Villanova University Environmental Sustainability Policy

Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment, people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past. ...[A] new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge. ...The ecological crisis is a moral issue.


Villanova University, as a Catholic institution of higher education, has an opportunity and an obligation to exercise leadership in promoting and reinforcing environmental responsibility by integrating the ethical, social, economic and ecological values of environmentally sustainable development into institutional policy and practice.¹ A sustainable campus means that the current needs of Villanova are met today, without compromising the mission, longevity and prosperity of the institution or the ability of its students, faculty, and staff to meet their future needs. This policy is in accordance with the *Common Declaration of Environmental Ethics*, signed on June 10, 2002 by Pope John Paul II, as a “rejection of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.” Implementation of the Campus Environmental Sustainability Policy is timely as it coincides with the beginning of The United Nations *decade of education for sustainable development*.

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Villanova University will strive to conduct its activities in an ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable manner, and will continue to do so for future generations. Villanova University will support the concepts of sustainability in its curriculum, research, and related activities, preparing all members of the Villanova community to contribute to an environmentally sound and socially just society. The institution will strive to function as a sustainable community, embodying responsible consumption, promoting ecological literacy and environmentally sound practices among its students, faculty, staff, and graduates, and supporting these values in the local community.

**Goal 1.** Villanova University will strive to practice the principles of environmental sustainability and wise use of resources within the University community. Villanova University will make reasonable efforts to conserve resources. Methods to conserve may include, among other things:

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¹ In accordance with the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future.
a) the promotion of water conservation,
b) waste reduction and the conscientious use of materials,
c) the conscientious production and consumption of food,
d) the promotion of energy conservation,
e) the use of renewable energy resources,
f) practicing environmental stewardship of its lands,
g) the acquisition of sustainable modes of campus transportation, and
h) the adoption of green building standards.

Goal 2. Villanova University will engage in appropriate learning opportunities with the intention of creating a community whose members (students, faculty, staff, and graduates) are environmentally literate and responsible. Methods to do so may include, among other things:

a) integrating social and environmental responsibility into curricular development,
b) fostering further research and a deeper understanding of environmentally sustainable development, and
c) creating and promoting an informed network of Villanovans committed to the principles of environmental sustainability.

Policy Assessment will be carried out in consultation with members of the VQI Environment Team’s Subcommittee on Sustainability. An annual report on the “State of Sustainability at Villanova” will be prepared by that Subcommittee in cooperation with appropriate University officials and submitted to the Vice President’s Council by the end of May each year. The report will document achievements and recommendations for the next academic year.

The Villanova University Campus Environmental Sustainability Policy captures the spirit and mission of the institution through its influence to search for world peace and justice by means of both its academic programs and ministry, providing for both the campus members and the larger community. Ultimately, the embodiment of the sustainability policy promotes the development of the total person: intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, culturally, socially and physically, and promotes the development of a more respectful relationship with the environment. This sustainability initiative enhances Villanova University’s legacy of social and environmental justice.

Ecological irresponsibility is at heart a moral problem – founded upon an anthropological error which arises when man forgets that his ability to transform the world must always respect God’s design for creation.