

# A Resolution on SDSU's Sustainability Leadership & Integration

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 with the objective of producing a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, social, political and economic challenges facing our world<sup>6</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate is deeply concerned that current U.S. federal policy and implementation does not sufficiently reduce carbon emissions on the scale necessary to protect all living things on our planet<sup>7</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate looks to the State of California, whose goal of 2045 neutrality, and whose gross domestic product (GDP) has generally continued to rise as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions decreased, as a leader in climate neutrality legislation<sup>8</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate recognizes that the California State University (CSU) system provides rules and guidance on sustainable operations, is constantly updating sustainability system-wide policies for all of its 23 campuses to implement<sup>9</sup>, and expects each CSU campus to maintain and implement sustainability plans;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate recognizes that CSU campuses such as Chico, Long Beach, and Monterey Bay have sustainability-related achievements such as San Luis Obispo's carbon neutrality goals for 2030 and have designated administrators to coordinate sustainability across campus units;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate acknowledges that San Diego's Climate Action Plan<sup>10</sup> calls for 100% renewable energy by 2035, and SDSU must incorporate this goal into their Environmental Impact Plan for the Mission Valley campus;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate supports over 500 students, faculty, and staff who participated in a Climate Strike, which asked for full Carbon Neutrality by 2030<sup>11</sup> as well as the student-led Associated Students that passed "A Resolution Calling for SDSU's Commitment to Climate Action, Justice, and Leadership<sup>12</sup>," along with diverse

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/background.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

<sup>8</sup>

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/08/12/governor-newsom-announces-climate-pollution-continues-to-drop-below-2020-target-while-states-economy-grows/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/6987526/latest/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sandiego.gov/sustainability/climate-action-plan>

<sup>11</sup> <https://thedailyaztec.com/95595/news/sdsu-community-takes-part-in-global-climate-strike/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Ki-dFu0g5JHBwAKwOIT9hcqqgno186Nr>

members of the SDSU community who agree that our campus and the region can benefit from more aggressive measures to advance the practices of sustainability;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate recognizes that SDSU Associated Students and the University have been able to save money through implementation of their sustainability-related initiatives<sup>13</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate aims to reinforce and build upon SDSU's commitment to sustainability, as evidenced by a number of actions and accomplishments, including, but not limited to, the establishment of the SDSU Sustainability Committee in 2008 and completion of SDSU's Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2017;

**WHEREAS**, the SDSU Senate believes university policies promoted from an environmental standpoint can help to contain costs and support financial resilience while improving social justice in the long term;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** that the SDSU Senate urgently recommends that the SDSU President de la Torre to take the following actions:

- a) Approve the Sustainability Policy recently added to the University Policy File.
- b) Establish a set of responsibilities assigned to an appropriately placed administrator dedicated to the implementation and integration of sustainability policy for all of SDSU's campuses, coordinate with the President's Office, and address the intersectional and interdisciplinary nature of sustainability work.
- c) Commit the University to exceeding local, CSU, state, federal, and international rules and regulations regarding sustainability, including the achievement of full carbon neutrality at all campuses by 2030.
- d) Commit to achieving AASHE Sustainability Tracking Assessment Rating System (STARS) Platinum Ratings in Academics, Engagement, Operations and Planning & Administration, with the collaboration of students, faculty, staff, and community members<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> [https://drive.google.com/a/mail.sdsu.edu/file/d/1pkTHnZYJ5s4K8KtKS2NTEW\\_Es38jA7ge/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/a/mail.sdsu.edu/file/d/1pkTHnZYJ5s4K8KtKS2NTEW_Es38jA7ge/view?usp=sharing)

<sup>14</sup> <https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/san-diego-state-university-ca/report/2018-03-02/>

## **Rationale:**

In 2012, the Committee presented to the Senate a “Resolution on signing the America Colleges and Universities Presidents’ Climate Commitment.” Based on the passing of this Resolution, SDSU signed the ACUPCC, the signing was publicly announced, and a Climate Action Planning Committee (CAP) was formed. Since 2012, the university has initiated a variety of programs and projects to establish and achieve sustainability goals at SDSU, including naming the Assistant Director of Facilities Services, Tom Abram, the Energy & Sustainability Officer. Abram’s unique knowledge, skills, and qualifications in the realm of sustainability led to the completion of numerous projects. In this role, he collaborated with Associated Students, student organizations, university divisions and leaders, and even developed curriculum which resulted in the completion of sustainability related projects and goals. Progress was achieved without the benefit of a comprehensive sustainability policy or an administrative role dedicated to implementation, integration, and tracking of sustainability initiatives across campus. This progress was a direct result of Abram’s efforts and expertise in these critical areas. Abram’s departure from SDSU in early March 2020 has created a problematic void in sustainability coordination across units and an opportunity to reassess our campus’ commitments to sustainability goals and resilience planning around social justice and financial stability. The importance of these issues to our campus is coming into full view in light of the current pandemic.

In June 2017, the CSU joined the We Are Still In Climate Declaration along with thousands of cities, states, businesses, and universities, pledging to uphold the climate goals of the Paris Agreement<sup>15</sup>. However, SDSU’s 2017 Climate Action Plan (CAP) agreement with America Colleges and Universities President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), which encompasses 2040 operational and 2050 full carbon neutrality goals, needs to be updated. International, national, state, CSU, and local bodies are calling for more aggressive and integrated climate action. Other CSU campuses have already implemented comprehensive sustainability policies, and have operationalized sustainability goals<sup>16</sup>. The Committee has prepared a new policy to empower SDSU as a regional leader in sustainability. The Committee asks the Senate to ensure that SDSU has an institutional structure that complies with the CAP and other sustainability commitments, as well as the capacity to address evolving sustainability recommendations and best practices.

Therefore, recognizing the central importance of sustainability and resilience in the forthcoming San Diego State University (SDSU) Strategic Plan, and the southwest region, the Committee requests the Senate add the proposed and comprehensive sustainability policy to the University Policy File as a means to guide SDSU’s campuses.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/sustainability/Documents/2014-17-Sustainability.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/sustainability/Documents/2014-17-Sustainability.pdf>

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