



SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Sustainability Policy
Amended November 2012

Policy:	Sustainability Policy
Last Amended:	November 2012
Responsibility:	Board of Directors, President
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Board Chair Signature:	 Crystal Witter

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

- A. The Saint Mary's Student Union Association will be a leader in reducing the University's ecological footprint to sustainable levels and in fostering environmental justice. We will do this in our operations and through our relationships with the University and the broader community.
- B. The Association follows the 4R philosophy in waste management: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

2. APPLICATION

- A. This policy is for all the Association's operations and business transactions. These include, but are not limited to purchasing, corporate partnerships, day-to-day operations and lobbying efforts.
- B. For the purpose of this policy, the Association has influence over two broad categories of environmental impacts:
 - i. Internal impacts are those the Association can act on alone, such as changing its own purchasing policies.
 - ii. Interactive impacts are those where the Association must cooperate with groups like the University administration, Metro Transit, Halifax Regional Municipality, or student organizations at other universities and colleges. Interaction with other bodies should be cooperative, but might include active lobbying and campaigning when this will be the most effective strategy

3. PRINCIPLES

A. Partnerships

The Association works with partners in the University and community to encourage sustainable practices. Partners include: 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).

B. Purchasing

The Association only conducts business with ethical business partners. It does not conduct business with companies who fail to meet basic standards of environmental protection. While the Association has a fiscal responsibility to its members, the additional costs of environmental sustainability are accepted when possible. If the Association cannot find a company that meets these guidelines, it will give preference to a company that makes the best effort to meet them.

C. Promotion

The Association actively and visibly promotes sustainable activities among its members and partners. It educates them about sustainable living and encourages them to minimize the environmental impact of their work. The Association achieves this through events such as Sustainability Day with SMU, Orientation Week, Speaker Engagements and the Association website.

D. Participation

The Association encourages members to take part in efforts to improve its sustainability and the University's. The Association promotes members' initiatives to the University administration where it can through the SMU Task Force on Sustainability.

E. Reduction

The Association conducts an Environmental and Energy Review each year with the help of organizations like the Eco-Efficiency Centre at Dalhousie. The Association works to incorporate recommendations from the Review into the Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy while remaining financially responsible. These recommendations include categories such as energy, paper and disposable items.

F. Advocacy and Collaboration

The Association lobbies organizations such as the University and Halifax Regional Municipality to reduce their impact on the environment to sustainable levels. The Association works with organizations such as the SMUSA Environmental Society and the Ecology Action Centre to aid in its lobby efforts.

G. Contracts

The Association expects its partners to be sustainable. It considers the environmental impacts of its contracts. It tries to use the most sustainable option where fiscally responsible.

H. Research

The Association researches the efforts of other student associations, universities and sustainability leaders across the country to improve its own sustainability efforts. The Association also researches the sustainability initiatives of Saint Mary's University and helps to form them when it can.

I. Implementation

i. The General Manager is responsible for implementing this policy in partnership with the Board and with full-time and part-time staff. All management and supervisory staff of the Association receive 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. Sustainable practices must be integrated into the Association's 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.

ii. The Association's current business partners must learn about the Sustainability Policy and the implementation process. If a business partner is found to have breached that policy, the General Manager will discuss corrections with the partner. Business relationships may be ended if the business partner does not correct the problem.

iii. The Association's Board of Directors monitors the progress of implementing this policy, and the General Manager will provide regular updates, at least once a year.

J. Assessment and Reporting

i. The Association works to develop responsible and sustainable practices through a process that includes primary assessment, re-assessments, and subsequent audits, and developing recommendations, feasibility studies, and implementation plans.

ii. Ecological integrity, social equity and economic security are guiding principles of the Sustainable Practices and Procedures Strategy. Department managers compile and present progress reports with recommendations for their departments by November 31 of each year. The General Manager combines these progress reports into the Association's Sustainability Progress Report by January 31 of each year. The Annual Sustainability Progress Report is presented to the Board of Directors and made available to the campus community on the Association's website.

4. AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS

A. Additions to this policy may be made whenever deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.