

Departmental Climate Action Plan

Financial Affairs – April 2022

Executive Summary

Climate change is arguably the most pressing environmental issue of our time. Since its inception in 2017, Boston University's Climate Action Plan has served as the University's roadmap towards climate resiliency, emissions reductions, and education and research across our campuses. A crucial component of the University's climate goals is its commitment to achieving Zero Waste by 2030. While the University's goal of achieving carbon neutrality and zero waste, relies on operational change, it is important that this and other institution-wide targets are supported by ambitious departmental action and commitments to sustainability in the workplace.

The Financial Affairs Department has a long-standing commitment to being on the front lines of Sustainability at Boston University. For example, our Risk Management Department intersects with sustainability while determining how our buildings will be insured against the effects of climate change, and our Research Accounting Department manages the grants with which our schools research the short and long-term effects of climate change. We recognize that small efforts on a daily basis can make a large difference when everyone participates. Our Departmental Sustainability Liaison has established a culture of Sustainability across the various units and continues to provide an array of resources to assist members make more sustainable choices during the workday and beyond. Everyone benefits when sustainable actions are turned into efficiencies. Financial Affairs is committed to working on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and have created a DEI committee that is working congruently towards true sustainability for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive department.

Financial Affairs Sustainability Goals

- Reduce the department's environmental footprint through targeted and measureable actions which conserve, reuse, or recycle in the areas of Energy, Consumables, Waste/Shredding, Purchasing, and Transportation.
- Develop a culture of Sustainability across Financial Affairs which changes behavior and increases our awareness of the impacts (both positive and negative) that each of us can make on our environment.
- Provide a central departmental resource which is responsible to communicate and elevate "green office" initiatives and accomplishments through a variety of resources.
- Create positive change through networking, education, and training in order to lead our department toward a more sustainable future.

Financial Affairs Sustainability Actions

Our departmental Sustainability efforts began in 2017. We continue to identify and aggressively implement action items which have a measurable affect on our departmental environmental footprint. Items which are completed or are in progress include:

- Energy efficiencies through lighting upgrades.
 - Overhead lighting conversion from fluorescent to LED Bulbs. 90% of Dept. converted by January 2021.
 - Installation of motion sensing technologies on the 4th floor of 881 Commonwealth Avenue, and on the 1st and 3rd floors of 25 Buick Street and in 975 Comm Ave.
 - Switched all desk lamps to LED Lighting (2017).
- Reduction in Consumables and disposable waste.
 - Installed Filtered Water Bottle Filling Stations and issued Reusable Water Bottles to all current and new employees.
 - Reduced single use coffee cups and flatware by ensuring that current and new employees received a sustainable coffee mug or reusable water bottle and bamboo utensil set upon completing their Green

Office Certifications. As a department this initiative eliminates the purchase of approximately 36,000 plastic single-use utensils per year, an estimated savings of \$775.00 per fiscal year.

- Partnered with WB Mason in the K-Cup Recycling program, and their Reusable Tote Program.
- Throughout the year 2019, the SVPFA suite purchased copy paper at a rate of 10 cartons every 3 months, costing \$1,032.00 annually; as compared to 2020, purchasing only 10 cartons total at \$259.00. Based on our electronic document initiatives, and electronic check initiative, we have seen a drastic reduction in printing, we will use a portion of the savings to upgrade our purchasing to 100% recycled content paper.
- Electronic signature initiative:
 - Reduced copy/print supplies drastically through training and implementing an electronic signature requirement for most executive level documents. Resulted in more than 80% of our signature requests electronically in 2020 as compared to 24% of our signature requests in 2019.
- Sustainability centric renovation/reallocation for seven departments. Financial Affairs opted to use current “footprint” within Financial Affairs (881 Comm Ave & 25 Buick St) rather than moving to another office building resulting in:
 - Revenue loss Avoidance: Commercial office space yielding rental income of approx. \$369,000/yr
 - Generated administrative savings through consolidated shredding and waste management functions
 - Improved energy efficiencies such as Installation of LED and motion sensing lights across 90% of FA office spaces.
 - Created shared copy/print room for multi-departmental use led to the reduction of four redundant RICOH copy/print machines (\$7000/unit).
 - Re-purposed current office furniture during renovation saving over \$105,000 in new furniture costs. Reduced waste/landfill requirement by 230 pieces of furniture.
 - Salvaged and sold functioning workstations to a furniture refurbisher, generating \$175,000 in credits for future furniture purchases. Reduced waste/landfill requirement by over 25 workstations.
 - Supported University programs through furniture/IT donations.
 - 25+ desk chairs in support of BU efforts to stand up COVID testing facilities. Estimated cost savings \$8,750.
 - Provided BU Academy students with surplus IT equipment 20+ monitors, keyboards, and mice in order to support their remote schooling efforts.

Financial Affairs Sustainability Culture

Members of Financial Affairs are encouraged to “think green” in all that we do. We have also implemented a number of strategies to reduce our energy consumption for example, use shared printing, motion sensing lights that turn off in unoccupied rooms, and maintain a healthy array of plants in common areas to improve indoor air quality. Earning and building upon our Green Department Certification is a central component to our Sustainability culture within Financial Affairs.

- Over 65% of our staff personnel received Sustainability training and our offices were evaluated for areas to reduce waste. Note: Green-Office certifications were suspended in March of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic forced most employees to work remotely.
- In partnership with BU Sustainability, Financial Affairs will have the capability to conduct new Green Office Certifications internally. (Post-COVID)

Additionally, we strive to increase efficiencies and reduce waste through the standard practices and policies.

- Maximize electronic documentation and note-taking via laptop computers during office events and meetings.
 - 65% of our desktop computers have been replaced with laptop devices to promote use of electronic mediums during office meetings and a reduction of printed documents, presentations, and reports. Plan to be 100% laptop capable by FY23.
- Encourage printing in B&W, and on double sided pages, or electronic distribution whenever possible
- Moved toward the elimination of individual stand-alone printers and provided a central location in our office space for shared printing, recycling, and supplies.

- FA commits to seeking out remanufactured furniture or repurpose furniture before buying new in all cases.

Financial Affairs Sustainability – Future

- **Move toward Zero Departmental Waste:**
 - Plan to implement an annual departmental Zero Waste Audit in 2022 (post covid-19) in order to assess our departmental waste and make further goals annually to improve, both in diversion and waste reduction through sourcing.
 - By FY 2022, The Financial Affairs Department will move to purchase 100% recycled content copy paper instead of the current standard of 30% recycled content.
 - Implement Zero Waste Catering and/or potluck events for all meetings and events by 2022. During a Zero Waste Event, BU catering provides environmentally friendly plates/utensils, and will set up a green bag enabling attendees to compost waste and a clear bag for recycling. Additionally, they educate guests how to sort their waste. The cost for this initiative is \$10 additional per event. To accomplish this goal and offset the cost, most of our departments have implemented pot-luck style events. For example, Internal Audit and Advisory Services implemented pot-luck style breakfast meetings in 2019 and eliminated a monthly catered meeting. This simple change reduced the number of catered events by 50%, covering the cost of adding Zero Waste Catering for their remaining training classes or meetings. They took this one step further in 2022 by holding all meetings virtually and working remotely.
 - We will replace 100% of our desktop computers with laptops to promote electronic communication. Our goal is to take this a step further by making future technology purchases that meet EPEAT GOLD standards.
- **Energy:**
 - Complete Energy Audit with the Sustainability Department (Post-COVID)
 - Swap out all standard power strips with Smart/Advanced Power Strips
 - Advanced Power Strips (APS) operate on the same basic principle of shutting off the supply power to devices that are not in use. By replacing your standard power strip with an APS, you can significantly cut the amount of electricity used by office devices and save money on electric bills.
- **Transportation:**
 - Financial Affairs will generate a transportation survey for our current and new to assess commuting practices and to promote and encourage sustainable commuting (i.e. train, bus, carpool, walking, or bicycling).
- **Communication and Training:**
 - Creation of Financial Affairs “Green Team” to support Inter-Departmental Progress
 - Conduct individual energy and waste conscience training:
 - Support Green Office initial and re-certifications for 100% of Financial Affairs personnel by XXX.
 - Offer training and resources to promote departmental sustainability initiatives.
 - Sustainability Website within Financial Affairs created/maintained (www.bu.edu/cfo/administrative-support/financial-affairs-sustainability/)
 - Sustainability Resources e-mail (CFOGreen@bu.edu)
 - Digital signage boards to communicate our goals, progress, sustainability events, and app challenges.
- **Onboarding training and Orientation:**

We recognize that the best time to educate an employee on all available resources and departmental initiatives/policies is on day one.

- We strive to have all new employees become Green Office Certified within the first month of their employment.

Financial Affairs Sustainability – Summary

Climate Change and its effects are an inescapable component of our everyday lives, but we have the power to mitigate the effects by making small changes in our behavior, both as individuals and as a team. The sustainable actions we make on a daily basis, such as recycling, bringing our own coffee mugs, or eating less meat, all have a huge impact on our carbon emissions and climate change goals. These everyday actions serve not only to improve our carbon footprint, but also as educational tools for behavior change campus-wide. The Financial Affairs Department is committed to helping educate all new employees through departmental orientation, and by providing online sustainability resources through the Financial Affairs website. We have improved our work culture by bringing the people of the Financial Affairs Department together, with a common goal to improve our carbon footprint through a commitment to more sustainable actions. We are committed to our continued engagement in Pilot Programs across campus, and will work towards an annual update of our Climate Action Plan which will be published on both the Sustainability website and our own departmental website.

Signed by Department Head Gary Nicksa
