

Proposed Sustainability Policy for RWU School of Law

Draft 1: Presented to Sustainability Town Hall Meeting, October 9, 2007

Goal 1: Create a Sustainability Policy for consideration by School of Law and University to serve as the public declaration of university commitment to environmental protection.

Goal 2: To provide a framework for the School of Law and University to ask of every decision what the environmental implications are and what can be done to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts.

Proposed RWU School of Law Sustainability Policy

We, the Roger Williams University School of Law community, affirm our belief that university faculty, staff and students have a responsibility to take a leadership role in conducting activities as responsible stewards of the physical environment and using educational activities to promote environmental awareness, local action and global thinking.

In our community functions, the School of Law will strive to:

- Conserve natural resources and support their sustainable use.
- Conduct affairs in a manner that safeguards the environmental health and safety of students, faculty and staff and communities.
- Reduce the use of toxic substances and the generation of wastes and promote strategies to reuse and recycle those wastes that cannot be avoided.
- Purchase renewable, reusable, recyclable, and recycled materials.
- Reduce the amount of energy used in School of Law related activities and endeavors including events, travel, and daily operations.

In our education and research missions, the School of Law will strive to:

- Foster an understanding of and a responsibility for the physical environment.
- Ensure that individuals are knowledgeable about the environmental and health issues that affect their study and work.
- Encourage environmental research.
- Conduct research and teaching in an environmentally responsible way.
- Provide a forum for the open flow of information among governments, international organizations, industry, and academia to discuss and study environmental issues and their relationship to other social issues.

The School of Law will initiate, promote, and conduct programs that fully implement this policy, with assistance from and involvement of the University and outside community.

Proposed Elements of RWU School of Law Sustainability Policy

The School of Law is committed to making sustainability an integral part of its curriculum, research, operations and outreach by undertaking the following.

1. Make sustainability a corporate priority.

- Set best practice standards, meet or surpass requirements of environmental legislation and commit to a process of continual environmental improvement on campus, in Bristol, Providence, and Rhode Island.
- Encourage students and staff to incorporate informed sustainability perspectives within their work.
- Develop the capacities of academic staff to promote understanding of the principles of sustainability.

2. Develop and deliver appropriate teaching and outreach.

- As feasible, expose all students to concepts of social, ecological and ethical stewardship.
- Provide access to education, training and facilities to staff and students to raise awareness of sustainability issues and encourage energy efficiency, waste minimization and recycling.

3. Take a leadership role in sustainability.

- Promote awareness of all legislative, economic, technical and market developments that assist progress towards sustainability.
- Maintain Sustainability Committee and establish an Advisory Group to oversee implementation of this policy and associated programs.
- As appropriate and feasible, join regional, national, and international networks and initiatives to become part of a larger sustainability community. (Focus the Nation; Higher Education Ass'n Sustainability Consortium)

4. Contribute to and participate in a Sustainable Community.

- Build partnerships and create local information and learning networks for sharing experiences and knowledge of sustainability issues with all stakeholders.
- Operate in ways that maximize social and economic benefit while minimizing adverse impacts to the local community.
- Invest in staff development, value stakeholder involvement and promote social inclusion and equity.

5. Maintain and develop the University in a sustainable manner.

- Seek practical means of characterizing, monitoring and minimizing all aspects of its operations that result in adverse impacts on the environment including emissions and discharges to air, water and land and use of natural resources.
- Where viable, minimize consumption of unsustainable raw materials and fuels through our purchasing and transport policies and influencing our suppliers and contractors to ensure that goods and services meet acceptable environmental standards.
- Manage buildings and grounds within the University in a manner that avoids adverse environmental impact and, wherever possible, enhances the natural environment and encourages bio-diversity.
- Promote continual improvement in maintenance practices and establish sustainability guidelines for internal and external design teams and contractors working on new buildings and refurbishment projects.
- Maximize the efficient use of energy and materials, continually improve pollution prevention measures and increase use of renewable resources.
- Minimize waste generation in research and teaching activity and encourage repair, reuse and recycling ahead of the responsible disposal of surplus materials.
- Promote practical measures to reduce the impact of travel to and between university sites.

6. Monitor and report on progress towards sustainability.

- Strive towards continuous improvement in all our activities while recognizing that sustainable development is an on-going process.
- Manage responsibly the social, environmental and economic impacts of all University policies and practices and assess potential improvements within the University's decision-making processes.
- Conduct reviews of all University policies, management performance standards and operations against internal sustainability targets and best practice standards.
- Make the results of social, environmental and sustainability audits and impact assessments carried out by or for the University available to all stakeholders.