



The American College of Greece Sustainability Policy

Commitment & Vision

The American College of Greece (ACG) is committed to responsible environmental stewardship in all its activities in line with the provisions of the Talloires Declaration (<http://www.ulsf.org/pdf/TD.pdf>); to becoming a sustainable campus and a sustainable learning community; and to excellence and leadership in the field of sustainability. ACG's commitment to sustainable development arises from its tradition of concerned citizenship and moral duty (Non ministrari, sed ministrare) and from a desire to teach and lead by example.¹

Guiding Principles

- Recognizing that our activities, services and products have considerable impact on the environment
- Recognizing that ACG is a working landscape, in a particular area, in limited global commons, and a component part of an interdependent web of social and ecological relationships
- Recognizing that our membership in this ecological community causes us to reconsider our ideals, values, and organizing principles
- Acknowledging and upholding our moral obligation as an educational institution to set an example of a sustainable community for current and future generations
- Guided by our fundamental values of respect and care for the environment, sustainable living, and intergenerational responsibility
- With a Center of Excellence for Sustainability and a Green Campus Committee, all working cooperatively and collaboratively to further integrate sustainability in ACG educational activities, operations and relations with other bodies

We shall:

¹ ACG adopts / embraces the following definition of a sustainable college:

“ ‘Sustainability’ implies that the critical activities of a higher education institution are ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable, and that they will continue to be so for future generations. A truly sustainable college or university would emphasize these concepts in its curriculum and research, preparing students to contribute as working citizens to an environmentally healthy and equitable society. The institution would function as a sustainable community, embodying responsible consumption of energy, water, and food, and supporting sustainable development in its local community and region.” (University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, www.ulsf.org)

Recognize appropriate environmental management as one of our highest priorities, and establish policies, programs, and practices for conducting operations in an environmentally sustainable manner, in compliance with relevant legislation.

- Take action to conserve natural resources and ensure their sustainable use (including but not limited to conserving energy and natural resources, reducing waste, purchasing environmentally friendly products, use of sustainable technologies and minimizing adverse impacts on the surrounding environment), reflecting our deep commitment and passionate concern for the health of the planet and the wellbeing of all humans and other species
- Conduct our affairs in a manner that safeguards the environmental health and safety of students, faculty, staff and communities, based on principles of social solidarity
- Foster an understanding of, respect and responsibility for the physical environment; promote a deep, aesthetic, spiritually-based awareness of our connection to the environment; and cultivate a sense of social solidarity based on a deep understanding of the interconnections between local and global affairs among the members of this and the larger community
- Promote and support research on sustainability issues, ensuring that ACG will achieve and maintain excellence and leadership in the field
- Seek and develop partnerships with the aim to promote sustainability knowledge, awareness and practices
- Commit adequate resources for the achievement of the sustainability goals of the College
- Maintain a participatory decision-making process that will lead to the development of an effective sustainability policy making and practice
- Integrate environmental sustainability principles in policies, procedures and practices of the College
- Display our commitment to sustainability in the way we learn, work, and conduct ourselves on campus.

Objectives

As a College, we are committed to achieving our sustainability goals through how and what we teach and learn; how we operate and behave; open dialogue, and learning from our successes and failures. We shall assess, improve and monitor our environmental, economic and social performance with the use of tools that provide a useful measure of progress toward ecological harmony, economic viability, quality of life and social equity. Our specific objectives are:

Energy

We will endeavor to reduce energy consumption by increasing ACG's energy efficiency, minimizing energy losses, utilizing renewable energy sources, where possible, and implementing new energy technologies that can help attain the goal of a more energy efficient institution.

Waste: Reduction, reuse and recycling

We will strive to reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling, via a more efficient use of resources, purchasing reusable products, separation at the source, and educational activities targeting staff, faculty

and students. We recognize that waste constitutes resources that have been used once and can be reused if properly managed.

Water

We aim to use water resources in ways that maintain good water quality and reduce water consumption, by closely inspecting for and minimizing leakages, promoting rainwater collection, and regularly monitoring water use and quality, among other initiatives.

Buildings & Grounds

We shall integrate environmental concerns and sustainability principles in the maintenance and management of our buildings and lands, as well as in planning and design decisions. We will strive for sustainable construction and sustainable buildings/grounds management practices, in terms of energy efficiency, use of resources, maintenance practices, and waste management.

Forest and biodiversity

We shall strive to sustainably manage the forest ecosystem of Mount Hymettus, a protected area on which our College is located, actively participating in forest fire protection and organizing activities and research for the protection of, and awareness raising of its biodiversity.

Transportation

We will work to promote sustainable means of transportation and less reliance on single occupant automobiles, reducing the environmental impact of our vehicle fleet while promoting the use of bicycles and public transportation.

Climate change

We will take initiatives to significantly reduce carbon emissions in the immediate future, through increased energy efficiency, more environmentally friendly transport, and decreased water consumption.

Use of natural resources and procurement

We will opt for environmentally friendly, socially equitable and fiscally responsible purchasing choices.

Environmental literacy (curriculum, co-curricular, training activities)

We will strive for educational excellence and environmental citizenship through a strong curriculum:

- with experiential learning, international and cross-cultural experiences, reflection through service and active participation in the ACG campus and local community with interdisciplinary approaches, and
- focus on environment, health, population and development aiming towards global sustainability.

We will create an institutional culture of sustainability. We will ensure that academic, co-curricular and institutional training programs enable students and employees to achieve environmental literacy and develop a sustainability ethic with a perspective on the connections between local actions and global consequences.

Research for sustainability

We will encourage and facilitate research on sustainability, promoting interdisciplinary work among faculty; collaborations between education and operations, faculty, staff and students; and collaborations with other educational and/or research institutions.

Community and collaborations

We will build partnerships with the aim to promote sustainability, environmental protection policies, and education and research practices, at the local, national and international levels.

We will establish partnerships with educational institutions (at all levels of education) to help develop the capacity for interdisciplinary teaching about environment and sustainable development.

We will seek to support the local economy and community through sustainability education and training, procurement, social initiatives and other College activities.

Communication and accountability

We will communicate existing and new ACG sustainable practices inside the ACG community and to other educational institutions; we will raise environmental awareness among the College constituents and the local community; and we will become an example of sustainable development.

We shall adopt a systematic approach to environmental management; we will establish sustainability goals, develop an action plan with short-term tasks, quantifiable targets and long-term goals, monitor progress and achieve continued performance and improvement. We are certain that ACG staff, faculty and students will endorse the sustainability policy and take ownership and responsibility for its implementation. We will report on the progress of the sustainability plan on an annual basis.

In three years, this sustainability policy will be revisited in order to enhance it and update as appropriate.