

Campus Community Engagement

To fully realize the potential of the Climate Action Plan, strong participation by the BU community will be necessary. Getting buy-in from the community will help maintain and enhance emissions-related savings that we anticipate from Climate Action Plan initiatives. Whether it is turning off the lights, taking a more sustainable means of transportation or competing in a dorm energy challenge, individual and collective actions add up.

Current engagement activities include the sustainability@BU app for students, and the Green Office Certification for faculty and staff. Moreover, two large events, namely the Sustainability Festival in the fall and Earth Week in the spring, give visibility to climate change research and sustainable lifestyle choices. All sustainability and climate-related efforts and activities are communicated to the BU community via the sustainability@BU monthly newsletter.

Community engagement is tightly connected to specific CAP recommendations. For example, to design effective programs that support energy savings (and in turn, lowered emissions) from campus facilities, we need cooperation from the occupants of dorms, offices and labs in identifying current energy use patterns, and then in adopting behavior changes that will support reduced energy use.

Recognizing the importance of individual and collective action, the Task Force calls for an expansion of community engagement at BU in a way that is more comprehensive, systematic, and far-reaching. There are two sets of recommendations. The first set is a list of specific programs encompassing ideas that emerged from the four working groups. The second set takes a more holistic approach and addresses long-term, strategic initiatives at the nexus of education, training, research, operations, and outreach. These two sets of recommendations work together to spur a renewed campus culture to bring deeper involvement in, awareness, and understanding of climate action. These opportunities will enable all levels of the BU community to participate, including alumni.

Recommendations

Long-term, Strategic Initiatives to Enhance Community Engagement

The Task Force recommends that the University develop the following capacities to build on current sustainability@BU efforts to support the Climate Action Plan objectives.

1. Transform BU into a Living Learning Laboratory (LLL). Build on the BU Hub's Cross College Challenge and Co-Curricular opportunities and the success of existing faculty and staff collaborations, weaving together the University's operational activities with its education and research mission. The LLL would support evidence-based pilot programs, facilitate campus living laboratories, and provide robust opportunities for the BU Hub Cross College Challenge. This will allow the University to address the complex, interrelated challenges to realize carbon neutrality while providing opportunities for our students to explore interdisciplinary projects on campus, in the city and region; and build bridges for our graduates to continue these efforts in the world beyond our campuses. These living lab experiences are uniquely BU and highlight the benefits of a brick and mortar campus.

Examples of research at the nexus of BU operations and education include:

- a. Earth science: Biological flux of Sargent/Tanglewood. Evaluation of nitrogen cycle with different types of fertilizers.
 - b. Supply chain: lifecycle and supply chain analyses can be conducted of wide-spread products used on campus to quantify their embodied emissions and identify characteristics that lower the environmental impact of such items.
 - c. Waste: measure GHG emissions from waste
 - d. Construction: life-cycle analysis software packages to estimate economic and environmental cost and benefits of various construction options (embodied carbon accounting)
 - e. Transportation: pilot programs to measure uptake of carbon offset program for business flights
 - f. Economics/Engineering: construction of a Marginal Emissions Abatement Curve for Boston University
 - g. Food: communicating consequences of food choices in dining halls.
 - Evaluate the installation of vertical or container gardens on the Charles River Campus to provide meaningful academic research and evaluate the potential for meaningful (and economically viable) supply of produce for BU Dining.
 - Evaluate the installation of on-site anaerobic digesters
 - h. Behavior change for energy conservation: behavioral nudges programs in energy efficiency
 - i. Include a sustainability special interest tag on courses
2. Strategic Planning initiative: The Task Force recommends the development of procedures and conduct audits and guide units through a strategic planning initiative that incorporates the University's Climate Action Plan objectives. It is essential the University stays on track with its climate and sustainability goals and works toward engaging every CRC and BUMC campus academic and administrative unit in developing their own sustainability goals.
 3. Community-wide Training: Theory meets practice when campus community members are educated about how the University operates and how they can be part of reducing the collective environmental footprint. Trainings for new students, staff, and faculty would include a series of voluntary sustainability-related workshops/modules.
 4. Communications & Outreach: As an integral part of the overarching mandate to significantly curb GHG emissions, the University should develop a comprehensive, far-reaching communication strategy to bring University-wide culture change towards the common goal of carbon neutrality. The communication strategy is a tool to a) raise awareness and promote all mitigation efforts and actions happening on campus, b) encourage, sustain and reinforce individual and collective engagement of BU students, faculty, and staff, and c) highlight projects related to our campuses as living labs, strategic planning, and hubs for education.

The aforementioned elements, Living Learning Laboratory, Strategic Planning Initiative, Community-wide training, and Communications & Outreach, are part of a holistic community engagement program that could be realized either by expanding upon the Pardee Center's outreach mission (To establish linkages between the worlds of scholarship and practice for meaningful cross-learning so that scholarly insights on the possibilities of improved human well-being can be translated into practical programs of action.) or through the creation of an entirely new Center for Sustainability/Sustainability Institute.

Potential Programming Opportunities

The Task Force has compiled a variety of potential programs that will support the above strategic initiatives in support of the Climate Action Plan objectives.

1. Campus wide programs
 - a. Green and Safe Labs program (fume hoods, ventilation, plug loads, shared services, recycling)
 - b. Green IT program (energy settings, consolidation, right-sizing)
 - c. Installation of energy and water sub-meters in new and existing buildings to generate data for:
 - i. Integration with existing building management systems
 - ii. Reporting of building energy data for senior management
 - iii. Access to building energy data for download to faculty and students
 - iv. Monitoring with the purpose of gamification/engagement programs
 - v. Visuals for raising awareness, to be coupled with actionable
 - d. Outreach program/Community-wide events & activities
 - i. Potential to partner with other BU initiatives such as Howard Thurman Center and Arts Initiative
 - ii. Personal climate stories/experiences to make climate change relatable
 - iii. Public art to inspire action on climate change
 - iv. Sustainability special interest tag on BU calendar
 - v. Communication of emerging sustainability-related research
2. Faculty/Staff-focused programs
 - a. Residential resource efficiency program (electricity, water, waste) and renewable energy programs
 - b. Sustainability Liaisons program for faculty/staff; opportunities for involvement
 - c. Awareness program for faculty & staff orientations
3. Student-focused programs
 - a. Residential resource efficiency (electricity, water, waste) and renewable energy programs
 - b. Mandatory recycling training in dorms/floors
 - c. Awareness program at undergraduate & graduate orientations
 - d. Sustainability 101 course
4. Alumni-focused programs
 - a. Program to engage alumni in reducing their carbon footprint beyond campus. If including all alumni of the past 10 years, the impact is 18 times the one of campus alone.