

# Campus Sustainability Task Force Visioning

April 28, 2009

# Campus Sustainability Task Force

## Role & Responsibility #1

To guide the campus in developing sustainable strategies, the University commits to using the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education principles, including STARS.

# What is STARS?

- Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System
- Comprehensive – provides guidelines for university operations , administration education and research
- Enables comparisons over time
- Creates incentives for continued improvement
- Recognizes leaders and beginners
- Easy to use/transparent
- Anyone can participate
- *Rating not ranking*

# STARS and Credits

- Two types – Tier One and Tier Two
  - Tier 1 – Based on outcomes
  - Tier 2 – Based on strategies
- Prerequisites
- Three categories
  - Education and Research
  - Operations
  - Administration and Finance

# Strategy for Rolling Out STARS

- Low-hanging fruit
  - Document
  - Establish monitoring mechanisms
- Up the stakes
  - Which credits will impact carbon footprint and move the campus forward?
    - Commute – 51% of carbon footprint
    - Buildings – 46% of carbon footprint

# STARS: Education and Research

- Co-Curricular Education
  - Learning experiences outside the normal curriculum
- Curriculum
  - Formal education programs that address sustainability
- Faculty Staff Development and Training
  - The incorporation of sustainability into faculty and staff training and development
- Research
  - Research focused on sustainability

# Education and Research Credit #2: Sustainability Related Competition

## STARS

- Institution coordinates or oversees a sustainability-related competition at least annually. This competition may take place among the entire institution, between different residence halls, academic departments, classes or other divisions appropriate to the institution.
  - Documentation:
    - Name of the competition
    - Year competition started
    - Competition web site
    - Outreach materials
    - Statement of how the competition has advanced sustainability at the institution.

## University of Houston

- UH participated in RecycleMania for the first time in 2009.
- <http://www.uh.edu/recyclemania>

# Co-Curricular Education: Tier 2 Credits

## **STARS**

- Institution has an on-campus, organic garden for students.
- Institution produces outreach materials on sustainability such as information kiosks and sustainability maps.
- Institution has a student-run café that serves environmentally or socially preferable foods.
- Institution holds major events related to sustainability, such as conferences and symposia.

## **University of Houston**

- UH installed the Cougar Community Garden in February 2009.
- Maps of recycling bins and Fair Trade coffee are on the Green UH web site.
- Cougar Grounds and Shasta's Cones and More are two student-run facilities that serve all-Fair Trade coffee.
- UH held the Systems of Sustainability Conference in 2009.



# Up the Stakes – ER Credit #3: Sustainability in New Student Orientation

## **STARS**

- Institution includes sustainability prominently in new student orientation activities and/or materials distributed to new students.
  - Documentation: A brief description of how sustainability is incorporated into new student orientation.
  - A copy of outreach materials distributed to new students that address sustainability.

## **UH**

- At this time, UH does not provide Sustainability Training in New Student Orientation.

# Up the Stakes – ER Credit #4: Sustainability Course Identification

## STARS

- Institution has identified all of its sustainability-focused and sustainability-related courses. This identification system can take any form, including official recognition in the course catalog or a list compiled and published by the sustainability committee or officer, as long as the information is publicly available to the campus community.
  - Documentation: The document or web site where sustainability courses are listed.
  - A brief description of how the list of sustainability courses is shared with the campus community.
  - A brief description of the methodology used to identify sustainability courses.

## UH

- UH does not track at this time
- Completing this requirement may help us in completing future STARS benchmarks

# Up the Stakes – ER Credit #18: Sustainability in New Hire Orientation

## **STARS**

- Institution covers sustainability topics in new employee orientation and/or in outreach and guidance materials distributed to new employees.
  - Documentation: A brief description of how sustainability is covered in orientations and trainings for new employees.
  - A copy of outreach materials distributed to new employees that address sustainability.

## **UH**

- At this time, UH does not provide Sustainability Training in New Hire Orientation.

# STARS: Operations

- Includes the operational or logistical areas of the university: facilities, dining, parking, grounds, recycling/waste minimization

# Operational Prerequisite 1: Recycling Program

## STARS Criteria

- Institution has a means for recycling bottles, cans, paper and cardboard.
  - Documentation required:
    - A brief description of the institution's recycling program.
    - The URL for the institution's recycling program

## University of Houston

- UH has a means for recycling bottles, cans, plastics and cardboard. Information about UH's recycling programs is available at [www.uh.edu/green](http://www.uh.edu/green).

# Operational Credit #7: Fair Trade Certified Coffee

## STARS

- All of the institution's coffee purchases are Fair Trade Certified. Institution's should include coffee purchases for the residential dining halls and on-site catered events.
  - Documentation:
    - Expenditures on Fair Trade Certified coffee
    - Total expenditures on coffee
    - A brief description of policies and programs institution has implemented to promote Fair Trade Certified food purchasing.

## University of Houston

- The opportunity exists for all of the institution's coffee purchases to be Fair Trade Certified. Only Fair Trade Certified Coffee is used in the dining halls and the option is available for departments to choose to use Fair Trade certified coffee for catering orders. The university's coffee purchases are available on the following web site: [www.uh.edu/green](http://www.uh.edu/green). About 30% of the university's coffee purchases are Fair Trade Certified.

# Dining Services Tier Two Credits

## **STARS**

- Institution does not use trays in its dining operations.
- Institution has vegan and vegetarian dining options available for every meal.
- Institution does not use trans fat or ingredients that include trans fat in its dining operations.

## **University of Houston**

- The university went tray-less in Fall 2008.
- Vegan and vegetarian options are available for every meal. Menus are available at [www.uh.edu/dining](http://www.uh.edu/dining).
- The dining halls make every effort to not use trans fat in the residential dining facilities.

# Operational Credit #15: Waste Diversion

## STARS

- Institution achieves a specified landfill diversion rate.
  - 1 pt.: Institution achieves a 15 percent diversion rate.
  - 2 pts.: Institution achieves a 35 percent diversion rate.
    - Documentation: The weight in pounds composted, recycled, reused, donated, re-sold, or otherwise diverted.
    - The weight in pounds disposed in a solid waste landfill or incinerator.
    - A brief description of programs, policies and infrastructure investments, outreach efforts and other factors that contributed to the diversion rate.

## University of Houston

- UH achieves more than a 30 percent diversion rate.
  - <http://www.uh.edu/af/greenUH/recycledata.htm>
  - <http://www.uh.edu/recyclemania>



# Materials, Recycling, and Waste Minimization: Tier 2 Credits

## STARS

- Institution has pre-consumer food waste composting program.
- Institution composts yard waste.
- Institution has a surplus department or office supplies exchange that facilitates reuse of materials.
- Campus dining operations offer discounts for reusable mugs.
- Institution has replaced paper materials, such as course catalogs, registration, and directories with on-line alternatives.
- Institution limits free printing in computer labs and libraries.
- Campus dining operations use bulk condiment dispensers and decreased packaging for to-go food service purchases.

## University of Houston

- The residence hall kitchens at Moody Towers and OB participate in pre-consumer composting.
- Property Management has an on-line catalog for surplus furniture and a warehouse where departments can view furniture. Furniture that is not re-used by the departments is auctioned off.
- Starbucks and Einstein's offer discounts for reusable mugs.
- The university only uses an on-line catalog.
- Free printing in the M.D. Anderson Library is limited to per semester. Usage is tracked on the Cougar 1Card.
- The dining facilities only use bulk condiment dispensers to individually packaged products.

# Up the Stakes - Recycling

- Concentrate on targeted materials
- Office/Dorm Swarms – educational events
- Add more paper bins to the building
- Fully develop student positions
- Continue participation in RecycleMania

# Up the Stakes: OP Credit #1 – New Construction, Renovation and Commercial Interiors

## **STARS**

- Institution's new buildings, renovations, and interior improvements meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for new construction, core & shell or commercial interiors.
  - 1pt: All new buildings, major renovations, and interior improvements meet LEED certification criteria (at any level)

## **University of Houston**

- Document UH's building policy

# Up the Stakes: OP Credit #8 – Reduction in Energy Intensity

## **STARS**

- Institution has achieved a three-year downward trend in energy intensity, normalized for heating or cooling degree days. For this credit, energy intensity is calculated by dividing total energy consumption (electricity plus temperature control) by the amount of conditioned floor space.
- 1 pt: Institution reduced energy intensity up to two percent.
  - Documentation: Total electricity consumed for the past three years.
  - Total BTU used in each of the past three years.
  - Gross square footage of conditioned floor space.

## **University of Houston**

- UH needs to document and actively train employees, students and departments on how to reduce energy consumption.
- Will start Green Box in employee newsletters.

# Up the Stakes: Areas of focus – OP Credit #26: Commute Modal Split

## **STARS**

- A specified percentage of the institution's faculty, staff and students get to and from the campus by a means other than a single occupancy vehicle for the majority of their daily trips. Alternatives to single occupancy vehicle transportation includes walking, bicycling, van pool or carpooling, taking public transportation or riding a campus shuttle.
  - 1 pt. – More than 25% of the institution's population primarily uses preferable modes of transportation.
  - Documentation - % of community using preferable modes of transportation vs. % driving alone

## **University of Houston**

- Currently not tracking data.

# Next steps: Areas of focus – OP Credit #27: Commuter Options

## **STARS**

- Institution meets the criteria for being recognized by the Best Workplaces for Commuters Program.
  - Documentation: List of incentives for preferable modes of transportation that designates how the institution meets the Best Workplaces for Commuters guidelines. Examples include \$30 monthly subsidy for not purchasing a parking permit that would be directed to cost of van pool/car pool or METRO Q Card.

## **University of Houston**

- UH currently has not been recognized and does not have incentives.

# STARS: Administration and Finance

- Includes governance, finance, social responsibility and community engagement

# AF Prerequisite #1: Sustainability Committee

## STARS

- Institution has standing committee or other entity that meets at least once per semester or term. The committee advises on and/or implements policies and programs related to sustainability. The committee has multi-stakeholder representation, which means students, faculty and staff and may include other interested parties. The committee may be an informal group or officially appointed by the institution's administration.
  - Documentation:
    - Charter or mission statement of the committee
    - Committee membership, including affiliations
    - The committee meeting schedule

## University of Houston

- The UH Campus Sustainability Taskforce is composed of students, faculty and staff.
- The Taskforce membership is appointed by various constituency groups, including UH administration
- The committee meets at least monthly
- Information, including Taskforce membership is available at <http://www.uh.edu/green>



# AF Credit #10: Sustainability Officer

## STARS

- Institution has a paid sustainability officer who addressed multiple issues. An employee who focuses on just one issue, such as diversity officer or alternative transportation coordinator, would not count toward this credit.
  - 1 pt.: Any percentage of a paid staff member's time is dedicated to coordinating sustainability initiatives and this responsibility is included in the employee's job description.
    - Documentation:
      - The name, title and job description of the sustainability officer.
      - The office or department where the sustainability officer is housed.

## University of Houston

- Emily Messa, Assistant Vice President for University Services, directs sustainability activities for the university
- At least 25% of this position's duties are focused on campus sustainability issues
- This position reports to the UH Chief Financial Officer

# AF Credit #11 Sustainability Recognition Program

## STARS

- Institution has an awards program that recognizes sustainability achievements. Awards and recognition may be granted to individuals, buildings, departments, colleges, or other organizations within the campus community. Awards and recognition are publicized throughout the institution and are granted at least annually.
  - Documentation: program web site.
  - Program description

## University of Houston

- As part of RecycleMania, the university held the department and club recycling contest. Teams competed to see who could collect the most bags of recyclables.
- <http://www.uh.edu/af/recyclemania/competition.htm>

# AF Credit #17: Outreach & Partnerships Carnegie Designation

## **STARS**

- Institution meets the criteria of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's "Outreach & Partnerships" Elective Classification.

## **University of Houston**

- UH was awarded this designation in December 2008:  
<http://www.uh.edu/news-events/stories/2008articles/december08/1218carnegie-designation.php>

# AF Credit #28: Faculty and Staff Benefits

## STARS

- Institution provides health care benefits to employees.
  - 1 pt: All full-time employees receive full health care coverage.
  - 2 pts: All employees with at least .75 full-time equivalence receive full health care coverage.
  - 3 pts: All employees with at least .5 full-time equivalence receive full health care coverage.
  - Documentation:
    - A copy of the institution's most recent health care policy for employees, or a brief summary of the policy.

## University of Houston

- All regular employees, who work at least 20 hours per week and are classified as .50 FTE are eligible to participate in UH's group health insurance plan.
- A copy of the policy is available at:  
[http://www.uh.edu/sam/2H  
umanResources/2C3.pdf](http://www.uh.edu/sam/2HumanResources/2C3.pdf)

# AF Credit #33: Independent Monitoring of Logo Apparel

## STARS

- Institution is a member of an organization that conducts monitoring and verification to ensure that products bearing the institution's name or logo are produced under fair conditions (e.g., the Worker Rights Consortium or the Fair Labor Association).
  - Documentation: The monitoring and verification organization of which the institution is a member.
  - The date the institution joined the organization.

## University of Houston

- UH is a member of the Worker Rights Consortium:
  - <http://www.workersrights.org/about/as.asp>
  - The university joined in December 2008

# Up the Stakes: AF Opportunities

## **STARS**

- Rules for investment engagement and HR

## **University of Houston**

- Continue to document where UH meets these guidelines

# STARS/UH Summary

- STARS model works well for UH because:
  - It is not subjective.
  - We will be able to see progression over time.
  - We have already implemented many of the items in STARS.
  - It will provide us with nation-wide best practices.

# STARS Next Steps

- Continue monitoring those items where UH meets the STARS criteria.
- Work on “Up the Stakes” goals.
- Establish subcommittees w/deadlines and goals for implementation or report back to Task Force.
- Identify Fiscal 2010 objectives/assignments.