

# Yale School of Nursing Sustainability Action Plan

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Announced by Dean Margaret Gray in March 2015

## Sustainability at Yale

Yale University is dedicated to an integrated, comprehensive approach to policy and operations that balances ecosystem health with human health and economic viability in order to demonstrate that sustainability is both feasible and affordable. To accomplish this goal the University integrates sustainable practices into the fabric of institutional decision-making at all levels.

Each unit on campus has a unique cultural context. Successful implementation of sustainability tactics will rely on efforts to refine tools and tactics to suit this diversity of disciplines and perspectives.

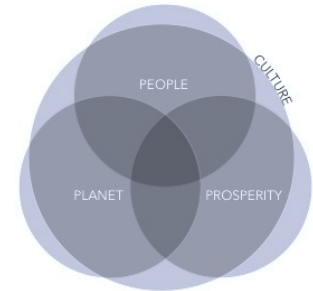


Figure 1: Sustainability values

## Yale 2013-2016 Sustainability Strategic Plan

The *Yale 2013-2016 Sustainability Strategic Plan* contains 25 ambitious-yet achievable goals divided into five categories:

**Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Yale is committed to comprehensive reduction of energy consumption. This includes both designing and updating buildings to be efficient and educating members of the community to use less energy. It also incorporates a robust renewable energy portfolio and efforts to increase fuel efficiency.

**Natural and Built Environment:** Yale values its natural and built environment, and is managing the campus in ways that improve the quality of natural resources and help ensure a healthy and vibrant community.

**Materials Management:** Purchasing of supplies and their eventual disposal are directly connected. Considering the two in parallel provides a systemic approach that focuses on better-quality products while minimizing waste.

**Food and Well-Being:** Whether it is through the food choices offered, the cleaning products used, or the community support offered, the health and well-being of the people who study and work at Yale are directly connected to the campus and benefit from sustainability efforts.

**Sustainability Leadership & Capacity Building:** Yale has established itself as a global sustainability leader. This is enhanced by efforts to incorporate principles of sustainability into everyday behavior, operational practices, and research and teaching.

The Plan is available online in full at [sustainability.yale.edu](http://sustainability.yale.edu).

## **This Document**

As a component of leadership and capacity building, the Yale Sustainability Strategic Plan commits to establish and implement sustainability action plans for each of the professional schools. These plans are intended to support the Yale-wide goals while reflecting the physical constructs and constraints of each School as well as the intersection of each discipline with sustainability.

This document offers overarching context for sustainability and nursing, and then suggests a brief set of initiatives related to the operations and mission of the School of Nursing. Once this plan has been launched, the Office of Sustainability will communicate with key members of the School of Nursing community on a quarterly basis to determine progress on the Action Items below. The Office will also convene a summit of Professional School representatives at least once per year to encourage knowledge transfer and collegiality.

## **About the Yale School of Nursing**

Yale University School of Nursing is a diverse community of clinicians and scholars with a common goal: better health for all. The School strives to achieve this goal through insightful research and expert care, both of which are informed by a model that empowers patients. Considered to be one of the top graduate schools for nursing, the school is focused on leadership in healthcare and forging unique pathways to improving the quality of life locally and around the world.

## **Nursing and Sustainability**

Health care and sustainability are intimately linked in many ways, including but not limited to: healthy food, clean air, clean water, and physical fitness. There are myriad examples of environmental influences on human health – from high asthma rates due to air pollution to increased ranges for disease vectors due to climate change. In parallel with this, instances of human health-related activities that reduce negative ecosystem impacts include gardening for fresh, healthy food and biking or walking instead of driving. In this context, the Yale School of Nursing has remarkable capacity to embrace and enhance sustainability at Yale, in the greater New Haven Area, and in the world.

## **Yale West Campus**

In terms of sustainability, the move to West Campus offers both challenges and opportunities for sustainability at the School of Nursing. The School is no longer walkable from New Haven neighborhoods, for example, so many students drive to class. At the same time, the accessibility of the West Campus Farm and the connection to the West Haven community are benefits. Additionally, there is strong support for sustainability at manager levels on West Campus, so the School of Nursing will both add to and benefit from a larger suite of projects and priorities. The Office of Sustainability is currently working with the West Campus administration to develop a Sustainability Action Plan that will help to unify that campus in its sustainability efforts as well as to tie it in to more of the central campus sustainability activities.

## Yale School of Nursing Sustainability Successes To-Date

The School of Nursing has already made real progress toward sustainability. The following table presents key accomplishments. Each of the Action Items listed here is labeled with the meta-categories listed in the *Yale Sustainability Strategic Plan*. It should be noted that because of the move to West Campus, the School of Nursing effectively had a clean slate and opportunities for improvement that might exist at other professional schools were limited.

**Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** the renovation of the Nursing spaces on West campus included energy efficient lighting.

**Natural and Built Environment:** the renovation of the ground floor classrooms allows for natural light.

**Materials Management:** the School has implemented centralized office supply purchasing and inventory and has reduced paper purchasing by streamlining administrative systems.

**Food and Well-Being:** The students and faculty are collaborating with the YWC farm to grow healing herbs and to teach area school children about healthy choices. The School's vending area stocks ample healthy choices.

**Sustainability Leadership & Capacity Building:** Starting in 2014, there was a sustainability unit in the orientation for new students.

## Sustainability Action at the School of Nursing

At the time of this writing, the integration of sustainability into the cultural fabric of the Yale School of Nursing is a nascent concept. This does not preclude visionary leadership in this arena, but it does require careful first steps, and in some cases some preliminary explorations. The institutional goals included here are selected. Please see the full plan online for all 25 goals.

### ***Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions***

*University Goal:* Reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions 5% below 2013 levels by June 2016.

Proposed YSN Activities:

- Partner with Facilities and the Office of Sustainability to identify opportunities to save energy through behavior change.
- Partner with Facilities and to identify operational updates that will save energy without compromising the design or use of the YSN facilities.

### ***Natural and Built Environment***

*University Goal:* Reduce single-occupancy vehicle use by 2% below 2013 levels by June 2016.

Proposed YSN Activities:

- Consider ways to encourage students and employees to reduce the number of cars coming to campus.

### **Materials Management**

#### *University Goals:*

- Reduce purchasing of paper and office supplies by 10% by June 2016.
- Achieve a 50% waste diversion rate via reuse, recycling, and/or composting strategies.

#### *Proposed YSN Activities:*

- Integrate composting into kitchen areas.
- Expand effective communication about recycling and composting.
- Explore additional opportunities for electronic filing.
- Consider transition to 50% recycled content paper.

### **Food and Well-Being**

#### *University Goals:*

- Ensure that 37% of the food purchased and served by Yale meets one or more of the following sustainability criteria: local, eco-sensitive, humane, or fair.
- Increase the purchase and preparation of plant-based foods in Yale Dining by 15% over 2013 levels by June 2016.
- Reduce cleaning chemical usage on campus 30% from 2013 levels by June 2016.

#### *Proposed YSN Activities:*

- Partner with Yale Dining to enhance the cafeteria menu to offer healthier options.
- Consider championing Meatless Mondays both within the School and at the cafeteria.
- Work with the West Campus Farm on healthy food programming for community members.
- Collaborate with the Yale Peabody Museum on health and nature related activities.

### **Sustainability Leadership & Capacity Building**

#### *University Goals:*

- Establish sustainability action plans for professional schools by December 2013.
- Expand Green Certification Programs by June 2016.

#### *Proposed YSN Activities:*

- Conduct surveys of faculty and students to determine interests in sustainability themes.
- Create a student assistant position to support sustainability communications and programming.
- Add sustainability to training for new staff members.
- Add sustainability progress reporting to regular staff communications.
- Apply for Green Workplace Certification.
- Consider developing a list of existing courses that relate to sustainability.