



SDSU Associated Students Climate Action Plan

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Introduction

In April of 2017, a university-wide Climate Action Plan was approved by former president Elliot Hirshman, which is a comprehensive report analyzing various goals for the future of SDSU's sustainability. This report encompassed a wide variety of topics to address, and has annual progress reports in place until 2050, when we are set to be an entirely carbon-neutral campus. The report can be accessed below for reference¹. As in-depth as this plan gets, it relates to university-wide policies. As a subsidiary of the university, we propose a set of policies specifically designed for our capabilities.

In order to prevent unintended consequences of climate change and preserve resources for future generations, the Associated Students' Sustainability Commission at San Diego State University, Green Love, has created a framework for Associated Students to follow. Aligned with the university's Climate Action Plan, we hope to navigate a path for our campus to engage in climate action and lead all CSU's to promote sustainability. As Associated Students values the core belief of leading by example, we hope the implementation of this plan embodies our sustainable goals, allowing future student leaders and their respective organizations to follow.

Current Associated Students Sustainability Goals

-  All Associated Students managed facilities will achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Existing Building: Operations & Maintenance (LEED EB: O&M) silver certification or better by 2020.
-  All Associated Students managed facilities will become net-electric energy zero by 2020.
-  Associated Students will encourage full-time and part-time employees to embrace sustainable lifestyles by implementing programs to incentivize socially and environmentally responsible behavior.
-  Associated Students will use 100% recycled paper for all printing.
-  Associated Students will use TerraCycle for disposal of special materials.
-  Associated Students will encourage all commissions and councils to create their own transition plans to mirror this plan.
-  Associated Students will make all events zero waste.

¹<https://www.international-sustainable-campus-network.org/downloads/reports/san-diego-state-university/471-climate-action-plan-for-san-diego-state-university/file>

Green Love/Sustainability Commission Background

Mission Statement: To pave the way for a full-scale sustainable movement by and for San Diego State University and the surrounding communities.

The Sustainability Commission of Associated Students, Green Love, first began due to student involvement in the Environmental Business Society. The first Associated Students Green Commissioner was appointed in Spring of 2007, and the full board was introduced in Spring of 2008. The board was officially created due to the passing of an initiative that allowed funding for sustainability-specific items, which helped form the group they are today. Since inception, Green Love has accomplished monumental tasks such as:

- ♥ Implementing the campus bike lanes
- ♥ Constructing the first LEED Double Platinum Student Union building
- ♥ Adding hydration stations to Associated Students facilities to reduce plastic bottle use
- ♥ Adding hand dryers to Associated Students facilities to reduce waste
- ♥ Collaborating with the Aztec Student Union Board to create Greenfest week annually
- ♥ Enhancing the Green Lunch Bag meetings to a public speaker monthly series
- ♥ Founding the school's first ever pop-up thrift shop, Swap Shop

These are only a few of the many incredible projects that Green Love has addressed. With the help of Glen Brandenburg, former director of the Mission Bay Aquatic Center, Green Love has grown over the past 11 years to the powerhouse that exists today. Sustainability has become a key component of Associated Students thanks to the collaboration with Green Love's founders and other organizations, which is what the commission continues to grow upon.



Pictured above from left to right: Tara Kelly (former Green Love Commissioner & Enviro-Business Society President), Glen Brandenburg (Green Love advisor & Director of Facilities and Sustainability), Elsa Brandenburg (wife of Glen Brandenburg), Grant Mack (former Green Love Commissioner & Associated Students President)



Actions

Commissions, Councils, Boards, and Committees



Each commission, council, board, and committee under Associated Students is unique with its own set of goals and mission statements, which differ based on the purpose of the organization. With the vast diversity amongst these organizations, the unifying facet is the network of Associated Students at San Diego State University. With this in mind, the 2018-2019 leadership of each organization has collaborated with Green Love to ensure that all sectors of Associated Students are critically analyzed to further sustainable measures and make plans for future improvements. The specific policies for each are as follows:

Commissions

Aztec Student Union Board

-  Require that all events be “zero waste”; see [Zero Waste Events](#) section
-  Ensure that both the Student Union and Scripps Cottage are upholding Associated Students’ sustainable standards per past and current policy


Campus Community Commission

-  Discuss recyclable materials and implement better waste sorting standards within Good Neighbor Cleanup
-  Educate for a more sustainable campus and surrounding community

Community Service Commission

-  Collaborate on more sustainable service-based events



Marketing and Communications Commission

-  Advertise and actively promote more sustainable tips, organizations, and events



Recreation and Wellness Commission

-  Continue sustainable developments among recreation/wellness facilities



Student Diversity Commission

-  Require that all events be “zero waste”; see [Zero Waste Events](#) section
-  Educate commission members on environmental justice

Student Support Commission








-  Recommend that food pantry participants bring back reusable bags
-  Ensure that the Children's Center is upholding Associated Students' sustainable standards per past and current policy

Sustainability Commission

-  Continue advocacy for sustainability in all facets of the university
-  Ensure that Cal Coast Open Air Theater, Viejas Arena, Business Services, and Government Affairs are upholding Associated Students' sustainable standards per past and current policy


Councils, Boards, Committees

Board of Directors, External Relations Board, University Affairs Board, Judicial Affairs, All College Councils, Financial Affairs Committee, Audit Committee, Appointment and Review Committee, Awards Committee, Elections Committee

-  Reduce paper usage in meetings
-  Require that all events be “zero waste”; see **Zero Waste Events** section
-  Stock ample compostable utensils, plates, bowls, cups, napkins, etc.
-  Enforce digitization of marketing materials
-  Educate students on sustainability + new sustainability goals
-  Use a TerraCycle box for chip bags or transfer all bags to TerraCycle zero waste box being established in A.S. office
-  Refer to **Purchasing** section when buying shirts for campaigns

A.S. Departments & Facilities

ARC Express, A.S. Graphics, Aztec Aquaplex, Aztec Lanes, Aztec Recreation Center, Business Services, Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union, Cal Coast Credit Union Open Air Theater, Children's Center, Facilities & Sustainability, Government Affairs, Mission Bay Aquatic Center, Scripps Cottage, Union Programs and Services, Viejas Arena

-  Compile annual environmental report to increase accountability on Associated Students' sustainable standards per past and current policy

Zero Waste Events

Associated Students hosts a multitude of events, whether for a specific sub-committee or for the organization as a whole. We would like to highlight this section due to its magnitude, and we encourage all members of Associated Students to consult this section before planning any event. “Zero waste,” according to industry guidelines, accounts for 95% of waste diverted from the landfill towards reuse, reduction, recycling, or compost. Green Love has created a set of guidelines to follow in order to make the process easier, which can be found below.

Green Event Guidelines

1. Fill out this form to allow the Green Love Commissioner and Glen Brandenburg to help:

<https://greenloveevents.wufoo.com/forms/z2sn4e917yaczf/>

2. Consult with the Commissioner before making *any* event-related purchasing decisions, most importantly utensils, plates, bowls, etc.

If using SDSU Catering, tell them not to provide above materials
3. AT THE EVENT: Announce ***multiple times*** that it is a zero waste event, and that all food/utensils/plates should be placed into the **green bin**.

Questions | Comments | Concerns | Contact asgreencomm@sdsu.edu

Transportation

San Diego County's Climate Action Plan emphasizes that 45% of greenhouse gas emissions are due to on-road transportation². The influx of greenhouse gases create a barrier in our atmosphere, which traps heat from the sun onto Earth's surface. While the greenhouse effect is necessary for maintaining Earth's climate, adding emissions through burning fossil fuels disrupts the delicate balance that has allowed our climate to remain steady over thousands of years. In order to aid in preventing rapid climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be considerably reduced in accordance with San Diego County's Climate Action Plan.

Due to the large impact of greenhouse gases on the atmosphere, it is important to reduce emissions wherever possible. For standard A.S. travel, including but not limited to: conferences, meetings, events, and other necessary travels, different solutions have been curated based on the type of travel required:

1. **Purchase carbon offsets to counteract the emissions of flight/road travel.** A carbon offset is a reduction in carbon emissions used to offset the emissions made through travel, which usually costs an extra \$2 for environmentally friendly project funding. Enterprise, the Associated Students partner for travel, uses their \$1.25 extra to fund sustainable projects through their partner, TerraPass, which help reduce the amount of harmful GHG gases in the atmosphere. The overall impact has offset 42,000 metric tons of carbon, which is equivalent to saving 4.8 million gallons of gas and 98,000 barrels of oil³. Southwest does not have its own carbon offset program, so donating to a program like the Conservation Fund would be sufficient instead.
2. **Choose environmentally friendly vehicles for rental, or suggest public transportation/carpooling for any travel not regulated (i.e. for incoming guests or short distances).** Enterprise has options for hybrids and electric vehicles, so choose one of those options rather than a standard one. If guests must stay somewhere overnight, suggest the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Mission Valley⁴, which is located across the street from the MTS Trolley, and runs directly through campus at the transit center as well. Furthermore, Associated Students can help promote the use of Zimride and Zipcar for students to reduce emissions from road travel. By encouraging students to access the SDSU Transit Center website, more information can be shared regarding the options students have in relation to SDSU and the public transport system.

²<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/advance/cap/publicreviewdocuments/CAPfilespublicreview/Chapter%202%20Greenhouse%20Gas%20Emissions%20Inventory%2C%20Projections%20and%20Reduction%20Target.pdf>

³<https://instead.com/blog/enterprise-rent-a-cars-voluntary-carbon-offset-program-most-popular-with-customers/>

⁴<https://doubletree3.hilton.com/en/hotels/california/doubletree-by-hilton-hotel-san-diego-mission-valley-SDGO-DT/index.html>

Waste Stream

Historically, SDSU has faced concerns with the elimination of waste. EDCO, our partner for waste pickup, is in the process of developing an anaerobic digester facility, where food waste will be able to be processed through the same green bins that currently only accept yard waste⁵. Until this facility is established, Associated Students composts on a small scale through the College Area Community Garden. The facility is on our campus next to the Children's Center, and can be utilized for all Associated Students events. Once EDCO finishes their facility, the whole campus will be capable of following the lead of Associated Students. Due to Associated Students' ability to have compost, **every event should be zero waste. In addition, there should be "trash talkers" at every event in order to prevent waste contamination.**

Besides events, there are small adjustments to make in daily activities to reduce waste. The first and most obvious is to reduce paper usage. Although Associated Students uses 100% recycled paper, it should always be a goal to reduce wherever possible. **For all council meetings, including CLC, UC, BOD, and JAC, we suggest that electronic methods of distribution are considered.** Google Chromebooks are \$169-180 each, which could act as a substitute for at least some paper usage. As demonstrated by each commission and council's suggestions, many are concerned with the amount of paper being wasted in meetings. The reality is that most councilmembers fail to take them out of their mailboxes before meetings, let alone effectively utilize them within the meetings. This is why we suggest electronic versions, which are already sent out before meetings.

In order to properly dispose of waste, TerraCycle, which is currently used for special item disposal, should be expanded among all of Associated Students. *TerraCycle features an all-in-one zero waste box*, where all categories of waste can be recycled besides food and hazardous waste⁶. If placed within the Associated Students office with signage to ensure lack of contamination, this would be revolutionary in reducing waste. A small box is \$184, medium is \$333, and large is \$423. The incentives to utilize this as a resource can be measured through the value of sustainability in comparison with the yearly budget.

⁵ <https://www.edcodisposal.com/san-diego/sustainability-report439175.htm>

⁶ https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/zero_waste_boxes/no-separation

Purchasing

Considering the impact of our purchasing needs is a necessary facet to promote a more sustainable government. The main item of concern in regard to Associated Students purchasing is shirts, considering the high magnitude acquired for campaigns, elections, and various events. Fashion is a large contributor to negative environmental impacts, which is why we prioritize this topic. The two main issues for shirt purchasing is as follows:

1. **Reduce excess production.** For campaigns, we recognize the difficulty of estimating the quantity of shirts required to adequately present the message. *Our goal for this measure is to simply question the necessity of the amount of shirts, and consider reducing it.*
2. **Examine materials made to produce the shirts.** In the past, both Green Love and Associated Students have utilized the same retailer to produce shirts; Green Love produces organic cotton shirts, while Associated Students as a whole does not. Whatever retailer is used, we encourage Associated Students to consider purchasing shirts made of organic cotton. In addition, we ask that Associated Students considers the ethics associated with the production process of the shirts, and takes extra care to ensure proper procurement.

Besides shirts, something that comes up in all of Associated Students is food and what is used to consume food. For all future events and meetings where food is provided, **we recommend purchasing bulk compostable plates, bowls, utensils, cups, and napkins to store in the basement with Green Love.** As the current protocol involves asking Green Love to provide these items, it would ease the process if Associated Students purchased their own for use. In terms of the food itself, we recommend vegetarian or vegan options which are less impactful in regard to emissions from production. Most importantly, having compost bags readily available where all the food and cutlery can be properly disposed after the event or meeting will ensure that events remain zero-waste.

As previously mentioned within the **Transportation** section, carbon offsets could be an effective measure of neutralizing carbon emissions produced from travel. Within the same category, carbon offsets can be purchased through UPS and FedEx when shipping a package⁷. We encourage Associated Students to purchase these offsets in order to properly take care of the emissions produced by receiving or sending various packages.

⁷ <https://www.ups.com/us/en/help-center/shipping-support/carbon-neutral/recipient.page>

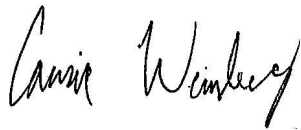
Future Goals & Ending Comments

These policies will greatly increase the sustainability of Associated Students, which is one of the eight values established in the Associated Students mission statement. Green Love places extensive value on sustainability due to its diverse definition, emphasizing how it is not only about the environment, but about finding solutions for today that will be beneficial for future generations. Sustainability is based on the triple bottom line: economic, social, and environmental practices. With this definition as the baseline for our Climate Action Plan, we hope to inspire Associated Students to embrace these policies as part of its core institution.

As technologies and policies evolve over time, we encourage future generations of Green Love to modify this plan as necessary to accommodate new ideas. Once composting is made readily available through EDCO, we plan to incorporate that into our plans for the rest of the university. Green Love believes that putting these policies into place will benefit both current and future leaders of Associated Students, and will create a stronger foundation of sustainability throughout the organization.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Climate Action Plan, and we look forward to seeing Associated Students of San Diego State University with a more sustainable future!

Sustainably,



Cassie Weinberg
Green Love Commissioner 2018-2019



Sabrina Sessarego
Green Love Representative 2018-2019



Nick Wohlman
Associated Students Executive Vice President 2018-2019