

## SMUSA Sustainability Policy

IT IS HEREBY ENACTED as a Policy of the Saint Mary's University Students' Association (Hereinafter called "SMUSA") as follows:

### 1.00 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.01 Our Planet Earth and all of mankind are in jeopardy as there is overwhelming evidence that proves the current rate of resource depletion is unsustainable and renewable resources must be utilized to ensure quality of life for future generations. Human demands upon the planet are now of a volume and kind that unless changed substantially, threatens the future well-being of all living species. SMUSA recognizes the ecological crisis humanity faces and the special responsibility universities, and university students have in finding and implementing solutions. We acknowledge our ethical obligations as global citizens and strive to do our part to create a sustainable and equitable future for all. The SMUSA Sustainability Policy is guided by the following vision and purpose as set out in the SMUSA Sustainability Policy and corresponding Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy:

*SMUSA will be a leader in reducing the universities' ecological footprint to sustainable levels and in fostering environmental justice in our own operations and through our relationships with the University and broader community. SMUSA will be a vehicle for new ideas and innovation, and will be a model for the University and for other student organizations to follow.*

- 1.02 One responsibility of a students' association whose members are at an institution of higher learning is to ensure that students leave with an education that will promote responsible global citizenship and stewardship. In recognition of the importance of these factors, SMUSA commits to improving the sustainability of operations, promoting responsible consumption to its members, and lobbying the university, various levels of government and any other organization within SMUSA's sphere of influence to follow suit. By demonstrating a commitment to sustainability SMUSA will be leading by example in promoting a culture of responsible global citizenship to the campus community. SMUSA recognizes and accepts that sustainability may have initial costs but will save money in the long term.
- 1.03 The SMUSA Sustainability Policy and corresponding Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy will clearly set out the purpose of this policy and outline some of the ways to strategically implement measures and operating regulations to reduce the environmental impact of SMUSA's operations.

## 2.00 **Application**

- 2.01 This policy is to be recognized as a first step by SMUSA towards institutionalizing sustainability. This policy shall act as an ethical guide for SMUSA operations and business transactions including but not limited to purchasing, corporate partnerships, day to day operations and lobbying at different levels of government.
- 2.02 This policy is to be implemented and enforced by all SMUSA staff responsible for day to day operations and ordering and purchasing goods for the students' association.
- 2.03 Since the overarching goal of the SMUSA Sustainability Policy is to reduce the overall impact SMUSA has on the environment as well as influence the university and other organizations to reduce their impact to sustainable levels, it is necessary to have some idea of what SMUSA's direct environmental impact is, and what areas of significant environmental impact SMUSA has influence over. The judgment of how broadly or narrowly to define the SMUSA sphere of influence is subjective; but asking the question "Is this where and how SMUSA can most effectively reduce the impact on the environment?" will give a good indication of where SMUSA should devote its limited money and time. For the purpose of this policy, the environmental impacts that SMUSA has influence over are divided into two broad categories, internal and interactive:

**Internal impacts** are those that SMUSA can act on without the cooperation of external parties, such as changing SMUSA purchasing policies.

**Interactive impacts** are those that require interaction with groups such as the SMU administration, Metro Transit, the Halifax Regional Municipality, or student organizations at other universities and colleges. Interaction with other bodies should strive to build cooperative relationships, but does not exclude active lobbying and campaigning when this is judged to be the most effective strategy.

## 3.00 **Fundamental Principles**

### 3.01 **Partnerships**

SMUSA will cooperate with stakeholders in the University and Community to encourage sustainable practices at all levels. Where possible, partners shall include but are not limited to: Saint Mary's University, the Saint Mary's University Environmental Society, the Ecology Action Centre, the Eco-Efficiency Centre and the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG).

### 3.02 **Purchasing**

SMUSA will only conduct business with "Ethical Business Partners" and will not conduct business with companies who fail to meet the basic standards of environmental protection. While SMUSA must maintain a fiscal responsibility to

its members, the additional costs of environmental sustainability shall be accepted when possible. In the event that SMUSA cannot find a company that meets these guidelines, SMUSA will give preference to a “best in practice” company.

### 3.03 **Promotion**

SMUSA will actively and visibly promote sustainable activities among its members and partners. It will educate them about sustainable living and encourage them to minimize their environmental impacts. SMUSA will be achieve this through events such as, but not limited to, Sustainability Day with SMU, Orientation Week, Speaker Engagements and the SMUSA Web Site.

### 3.04 **Participation**

SMUSA encourages initiatives on the part of its membership, both for its own sustainability and the University's. SMUSA will advocate the initiatives of its membership to the University Administration where applicable. The vehicle for this advocating will be the SMU Task Force on Sustainability.

### 3.05 **Reduction**

SMUSA shall annually conduct an Environmental and Energy Review with the assistance of such organizations as the Eco-Efficiency Centre at Dalhousie and work to incorporate any recommendations from the Review into the Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy while maintaining fiscal responsibility. These recommendations can include categories such as energy, paper and disposable items SMUSA will adopt the 4R philosophy in waste management: Rethink Reduce Reuse Recycle.

### 3.06 **Advocacy and Collaboration**

SMUSA will lobby organizations such as Saint Mary's University and the Halifax Regional Municipality to reduce their impact on the environment to sustainable levels. SMUSA will collaborate with organizations such as the SMUSA Environmental Society and the Ecology Action Centre to aid in its lobby efforts.

### 3.07 **Contracts**

SMUSA will require its contractual partners to be sustainable. SMUSA will consider the environmental impacts of its contractual agreements where applicable. For example, renovations, and strive to acquire the most sustainable option where fiscally responsible.

### 3.08 **Research**

SMUSA will actively research the comparative efforts of other students' associations, universities and sustainability leaders across the country to improve its sustainability efforts. SMUSA will actively research the sustainability initiatives of Saint Mary's University and participate in their formation wherever possible.

### **3.09 Principals of Implementation**

The implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of the General Manager in partnership with the SRC, the Full-Time and Part-Time Staff. All management and supervisory staff of SMUSA will be offered a presentation or workshop in the goals and guidelines of sustainability that are to be considered in every aspect of the organization through the Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy. With the cooperation of key stakeholders, sustainable practices must be integrated into SMUSA operations to build a culture of sustainability; the initial cost of being sustainable must be recognized and accepted as part of a long-term strategy for cost efficiency. Companies who are current SMUSA business partners shall be familiarized with the Sustainability Policy and the process of implementation. Serious breaches to the Policy, found on the basis of knowledge gained from monitoring, will initiate negotiation to determine a schedule for corrective action if deemed necessary by the General Manager. Business relationships may be terminated as a result of a failure to comply with the schedule of corrective action as recommended by the General Manager. The SRC shall monitor the progress of implementation for this policy and the General Manager shall provide updates at regular intervals, but at least once annually. This policy shall take effect May 1st, 2008.

### **3.10 Assessment and Reporting**

SMUSA will work to develop responsible and sustainable solutions through a process that includes primary assessment, re-assessments and subsequent audits, developing recommendations, feasibility studies, and implementation plans. Ecological integrity, social equity and economic security shall be considered guiding principles of the Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy. Department Managers shall compile and present Progress Reports including recommendations on their respective departments by November 31st of each year. Progress Reports for respective departments shall be reviewed by the General Manager and consolidated into a SMUSA Sustainability Progress Report by January 31st of each year. The Annual Sustainability Progress Report shall be presented to the SRC and made easily accessible to the campus community by posting on the SMUSA website.

### **3.11 Amendments and Additions**

Additions to this policy may be made whenever deemed necessary by the SRC.

## **SMUSA Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy**

The SMUSA Sustainability Practices and Procedures Strategy is designed to empower SMUSA students, staff and community members to make progressive change toward sustainability. It is a strategy that is designed to make SMUSA, the university and the greater community more sustainable in its operations, culture, and policies. This strategy will identify what SMUSA can influence in the way of Internal Impacts and what SMUSA can influence in the way of Interactive Impacts. This strategy will be ever changing and continue to develop as new initiatives are identified and adopted to support the Sustainability Policy. The SMUSA Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy will create a vision of long term and continually adapting sustainability.

### **Internal Impacts**

1. At each step in the business process, SMUSA management and staff will be required to ask the question, "Is this going to have a negative impact of the environment and how can I reduce that impact?"
2. In 2007 SMUSA consumed approximately 170,000 sheets of paper. In 2008 SMUSA will reduce that quantity by 25%. In 2009 SMUSA will reduce that quantity by another 25%.
3. SMUSA will implement that all photocopying must be double sided and that all SMUSA staff and SRC members must comply. Where available, all new photocopier and printing equipment will be equipped with a fixed double sided feature.
4. While reducing paper consumption by 50% over the next two years SMUSA will purchase 100% post-consumer recycled paper that is Forestry Stewardship approved. The marginal cost increase in the recycled paper product will be absorbed by reducing the quantity of paper purchased.
5. SMUSA will purchase Eco Friendly stationary products as they become available. The additional costs of such products will be offset with a decrease in the volume of purchasing such as purchasing refillable pens.
6. SMUSA will recycle. In the pursuit of the paperless office we still use more paper than ever. SMUSA personnel will be required to always throw used paper in the recycling bin, not the trash bin. Paper only used on one side should be kept until both sides are used before recycling. SMUSA will set an example for recycling and composting in the office spaces within its jurisdiction by providing proper facilities for such purposes
7. SMUSA will decrease its paper consumption while increasing the efficiency of its administrative systems by increasing its electronic filing through better use of the S Drive. All SMUSA employees will be trained on the use of the SMUSA S Drive.
8. The SRC will no longer print paper copies of reports instead making them electronic and recording them on the S Drive.

9. SMUSA will work to implement a system that digitizes its records to prevent further waste. This initiative shall be contingent on the considerable expense for the equipment and shall be part of a long-term plan to reduce waste. Additionally the possibility of a University wide effort which SMUSA could participate in at a reduced cost shall be advocated to the Administration.
  10. SMUSA will build on and maintain the recently developed Electronic Voting method to completely eliminate the paper ballot.
  11. SMUSA will build on and maintain the High Definition Electronic Display (HDED) screens located on campus as a measure to further reduce the paper products used in advertising.
  12. SMUSA will assign one employee from each department to be a Sustainable Ambassador. A sustainable Ambassador will be a member of the SMUSA staff who strives to promote and encourage sustainable actions and attitudes in the workplace by leadership and example. Sustainable Ambassadors commit to make every attempt to lead by example while endeavoring to understand the consequences of others actions.
  13. SMUSA will actively work with the SMUSA Environmental Society to develop ways to rethink, reduce, re-use and recycle.
  14. SMUSA will purchase Energy Star Appliances when acquiring new equipment. The addition cost of these appliances will be factored into all capital budgets.
  15. SMUSA shall only purchase new lighting fixtures that are compatible with compact fluorescent light-bulbs.
  16. SMUSA will only purchase new printers and photocopiers that can be defaulted to double-sided.
  17. SMUSA will mandate that all building lights within SMUSA operational control be turned off when not being used.
  18. SMUSA will mandate that office computers and electronic equipment be programmed for sleep mode or be turned off when not in use.
  19. SMUSA will promote car pooling to students and staff by linking car pool website on the SMUSA web site.
  20. SMUSA will purchase a bike repair kit to be available to students free of charge from the Information Services Desk.
  21. SMUSA shall purchase recycled, reused, fair-trade certified, eco-logo certified and certified organic items that come from a renewable resource or locally produced products wherever they are available and additional costs incurred are fiscally responsible such as organic uniforms for staff.
  22. SMUSA currently uses approximately 25,000 plastic cups per year within the Gorsebrook Lounge and Liquor Services. SMUSA will reduce this amount by 25% in 2008. While working to reduce this volume of cup use SMUSA will further develop a plan to replace the plastic cup with a more sustainable measure such as a reusable cup. SMUSA will purchase biodegradable cups as a secondary to reusable cups when economically feasible.
  23. SMUSA staff will be provided with a coffee mug and strongly encouraged to support the sustainability initiative by not purchasing beverages in a disposable paper/plastic cup. SMUSA will also make available coffee mugs for guests to avoid the use of disposable cups.
  24. SMUSA will ask staff to bring their own container to work for use when ordering take out food.
  25. The SMUSA staff kitchen will only be equipped with reusable cutlery, plates, mugs and glasses.
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26. SMUSA departmental staff will be required to recycle all printer and toner cartridges.
27. SMUSA will receive all faxes as email attachments.
28. SMUSA will encourage all employees to bring plants to work to create a healthy atmosphere and to increase the flow of oxygen.
29. SMUSA staff will be required to unplug cell phone or other device chargers when they're not being used as the chargers continue to use power even when the device isn't attached.
30. SMUSA will consider fuel efficiency a priority when purchasing new Husky Patrol Vehicles and will purchase hybrids if they are available in a mini-van. SMUSA will consider renting hybrids when required to rent vehicles while conducting business on behalf of SMUSA if said vehicle serves the purpose of the rental.
31. SMUSA staff and student leaders shall purchase carbon credits to off-set those released into the atmosphere when traveling by airline, where economically feasible.
32. SMUSA shall actively promote and advertise the student bus pass program as a sustainable activity.
33. SMUSA will record and compile all sustainability efforts made within SMUSA operations.
34. SMUSA will not conduct business with companies that:
  - a. Fail to meet basic standards of environmental protection. The Basic Standards for the purpose of this policy will be to have a Sustainability Policy in place and to prove that they are actively implementing;
  - b. Actively undermine or fail to respect basic human rights;
  - c. Harm the peoples of developing countries through unscrupulous or exploitative behavior and are sweat shop free;
  - d. Inflict excessive or unnecessary suffering upon animals by the procedures to which they are subjected;

SMUSA will actively identify and establish business relationships with companies that have strong records in:

- a. Environmental management systems and environmental policy;
- b. Commendation for environmental performance;
- c. Voluntary adherence to standards of ecological regulation or employee care in excess of statutory requirements;
- d. Effectively implemented and monitored equal opportunity policies covering race, gender, religion, disability and sexual orientation;
- e. Effectively enforced policies against discrimination or harassment on grounds of race, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation;
- f. Paid maternity leave above and beyond statutory requirements;
- g. Provision of childcare facilities, job sharing, flextime and career breaks;

SMUSA will give preference to companies that:

- a. Are from local or regional sources;
  - b. Are energy efficient in their production;
  - c. Use minimal packaging;
  - d. Use recycled or reused materials where possible;
  - e. Produce organic products;
  - f. Possess a fair trade label.
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## Interactive Impacts

1. SMUSA will promote to all first year students the efforts of the Students' Association on sustainability and what SMUSA is doing to reduce its ecological footprint.
2. SMUSA shall lobby and work with the university Facilities Management Department and other stakeholders to implement a campus wide recycling program and investigate the creation of a comprehensive composting program to collect organic waste generated on campus.
3. SMUSA will participate in, and support, efforts to implement sustainability policy through the work of the Saint Mary's University Sustainability Task Force.
4. SMUSA will lobby the campus community to discourage the use of Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) by its members traveling to and from the University Campus. It will endeavor to educate the membership of the environmental impacts of this behavior. SMUSA will promote more sustainable commuter travel options to the membership.
5. SMUSA will lobby Metro Transit to provide better coverage to the SMU campus in an attempt to increase transit use and alleviate SOV concerns. SMUSA will also work with Metro Transit and the Ecology Action Centre to extend the program to Faculty and Staff.
6. SMUSA will lobby the university and Facilities Management to assist SMUSA in sustainability assessments and audits of SMUSA operations.
7. SMUSA will lobby the university and the university food service provider to decrease the use of disposable food containers by providing incentives for students to bring their own reusable containers.
8. SMUSA will work with Metro Transit to produce information for present and incoming students promoting active and alternative transit resources, including U-Pass, and continue to develop initiatives in the best interest of students.
9. SMUSA will investigate new alternatives pertaining to sustainability by networking with other Universities involved in campus sustainability efforts.
10. SMUSA will work with the SMUSA Environmental Society to identify sustainable initiatives and methods to implement.
11. SMUSA will lobby the university Facilities Management Department to use Energy Saver Bulbs or fluorescent lighting instead of incandescent. Only 8% of energy used by incandescent bulbs goes to providing light – the rest is used to create heat. Fluorescent bulbs burn cooler and are energy and cost-efficient.
12. SMUSA will lobby the HRM and the university to improve bicycle access to the campus and facilities on campus to secure bikes.
13. SMUSA will encourage a campus-wide effort to be involved with a commuter challenge.
14. SMUSA will lobby the university Facilities Management Department to reduce the amount of harmful chemicals used in cleaning and/or maintenance of the university operations and ensure that any new cleaning contracts consider

the environmental soundness, effectiveness, ease of disposal, and packaging of the product.

15. Building Energy - The Student Centre is operated cooperatively by SMUSA and SMU Services. SMUSA does not directly pay for the energy used and does not even have data on energy usage. SMUSA will acquire the data on the energy use and work to reduce the consumption of energy in the Student Centre. SMUSA estimates the amount of energy used is quite high as the Student Centre was built in the 1960s, and has had only had modest energy efficiency upgrades. SMUSA will lobby the Facilities Management Department to consider the most efficient energy upgrades in all future renovations.
16. SMUSA will lobby the university to adopt a scent free campus
17. SMUSA has some influence over campus development and policies for all of SMU, which has a much larger impact than SMUSA operations and the Student Centre. Campus development has an impact on building energy, building materials, transportation, and food. University policies determine how high a priority is put on reducing environmental impacts, and where SMU funds are invested. SMUSA will lobby the university to be more sustainable and to invest in sustainability initiatives.