

UCS Sustainability 5-Year Plan

Since its founding in 1969, UCS has tried to make sustainable choices. Our headquarters are in a green building we helped design nearly twenty years ago. This office space in Cambridge MA has natural light throughout, sharply reducing the need for lighting until dusk. We utilize high efficiency heating and cooling systems and because the building itself is highly energy efficient, we are able to use residential-sized heat pumps. Our thermal and lighting systems use less than 40,000 Btu per square foot per year—30 percent lower than recommended standards for efficient office buildings and significantly lower than in conventional buildings. We are currently in the construction phase of a LEED-Gold certified buildout for our DC office.

Since 2002, we have conducted an annual carbon inventory of our electricity use in all three offices, which has been certified by the California Climate Action Registry (CCAR). CCAR has named us “Climate Action Leader” each year since 2003 for taking steps to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across our organization. We expanded our carbon inventory in 2006 to include natural gas, office and publication paper, and business and commuter travel, and we have purchased Green-e certified Renewable Energy Credits to offset our electricity use, and a substantial portion of our other energy use, every year since 2004.

Our purchasing policies define a preference for recycled materials and our major regular publications, Catalyst and Earthwise, as well as our letterhead, are printed on recycled paper using soy ink. In all our recycled paper purchases, we seek the largest practical proportion of post-consumer content.

We continually aim to improve our sustainability and have created this 5-year plan to help us reach the goals outlined in the UCS Sustainability Commitments document.

FY08

- Discontinue purchase of bottled water. Install water filters in kitchen sinks and/or purchase water pitchers with filters for refrigerators
- Modify staff travel expense voucher to include carbon accounting data
- Purchase/rent web conferencing or video conferencing capabilities
- Create system for electronic submission of out of office and time tracking forms

Research

- Request a free energy audit from electricity/natural gas providers.¹ (MA)
- Discuss with energy auditor possible energy reduction techniques, such as installing window film, caulking, windows, or applying a reflective building roof coating. (MA)

Purchase/Install

- Purchase 100% wind power electricity through NSTAR’s upcoming green power program. (MA)

¹ Cambridge: NStar—Brett Feldman (781-441-8344, brett.feldman@nstar.com); Berkeley: PG&E http://www.pge.com/biz/energy_tools_resources/energy_audit/index.html; Washington, DC (for future offices): Washington Gas (703-750-5900) and Pepco—John Dukes (703-253-1775)

- Shift from 30% post consumer recycled to 100% post consumer recycled paper (CA)
- Ensure that the new DC office has safe bike storage and a shower.

Implement

- Determine how best to publicize our sustainability efforts in collaboration with communications staff and assign responsible staff
- Designate a Task Force with members in each office to oversee a long-term Carbon Strategy Plan and to spearhead, implement, and help enforce recommended actions for emissions reduction.
- Ensure that every employee has a recycling bin near their desk
- Reduce the number of personal printers in the office. (MA)
- Create a monitoring system to make sure the HVAC systems are regularly cleansed, serviced, and upgraded.

Task Force

- Develop Space Heater Strategy
 - Measure electric output from space heaters
 - Conduct feasibility study on the impacts of removing space heaters
 - Create phase-out proposal for removal of space heaters that minimizes staff discomfort

Possible Strategies:

- Move thermostats so that they are not affected by heat from space heaters
- When purchasing space heaters, purchase units with a motion sensor² (\$55-\$75).
- Provide staff with a UCS branded sweatshirt or fleece jacket to keep at work
- Purchase energy efficient feet warmers like these:
<http://www.gaiam.com/product/id/1006656.do> as an alternative to space heaters
- Establish real-time feedback systems and reporting on our carbon use, energy usage, and paper usage
 - Set up regular system to share those numbers with staff
 - Create wall charts that report paper, electricity, and carbon use
 - Track paper use by department (using counters on the copier)
 - Create folder in the shared area for documents related to our annual carbon inventory and regularly update figures on energy, carbon, and paper use by department

UCS Policy

- Strive to have all new UCS office spaces be in LEED certified buildings, and/or commit include LEED certified build-outs
 - Attempt to negotiate energy efficiency improvements in any new leases we sign

²

http://www.greenlightoffice.com/product/displayproduct.aspx?sku=HEA33553&source=fr&utm_source=froogle&utm_medium=feed&utm_term=HEA33553&utm_campaign=froogle

- Establish a procurement protocol that ensures:
 - new equipment be EnergyStar certified where available, and capable of going into sleep mode or turning itself off after an extended period of non-use
 - new printers be capable of and to be set to print double-sided
 - new furniture should be environmentally friendly, where possible, e.g., made of recyclable materials and low VOCs
 - cleaning supplies be environmentally friendly
 - incorporate Office Sustainability Guidelines into Employee Manual

FY09

Research

- Research environmentally friendly event planning
 - develop list of local and organic food providers near UCS offices
 - develop a list of green venues, or, if none are available, a list of green guidelines staff should follow when planning events
- Research data availability for tracking carbon use associated with those associated with garbage, water use, transport of materials, cradle to grave use of electronics, other office equipment and products
- implement new data into the carbon inventory process where available.

Purchase/install

- Look for and consider certified space (at least silver) when relocating the CA office
- Purchase additional photo-voltaic cells for the roof. (MA)

Implement

- Include office sustainability strategies in HR manual and employee orientations.

Task Force

- Conduct Paper Use Reduction Feasibility Study with a goal of reducing paper use by 50% by 2012
- **Research and begin implementation of paper and pubs “Smart Use” Campaign**
Suggested Strategies:
 - Develop Intranet for electronic submission of purchase records and travel vouchers with at goal of implementation by FY11
 - Develop feedback system for program staff to learn about publication waste and encourage more accurate ordering of publications³
 - Change purchasing guidelines to include a caution about excessive ordering

³ Staff currently estimate the number of publications they need based on outreach requirements, but we still recycle hundreds of boxes of outdated publications every year.

- Measure the number of black & white and color copies made every month. Determine organization-wide reduction goals and determine strategies to reach them.
- Create departmental libraries of popular reports so that staff can share hard copies
- Implement regular use of Environmental Defense's paper calculator when planning publications
- Increase percentage of post-consumer recycled paper in UCS reports and other program publications.
- Research availability of copy paper produced locally.
- Research possible efficiencies in direct mail program and increase usage of recycled paper in direct mail program.

- **Research and Begin Implementation of Staff Energy Savings Campaign**

Suggested Strategies:

- Invite staff to use Kill-a-Watt meters to monitor and eliminate 'phantom load' energy, such as cell phone chargers that are plugged in but not charging a phone.⁴
- Purchase 'Smart Power Strips' for all printers, faxes, postage machines, and staff offices and set them to sense idle energy and turn off automatically.
- Procure and install energy reduction techniques, as recommended by the energy auditor (MA)
- Reconfigure all offices such that the PC, monitor, phone earpiece, and other electronics besides the phone are plugged into one power strip that turns off automatically when the PC is shut down.
- Install compact fluorescent light bulbs where available and, when purchasing light fixtures, purchase those that can use CFLs
- Install light motion sensors in all meeting rooms and bathrooms
- Research the energy impacts of space sharing versus individual offices.
- **Implement annual staff training/e-mail reminder about biggest energy saving steps they can take.**

- **Research and Begin Implementation of Clean Commuting Campaign**

Suggested Strategies:

- Discourage driving by providing staff discounts/subsidies on public transit expenses, or monthly raffles for staff with low/no emissions
- Encourage biking by negotiating discounts with bike stores, offering memberships to local biking coalitions, keeping biking repair equipment in the office, creating a pre-tax bike repair allowance, and making sure cyclists have a space in the office to keep professional clothes.
- Encourage carpooling/car-sharing
- Provide incentives/parking perks for staff that carpool or drive cars with high mpg (45+).
- Consider telecommuting and/or flex-time schedules, when approved by a supervisor.

⁴ Office Managers in all offices have been given a Kill-a-Watt meter.

- Survey staff to determine whether access to Zipcars or another car-sharing program would reduce the need for personal cars at work.

UCS Policy

- Post UCS Green Event Planning Guide to shared area.
- Create and circulate Office Best Practice guidelines for staff

FY10

Task Force

- Continue Paper and Pubs “Smart Use” Campaign
- Continue Staff Energy Savings Campaign
- Continue Clean Commuting Campaign
- Investigate Zero Waste initiative with a potential goal of being Zero Waste by 2012

Suggested Strategies:

- Research local recycling options and utilize every available local option
- Develop relationships with local restaurants that compost
- Utilize local curbside composting services where available

- Develop Bathroom Efficiency Campaign

Possible Strategies:

- Purchase stickers for the paper towel dispensers reminding staff how many trees they use
- Replace paper towel dispensers with hand Dyson-brand or other low energy air dryers or re-usable cloth dryers
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- Install low-flow toilets if possible

FY11

Research

- Investigate the cost, feasibility and energy savings associated with installing a small wind turbine on the roof. (MA)

Purchase/Install

- Increase bike security at the Cambridge office (purchase indoor bike rack)

Task Force

- Develop and implement Business Travel Reduction Campaign

Suggested strategies:

- Increase the use of trains (Berkeley to Sacramento, DC to Boston).
- Reduce number of employee trips, particularly short flights.
- Organize trips so they are multi-purpose and maximize productivity.

- Continue working on Zero Waste initiative
- Implement Paper-Free initiative (goal of reducing paper usage 50% by 2012)

FY12

Purchase/Install

- Install wind turbine on the roof in MA if consistent with research conducted in 2011

Task Force

- Develop 'clean living' recommendations for staff and UCS website visitors
- Ensure on-time arrival at waste reduction plan
- Ensure on-time arrival at Paper commitment

UCS policy

- Help another non-profit conduct a CO₂ inventory and develop reduction targets