

1. Cover Sheet

Center Review Self-Study

Official name of the center/institute: Center for Sustainability

Director: John Bock, Professor of Anthropology

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

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Year of last review: 2018

Date of submission: April 30, 2024

2. Mission and Goals

What are the mission and goals of the center/institute?

The Center for Sustainability's fundamental mission is to build capacity on campus and bring together members of the campus community from all divisions to work together to make Cal State Fullerton a leader in educational practice, research, and community engagement related to sustainability, as well as the implementation of sustainable practices on campus and in the greater community. The Center supports student learning by increasing access to high impact practices related to sustainability and promoting inclusion of sustainability-centered topics in the curriculum. The Center increases the educational and pedagogical capacity of the university faculty and community in relation to sustainability by assisting with external and internal grant-seeking and other professional activities by faculty and other members of the university community, as well as facilitating faculty collaboration. The Center conducts public education programs and works with student groups to coordinate efforts to raise awareness about sustainability and to increase the level of sustainability in campus operations and activities.

In support of this mission, the Center has seven interrelated goals:

- Raising awareness and building capacity regarding sustainability on campus through the Center web portal and interactive events
- Supporting sustainability-related educational activities by students and faculty through developing curriculum, supporting high impact experiences such as internships and service-learning, and providing a base for student organizations
- Enhancing faculty capacity by promoting collegial interaction
- Engaging community organizations and institutions in sustainability-focused activities
- Acting as a resource center for developing research related to sustainability, including logistic support; and facilitating extramural grant acquisition
- Coordinating sustainability-related activities across campus
- Initiating and supporting efforts to make the campus environment more sustainable

Which university mission and goals does the center/institute best align with?

The Center for Sustainability's mission and goals align with Goals 1-5 from the Fullerton Forward Strategic Plan 2024-29:

Goal 1: Enhance Support for Student Access, Learning, and Academic Success

The Center supports high impact experiences at the curricular level, such as service-learning and internships, and at the co-curricular level through support of student groups. In addition, the Center has supported the development of sustainability-related curriculum at the course and programmatic level. Sustainability, in all its dimensions, including the social/cultural, economic, and environmental components challenges society on a number of levels. By participating in high impact experiences supported by the Center, students gain skills in navigating the complex dynamics in creating a future that is socially just, economically viable, and environmentally stable. The knowledge, social awareness, and critical thinking skills gained that are specific to the topic of sustainability are in demand within the workforce among government entities, non-profits, and among major corporations.

Goal 2: Foster Student Engagement and Well-Being

Substantial research has shown that students who engage in the constructivist and experiential approaches to learning that the Center supports have higher rates of retention and more direct progress towards graduation. These benefits are especially important among students from underrepresented groups.

Goal 3: Recruit and Retain a High-quality and Diverse Faculty and Staff.

The Center's support of faculty activities, including providing stipends and other direct support, helps contribute to a positive work environment.

Goal 4: Expand and Strengthen Physical and Financial Capacity and Community Relations

The Center for Sustainability's mission, goals, and activities are closely aligned with this goal. The Center was initiated with a three year federal grant, and has actively pursued and obtained external and intramural support, including a 2019 award from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) HSI Education Grants program.

Goal 5: Innovate and Improve Campus Operations

The Center plays a key role in CSUF's submission to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AAHHE) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). The Center supports our partners in University Sustainability in their efforts to improve campus operations.

What are the departmental or college-level missions or goals that the center/institute strives to attain?

Consistent with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences mission and goals, the Center for Sustainability emphasizes learning, teaching, research, and community engagement related to the social justice, economic viability, and ecologically sound ethos of sustainability to "educate students to be culturally, globally, socially, historically and environmentally astute, civically responsible alumni able to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world." The Center's support of student learning contributes to "class materials and activities, co-curricular activities, and off-campus opportunities that foster students' development as productive members of society with global awareness, cultural sensitivity, and social responsibility" and "provide[s] mentoring, service-learning and other course-related opportunities that prepare students to enter the local and global workforce." Additionally, the Center strives "to design and employ opportunities for students to develop transferable skills in scholarly/creative activity of the humanities and the social sciences, project-based learning, teamwork, social networking, and the ability to present themselves as professionals,,,[t]o serve as a resource to local and regional communities in fostering an understanding and appreciation of the humanities and social sciences, as well as in supporting community education and welfare...[and t]o provide local, regional, national, and international communities with opportunities both on- and off-campus to engage intellectually and professionally with the scholars and students in our College."

3. Activities:

What activities took place in the most recent three-year period?

2022-2023

- Support of service-learning at Fullerton Arboretum
- Support of U-ACRE internships at 10 community partners and U-ACRE web presence
- Coordination and logistic/financial support of 11th Annual CSUF Earth Week celebration, various locations on campus. Co-sponsored with CSUF Office of Sustainability, ASI, CSUF Parking & Transportation, Fullerton Arboretum. Participation by numerous student organizations and community exhibitors/vendors
- Coordination and logistic/financial support of CSUF Sustainability Month celebration, various locations on campus. Co-sponsored with CSUF Office of Sustainability, ASI, CSUF Parking & Transportation, Fullerton Arboretum. Participation by numerous student organizations and community exhibitors/vendors
- Implementation of CSUF Campus Garden, with one bed structure and eight bed shepherd departments, classes, and orgs. 14 varieties of CA native pollinator attractors planted as part of ENST master's project.

2021-2022

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- Ceremonial groundbreaking for CSUF Campus Garden
- Implementation of NIFA-funded the Southern California Agroecology and Sustainable Urban Food Systems Education and Research Conference (SoCal-AgSURFS) April 7-8, 2022 at the Fullerton Arboretum. The mission of the conference was to promote research and education surrounding agroecology and sustainable urban food systems; to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and discussions about agroecology and sustainable urban food systems among students, staff, and faculty from southern California CSUs and other higher-education institutions; and to provide students, especially those from underrepresented groups, with opportunities for experiential learning and professional development. Keynote speakers were James Beard Award winner Rowen White, influential figure in the Indigenous seed matriation movement, and Dan Saladino, author of *Eating to Extinction*, multiple award-winning best seller and host of BBC's *The Food Programme*.

2020-2021

- On hiatus during mandatory COVID research pause

How were specific activities conducted during the most recent three-year period directed toward meeting the aforementioned mission and goals?

The activities group into three areas:

- 1) Support of CSUF and HSS mission and goals through high impact experiences in service-learning and internships, and curriculum development;
- 2) Support of CSUF and HSS mission and goals through community engagement and outreach;
- 3) Support of CSUF and HSS mission and goals through entrepreneurial activities including grant proposals and networking.

In addition, the Center supported leadership efforts by assistant and associate professors in the UC-CSU Climate Knowledge Action Network.

Several of these activities received both in-house and external media coverage including in the OC Register..

4. Organizational Structure and Governance

What is the center's/institute's organizational and governance structure?

The Center for Sustainability has a director who receives no specific institutional support for this role.

Does the center/institute operate with a formal Advisory Committee or Governing Board?

The Advisory Board was placed on hiatus on the instructions of former Dean Fontaine.

If so, what is the composition of that group and the frequency of meetings?

N/A

What roles and oversight duties are the committee or board generally engaged in, and in what ways was the committee or board particularly impactful during the review period?

N/A

If there is no advisory or governing group, then what is the rationale for not having such participation in the decision-making process?

According to Dean Fontaine, the advisory board was no longer required.

5. Resources and Sustainability

List the revenue received by the center/institute during its latest three years of operation.

\$1,000 CSUF crowd-funding.

What additional resources/sources of support does the center receive (e.g., assigned time for leadership, baseline budget amount, hours from community volunteers, unpaid student internships, etc.)?

The director received 3 WTUs assigned time from the Division of Anthropology for all of his activities, including the Center, U-ACRE, NSF-funded research in Botswana, and service,. In addition, many of the Center's activities are tied into service-learning in courses taught by several faculty members. There is no baseline budget from the university. Students work with the Center through FWS, unpaid internships and service-learning. Over the three years, on average the student engagement was approximately 30 hours per week. The director's actual unfunded commitments total 19 WTUs per week.

Provide a summary of the number of faculty and staff affiliated with the center and approximate time base of each.

There is no budget for faculty and staff. There are on average ten faculty members who engage with Center activities on a regular basis.

What assigned space does the center occupy and what administrative unit assigns that space? Are there costs related to the space?

The Center occupies LH-321A, allocated by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. This space is used by graduate student and undergraduate student interns to work on projects associated with the Center. There is no separate cost for the space.

Comment on the “degree of sustainability” of the center/institute in relation to the resources that the center/institute has to draw upon and in relation to plans to maintain, reduce, or grow the work of the center/institute

In 2019, the Center received a three year award from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) HSI Education Grants program for implementation of the Southern California Agroecology and Sustainable Urban Food Systems Education and Research Conference (SoCal-AgSURFS) April 7-8, 2022 at the Fullerton Arboretum. At this point, it would seem that additional support is needed for proposal development and funding outreach.

6. Highlights and Accomplishments

Discuss any special reports, products, or activities that reflect accomplishments of the center/institute in its most recent three-year period.

Several articles in CSUF News and the OC Register.

In what ways have these accomplishments contributed to the impact of the center/institute?

Activities and projects supported by the Center have raised its profile within the university and in the community. The Center's collaboration with ASI for Earth Week began with the Center's origination. Cal State Fullerton's Earth Week celebration is widely recognized across southern California.

In what ways have they contributed to the mission of the college or university and/or to the goal of promoting faculty and student research and engagement?

Through the Center's collaboration with the Arboretum, in any year over 200 students engage in high impact experiences through service-learning. This includes students from at least five colleges. Without the Center hosting the scheduling and login system, the Arboretum would be unable to meet the demand. These efforts were noted in contributing to the Arboretum being one of 20 worldwide botanical gardens receiving the highest possible accreditation. Students engaged through the Center's supported service-learning and internship activities have engaged in wide range of research projects, resulting in several master's projects.

7. Planning and Strategic Outlook

What is the nature and formality of the center's/institute's strategic planning process?

The Center has a number of interactions with a non-formal group of the campus community.

What are the goals of the center/institute for the coming three-year period and to what extent are the center's/institute's resources aligned with those goals?

In the coming three years, the Center will continue its three-pronged efforts in education, research, and outreach concerning sustainability. A goal will be to secure additional external support.

If the leadership of the center/institute believes that some or all of the activities and operations of the center/institute need to be substantially modified, refocused, or discontinued, please explain the rationale and potential timeframe for the viewpoint.

The Center should continue its efforts in supporting service-learning, internships, inclusion of sustainability within the curriculum through high-impact practices, supporting faculty and student research, and community outreach and engagement. Although the original conception for the Center was to grow into an Institute of Sustainability that had two components, academics/student learning and campus operations, the change in administrative personnel and priorities over the last eight years makes that an unlikely prospect in the near term. The Center will continue its excellent collegial and collaborative relationship with University Sustainability.

Since there seems to be heightened interest from senior management, it may be a good opportunity to pursue further integration with one website and merging administrative structures into one unit. It is important, however, that Academic Affairs does not cede this area to A&F through lack of financial support in the form of baseline funding and assigned time. One model pursued by many CSU campuses, as well as some UCs and others, is to integrate academic affairs, operations, and student government sustainability activities into one Center for Sustainability, housed in the student union and supported by a split baseline from both the campus and ASI.