, August 7). *Presidential Working Group on Sustainability in Education, research and Operations*. Sustainability. <https://sustainability.usc.edu/assignment-earth/presidential-working-group/>

University of Washington. (n.d.). *Environmental Stewardship Committee*. UW Sustainability. <https://sustainability.uw.edu/environmental-stewardship-committee>

⁴ University of Wisconsin-Madison. (n.d.). *Sustainability Advisory Council*. Office of Sustainability. <https://sustainability.wisc.edu/sustainability-advisory-council/#living-report>

⁵ Smith, J. (2020, July 30). *Thousands of students petition Purdue for carbon neutrality by 2030*. Purdue Exponent. https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/thousands-of-students-petition-purdue-for-carbon-neutrality-by-2030/article_3cbb5394-d27a-11ea-8d95-efad3d7293d1.html

Denham, E. (2024, October 24). *Where is Purdue's climate action plan?* Purdue Exponent. https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/purdue-university-climate-action-plan-environment-petition-carbon-emissions-west-lafayette/article_53b202ee-8b37-11ef-9694-77e3b5665dcc.html

⁶ Kircher, K., & Johnston, M. (2025, October 20). *On Climate Action, a View From Behind the Pack (opinion)*. Opinion | Views. https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/views/2025/10/20/climate-action-view-behind-pack-opinion?utm_source=Inside%2BHigher%2BED&utm_campaign=9c6148f256-DNU_2021_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-9c6148f256-198152633&mc_cid=9c6148f256&mc_eid=e8fc0c9aba

Holguin, Q. (2025, April 4). *PCAC student protest attempts to fight Purdue's lack of climate plan*. Purdue Exponent. https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/general_news/purdue-climate-plan-protests-pcac/article_f11cb8ae-b359-497e-bb0f-9df69f2114b9.html

⁷ University Senate, SD 22-22. (2023, February 20). *Calling for Purdue to Commit to Carbon Neutrality*. Purdue University.

WHEREAS, a sustainability task force would provide the administrative structure to coordinate and manage transparent data collection and publication across campuses, ensuring reliability, accessibility, and continued institutional accountability; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of such a task force would significantly enhance the well-being of our community; and

WHEREAS, in Fall 2025, the Purdue Student Government and the Purdue Graduate Student Government each passed a resolution calling upon Purdue University to establish a university-side sustainability task force.⁸

Therefore, be it RESOLVED,

THAT, we call upon President Chiang, the Board of Trustees, and Administrative Operations of Purdue University to collaborate on the formation and public establishment of a university-wide sustainability task force commissioned by the president by the end of calendar year 2026; and

THAT, we call upon the administration of Purdue University to include students, faculty, staff, and at minimum one Purdue Student Government and one Purdue Graduate Student government representative on this task force; and

THAT, we call upon all administrative offices of Purdue University to authorize this task force to study all aspects of campus sustainability that the task force shall deem relevant, facilitating the task force's work by supplying necessary data (recognizing that some data may be confidential and cannot be shared outside of the committee) and coordinating the implementation of initiatives arising from their work; and

THAT, to establish a transparent foundation for decision making, this task force shall release a comprehensive annual progress report, beginning in 2027, regarding emissions, energy efficiency, waste reduction, the vehicle fleet, and any other relevant items to the Purdue community; and

THAT, we call upon the administration of Purdue University to support and facilitate the public dissemination of the work of this presidentially directed, university-wide task force.

⁸ Purdue Student Senate, Resolution 25-10; Purdue Graduate Student Senate, Resolution FA25-R001.