THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Sustainability Checklist for Reopening During COVID-19
GW Office Of Sustainability
July 2020

Sustainable **GW**

GW has robust plans for reopening campus in fall 2020 that address many facets of campus life from student health and safety, academics, athletics, and more. Sustainability principles have informed those plans. This checklist highlights some of the most important steps GW community members can take to ensure reopening plans promote healthy and thriving resource systems for all and prevent inadvertent environmental harm. The recommendations below are organized to reflect the goals in GW's underlined sustainability plan.

The Office of Sustainability is available to schedule trainings and consultations on how to make events, office operations, virtual learning, labs, and home office operations sustainable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please contact kwilliams@gwu.edu for more information.

Sustainability Goal 1: Strengthen Habitat and Optimize Natural Space

Landscape
☑ Plant cost-effective, hardy plants that require less maintenance. Current social distancing requires that staff remain 6' apart. Low-maintenance plants require less ongoing maintenance and may allow staff to safely continue social distancing.

Procurement
☑ Procure paper, PPE, and cleaning supplies with green attributes and through bulk purchasing through the GW Procurement department.
☑ Communicate clearly with the GW community on how best to prolong the life of masks.

Signage
☑ Ensure that all new paper signage uses recycled content paper.

Sustainability Goal 2: Promote Healthy Air and Climate

Transportation
☑ Per District of Columbia Reopening guidelines, encourage staff to telework if possible until travel on public transportation no longer poses a risk.
☑ Limit car traffic on narrow streets on campus to allow pedestrians room to safely pass each other on the street without violating social distancing guidelines.
☑ Provide managers, supervisors, deans and department chairs with guidelines, tips, and best practices for ensuring all team members are kept in the loop whether they are teleworking or on campus. Team members may feel pressured to come to campus even though they do not feel safe if they feel they will miss out on critical information and activities. Alternatively, not all staff and faculty have safe, quiet, and appropriate workspaces at home. Supervisors and managers should support team members so that they can telework effectively if they prefer.
☑ Provide employees with information about commuting, including resources for walking, biking, or taking public transit to work. If Metro establishes rotational schedules to avoid "peak" ride times, encourage staff to commute at times with lower ridership.

Energy efficiency

- ☑ Avoid propped open doors by ensuring ADA door push buttons are routinely serviced and sanitized.
- ☑ Shut down all devices in unoccupied or minimally occupied buildings (computers, printers, etc.)

Sustainability Goal 3: Foster Clean and Abundant Fresh Water

- ☑ Encourage use of no-touch bottle fills in campus buildings to minimize use of water fountains (high touch surfaces) and plastic water bottles (high volume of waste).
- ☑ Provide signage or stickers on indoor and outdoor bottle fillers that clearly indicate that they are safe to use during COVID-19.

Sustainability Goal 4: Support Sustainable Food Production Systems

- ☑ Expand the CSA program offered by the GroW Garden (and available with Dining Dollars) to provide students with healthy, local produce (listed in the Food Insecurity Decision Map with a request for additional funding). Direct students to a central location on campus to hold CSA pickups weekly.
- ☑ Identify local businesses sourcing sustainable, local food to add to GWorld vendors, to ensure that a variety of healthy, fresh, sustainable options remains available to students amidst disruptions to restaurant industry.
- ☑ Increase and highlight the number of GWorld partners who provide healthy, local produce.
- ☑ Source easy meal prep kits from local vendors and food suppliers.

Sustainability Goal 5: Optimize Waste Decomposition and Treatment

Personal protective equipment
- ☑ Encourage safe ways to reuse cloth face coverings used on campus. Communicate information about safely reusing masks, including this video and this language.
- ☑ Communicate that cloth face coverings should not be placed in clothing donation bins.
- ☑ Communicate that containers for disinfectant sprays and wipes can be recycled.
- ☑ Re-fill your personal hand sanitizer bottle from a bulk container to minimize waste.

Reuse
- ☑ Continue to support and promote the Reuse program by implementing and/or increasing transparency around cleaning and sanitizing processes.

Paper
- ☑ Create signage at copiers, printers, and printing kiosks to encourage students, faculty, and staff to print less in order to avoid touching the units.

Food and food packaging waste
- ☑ Be sure to only order the amount of food needed for event participants to avoid food waste. Traditional opportunities for donating leftover food may not be available due to COVID-19.

- ☑ Issue clear guidance on potential COVID-19 transmission from food packaging to dispel community fears around food and food packaging. FDA guidelines state that COVID-19 is highly unlikely to be transmitted through food or food packaging.
- ☑ Provide residential composting pilot program to help address increased food waste generated in residence halls.
- ☑ Work with dining vendors to provide recyclable and compostable packaging materials.
- ☑ Ensure indoor and outdoor refuse containers are aplenty for recycling, trash, and food waste.
- ☑ Educate the GW community on how to properly recycle (i.e., what materials are recyclable and how to clean them for recycling) through signage, training, and infographics; for students, use the RAs to communicate information.
- ☑ Encourage students to bring personal reusable utensils to reduce touchpoints from single-use utensils provided by dining vendors. Reusable utensil kits to include cutlery, straws, and stirrers should be provided to students as a resource. One example (given out at the 2019 Diversity Summit) is here.

Sustainability Goal 6: Encourage a Connection to the Natural Environment

- ☑ Encourage students to make use of outdoor green spaces for socializing, dining, and studying. Studies show that exposure to natural space improves mental health and that the rate of outdoor transmission of COVID-19 is low.
- ☑ Provide outdoor seating in accordance with social distancing guidelines to encourage safe outdoors gathering.
- ☑ Install outdoor bottle fills in key outdoor locations to facilitate safe outdoor gatherings while minimizing the need for students to enter buildings for water (e.g., in Potomac Square).
- ☑ Promote the use of various underutilized outside spaces as "outdoor classrooms" and meeting spaces as weather permits.
- ☑ Provide an online resource and/or map for where students can access outdoor spaces for seating, eating, and refilling water bottles.

GW Community and DMV Community Engagement

GW Community
- ☑ To help students continue to feel connected as part of the GW community, ensure students continue to have access to high-quality programming through offices like Sustainable GW, Multicultural Student Services Center, Innovation Center, the Nashman Center, and Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- ☑ To help employees continue to feel connected, encourage staff to join the Green Office Network, to access resources for working from home in a sustainable way. For more information, contact Kimberly Williams at kwilliams@gwu.edu.

DMV Community Engagement
- ☑ Commit to further support of the DC metropolitan region where you can, and highlight how the university as an anchor institution supports and contributes to the DMV community.