

# California Community Colleges Board of Governors Climate Action and Sustainability Framework

## INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the California Community College Board of Governors (Board of Governors) adopted the Climate Change and Sustainability Policy. Building off this important work, the updated *Climate Action and Sustainability Framework* provides revised goals and recommendations for community college districts. This updated framework is more comprehensive and inclusive of all areas of the campus community. The *Climate Action and Sustainability Framework* aims to create environmental, social, and educational benefits for the communities we serve. The framework is designed to serve as a tool to prompt local discussion around ways California Community Colleges can leverage their expansive footprint by incorporating sustainability principles and climate science in their local practices.

The Board of Governors has been a bold proponent of climate action, energy conservation, and other sustainability measures and has had established policies since 2013. Over that time, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has made minor policy adjustments until 2019, when the Chancellor's Office updated and the Board of Governors adopted the Climate Change and Sustainability Policy. The 2019 policy provided goals and guidance for community college districts to align with the key climate change strategy pillars, achieve energy conservation goals, build capital projects sustainably, and integrate physical plant management practices to reduce energy consumption to improve local environmental sustainability measures. Approaches have been consistent with state policy goals and efforts, including California legislation, California Code of regulations, and Gubernatorial Executive Orders that detail statewide energy conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, de-carbonization, sustainability, and climate change mitigation measures.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. It requires our collective attention to explore actions and solutions that avoid the most catastrophic of modeled scenarios. Since 2019, the Board of Governors has charged community college districts with developing local climate action and sustainability resolutions. For this work and efforts to advance, it was important for a revised climate change and sustainability policy to reflect the needs of colleges and the perspective of a diverse set of stakeholders. As a result, Chancellor Oakley formed a Climate Action and Sustainability Steering Committee to help guide the Board of Governors policy and framework. The committee comprised volunteers from the ten community colleges, the Student Senate of California Community Colleges (SSCCC), the Chancellor's Office, and the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Specifically, the expertise of colleges representatives encompasses environmental science, sustainability, facilities management, academics, business operations. To date, the committee provides advice to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and community colleges around climate crisis and sustainability policies and programs. Please see Appendix A for the list of steering committee members.

The steering committee has revised the 2019 Climate Change and Sustainability Policy under a new framework which establishes systemwide goals and targets. Further, the new framework integrates a comprehensive approach to leverage both colleges' physical and social impact footprint. Most importantly, this proposed revision compels bold action to protect our future.

## CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

Examples of the impacts of climate change are abound. One heartbreaking illustration is California's fire season, which for the fifth year in a row has devastated entire communities and left lasting impacts for many California Community Colleges. The record-breaking losses of the past several years have also shown the increasing destruction of fire disasters, and have highlighted the need for longer-term strategies for climate emergency mitigation and resilience. We have our clarion call for action.

The 2019 Climate Change and Sustainability Policy was an important first step for community colleges to align with California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan (as adopted by the California Air Resources Board in 2017). The new *Climate Action and Sustainability Framework* aims to inspire and empower institutions to act on bold climate commitments and to create innovative climate solutions. It also recognizes district-level progress is achieved at different stages. As such, the Framework first asks California's community colleges to establish benchmarks. Next, the *Climate Action and Sustainability Framework* asks districts and colleges to tracking progress towards the goals for 2025, 2030, and ultimately 2035, the target year for the state of California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100% below the baseline.

## RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY

To support districts and colleges in striving for bold climate action and sustainability goals, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office will continue to develop key supports for districts and explore resources that enable progress towards these goals. Specifically, the Chancellor's Office is exploring and advancing the following focus areas:

- **Analysis of Climate Change Impacts.** In the face of compounding emergencies, it is critical to think about the long-term effects and impacts to California's community colleges. More importantly, it is our imperative to think about our future resiliency. A comprehensive analysis of the potential climate change and environmental risks facing each district can present the Chancellor's Office with strategies to prepare and respond.
- **Advocacy.** California Community Colleges can integrate within its advocacy agenda requests for resources focused on Climate Action and Sustainability, specifically as it related to facilities and scheduled maintenance.
- **Climate Action Data.** Explore the adoption of the Sustainability Tracking, Rating and Assessment System (STARS) as a tool for measuring campus sustainability progress for California community colleges to use. STARS is a self-reporting tool that measures sustainability performance.

- **Sustainability Toolkit.** Through the Facilities Planning Unit, create an online climate action and sustainability toolkit which include resources, templates, and promising practices to assist campuses in advancing climate action and sustainability efforts in areas such as facilities operations, design and construction, procurement, information technology, among other key services and supports.
- **District Goals.** Recommend each campus to submit to the Chancellor’s Office measurable sustainability objectives, including:
  - District commitments to address climate and environmental justice in the communities they serve.
  - District carbon emissions baselines, carbon emissions inventories and local Climate Action Plans to reduce emissions by at least 75% by 2030.
  - District sustainability plans that meet or exceed the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework goals.

## CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Campuses physical footprint and facilities present an important asset districts can leverage to meet the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework goals. To help coordinate climate and sustainability activities, each California community college district is encouraged to designate a sustainability officer responsible for carrying out and/or coordinating its campus sustainability program efforts.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction

1. The California community colleges can conduct an emissions inventory baseline and create a climate action plan by 2025.
2. In alignment with statewide goals adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), California Community Colleges can strive to eliminate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2035. To achieve this, it is recommended to reduce campus/district GHG emissions by at least 75% by 2030 and 100% by 2035 to align with the state’s goals. Emissions will include both state and auxiliary organization purchases of electricity and natural gas; fleet and marine vessel usage; and other emissions over which the college or self-support entity has direct control.
3. Districts and colleges can track and report of their greenhouse gas inventory in alignment with the [American College and University President’s Climate Commitment](https://secondnature.org/webinars/getting-started-on-your-acupcc-climate-action-plan-2/) (secondnature.org/webinars/getting-started-on-your-acupcc-climate-action-plan-2/) guidelines. Possible metrics to measure include GHG emissions per FTES.
4. The California community colleges are encouraged to promote the use of alternative transportation and/or alternative fuels to reduce GHG emissions related to college-associated transportation, including commuter and business travel.

As districts leaders develop new plans, important emphasis should be placed on designing new construction, remodeling, renovation, and repair projects with

consideration of optimum energy utilization, low life cycle operating costs, and compliance with all applicable energy codes (enhanced Title 24 energy codes) and regulations. In the areas of specialized construction that are not regulated through the current energy codes, such as historical buildings, museums, and auditoriums, the campuses should ensure these facilities are designed to consider energy efficiency and maximize resources to subsidize energy efficiency. Moving forward, energy efficient and sustainable design features in project plans encouraged.

The Chancellor's Office will monitor building sustainability/energy performance and maintain information on design best practices to support the energy efficiency goals and guidelines of this policy. The sustainability performance will be based on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles with consideration to the physical diversity across the campuses.

## **Green Buildings**

- 1.** California community colleges are encouraged to benchmark their energy usage intensity for each building. Districts and colleges may develop a zero net energy (ZNE) and campus electrification strategy. They also have the option to conduct Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or WELL assessment of existing buildings.
- 2.** Districts and colleges are encouraged to strive for all new buildings and major renovations to be constructed as ZNE ready, all new buildings to be certified LEED or WELL Gold, and strive to reduce the use of natural gas in buildings by 30% by 2030.
- 3.** Districts and colleges are encouraged to strive for all new buildings and major renovations to be constructed as ZNE and certified Zero Carbon, all existing buildings to be LEED Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Gold or WELL Gold equivalent, and for the use of natural gas in buildings to be reduced by at least 75% by 2035.

## **Energy**

- 1.** California's local community colleges should consider establish a campus Energy Use Intensity (EUI) score and conduct Effective Useful Life (EUL) analysis of all gas-using appliances and systems; plan for electrification of systems with EUL of less than 10 years.
- 2.** Districts and colleges should strive to decrease EUI by 25% compared to the campus benchmark and annually produce or procure 75% of site electrical consumption using renewable energy by 2030.
- 3.** Districts and colleges should strive to decrease EUI by 40% compared to the campus benchmark and accomplish Net Zero Energy Campus by 2035.

## **Water**

- 1.** Districts and colleges should consider local benchmarks for potable water usage. Districts can also identify potential non-potable water resources, create a landscape zoning map and irrigation metering strategy and adopt best practices such as the

California Community College Model Stormwater Management Program. For more information on Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems, please visit the [California State Water Boards website](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal.html) for requirements.  
([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal.html))

2. Districts and colleges are encouraged to reduce potable water usage by 25%. To achieve this goal, districts and colleges can ensure that landscape irrigation systems of 2500 square feet or greater are separately metered (unless using local or municipal reclaimed water system); ensure that landscape planting materials are 90% native species to the climate and geographical area of the college; ensure that irrigated turf grass does not exceed 50% of the landscaped areas on campus; and are recommended to follow Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) requirements by 2030.
3. By 2035, California community colleges are encouraged to reduce potable water usage from baseline level by 50%; limit stormwater runoff and discharge to predevelopment levels for temperature, rate, volume and duration of flow through the use of green infrastructure and low impact development for the campus; and limit stormwater runoff and discharge to predevelopment levels for temperature, rate, volume and duration of flow through the use of green infrastructure and low impact development for new buildings and major modifications.

## Waste

1. Districts and colleges are encouraged to conduct a waste categorization assessment; benchmark and comply with [Title 14, Division 2, Chapter 5](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Laws/Regulations/Title14/#Div2Chap5) ([www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Laws/Regulations/Title14/#Div2Chap5](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Laws/Regulations/Title14/#Div2Chap5)) (Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act); benchmark and comply with [Title 14, CCR Division 7](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Laws/Regulations/Title14/#Div7) ([www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Laws/Regulations/Title14/#Div7](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Laws/Regulations/Title14/#Div7)); develop a total material consumption benchmark; conduct an [AB 341](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120AB341) ([leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201120120AB341](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120AB341)) compliance assessment; and centralize reporting for waste and resource recovery by 2025.
2. Districts and colleges should strive to achieve zero waste to landfill, conduct a circularity analysis, and reduce total material consumption compared to the benchmark by 10% by 2030.
3. Districts and colleges are encouraged to strive to increase material circularity by 25%, and decrease consumption of materials by 25% by 2035.

## Purchasing and Procurement

1. California's local community colleges are encouraged to benchmark sustainability characteristics of existing products and services, adopt a sustainable procurement policy and administrative procedure, and purchase environmentally preferable electronic products by 2025.

2. Districts and colleges should strive to increase procurement of sustainable products and services by 25% compared to benchmark levels by 2030.
3. Districts and colleges should strive to increase procurement of sustainable products and services by 50% compared to benchmark levels by 2035.

In order for the California community colleges to reach these goals, campuses can promote use of suppliers and/or vendors who reduce waste, re-purpose recycled material, or support other environmentally friendly practices in the provision of goods or services to the colleges under contract. This may include additional evaluation points in solicitation evaluations for suppliers integrating sustainable practices.

In order to move to zero waste, campus practices can: (1) encourage use of products that minimize the volume of trash sent to landfills or incinerators; (2) participate in the CalRecycle Buy-Recycled program or equivalent; and (3) increase recycled content purchases in all Buy- Recycled program product categories.

Districts and colleges should strive to continue to report on all recycled content product categories, consistent with [PCC § 12153-12217](#) ([leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=12153.&nodeTreePath=3.2.12.1&lawCode=PCC](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=12153.&nodeTreePath=3.2.12.1&lawCode=PCC)) and shall implement improved tracking and reporting procedures for their recycled content purchases.

## Transportation

1. The California community colleges can conduct accounting and conditions assessment of fleet vehicles; assess remainder rolling stock for potential electrification; develop Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to encourage faculty, staff and students to use EVs; promote accessible shared transport methods; and make pedestrian and bicycle access improvements by 2025.
2. Districts and colleges should strive to have 50% of new fleet vehicles that are zero emission vehicles, 50% of rolling stock that are zero emissions, and can consider implementing green parking permits by 2030.
3. Districts and colleges should strive to have 100% of new fleet vehicles that are zero emission vehicles, and 100% of rolling stock that are zero emissions by 2035.

## Food Systems

1. Districts and colleges should strive to have campus food service organizations track their sustainable food purchases. Such tracking and reporting can be grounded in the [Real Food Challenge](http://www.realfoodchallenge.org/resources/real-food-resources/) ([www.realfoodchallenge.org/resources/real-food-resources/](http://www.realfoodchallenge.org/resources/real-food-resources/)) guidelines, or equivalent, with consideration to campus-requested improvements.
2. Campuses are encouraged to strive to increase their sustainable food purchases to 20% of total food budget by 2030, and to have 80% of food served on campus meeting the goals of the Real Food Challenge or equivalent by 2035.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Consideration for Advancing the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework

### Considerations for the Future

As climate change remains an increasing threat to Californians' health, safety, and economic well-being—wildfires, and widespread drought throughout the State being some of the most recent reminders of the changing environment's impact on our community – it's important to consider the impact California Community Colleges can make if they look beyond just their facilities footprint and leverage the role they play in increasing knowledge and education about the challenges we face. The following section invites our broader academic community to consider ways they can support the advancement of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework.

### Building Alignment to Campus Operations and Teaching & Learning

#### Environmental Justice: Aligning to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy

1. Consistent with the *Vision for Success*, the California Community Colleges can create connections between plans, projects and committees (including those specific to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts) and the Climate Action and Sustainability Plan.
2. Districts and colleges can explore how to improve connections between environmental and social justice initiatives and program on campus and foster a more diverse and inclusive engagement in climate action and sustainability initiatives. In addition, the campuses can measure engagement of diverse audiences in climate action and sustainability initiatives to assess equitable participation.
3. Districts and colleges can explore changes their local policies and administrative procedures with their elected board to bolster climate/environmental justice efforts.
4. Districts and colleges can develop educational programs or hold annual event underscoring the intersectional relationship of environment, climate and social equity issues.

#### Planning and Administration: Coordination and Planning

1. The California Community Colleges can form sustainability committee or offices to advise and implement sustainability initiatives on campus. The campuses can publish a plan that includes measurable sustainability objectives and/or include the integrated concept of sustainability in the institution's master plan.
2. Districts and colleges can update their local plan and complete peer or independent STARS Reporting Assurance.

#### Advancing Climate Action Education & Engagement

1. Identify and develop community partnerships, including private philanthropy, to support and promote sustainability activities and programs.

- 2.** Districts and colleges can consider developing an inventory of courses focused on climate change, sustainability and action to engage current and future students. This can also encourage collaboration and for interdisciplinary pathways.
- 3.** Districts and colleges can explore partnership which allow climate change and sustainability education to be an immersive experience for students such as community engaged learning, continued learning, and campus as a living lab initiatives.
- 4.** California's community colleges can highlight climate action and sustainability in various venues such as convocation, student orientation, professional development.



## **APPENDIX A: STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 1.** Karen Groppi, Instructor, Engineering Department, Environmental Sustainability Specialist, Cabrillo College
- 2.** Farrah Farzaneh, Director of Facilities Planning and Construction, San Bernardino CCD
- 3.** Joseph Fullerton, Energy and Sustainability Manager, San Mateo County CCD
- 4.** Aris Hovasapian, Utility Program Manager, LACCD
- 5.** Ferris Kwar, Sustainability Project Manager, Santa Monica College
- 6.** Jennifer Keiper, Foundation for California Community Colleges
- 7.** Owen Letcher, Vice Chancellor of Facilities and Bond Program, Chabot-Las Positas CCD
- 8.** Nat Martin, Director of Sustainability, Los Rios CCD
- 9.** Hoang Nguyen, Director of Facilities Planning and Utilization, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- 10.** Don Reid, Supervisor, American River College
- 11.** Sophia Ruiz, Student Senate for California Community Colleges, Mt. San Antonio College (graduated)
- 12.** Brian Turner, Program Assistant II, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- 13.** Chay Yang, Specialist, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- 14.** John White, Executive Director of Bond Program and Facilities Planning, College of the Desert