



The University of Chicago Student Government Committee on Campus Sustainability 2017-2018 Academic Year

Executive Summary

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, the Committee on Campus Sustainability (CCS) adopted the following framework to guide our project goals and define our broader mission at the University of Chicago:

- **Advocacy:** Advocate for sustainability on campus, and elevate other community members who are already working on sustainable initiatives;
- **Awareness:** Work with other sustainability stakeholders to engage the student body, faculty, and community members;
- **Action:** Set project goals and work toward them to produce tangible results.

With this new framework in mind, we selected projects to promote Advocacy, Awareness, and Action around sustainability on campus. The following sections provide details about the CCS's recent Projects & Outcomes. We reiterate our conviction that the CCS is an important advocate for sustainability at the University of Chicago, serving to connect the Institution and its student body. We hope that the CCS will advance its projects and initiatives in the years to come. To this end, we propose areas of focus and potential improvements under Next Steps.

Members

The Chair was selected by the leadership of the Student Government Executive Committee. The remaining seven qualified members were chosen from a pool of over 25 applicants.

- Kimika Padilla, *Chair*
- Eugene Han, *Vice Chair*
- Liam Torpy, *College Council Representative & Sustainability Partners Representative*
- Jayee Malwankar, *Sustainability Partners Representative*
- Alex Levi, *Communications Chair*
- Shira Eisenberg
- Anant Matai
- Sharon Pan

Partners

- The University of Chicago Student Government Executive Committee
- The Office of Sustainability under Facilities & Services
- The Office of Housing & Residence Life
- Phoenix Sustainability Initiative (PSI)

Projects & Outcomes

1. Sustainability Czar Pilot Program

The CCS launched the Sustainability Czar Pilot Program in collaboration with PSI, the Office of Sustainability, and Housing & Residence Life. We established student liaisons in 14 College Houses; and provided weekly sustainability news to up to 800 students living in residence halls. A brief timeline is included below:

- **Autumn 2017:** Kimika Padilla (CCS) was the primary author of the Sustainability Czar Pilot Program [documentation](#), produced in collaboration with Eugene Han (CCS) and Annabella Fei (PSI). This document provided the guiding framework for the entire program—including goals, timeline, and project team responsibilities.
- **Winter 2018:** Eugene Han (CCS) and Annabella Fei (PSI) oversaw the pilot program's launch, along with University stakeholders. Liam Torpy (CCS), Jayee Malwankar (CCS), Jessica Hanlon (PSI), and Kriza Sy (PSI) were appointed to organize three quarterly meetings with all of the Sustainability Czars and serve as their primary point of contact.
- **Spring 2018:** Kimika Padilla (CCS) was the primary author of the Spring 2018 Roadmap document which summarized the survey results and feedback from the inaugural Sustainability Czars, and created the plan for Spring 2018 and beyond. The document is not linked, because it contains personal email addresses, but for more information please email kimika@uchicago.edu. During Spring 2018, the Sustainability Czars began receiving weekly updates about sustainability events and opportunities, which were announced to their fellow residents at weekly House meetings.
- **Autumn 2018:** The Sustainability Czar Program will launch campus-wide at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year.

2. Communication: Listhosts and Webpage

We believe that the CCS has a responsibility to increase transparency and awareness around sustainability on campus.

- **Transparency:** Sustainability-oriented organizations on campus, including the CCS, have a responsibility to play a more public role in student life. By communicating the impact of our projects, and identifying avenues for further improvement, we can raise awareness of sustainable issues. Furthermore, we believe that information about the University's energy usage, recycling, and waste should be more accessible to students, faculty, and the general public.

- Awareness: The student body will be empowered to live more sustainably when it has access to information and resources which enable and encourage sustainable choices. Toward this end, the CCS has worked to increase access to information about sustainable events and opportunities, and to amplify eco-conscious voices in the student body.

This academic year, the CCS took a number of critical first steps in order to increase transparency and awareness. The CCS updated its [webpage](#) on the Student Government website; created and managed new sustainability listhosts (sustainability@lists.uchicago.edu and sustainabilityczar@lists.uchicago.edu); and formed new partnerships with institutional and student-run sustainability organizations on campus. We also applaud the efforts of students including third-year Annabella Gong and fourth-year Caitlin Piccirillo-Stosser, who published a Chicago Maroon [op-ed](#) in March, detailing the impact of recent sustainable projects at the University of Chicago.

3. Partnerships: Sustainability Stakeholders

The CCS partnered with University administrators, and worked closely with the Phoenix Sustainability Initiative to advance common goals. We also created this [spreadsheet](#) by compiling a list of the major sustainability stakeholders on campus. In the future, this spreadsheet should be updated annually, and shared with other student stakeholders.

4. Openlands 2017 Annual Luncheon

On November 9, 2017, Vice Chair Eugene Han attended the Openlands 2017 Annual Luncheon, which serves a dual purpose as (1) a fundraiser to support environmental preservation and restoration in Chicago, and (2) a conference to bring the eco-conscious community together to address sustainable issues. The CCS was invited to attend the conference by a University of Chicago alum. Serving as a student ambassador, Eugene Han created this [PowerPoint](#) about the event, and spoke to organizations in attendance about networking and internship opportunities.

5. The Plant Tour

On January 20, 2018, the CCS led a group of 10 undergraduate students to The Plant, which is a former 93,500 sq. foot industrial factory that has been transformed into an experiment and working model for closing waste, resource and energy loops. During the tour, students observed closed-loop tech demonstration projects up close, including an aquaponics farm and algae bioreactor. Students also visited sustainable food production tenants at The Plant, including a brewery, British-style bakery, and various growing operations.

The CCS partnered with PSI members, who attended the event. Here is some of the feedback we received:

The tour of the Plant showed us a really interesting approach to systems and this idea of a closed-loop economy. I was really intrigued by the spectrum of organisations involved,

and it helped me reflect on supply chain sustainability—from production to consumption.
—Anant, Class of 2021

The Plant tour provided me with an interesting perspective about the interdependent nature of sustainability. I was fascinated by the mutual reliance on waste materials within members of the closed-loop economy. —Alex, Class of 2021

6. Hyde Park Cleanup

On April 22, 2018 the CCS partnered with Hannah Morin to organize the Hyde Park Clean Up on Earth Day. We registered teams of 4+ volunteers to pick up trash in Hyde Park. We partnered with the Office of Sustainability, which donated vests and gloves for the Earth Day event. Additionally, we received funding from College Council to offer three study break prizes: (1) Insomnia Cookies (2) Stan's Donuts and (3) movie night snacks based on most trash collected by weight.

Ultimately, the teams collected 78.8 pounds of trash in total. The Keller House team (pictured right) won the distinction of “Trashiest Team.”



The CCS should consider the possibility of running the Hyde Park Clean Up as an annual Earth Day event. This year was the first time,

and the event was not as well attended as we would have hoped. However, in the future with more advertising, this event could be even more successful!

7. Film Screening: *Chasing Coral*

We partnered with the Phoenix Sustainability Initiative (PSI) and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC) to host a special screening on the *Chasing Coral* documentary on May 12, 2018. The documentary investigates the effect of global warming on one of the ocean's most vibrant and diverse ecosystems: coral reefs. Over 30 undergraduate students and community members attended the event, and the documentary delivered a compelling message about the consequences of global warming.

8. Official Committee Bylaws

The CCS worked with Chase Harrison, the Vice President of Student Government, to create official committee bylaws. Additionally, a faculty advisor was appointed to

advise the CCS beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year. These steps seek to institutionalize the role and responsibilities of the CCS, in order to make the ad-hoc committee a more permanent and effective vehicle for change in the coming years.

Next Steps

This academic year, the CCS adopted a new guiding framework and implemented new short- and long-term projects. This was a transformative year, and for precisely that reason, more work remains to be done. Therefore, we highlight the following areas for future improvement:

- **Recruitment & Transition**
 - Increase the number of applicants by publicizing CCS positions to current students and incoming first-years.
 - Retain members for multiple academic years, and promote current members to future leadership positions (i.e., select a Chair and Vice Chair who have previous experience on the CCS).
 - Facilitate a smoother transition between academic years by requiring the previous and incoming leadership to meet; encouraging non-graduating members to return; and making it possible to build upon previous work by documenting progress in writing and maintaining the CCS's connections.
- **Communication & Transparency**
 - Publicize major projects and initiatives on the CCS webpage and on the Student Government Facebook page, and engage with more students and faculty.
 - Increase the number of subscribers and encourage more students to use the listhost sustainability@lists.uchicago.edu, which is managed by the CCS.
 - Measure outcomes more effectively, and publish the numbers in order to increase transparency.
- **Institutional Partners**
 - Build stronger relationships with faculty members who conduct sustainability-oriented research, programs, or classes.
 - Partner with University administrators and help connect students to institutional partners in order to raise concerns and advance shared goals.
- **Food & Waste**
 - Address the problem of food waste in dining halls; initiatives such as composting and food donation have been successfully implemented at other universities.
 - Improve recycling by increasing access to recycling bins, switching to recyclable materials, and spreading information about proper waste disposal.
- **Ongoing Projects**
 - Implement the campus-wide Sustainability Czar Program in Autumn 2018 in partnership with the Phoenix Sustainability Initiative, Office of Sustainability, and Housing & Residence Life.
 - Continue to improve communication through the listhosts and [webpage](#), and update the sustainability stakeholders [spreadsheet](#) annually.
 - Organize future tours/partnerships with The Plant and Openlands, if it would be beneficial to the CCS and the student body.