



2009: Year of Sustainability at New Mexico State University

Introduction

2009 will mark the *Year of Sustainability at New Mexico State University*. Through a combination of special events and strategic initiatives, the university will challenge itself to become a leader in sustainability by developing educational, research, and outreach opportunities to make 2009 the keystone year in meeting this challenge.

The *Year of Sustainability at New Mexico State University* will engage all academic and division units in the inventory, development, and implementation of programs involving best practices in the preservation of our natural resources. As the state's land-grant university, New Mexico State University has the special responsibility of actively addressing issues affecting New Mexicans.

Many opportunities will continue to emerge in issues related to the environment. New Mexico State University is called to educate students who will step into society, to provide innovation through the creation of new knowledge and technologies, and to offer expertise to the private and public sectors seeking solutions to environmental issues.

On October 30, 2008, the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University approved a resolution that "recognizes the particular relevance and ability of Higher Education to address the values and critical challenges of sustainability through research, educational curriculum, understanding, and appreciation of the environment." This resolution established the following goals:

Urging the administration, faculty, students, and staff to work together to implement practices that will make New Mexico State University environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Developing and assessing the creation of new knowledge and skill sets through advanced research and curriculum that expands understanding in the areas of energy and sustainability.

Developing appropriate vocational training in "green collar" jobs that will enhance the economic development of the region and the state.

Encouraging the incorporation of these principles to the extent possible in all future university development plans and projects and working with our local communities to develop comprehensive plans in the areas including but not limited to transportation, drainage, and waste management.

Providing an annual update regarding the progress made toward meeting the above-stated goals in establishing New Mexico State University as a living example of sustainable principles.

Sustainability Goals

By the end of 2009, New Mexico State University will complete the following tasks:

1. Establish the Sustainability Council to advise on matters of sustainability and to facilitate activities during the *Year of Sustainability*.
2. Encourage each college, community college, and unit to develop and implement a sustainability plan and at least one public event related to sustainability.
3. Develop a portal that provides a point of entry to all sustainability-related activities on and off campus.
4. Produce an inventory of courses that have an emphasis on sustainability and the environment.
5. Promote existing and new research and development opportunities that deal with problems in natural resources.
6. Initiate the development of a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality.
7. Complete a comprehensive inventory of all greenhouse gas emissions at all of New Mexico State University's facilities.
8. Take actions necessary to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the academic curriculum.
9. Create a mechanism for tracking progress in the action items and goals within each college and unit.
10. Establish policies that will adopt the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver standards or equivalent.
11. Engage students in the process.
12. Create an inventory of NMSU experts and guest lecturers.

Higher education will be the primary source of expertise to tackle these concerns and I believe we must work together to address common issues. Specifically, I challenge all of us to become involved and consider the following:

Short-term: Can you or your organization change your activities to curtail or more efficiently use resources?

Long-term: What should be the fundamental role of a land-grant university? Will it change? How should NMSU function to fulfill its mission in a sustainability-driven environment?

Thank you for your efforts on this important initiative. Working together, NMSU will make a difference.

References and Recognition

Board of Regents, New Mexico State University. "Resolution." October 30, 2008.

Special thanks to:

Paul Gutierrez, Vice Provost for Outreach Services

Steve Loring, Chair, Sustainability and Climate Change Task Force

Bob McNeil, Special Assistant to the President

Bob Moulton, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost

Ben Woods, Senior Vice President for Planning, Physical Resources and University Relations