

# Staff and Student Sustainability Engagement Plan 2020-2021

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Aim

Staff, student and stakeholder engagement is a vital component of our overall sustainability strategy. The aim is to engage with all university students, employees and stakeholders which all contribute to our overall energy usage to reduce the GHG emissions.

The aim of this document is to formalise our overarching engagement plan in order to aid us in tracking our progress; to enable staff, students and stakeholders to discover opportunities to engage in sustainability on campus; and to demonstrate our commitment to sustainability engagement.

This document also outlines the University of Essex sustainability team's core activities for 2020-2021. It is subject to change but gives an overview of our main projects for the coming academic year.

Owing to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the channels and dates for delivering some activities are subject to change, due to uncertainty about how our campuses will be operating in the autumn.

### 1.2. Objectives

Our underlying objectives for student, staff and stakeholder engagement are as follows:

- To collaborate with the Students' Union in a joint effort to improve sustainability on campus.
- To normalise the SOS-UK Green Impact initiative (or equivalent) and to involve every department on campus.
- To encourage students to establish new sustainability or environmentally themed societies or clubs.
- To push for improvements in integrating education for sustainable development into the curriculum.
- To integrate sustainability as a core component of student and staff inductions.
- To increase and improve engagement opportunities with the Sustainability Sub-Strategy, Carbon Management Plan, Statement of Investment Principles and other key strategy and policy documentation.
- To ensure that Trades Unions are presented with opportunities to engage with sustainability management.
- To collaborate with print and digital media teams (internal and external to the University) to promote sustainability on campus using best-practice marketing techniques.
- To increase the number of engagements through our social media channels

## 2. Engagement Initiatives

### 2.1. Accommodation engagement programme (#LittleChoicesBigChanges)

Bringing engagement with students under one campaign, #LittleChoicesBigChanges encourages students living on campus to reduce energy use, increase recycling and save water, but will also target those living off campus to adopt sustainable habits. This campaign will target key dates throughout the academic year: Welcome Week, Christmas move out, January/February cold season and the end of the year move out, an addition to promoting sustainability on an on-going basis, in collaboration with key partners such as EssexFood.

### 2.2. Green Impact

The SOS-UK Green Impact scheme continues to be a success at the University of Essex. New teams are recruited each year and the proportion achieving a Gold award has risen year-on-year since 2014. Green Impact commences in October and runs through to the award ceremony in July.

The SOS-UK provides the University with a bespoke workbook of actions from which departmental teams can work through with the support of our students. Student assistants are provided with training to aid in the auditing of teams.

## **2.3. Engagement Events:**

### **2.3.1. Welcome Week**

Welcome Week spans the first two weeks of term, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The first week focusses on welcoming new students to the university; while the second is an opportunity to welcome back returning students. This presents a perfect opportunity to launch a marketing campaign to raise awareness about environmental issues and sustainability on campus. The event consists of stalls, informative handouts and face to face discussions involving members of the sustainability team. Activity for this will primarily be held on the Colchester campus; however, a similar event will be held at Southend campus for Fresher's Fair on date TBC.

### **2.3.2. Sustainability awareness promotion**

During the Autumn term we will deliver a sustainability awareness campaign which links to our 'reduce, recycle, protect' initiative utilising digital signage and social media channels. The date for this activity is to be confirmed but will be scheduled for late October to mid-November.

### **2.3.3. Sustainability Week (date TBC)**

Each year, the university hosts a sustainability-themed week (usually in March) where events take place to raise awareness about sustainability issues. Past activities have included a smoothie bike, guided tree walks around campus, cooking tips to avoid food waste, electric vehicle test drives, photo competitions and recycling information.

## **Engagement Opportunities**

### **3.1. University Committees**

Having student representatives on our committees is a valuable way in which students can engage with strategic decision making at the University governance level. However, it is important that we ensure that students are engaged as active participants and not simply observers. One of our aims is to ensure that student committee members have the necessary support to confidently participate.

Student representatives are primarily on Senate committees; however, there is also some representation at Council. Below is a list of all university committees involved in sustainability, ethics, estates planning, finance and strategic decision making with student representation.

#### **Council**

1. People Supporting Strategy Committee
2. Resource Committee:
3. Advisory groups of the University Steering Group (USG):
4. Joint Committee of the Council and the Senate

#### **Senate**

1. Education Committee
2. Ethics Committee
3. Research Committee

#### 4. Action Plan 2020-2021

Table to show Annual Sustainability Engagement Actions

Strategic Area	Action	Date	Owner(s)
Campaigns	Social Media campaign	Ongoing	Sustainability Engagement Officer/ Engagement Assistant
	Green Impact Launch	October 2020	Sustainability Engagement Officer/ Engagement Assistant
	Green Impact Student Assistant Training	October/ November 2020	SOS-UK Project Officer
	Green Impact Audits	April/ May 2021	Sustainability Engagement Officer, Sustainability Engagement Assistant, Student Assistants
	Green Impact Awards	July 2021	Sustainability Engagement Officer, Sustainability Engagement Assistant, SOS-UK Project Officer
	Welcome Week Stalls	October 2020	Sustainability Engagement Officer/Engagement Assistant
	Christmas Move Out	December 2020	Sustainability Engagement Officer/Engagement Assistant
	Cold Season	January/ February 2021	Sustainability Engagement Officer/Engagement Assistant

	End of Year Move Out	June/July 2021	Sustainability Engagement Officer/Engagement Assistant
	Annual Sustainability Week	March 2021	Sustainability Engagement Officer/Engagement Assistant
Marketing	Updating the Sustainability Website	+ Ongoing	Sustainability Engagement Officer, Sustainability Project Officer, Head of Sustainability and Grounds, WEDM
	Enormoboards on Colchester Campus Squares to promote sustainable living (if appropriate)	Ongoing	Sustainability Engagement Officer
	Sustainability Newsletter	Ongoing	Sustainability Engagement Officer/Engagement Assistant
	Maintain Social Media Pages	Ongoing	Sustainability Engagement Officer, Sustainability Engagement Assistant
Education	Summer School in Sustainable Practice	June 2021	Dr Jane Hindley
	Tree Walks	Ongoing	Sarah Manning

	Social Cycle Rides	TBC	Travel and Transport Officer
Transport	Cycle to Work Day	August 2020	Travel and Transport Officer

This document is subject to annual review by the University of Essex

<b>Signed by</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Next review date</b>
Rebecca Moss – Sustainability Engagement Officer	22/4/2020	2/4/2021