

University of Mary Washington

President's Council on Sustainability: Constitution and Bylaws



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 University Mission Statement

The University of Mary Washington is one of Virginia’s outstanding public liberal arts universities, providing a superior education that inspires and enables our students to make positive changes in the world.

The University is a place where faculty, students, and staff share in the creation and exploration of knowledge through freedom of inquiry, personal responsibility, and service. UMW regards the provision of high quality instruction as its most important function. The University offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs focusing on both disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies. These academic programs afford students opportunities to integrate and apply their knowledge within broad educational experiences, to develop their professional interests, and to practice the habits of mind necessary for life-long learning. Through a professionally engaged faculty, the University supports ongoing research appropriate to the development of student abilities and faculty interests. It especially encourages the participation of undergraduates in research.

UMW’s size, dedicated faculty, and historical commitment to fine teaching create an institutional culture where both undergraduate and graduate students benefit from strong connections with their faculty and multiple opportunities for active learning.

Located in Fredericksburg between our nation’s capital and the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the University of Mary Washington is a nexus for engagement among diverse communities and is dedicated to supporting professional advancement and economic development and to improving the regional quality of life.

We fulfill our mission by immersing students, faculty, and staff in local, regional, national, and international communities, and by inculcating the values of honor and integrity. UMW graduates are models of adaptive learning, personal achievement, responsible leadership, service to others, and engaged citizenship in a global and diverse society.

1.2 Statement of Community Values

As a public, liberal arts university, the University of Mary Washington community is dedicated to providing a diverse, accepting, and supportive environment that holds all of its members to the highest standards of conduct, scholarship, integrity, inclusiveness, respect, and engagement. Through a commitment to these values, we strive to transform our academic community into a place where all will learn, thrive, and grow. As faculty, staff, and students of the UMW community, we are committed to upholding these common values:

Accountability – we promote practices, behaviors, and attitudes where individuals take responsibility for their actions and decisions.

Scholarship – we promote intellectual inquiry by engaging ideas and one another in order to gain better understanding and contribute to knowledge.

Personal and Institutional Integrity – we are honorable in our academic and work endeavors as well as our interactions with others.

Inclusive Excellence – we strive for all members of the community to have equitable access to opportunities for participation and the resources necessary for success.

Respect and Civility – we foster an environment in which every individual is treated with dignity at all times by valuing the inherent worth of all identities, abilities, and differences.

Engagement – we develop engaged members of our community who actively participate in the community through responsible leadership and service.

We **ASPIRE** to live these values and work to support our collective and individual successes.

1.3 Principles on Diversity and Inclusion

UMW embraces its obligation to serve the educational aspirations of all communities and seeks to reflect the diversities of all people in its students, faculty, and staff. This philosophical approach to diversity and inclusion strengthens our community and is essential to our academic mission and institutional excellence. UMW is committed to its responsibility to be a model of fairness, inclusivity, equity, access and equal opportunity, providing intellectual and institutional leadership regarding diversity, and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive environment of mutual respect for its members of all backgrounds and identities. In keeping with these tenets, the University is committed to a system of responsibility, accountability, and recognition of all of its members, and seeks to carry out these principles of diversity and inclusion in all of its operations, goals, and objectives.

1.4 Vision

The success of the University is dependent on the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations, as well as the quality and commitment of its workforce. Ensuring appropriate support for university staff is a fundamental value that helps the University fulfill its mission and enhances the well-being of its students and employees. UMW will utilize long-term planning, effective data management, and commitment to financial and environmental sustainability to ensure both the fiscal and environmental sustainability of all university initiatives. ([UMW Strategic Plan 2020](#))

The President's Council on Sustainability (PCS) was formed in the fall of 2009 and consists of faculty, staff, and students giving the PCS a dynamic perspective on sustainability on campus. The Council reports both to the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance and the Provost. The Council has a critical role in shaping administrative goals and objectives relating to campus sustainability. The PCS is charged with the responsibility of making recommendations on:

- Sustainability issues and policy
- Developing strategies for implementation of sustainability initiatives
- Providing a cohesive public face for UMW sustainability efforts

The council will report regularly to the President's Cabinet outlining recommendations and the university's progress. At the end of every academic year, a thorough report of the council's projects and accomplishments will be submitted to the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Provost, the President, and the Student Government Association (SGA) for review. The report is then made available to the public through the PCS's official website.

2. CONSTITUTION

2.1 Organizational Name

The working name of this representative body shall be the President's Council on Sustainability (PCS.).

2.2 Statement of Purpose

The PCS has a twofold purpose: as an advisory council and as an active organization on campus engaged in sustainability initiatives and projects.

The PCS accepts the responsibility and challenge of shaping the administrative goals and objectives relating to sustainability issues and policies. The council shall serve as a representative body for faculty, staff, and students, acting in an advisory capacity to the University administration. The PCS will advise and assist in the development of goals in the following four action areas:

- Administration and Finance
- Education and Research
- Operation
- Innovation and Awareness

The PCS accepts and shares this responsibility with the administration, faculty, and students of UMW in order to attain the stated goals of the University. Periodically, the PCS will solicit suggestions for sustainability related concerns or ideas from the UMW administration, faculty, and students.

The second purpose of the PCS is to develop, organize, and participate in sustainability initiatives and projects on campus and in the greater community. These are accomplished in partnership with student groups and clubs, university offices and departments, and community organizations.

2.3 Membership

Membership of the President's Council on Sustainability shall consist of a minimum of twenty-one faculty (7), staff (7) and student (7) representatives from the university community. Among these members, there will be a Faculty Co-chair, Staff Co-chair and Student Co-chair who coordinate membership duties and responsibilities. Prior to the first PCS meeting of each Academic Year, the Co-chairs will review membership. During the spring semester of each year, the Co-chairs will coordinate with the university to solicit nominations to the PCS from faculty, staff, and students.

Nominations can be declared by any employee or student, including self-nominations. Nominations will be sent to the Co-chairs who will then contact each nominee to confirm the acceptance of the nomination. Candidates will be given the opportunity to submit a short paragraph in response to why they feel they would be a productive member of the council. The Co-chairs will contact new members who will begin their term in the subsequent fall semester. If necessary, vacancies can be filled for the spring semester.

2.3.1 Length of Terms

New members may be appointed based on recommendation from fellow faculty, staff, and/or students as needed each year to fill vacancies. Each faculty and staff member shall serve a three-year term beginning in the fall of their appointment. Should a member start their appointment in the spring or summer, they will finish that year of membership and remain on for an additional two years. Depending on potential new membership interest, terms are renewable based on the current member's interest and past contributions to the PCS. Co-chairs will serve a three-year term. Students serve renewable one-year terms.

2.3.2 Vacant Member Seats

If a representative is unable to complete the duties of membership on the council, the representative shall relinquish their seat on the council. The respective Co-chair of the representative relinquishing his/her membership will coordinate replacing the member.

2.4 Amendments

The Council may amend, change, or delete parts of this Constitution with the consent of a super-majority (two-thirds) vote of the PCS.

2.5 Internal Review

The PCS Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed and revised as needed at least every three years to ensure maximum efficiency. The review process shall be conducted by the entire council and posted on the Council's website. Recommendations from the review shall be presented to the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance and the Provost.

3. BY LAWS

3.1 Duties of Council Members

- Attend regular monthly meetings
- Review Council Mission, Constitution, and Bylaws for a clear understanding of the purpose, function, and structure of the Council;
- Bring matters of importance, concerns, and ideas of their constituents with relation to sustainability to the attention of the Council;
- Participate in action-oriented subcommittees to focus on sustainability priorities

3.2 Duties of Co-Chairs

- Coordinate, organize and preside at all meetings of the Council
- Create action-oriented subcommittees at the beginning of each year to focus on sustainability priorities
- Communicate and work with their respective members
- Call special meetings as necessary;
- Manage nominations of new members to the Council;
- Establish ad hoc committees as needed
- Perform other such duties associated with this office.
- Prepare and maintain minutes of m o n t h l y meetings as permanent records;
- Distribute meeting minutes to Council membership prior to the next regular meeting
- Maintain records of the Council, including lists of members
- Record attendance in accordance with standard operating procedures;

3.3 Attendance Policy

All members are expected to attend each regularly scheduled meeting. If a member finds it necessary to be absent from a meeting, or from any significant portion thereof, they shall notify their respective Co-chair prior to the meeting. Three or more unexcused absences within one academic year may result in the removal of the member from the Council.

3.4 Meetings

3.4.1 Open Meetings

Meetings of the Council shall be open to employees, students, and the public to observe and make comments as appropriate. The Council may elect to close any meeting at any time with a simple majority vote. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at least once a month during each fall and spring semester. Special meetings may be called as needed with appropriate notice given to members.

3.5.1 UMW Peer-Group Sustainability Evaluation

At least every 3 years, the PCS will assemble a student research group of about 4-5 students to evaluate UMW's progress in reaching sustainability goals and comparatively analyze UMW's current and potential environmental impact. The group should begin meeting in the Spring semester and plan to present a final review to the PCS by the final meeting of the same semester. This Peer Group will be led by the Student PCS Co-Chair or another designated individual agreed upon by the PCS. Participating students may be eligible to receive course credit for their work toward completing this review with lead faculty's permission.

The report's content is open to student interpretation, but should aim to critically evaluate:

- The UMW's overall impact and progress in respect to the University's strategic vision goals/initiatives (specifically Action Step 1.4)
- Current UMW sustainability initiatives and working goals comparative to other universities.
 - Suggested parameters for comparative universities include, but are not limited by, similar university population, revenue, sustainability committees and initiatives.
- Feedback on current goals including suggestions on future, potential initiatives in areas including (but not limited to):
 - Waste Reduction (Recycling & Composting)
 - Energy Use – including renewable
 - Student and Community Involvement
 - Environmental/Sustainability Research Opportunitie