



Sustainability Plan for BSU & NTC

Fall 2017— Fall 2020

Framework Document



BEMIDJI
STATE UNIVERSITY



MIIGWECH!

(Thank You!)

to all of the contributors to this Sustainability Plan

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Notes from the Sustainability Office

History of Sustainability at BSU

For nearly five decades the faculty, staff, administration and students at Bemidji State University (BSU) have decided that the environment is a defining feature of the University. From one of the oldest environmental studies programs in the nation, to a defining value of environmental stewardship, the University has proudly proclaimed its dedication to protecting and preserving Mother Earth.

Since its inception, the Sustainability Office has guided and facilitated BSU's environmental stewardship efforts such as planting native plant beds that support pollinators, installing water bottle filling stations, and creating convenient recycling stations. Bikes line the buildings, and our community was chosen to pilot one of the few, if not only, small-scale bike sharing programs in the nation. Other, less obvious projects also display our commitment such as one of the first solar transpired air installations in the state. Academically, all BSU undergraduates must understand not only the impacts humans have on the environment, but the ways all are involved in being part of the solution by completing an environmental course.

BSU's Unique Sustainability Model

BSU honors Anishinaabe peoples' traditions and strives to ensure their history, language, and culture are part of our sustainability journey. Recognizing our unique cultural heritage and location, BSU operates under a sustainability model which includes the environment or Mother Earth as the basis for everything; the deep understanding that we need the environment to survive and thrive. The model also includes a wellness component, realizing that our own individual mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing must be considered when making good decisions for the future.

Comment on the future of Sustainability at BSU and NTC

BSU and NTC are at an important crossroads and there is opportunity for alignment with our sustainability efforts across our campuses. Every member of each of our campus communities has a stake in and responsibility for our institutional impacts on a future where our students can live and thrive. As a framework for our combined institutional efforts, this plan will require intentional, collaborative efforts across campuses, departments, and offices in order to be successful. Therefore, this plan should not be seen as a plan for the Sustainability Office alone, but instead an overall sustainability plan for BSU and NTC as a whole. The Sustainability Office is excited and proud to work as a facilitator and guide through this process to help strengthen and expand our collective sustainability and continued leadership in this field!

Erika Bailey-Johnson

Sustainability Director

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Institutional Mission Statements



We create an innovative, interdisciplinary and highly accessible learning environment committed to student success and a sustainable future of our communities, state and planet. Through the transformative power of the liberal arts, education in the professions, and robust engagement of our students, we instill and promote service to others, preservation of the earth, and respect and appreciation for the diverse peoples of our region and world.



Northwest Technical College integrates the value of work with the educational experience to develop resourceful lifelong students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to secure rewarding careers and satisfying lives in an increasingly technologically focused, globally interdependent, multicultural society.

Sustainability at BSU and NTC



Vision for Sustainability

Exemplify and create a culture that can exist indefinitely while in balance with the rest of nature.

Mission for Sustainability

Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College's Sustainability mission is to promote awareness and instill passion for the Earth through our leadership in operational, academic, wellness, and community and cultural activities.

Sustainability: Our Broad Definition

Ojibwe Influence

BSU and NTC are situated on treaty land surrounded by three Native American reservations: Leech Lake, White Earth and Red Lake. Our definition of sustainability is intimately related to Native American culture and perspective. Our unique sustainability model is inspired by the Anishinaabe creation story, where Gichi Manidoo (the Creator) created the world in a certain order. Humans were created last and are dependent on animals, plants and Mother Earth to survive, yet nothing is dependent on humans.



BSU and NTC's sustainability model thus sees the environment as all-encompassing with real limits that need to be understood and respected. This is in contrast to more conventional definitions of sustainability, where the environment is merely one balancing element along with the economy and society. Therefore, our office engages in work that recognizes that healthy people, communities and economies cannot survive or thrive without a healthy environment.

A Focus on Wellness

Our model also uniquely emphasizes Wellness as an essential component of sustainability. We work across campus to promote and ensure the overall health of our students, faculty and staff by encouraging all aspects of individual wellness and how each aspect is connected. We encourage students to get enough sleep, find activities that reduce stress (such as painting or going for a walk in the woods), and to participate in mentally enriching activities. Furthermore, our sustainability model highlights the interdependence of our individual, social and economic health with the overall health of the environment.

Sustainability at BSU and NTC

Leadership

- Institutional Values
- Coordination, Planning & Governance
- Sustainable Investments



Role of Leadership

Guiding Statement on Leadership

Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College will be the leaders in sustainability efforts in higher education across the state. In order to make this happen, decision-makers at every level of Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College will: communicate and act in ways that exemplify our long-term commitment to sustainability; recognize sustainability efforts for their long-term social, environmental, financial and health returns; and remain transparent and accountable in our actions to foster sustainability across the campuses and beyond.

In order for this Sustainability Plan to be successful, there must be a demonstration of leadership in sustainability from senior level administration all the way through and across the campus community. We will experience success if:

- ☼ Senior leadership including the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, Chairs and other key leaders support and communicate the importance of sustainability in higher education.
- ☼ Sustainability is incorporated and emphasized as a core value of BSU and NTC's Strategic Plan and other guiding documents.
- ☼ Sustainability values, knowledge and skills are incorporated into the hiring process at BSU and NTC (position descriptions, interview processes, employee orientations, performance reviews etc).
- ☼ Opportunities for existing campus community members to learn about and engage with sustainability issues and initiatives are advanced.
- ☼ Financial resources are adequately allocated to advance sustainability efforts.
- ☼ Social, environmental, financial and health consequences are integrated into institutional decision making processes.
- ☼ Communication and decision making efforts are transparent.

Guiding Statements

Operations

Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College strive to meet and exceed the highest sustainability industry standards in all its natural and built environments. There is active cross-departmental involvement in facility and operations endeavors; and we are responsive to new approaches that increase efficiencies, reduce waste, conserve energy and foster wellness. We demonstrate responsible purchasing of goods and services that promote long-term ecological and human health, while maintaining exceptional stewardship of our financial resources.

Education

Students at the University and Technical College have an abundance of opportunities to increase their understanding and involvement in sustainability-related activities. Faculty cross all disciplines foster these opportunities within the classroom while promoting experiential applications outside the classroom. We continuously increase our understanding of and appreciation for indigenous cultural and ecological well-being in all of our academic pursuits.

Culture & Community

Every member of the University and Technical College recognizes that we are a part of a greater community outside of our classroom walls. We consider this both a privilege and a responsibility. We are model stewards of the land, water, air, people and cultures around us, and pay deep tribute to the indigenous people of this community. We work in partnership with others by sharing campus facilities and resources, and we embolden students, staff, faculty and administrators to be contributing members of the community outside of campus and beyond the school day.

Wellness

The University and Technical College emboldens everyone in our educational community to pursue a sense of balance across their academic, vocational, physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual health. We encourage each individual to create a personal connection to the land we occupy, and foster a sense of place and purpose that reflects an ethic of environmental responsibility. We are intentional about endorsing the time, space and resources to foster this holistic sense of self-awareness and wellness.

Goals and Measurable Outcomes

Operations

1.1 Advance efforts to reach our Carbon Commitment

- A. *Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions 10% below 2010 baseline by 2020.*

1.2 Reduce waste and increase recycling

- A. *Reduce Municipal Solid Waste generation by 2% per year.*
- B. *Increase Recycling rate by 1% per year.*

1.3 Improve access to alternative modes of transportation

- A. *Increase amount and quality of biking and walking infrastructure.*
- B. *Increase awareness and use of Electric Vehicle (or other) opportunities on campus.*

1.4 Model stewardship of land and water

- A. *Increase square footage of native landscaping and shoreline buffer zone.*
- B. *Reduce water use by 2% per year.*

Education

2.1 Advance sustainability as an integral part of academic curriculum

- A. *Integrate sustainability into multiple areas of the BSU Master Academic Plan.*
- B. *Increase faculty participation in interdisciplinary teaching.*
- C. *Integrate traditional knowledge and indigenous teaching into academic studies.*

2.2 Expand experiential learning opportunities

- A. *Increase service learning requirements for BSU and NTC classes.*
- B. *Increase community internship opportunities related to sustainability.*

2.3 Motivate, educate, and outreach on sustainability issues

- A. *Increase awareness of sustainability issues among faculty, staff, student and community members.*

Goals and Measurable Outcomes

Community & Culture

3.1 Strengthen relationships between native and non-native peoples

- A. *Expose 100% of faculty, staff and students to issues facing indigenous communities.*
- B. *Increase number of faculty, staff and students engaged in environmental justice.*
- C. *Increase opportunities for indigenous peoples' environmental justice efforts.*

3.2 Advance a culture of inclusivity, safety and respect at our campuses

- A. *Increase a sense of respect and equity for every campus community member.*

3.3 Expand community partnerships

- A. *Improve the connection of sustainability related service learning and internship opportunities with community partners.*
- B. *Improve community members experience on campus.*

Wellness

4.1 Expand awareness and adoption of the “Best You at BSU” wellness model

- A. *Create a faculty and staff focused “Best You at BSU” initiative.*
- B. *Expose 100% of faculty, staff and students to our wellness model.*
- C. *Increase number of faculty, staff and students engaged in wellness activities.*

4.2 Advance a culture of wellness on our campuses

- A. *Increase time, space and opportunities for wellness and group activities.*