A Resolution to Adopt The Student Sustainability Resolution of 2011

James DeFrance (for himself) introduced the following resolution which was referred to the Committee on Student Life where is passed with unanimous consent.

* * *

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas OSU is a world leader in climate change, sustainability, and alternative energy research efforts, and

Whereas the Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility Committee (SERC) is a Council of Graduate Students committee spearheading many sustainability efforts at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas members of SERC have sought to develop with broad consensus and diverse sources of input The Student Sustainability Resolution of 2011, and

Whereas this resolution includes contributions and approvals of many undergraduates individually and through their organizations, and

Whereas this resolution outlines the goals and milestones that the students of this university believe should be adopted by administration of The Ohio State University, and

Whereas these goals and milestones are meaningful steps forward in the pursuit of this institution's sustainability and environmental responsibility;

Therefore let it be resolved that the undergraduate student body stands behind The Student Sustainability Resolution of 2011.

Floor Vote: Aye: 11/11 Nay: 0 Present: 0

Micah Kamrass
President

Andrew Mikae
Speaker of the Senate
The Student Sustainability Resolution of 2011

GRADUATE STUDENTS
Ms. Christine Biemann, Mr. Beau Billet, Ms. Melanie Dreser, Mr. Chris Eastman, Mr. Ryan Hottle, Mr. Greg Hostetler, Mr. Benjamin Kent, Ms. Lauren Kleinman, Ms. Justine Law, Mr. Ryan McFadyen, Mr. Jonathan Nutt, Mr. Christopher Scannell, Mr. Nicholas Stanich

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
Mr. James DeFrance, Mr. Cory Green, Ms. Ariel Miller, Ms. Samantha Sekar, Mr. Chris Skovron, Mr. Patrick O’Connell, Ms. Olga Ovchinnikova, Mr. Adam Sauer,

FACULTY & STAFF
Jessica D’Ambrosio, Program Manager, Ohio NEMO Program, Ohio State University Extension
Dr. Nicholas Basta, Professor, School of Environment and Natural Resources
Dr. Pierluigi Bonello, Professor, Department of Plant Pathology, OSU-Columbus
Dr. Jay Martin, Assistant Professor, Department of Food, Agriculture, and Biological Engineering, OSU
Mr. Allen Zimmerman, Professor, Engineering Technology and Technical Physics, OSU-ATI

ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS
The American Academy of Environmental Engineers, The Art of Living Club, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Association for India’s Development, The EARTH Center, Engineers for a Sustainable World (ESW), The Ecological Engineering Society at The Ohio State University, Fisher Professional Services, Free The Planet (!) OSU, The International Association of Students in Agricultural Related Sciences--The Ohio State University Chapter, Net Impact OSU, The Ohio State Solar Decathlon Team, The Ohio State University Student Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, STEMERS-OSU, Structural Engineers Association of Ohio (SEAoO), Students for Food Sovereignty (SFF) Student Group at The Ohio State University, Students for a Sustainable Campus (SSC), Students for Recycling, Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility Council (SERC), The Student Farm at The Ohio State University, Sustainability Team at The Ohio State University, TerAqua Student Group at The Ohio State University,

COMMUNITY SPONSORS
Consider Biking, 501c3 (Columbus, Ohio), Global Gallery (Columbus, Ohio), Habitats Landscaping, LLC. (Columbus, Ohio), Ohio Green Home, LLC (Columbus, Ohio), Rain Brothers, LLC (Columbus, Ohio), The Small Business Beanstalk (Columbus, Ohio),

SECTION 1: SHORT NAME

This act may be referred to as “The Student Sustainability Resolution.”

SECTION 2: PURPOSE

There has been a great deal of activity at The Ohio State University in terms of strategic planning recently including drafting of the One Ohio State Framework[1], the One University campaign[2], the Sustainability Plan, and the American College and University’s President’s Climate Commitment [3]. As the next generation of global leaders, the student body recognizes the significant challenges that we face on a global level and supports this commitment to global leadership for sustainability through education, research, and action.

Presented here within is a resolution to support specific goals for improving sustainability efforts at The Ohio State University addressing natural resource use and conservation, energy consumption and efficiency, water use, food supply sourcing, waste management and recycling, transportation options, ecological restoration of the campus and surrounding areas, construction and renovation policies, university purchasing and investments, and increased research and curriculum opportunities for students, faculty, staff and community members in order to make The Ohio State University a national and global leader on issues surrounding sustainability and environmental responsibility.


WHEREAS, the net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during academic year (AY) 2008-09 for the Columbus campus were 756,949 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2-e) using the Clean Air - Cool Planet Campus Carbon Calculator. Building energy consumption represents 75% GHG emissions, with purchased electricity accounting for 58% of all campus GHG emissions. The fuel mix for purchased electricity is 73% from coal, 22% from nuclear, 3% from
natural gas, 1% from petroleum, and <1% from renewables, [4]. Using ACUPCC accounting standards, the net GHG emissions were 716,325 metric tons CO2-e; and

WHEREAS, the building energy consumption during AY 2008-09 on The Ohio State University Columbus campus was 5,061,257 million British Thermal Units (mmBtus) including 574,013,929 kilowatt-hours of electrical power and 3,102,721 mmBTUs of heating fuels with a total cost of approximately USD 59,840,993 in 2008 through 2009[5]; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gordon Gee has signed the “American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment” which recognizes the need to reduce the global emission of greenhouse gases by 80% by mid-century at the latest [3]; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University has committed to reducing energy use by 20% by 2014 from 2004 levels as specified by Ohio House Bill 251[8]; and

WHEREAS, the AY 2008–2009 water usage for The Ohio State University Columbus campus was 182,389,200 cubic feet of water at a total cost of USD 7,874,418.00[5]; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University spent approximately USD 20.2 million on food during AY 2008-09. Of this, approximately USD 13.8 million was by Student Life with 18% percent being local, USD 4.2 million was by the OSU Medical Center with 8% being local, and USD 2.2 million was by OSU Athletics with 12.2% being local [6]; and

WHEREAS, increasing the percentage of money spent on sustainable and local food would economically benefit local farmers and food producers, and thereby benefit the State of Ohio’s economic health and prosperity[10]; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University is a land-grant university charged with the goal of providing extension and outreach to farmers and producers across the State of Ohio and beyond;

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University currently recycles about 26% of its approximately 15,566 tons of solid waste produced annually; and

WHEREAS, commuting and air travel represent 18% of the university’s annual emissions, and 85% of Ohio State University employees and 41% of Ohio State University students commute by single-occupancy vehicle transportation [7]; and

WHEREAS, ecological restoration provides students, faculty, and staff at The Ohio State University with interactive, living-laboratories in which to study local ecosystems such as the Lower Olentangy River, Waterman Agricultural Research Farm, the Olentangy River wetlands, and Ohio forests; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University Office of Business and Finance has drafted a Green Building Policy statement that requires all new buildings or renovation projects over USD 4,000,000 to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver Certification at minimum [14]; and
WHEREAS, the Ohio State recycled paper policy requires that all copy paper used on campus contains at least 30% post-consumer recycled content [9]; and

WHEREAS, Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) have been purchased for 18,000,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) representing approximately 3% of annual usage [4]; and

WHEREAS, the further alignment of the purchasing practices with university values through the incorporation of policies, communication tools, process improvement standards and reporting mechanisms can reduce the university’s environmental impact; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University manages a long-term investment pool of USD 1.9 billion[11] and presently does not ensure that investment is supporting environmentally and socially responsible companies; and

WHEREAS, renewable energy technologies can provide safe, clean and efficient energy sources that can diversify our energy generation portfolio while reducing dependence on environmentally harmful and/or foreign energy sources; and

WHEREAS, sustainability related courses and programs at all academic levels are in high demand across the country, and colleges and universities which offer these courses and programs are in better position to attract a greater quantity and quality of students; and

WHEREAS, research and curriculum on renewable energy technologies at The Ohio State University can provide students with significant opportunities for career development and job placement, and can provide living laboratories for hands-on interaction with said technologies; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University under the “One Ohio State Framework” is in the process of creating “Centers of Excellence” that address large, complex, and/or important global questions; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University is one of the leading higher education research institutes in the world and is involved in cutting-edge solutions-based interdisciplinary research collaborations and initiatives such as the Third Frontier Program; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio State University is true to its mission to prepare students for the global job market, future research, and global leadership responsibilities;

a) CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY

We RESOLVE, to have completed a comprehensive assessment of resource use on campus by completing energy and water usage audits of the built environment by 2012; and retrofits of the high return-on-investment (“low-hanging fruit”) opportunities by 2015 which will provide significant cost-savings benefits in addition to carbon emissions reductions; and
We RESOLVE, to support transparency in resource consumption, that all University facilities be individually monitored and all utility meters be digitally networked and automatically reporting, viewable by the University community in real-time, by 2050; and

We RESOLVE, to support Dr. E. Gordon Gee’s signing of the “American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment” to reduce carbon emissions including 10% reduction from 2005 levels by 2015, 50% reduction by 2025 and 80% reduction by the year 2050 by supporting energy conservation and efficiency measures (including energy auditing and metering), renewable energy generation, terrestrial carbon sequestration, purchase of carbon offsets, and transparent annual emissions reporting; and

b) ENERGY

We RESOLVE, to increase renewable energy use to 50% of total electrical power generation and 10% of heat generation by 2020 through both on-site energy generation such as wind, solar, geothermal and biomass[9], and purchase of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) or similar such guarantees for off-site renewable energy generation; and

We RESOLVE, to support efforts to create living laboratories for renewable energy generation that provide students, faculty, staff and community members with hands-on learning opportunities and job training; and

We RESOLVE, that a percentage of energy savings through energy auditing and ancillary conservation and efficiency measures are directed into a program that rewards building occupants (students, faculty and staff) in order to encourage strong behavioral changes to promote efficient energy use; and

c) WATER

We RESOLVE, to reduce water use by 20% by 2015 by conducting water audits and increasing water conservation and efficiency efforts that include large-scale rainwater catchment systems, retrofitting of older buildings with low-water use toilets, shower heads aerators etc., wastewater/greywater and storm water reuse systems, and improved irrigation; and

We RESOLVE, to create a cutting-edge high-efficiency water delivery systems for agricultural applications at the Waterman Research Farm on The Ohio State University campus which can be used as a model for both developed and developing countries; and

d) FOOD
We RESOLVE, to increase local food purchasing to 50% of total purchases, organic and/or sustainable food purchasing to 25% of total purchases, and to use only fair-trade coffee products on campus by 2015; and

We RESOLVE, to support practices which minimize environmental impact such as but not limited to the purchasing of food meeting the USDA "National Organic Standard" and food of local origin, as defined as food grown in the State of Ohio or food grown and processed in the State of Ohio; and

We RESOLVE, to increase curriculum development and research opportunities such as those provided by "The Ohio State University Student Farm" which brings students, staff, faculty, and community members together through local food production at the Waterman Farm on The Ohio State University’s West Campus; and

e) WASTE AND RECYCLING

We RESOLVE, to increase incentives and accountability for recycling and conservation of resources, provide more recycling bins in campus buildings, especially residence halls, provide education and outreach on recycling, and involve University staff, especially Facilities Operations and Development, on campus greening initiatives; and

We RESOLVE, that all compostable materials resulting from dining operations will be composted by 2015 and that a large-scale composting system and/or biodigester will be established at the Waterman Farm by the same date; and

We RESOLVE, to support efforts that move The Ohio State University toward a goal of zero waste; and

f) TRANSPORTATION

We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University increase access to alternative transportation options through expanded access to public transportation, improved pedestrian and bicycle safety, and increased bicycling infrastructure; and

We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University foster research, development and deployment of high efficiency vehicles including electric, electric-hybrid, biodiesel, compressed natural gas, and trolley systems; and

We RESOLVE, that all University vehicle purchases after 2015 meet high efficiency standards and utilize innovative technologies; and
We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University support community alternative transportation initiatives, and implement a plan to make main campus vehicle-free from non-essential vehicular traffic by 2025; and

g) ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

We RESOLVE, to support efforts by faculty, staff, and students to promote the health of local ecosystems by increasing pervious cover and native vegetation on campus, restoring wetlands, replanting forests, installing raingardens to prevent combined sewer overflow, and regenerating soils; and

We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University engage in innovative teaching, outreach and research projects that demonstrate important ecological restoration strategies such as the Olentangy Wetland Research Park; and

h) NEW CONSTRUCTION

We RESOLVE, that all new construction include direct involvement from students, staff, and faculty from the architecture, engineering, environmental science, business, and other schools with the conception, design, construction, commissioning, and monitoring of the construction process; and

We RESOLVE, that all new construction utilize progressive building design strategies such as passive solar design, pervious pavements, green roofs, and heat-island mitigation; and

We RESOLVE, that the University adopt sustainable construction guidelines that meet or exceed existing standards such as LEED; and

i) PURCHASING & INVESTMENT

We RESOLVE, to support the development of a sustainable purchasing policy which includes that all copy paper contain at least 75% or more post-consumer recycled content, that single-use plastics and petrochemical foam products be replaced with reusable products and biodegradable products, and that all cleaning products, where not prohibited, are certified by the Scientific Certification Systems® by 2015[12]; and

We RESOLVE, to support efforts that steer The Ohio State University’s investment portfolio towards investments where the capital invested helps build a sustainable and equitable economy—specifically, no less than 50% of the long-term investment pool be invested in explicitly socially and environmentally responsible stocks, funds, and bonds by 2015 as defined by the standards agreed upon by the United Nation’s Principles for Responsible Investment [13]; and
We RESOLVE, that a significant percentage of energy savings procured from energy auditing and ancillary conservation and efficiency measures are directed into a “Sustainability Fund” that supports continuing investment in sustainability initiatives through a transparent process in which a board composed of students, faculty and staff collectively decide how funds will be allocated based on cost-savings, global significance, demonstration quality, and benefits to the larger community; and

j) CURRICULUM AND RESEARCH

We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University expand the number and diversity of courses being offered on issues of sustainability by 2015 to include certification in LEED, BPI (Building Performance Institute), NABCEP (North American Board of Certified Energy Installers), and Permaculture Design; and

We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University develop an undergraduate minor and graduate interdisciplinary specialization program in sustainability; and

We RESOLVE, that The Ohio State University create an Office of Sustainability and hire a full-time professional charged with the task of prioritizing, interconnecting, and promoting sustainability research by 2012; and

We RESOLVE, that a team of students be hired to work on energy efficiency and conservation through the newly created Office of Sustainability by 2013; and

We RESOLVE, that existing Centers of Excellence make efforts to better connect with each other and market themselves on a national and international scale, and that additional Centers of Excellence be created that focus on sustainability including Global Climate Solutions, Sustainable Agriculture, Carbon Sequestration, Renewable Energy, and Development and Ecological Economics by 2015.

SECTION 4: SIGNING STATEMENT

The above statements, facts, and goals represent a vision of what can be done to positively and responsibly meet the sustainability challenge. Unprecedented environmental and humanitarian challenges are now facing us in the 21st century. These include climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and extreme poverty. Environmental decision-making is therefore not only a good thing to do, but also an ethical responsibility in our individual lives, in our communities, and on our campus. We have a responsibility for the future generation of Buckeyes for both environmental reasons and economic ones. The plans elucidated above will save the University considerable financial capital by reducing costs for electricity, gas, water, and waste. The Ohio State University Columbus campus uses around 60 million dollars for heat and electric, 10 million for water, and an undisclosed amount for waste. A 20% reduction could finance a Sustainability Fund in the amount of 15 million dollars per year which could pay for an interdisciplinary sustainability curriculum, living laboratories for renewable energy
technologies, ecosystem restoration projects, and a student employment program to conduct energy, recycling, and water audits as well as to take part in the design and construction of green buildings on campus. Some of the funds could also be used to buy better food options for students, faculty and staff. With a little greater investment in food quality--buying fresher, local foods grown by farmers here in Ohio--we can benefit the health and well being of The Ohio State community while at the same time benefiting local farmers, dairy men and women, bakers, and beekeepers. We should also make strong efforts to support the local economy by utilizing the services of and investing in local businesses. Local businesses are the backbone of our great city of Columbus which prosper in the diversity and good jobs of small enterprises across the landscape. In short, this plan offers a strong, logical, environmentally responsible, and economically intelligent option for responding positively and proactively to growing challenges. We call forth on the University to take clear, transparent, bench-marked steps to increase sustainability efforts on campus starting with those listed herein.

We greatly appreciate all who added to this document including over 480 viewers and editors, students, faculty members, and staff for your contributions, feedback, fact-checking, criticism and encouragements.

Go Bucks!


[3] American College and University’s President’s Climate Commitment, accessed 1/31/2011:
http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/.


