

VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Whereas the Academics section speaks to on-campus internal plans, this section aims to reach those beyond the bounds of Xavier University in a coordinated strategic manner. Xavier's efforts to prepare students to live "lives of solidarity, service and success" and to become "men and women for others" requires the integration of academic pursuits with experiences to form a personal mission for the betterment of humanity and our world. Xavier University, as a citizen, also is called to fulfill a key role in our city and our region to lead the development, modeling and enactment of sustainable practices. With and alongside the immediate surrounding communities, and radiating out to our region, Xavier must intentionally engage and clearly communicate efforts and ideas in order to model and forward environmental-stewardship practices that are both innovative and collaborative.

Long Term Vision: To develop and maintain significant outreach efforts, both through community engagement and communications in order to communicate lessons learned and market successes so that Xavier's sustainability efforts are known, appreciated, understood and replicated by the public, from the surrounding neighborhoods to the Midwest region and beyond. Xavier will become locally and nationally recognized as a model for sustainability efforts.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Xavier follows a distinctly Catholic and Jesuit call to be active participants in the building of a more just society that aims toward the common good. To this end, Xavier is committed to adding to and gaining from the conversation and action within the larger community concerning the issue of sustainability. For the purposes of this discussion, the community we speak of engaging refers to areas beyond the bounds of the University, including the local neighborhoods of Norwood, Evanston, Avondale and North Avondale, the City of Cincinnati, the Midwest region and beyond.

Goal: To engage as both a leader and active participant in inspiring thought, developing models and enacting plans that spur creative ideas and innovative projects in step with community partners.

1. ACTION PLAN:

Short-term Goals (1-2 years)

- *Define 'scope of community' when speaking of engaging around issues of sustainability (i.e., local neighborhoods, city, region, nation, etc.).*
- *Establish a regular presence at local, regional and national conferences focused on sustainability issues (including faculty, students and staff).*
- *Utilize a growing network of related internal and external groups to more effectively promote invitations to community-education opportunities, including speakers, events and campaigns (both student and University-sponsored), especially within the immediate communities.*
- *Ensure volunteer projects launched from the University serve mutually-beneficial needs and goals (NEXT collaborations, Earth Community Action Day, etc.).*
- *Employ the NEXUS Community Garden (Norwood-Evanston-Xavier Urban Sustainability) and other similar demonstration projects workshop series as a chance to learn together and promote sustainable lifestyle choices with the surrounding community.*



VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- *Consistently solicit ideas and feedback from internal-related groups and individuals, including faculty, students, staff, departments and offices, as well as external groups (agencies, institutions, groups and local leaders) responsible for community engagement initiatives.*

Mid-term Goals (3-5 years)

- *Identify and catalogue, in a central manner, already-existing sustainability efforts within the University, in our city and our region that can inform collaboration and learning opportunities, and coordinate alignment of efforts.*
- *Consider the dispersal of more-broadly applicable informational materials created by internal efforts, including recycling, safe bike routes, local food initiatives, etc., with local-neighborhood residents.*
- *Ensure a consistent voice from Xavier on planning commissions and non-profit boards related to the theme of sustainability to enable leadership and coordination among the University, the neighborhoods and the cities and communities within which Xavier resides.*

Long-term Goal (5-10 years)

- *Design a comprehensive plan for outreach related to sustainability in coordination with the Eigel Center and Community Building Institute plans and initiatives, incorporating community strengths and identified needs.*
- *Identify a physical location on campus for a sustainability center for coordination of sustainability efforts that may also serve as a resource for the local neighborhoods, our city and groups beyond.*

2. CHALLENGES AND FUNDING:

- Community engagement coordination efforts on campus led by the Eigel Center are young and evolving
- Student leadership transitions
- A history of neighborhood-relations challenges
- The need for more effective communications channels between Xavier and the surrounding neighborhoods and the city
- Diverse strengths and needs presented by each community that Xavier must adapt with in order to engage effectively



VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

Xavier University's mission calls us to the pursuit of knowledge and to the orderly discussion of issues confronting society. The University will use a number of internal and external tools to share, invite, inspire, challenge and inform our diverse communities. Traditional media, social media, internal Xavier communication tools, informative public signage and ongoing connection with various networks, are among the tools to be used. Our messages must be clear and well-coordinated to most effectively reach a broad audience in some depth and to be seen as a leader in sustainable efforts. Sharing and gathering best practices and successes will involve all of Xavier's constituents and uphold internal expectations of progress critical to the achievement of our goal.

Goal: To create a communications plan to inform the campus and surrounding community of the importance of sustainability and each individual's role. People will be encouraged to participate in campus and community sustainability efforts and to advocate their own ideas. The results of this engagement will be widely reported to show the benefits earned from successful implementation and to call for more input and engagement.

1. ACTION PLAN:

Short-term Goals: (1-2 years)

- *Finalize branding of Xavier Sustainability efforts.*
- *Improve and promote the Xavier Green website as a tool for both internal and external utilization.*
- *Grow the Xavier sustainability social-media presence (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.).*
- *Define preferred target audience(s) for the message of Xavier sustainability (alumni, neighborhood residents, prospective students, etc.) in order to refine message.*
- *Utilize "Xavier Today" and the "Newswire" as a means of communicating sustainability-related policy changes, events, or requests to the campus community.*

Mid-term Goals: (3-5 years)

- *Share Campus Sustainability Plan with local leaders (Norwood, Evanston and North Avondale City and Community Councils), as well as peer Universities, the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, so that they are aware of our efforts and plans.*
- *Request partnership and ongoing communication from key external organizations and groups to ensure coordination.*
- *Establish a strategic communications plan utilizing both traditional media (TV, print, radio) and digital media (blogs, Wikis, Twitter) based on current trends and culturally-appropriate methods coordinated with already-existing internal efforts.*

Long-term Goals: (5-10 years)

- *Maintain, adapt, and create new (when necessary) effective vehicles through which interested parties, both within and outside of the University, can gain helpful information surrounding sustainability efforts at Xavier.*



VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- *Continue to foster strong relationships between Xavier and local and regional media, as well as strategically release stories that will be both interesting and valuable to different audiences.*

2. CHALLENGES AND FUNDING:

- Improving communication channels within the University is an ongoing challenge which impacts Xavier sustainability as it launches its efforts.
- Capturing and sharing sustainability efforts that are happening and will continue to happen in a variety of areas throughout the University.

Increasing use of electronic means of communications will reduce printing and marketing costs (both financial and environmental).

