

Departmental Sustainability Action Plan

Office for Information and Technology

Adopted: March 20, 2024

Time Period covered: Winter 2024 - Winter 2025

Introduction

In 2021 Williams adopted its first-ever Strategic Plan. It specified sustainability as one of two cross-cutting commitments alongside diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility and outlined ambitious goals in six sustainability priority areas. Among them, Accountability and Transparency, calls for the creation of department-level sustainability plans. This goal led to the launch of the Sustainability Action Planning Group (SAPG) by the Zilkha Center, composed of volunteers from a wide range of administrative and operational departments as well as several faculty members.

The goals of SAPG are:

- Fulfill the Strategic Plan sustainability goal of creating departmental sustainability action plans (dSAPs);
- Foster greater interdepartmental coordination to solve problems at a systems level; and
- Support coordination among departments vis-a-vis information sharing, goal alignment, and joint implementation.

Facilitated by the Zilkha Center, the group developed this template for Departmental Sustainability Action Plans (dSAPs) with the aim to provide a simple yet effective format for specifying departmental goals and the steps to achieve them. We recognized that many sustainability goals require coordination among departments as well as financial and human capital to be achieved. Aside from departmental actions, the template enables departments to indicate their interest in participating in existing sustainability programs and initiatives run by the Zilkha Center and/or another department, to specify if and where cross-departmental dependencies exist with respect to their own departmental actions and what resources would be needed to implement them.

Development and Implementation Process

Development: On June 15th, 2023, all OIT members participated in a brainstorming exercise facilitated by Mike Evans of the Zilkha Center, with results collected and shared back in a Google Doc. On October 16th, 2023, CIO Barron Koralesky appointed a 3-member working group to lead OIT in the creation of their dSAP. This group met 4 times during Fall 2023, using the department-wide notes, plus resources provided by the Zilkha Center as well as College resources such as the Climate Action Plan, and sustainability policies and programs, to develop the first drafts of the dSAP. After receiving feedback and approval from Barron and the Directors, the committee presented a summary of their dSAP at an all-OIT staff gathering in Winter 2024. Currently the group is sharing the document with the Zilkha Center for analysis and recommendations for refinement.

Next Steps: Once the dSAP is completely finished, OIT will publish the final document to the OIT website and a site tied to the Zilkha Center.

Implementation: Upon formal adoption of the dSAP, the committee will prioritize and implement specific identified actions, beginning AY 2024-25. Regularly scheduled committee meetings will include review/update of progress on dSAP projects. The committee will conduct an annual review of dSAP projects to assess progress and report to OIT leadership around that time.

Sustainability Framework

Sustainability is generally defined as finding a harmonious, lasting balance between economic, social and environmental objectives. Also known as the three-legged stool framework, sustainability here does not privilege any of these three dimensions but rather sees them as equally important and highlights that without all three being sufficiently supported, the stool would be wobbly or even tip over.

An alternative perspective nests the three domains: the economy is a part of society and society exists within the greater natural environment. This frame also gives the environmental sphere the greatest weight by arguing that some environmental services such as a stable climate, clean air and water are critical for sustaining life and cannot be replaced or substituted with man-made creations.

Both perspectives share that the protection, conservation, and maintenance of environmental services is key for our long-term prosperity. Like the sustainability goals in the 2021 Strategic Plan, the dSAPs focus on the integration of environmental protection, conservation and maintenance into the college's operations and, therefore, focus on the following sustainability action areas:

- [Energy and Climate](#)
- [Waste Management and Circularity](#)
- [Procurement](#)
- [Food and Other Natural Resources Use](#)
- [Travel and Transportation](#)

College Goals & Actions and Collective Actions

Each sustainability action area includes the relevant institution-wide goals, programs, and initiatives that the department should be aware of, participate in if relevant and practical, and that departmental actions should refer to and/or align with. Opportunities for departments to join forces and/or issues to advocate for are also identified.

Sustainability Actions Areas

Sustainability Action Area 1: Energy and Climate

We commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by using energy more efficiently in our department and promoting the procurement of clean, renewable energy at the college level.

Applicable College-wide Energy & Climate Goals and Actions:

- [Climate Action Plan](#)
- [Williams College Air Travel Greenhouse Gas Emissions Information & Reduction Program](#)
- [Sustainable Building Policy](#)
- [High Efficiency Vehicles & Electric Vehicle Charging Stations](#)
- [Farmington & RECs](#)
- [Digital Signage Policy](#)
- [Community Climate Fund](#) for community-level investments in energy efficiency and GHG emissions reductions

We already positively impact the college's sustainability goals on Climate and Energy in the following ways:

- OIT has updated its data center cooling systems and is projected to save ~\$100k/yr in electricity costs
- OIT participates in implementing the Williams College Digital Signage Policy to minimize energy impacts
- OIT prioritizes power-saving settings (typically making them the default) on all deployed hardware (projectors, displays, computers) to decrease energy demands across campus

We opt to participate in ...

- ☒ Demand-Response events when the electric grid is at capacity and we are notified to curtail electric consumption (e.g., by having agreed to additional adjustments to indoor temperature settings to reduce energy load)
- ☒ Zero-waste event planning and execution (this has positive climate, waste management and resource conservation impacts)

We support the college's stretch goals in this area:

- ☒ creating zero-waste buildings (this has positive climate, waste management, and resource conservation impacts)
- ☒ adopting a tree planting and carbon sequestration project to rejuvenate and sustain our campus forest (this has positive climate and natural resource use impacts)

- ☑ developing and participating in green procurement policies (this has positive climate and resource conservation impacts).
- ☑ developing a cleaner transportation plan for employee business travel and commuting, student athletic and educational travel
- ☑ striving to increase plant-rich food at departmental meetings and other gatherings (this has positive climate and natural resource impacts).
- ☑ developing a college-fleet electrification plan

We commit to the following new actions:

Action: Develop & offer audience-targeted training and education on sustainable user behaviors

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	While OIT provides energy efficient equipment and makes energy efficiency settings the default, it is ultimately the users who have greater influence on its use
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	CAP - Action 1: Sharply reduce emissions from campus combustion through energy conservation measures and shifting to renewable energy sources CAP - Action 8: Reduce GHG emissions from waste disposal by promoting digital file usage vs hard copy.
What is the action's target?	Host up to 10 trainings a month (2 or more a week), which we will advertise in the Daily Messages. OIT keeps a running list of who signs up for the trainings, which could be used to assess their reach.
Who is responsible?	Academic Technology Services, Client Services
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	1 year
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	None

Sustainability Action Area 2: Waste Management and Circularity

We commit to reducing waste generated in our department and diverting more waste from landfills and incinerators through reusing, repurposing, and recycling more waste.

Applicable College-wide Waste Management and Circularity Goals & Actions:

- [Zero Waste Action Plan](#)
- [Campus Recycling & Composting Guides](#), [Tips for How to Reduce/Improve Swag](#), and forthcoming Zero Waste Events Guide
- [Sustainable Building Policy](#)
- [Furniture Reuse Program](#)
- [Give It Up!](#) Program (CLiA-led sustainable move-out donation program for students)
- [GreenUp](#) Program (OIT-led electronic equipment recycling program)
- [WRAPS](#) (Williams Recovery of All Perishable Surplus: food recovery program / student org)
- [GenCo](#) (a sustainable laundry program currently primarily available for students)

We already positively impact the college's sustainability goals on Waste Management and Circularity in the following ways:

- deploying used computers wherever possible instead of purchasing new equipment.
- donating older, unused and decommissioned technology to local non-profit organizations.

We opt to participate in ...

- ☒ The [Single Use Plastic Water Bottle](#) policy
- ☒ Zero-waste event planning and execution (this has positive climate, waste management and resource conservation impacts)
- ☒ Coffee grounds collection program in departmental office spaces

We support the college's stretch goals in this area:

- ☒ creating zero-waste buildings (this has positive climate, waste management, and resource conservation impacts)
- ☒ [Break Free From Plastic Pledge](#)

- ☑ the development and operation of a hardgoods surplus storage and management program and facility (has positive impacts on waste management and circularity and procurement)

We commit to the following new actions:

Action: Create an “Available for Donation” page on the OIT website.

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Reduce e-waste and recycling by expanding donations to the broader community
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Alignment with College Furniture Reuse Program Zero Waste Action Plan Action 4: Continue and strengthen the donation program of serviceable hard goods that no longer meet a campus need to the local and regional community
What is the action’s target?	Donate more used technology to the surrounding area by publicizing our current offerings via the website.
Who is responsible?	Client Services
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within 1-2 years, see an increase in the amount of donations compared to the previous year.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	None

Action: Partner with CLiA to expand outreach to additional community nonprofits for donations

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Reduce e-waste and recycling by expanding donations to the broader community
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How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Alignment with College Furniture Reuse Program Zero Waste Action Plan Action 4: Continue and strengthen the donation program of serviceable hard goods that no longer meet a campus need to the local and regional community
What is the action's target?	Donate more used technology by working with CLiA to increase outreach to local nonprofits who are in need of equipment.
Who is responsible?	Client Services, CLiA
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within 1-2 years, see an increase in the amount of donations compared to the previous year.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	None

Sustainability Action Area 3: Procurement

We commit to purchasing only products that are needed, promoting more efficient bulk purchases to reduce packaging and transportation impacts, and to giving preference to products with known lower environmental footprints when such options exist.

Applicable College-wide Procurement Goals and Actions:

- Pilot fleet electrification program (supported by Sustainability CIR project funds to cover the premium in purchase price of electric versus combustion engine vehicles)

We already positively impact the college's sustainability goals in the area of Procurement in the following ways:

- purchase EnergyStar Gold/Silver Star and EPEAT Gold certified equipment.
- procuring hardware that generates less waste (Mac Mini with Monitor instead of iMacs).

We opt to participate in ...

- ☐ N/A

We support the college's stretch goals in this area:

- ☑ developing and participating in green procurement policies (this has positive climate and resource conservation impacts)
- ☑ development of "green tags" in the new ERP software (WorkDay) to enable better information sharing on environmentally preferred products and improved tracking of environmental and sustainability spending
- ☑ the development and operation of a hardgoods surplus storage and management program and facility (has positive impacts on waste management and circularity and procurement)

We commit to the following new actions:

Action: Improve computer inventory & asset management processes

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Better assess computer purchasing needs and keep track of current inventory
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Develop green procurement policies CAP Action 9: Reduce GHG emissions from procurement
What is the action's target?	Develop comprehensive inventory of all hardware on campus to accurately project future purchasing needs.
Who is responsible?	Client Services
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within the next 2 years, implement a new inventory/asset management system within OIT.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	Budget to purchase new inventory management system

Action: Evaluate hardware replacement cycles

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts	Help drive down costs and the amount of waste by extending
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does this action have?	current lifespan of hardware
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Develop green procurement policies CAP Action 9
What is the action's target?	Decrease the amount of hardware purchased year-over-year by evaluating current acceptable lifespans for campus hardware and delaying upgrades when possible.
Who is responsible?	Client Services
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within 1-2 years, see a decrease in the number of devices deployed/purchased year-over-year.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	None

Action: Prioritize bulk packaging when ordering new devices

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Reduce the amount of plastic/cardboard for deliveries
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Zero Waste Action Plan CAP Action 9
What is the action's target?	Decrease the amount of packaging and waste OIT creates by bulk ordering hardware and peripherals.
Who is responsible?	Client Services
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within 1 year, order the majority of hardware and peripherals only through bulk packaging.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the	None

target?	
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Sustainability Action Area 4: Food and Other Natural Resources Use

We commit to saving valuable natural resources and protecting ecosystem and climate health by reducing food waste, promoting plant-rich food options, and promoting responsible paper usage.

Applicable College-wide Food and Other Natural Resources Goals and Actions:

- [Cool Food Pledge](#) (achieving a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from food purchases by 2030 from 2018 baseline)
- [Treekeeper platform](#) for the campus tree and forest management

We already positively impact the college's sustainability goals in the area of Food and Natural Resources Use in the following ways:

- due to our role on campus, OIT doesn't have a significant impact on this category.

We opt to participate in ...

- ☒ Periodically reminding departmental staff to print only when needed, use double-sided and black & white printing setting whenever possible and to track printing using the PaperCut software
- ☒ Treating our campus trees and landscapes with care and enjoying its many benefits responsible

We support the college's stretch goals in this area:

- ☒ becoming a certified [Tree Campus Higher Education](#)
- ☒ adopting a tree planting and carbon sequestration project to rejuvenate and sustain our campus forest (this has positive climate and natural resource use impacts)
- ☒ becoming a certified [Bee Campus USA](#)
- ☒ striving to increase local food purchases
- ☒ striving to increase plant-rich food (this has positive climate and natural resource impacts)

We commit to the following new actions:

Action: Awareness and education of sustainable food approaches within OIT

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Be more in alignment with the college's sustainability plans
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Promote sustainable food options on campus
What is the action's target?	More vegetarian and sustainable food options at department gatherings
Who is responsible?	Planning committees within OIT
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within a year, vegetarian or sustainable food options make up at least half of what is offered at any department gathering.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	None

Action: Exchange water dispensers in Jesup for more permanent solution

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Eliminate our departmental water bubblers and associated water delivery
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Reduce the college's overall carbon footprint, reduce energy

	consumption from bubblers
What is the action's target?	Remove water bubblers in OIT spaces
Who is responsible?	Facilities, with the OIT staff
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	Within 1-2 years, remove all water bubblers in OIT spaces.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	Funds to purchase the replacement system

Sustainability Action Area 5: Travel and Transportation

We commit to reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses and air pollutants by optimizing necessary vehicle usage, traveling using more sustainable modes and reducing unnecessary travel miles.

Applicable College-wide Travel and Transportation Goals and Actions:

- [High Efficiency Vehicles & Electric Vehicle Charging Stations](#)
- [Williams College Air Travel Greenhouse Gas Emissions Information & Reduction Program](#)
- Pilot fleet electrification program (supported by Sustainability CIR project funds to cover the premium in purchase price of electric versus combustion engine vehicles)

We already positively impact the college's sustainability goals in the area of Travel and Transportation in the following ways:

- prioritize virtual trainings and conferences instead of in-person
- carpool when possible to conferences and other events
- combine multiple deliveries into a single trip to cut down on van use

We opt to participate in ...

- ☒ Reserving fleet vehicles in accordance with environmental criteria such as right-sizing vehicle based on number of travelers, using cleaner modes of transportation, including car pooling whenever possible
- ☒ Considering replacing aging vehicles used by your department with electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles

We support the college's stretch goals in this area:

- ☑ becoming a certified [Bicycle Friendly University](#)
- ☑ developing a cleaner transportation plan for employee business travel and commuting, EV charging on campus, student athletic and educational travel
- ☑ developing a college-fleet electrification plan

We commit to the following new actions:

Action: Support EV Charging stations near Jesup

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Support the use of personal and college-owned electric vehicles
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Aligns with college-wide goals for campus vehicles
What is the action's target?	Build at least two charging stations in the Jesup parking lot
Who is responsible?	College planning departments and committees
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	TBD
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	Support from college decision makers

Action: Support converting transportation vans from gasoline to electric

Why is this important to your department OR what impacts does this action have?	Less fossil fuel use
How does this action align with college goal(s)?	Aligns with college-wide goals for campus vehicles

	CAP Action 3
What is the action's target?	Convert all OIT vehicles to electric
Who is responsible?	OIT staff
Over what timeframe can the action be reasonably executed and the target achieved?	When vans are to be replaced. This will take 5-10 years to complete.
What additional resources are needed to achieve the target?	Charging stations near Jesup

People

Bringing people into the conversation and providing them with meaningful, rewarding ways to engage with sustainability is one of the most impactful things a department and organization can do. Consider here, how your department might incorporate sustainability into its culture and individual and collective mindsets.

We commit to:

- ☒ working towards including sustainability in job descriptions and performance evaluations;
- ☒ including sustainability trainings, seminars, field trips and other educational opportunities into the department's professional development;
- ☒ recognizing and rewarding sustainability champions in the department; and
- ☐ other _____.

Accountability

Please outline your plan for reviewing progress made on your departmental sustainability action plan (dSAP) goals.

Review Timeframe: The department will review its dSAP on a

- ☐ *quarterly*
- ☒ *annually*
- ☐ *biennially*
- ☐ *other* _____

timeframe.

Review Process

dSAP committee will conduct an annual dSAP review to assess progress on specific actions and goals, and to make plan revisions as needed.

Responsibility

dSAP committee

Date of next review:

Winter 2025