

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT GENESEO**

United Nations Global Compact
Communication on Engagement
August 31, 2016

*Office of the Provost
Office of Sustainability
President's Commission on Sustainability*

Table of Contents

- I. President's Statement of Continued Support**
- II. Outcomes of Engagement**
 - A. Human Rights**
 - B. Labor**
 - C. Environment**
 - D. Anti-Corruption**
- III. Future Engagement**

President's Statement of Continued Support

As part of its mission to educate socially responsible citizens and to serve the larger society, SUNY Geneseo is proud to be signatory to the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact. Our commitment to values such as equity and inclusion, civic responsibility, and sustainability demonstrates that we are well-aligned with UNGC principles.

This document is our first Communication on Engagement Report since signing our original commitment in 2012. Here we summarize activities and initiatives from 2013 through June of 2016. In the areas of research, community service, institutional operations, curriculum and international engagement we have made significant progress in advancing the UNGC principles.

We are pleased to continue our work in the context of the SUNY membership in the United Nations Global Compact.

Sincerely,

Denise A. Battles
President
State University of New York at Geneseo

Communication on Engagement: Human Rights

In its dedication to service as a public institution, Geneseo continues to make every effort to support human rights on its own campus, in its community, and in the world. The campus is guided by the Statement on Diversity and Community adopted by the College Senate in 2003:

Geneseo holds among its core values the ideals of community and diversity. Our community is defined as a group of faculty, students and staff who live and work together at Geneseo because they share common goals that are based on the ideals of higher education rooted in the liberal arts.

Although they share common goals, the members of the Geneseo community also differ in many ways. Diversity at Geneseo is defined in part as differences in individuals that are manifested in their race, ethnicity, national origin, language heritage, world-view, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, physical ability, learning style, geographic background, mental health, age, and relationship status.

Geneseo recognizes that the individuals who make up our community bring to it unique perspectives and knowledge that contribute to its richness and vibrancy. Because Geneseo also holds educational excellence among its core values, it recognizes that its progress as a community toward such excellence is predicated on its ability to embrace both the diversity of its members and the vigorous exchange of their ideas.

Geneseo calls all members of our community to share responsibility for the ongoing work of continually recreating a sense of inclusion, belonging, and empowerment, so that together we will achieve our individual and collective aims, and experience the intellectual liberation that is at the heart of the educational enterprise.

Several of our international and local efforts are notable in the past 3 years.

Internationally, Geneseo has pursued long-term relationships with educational partners abroad. Several of these have made notable contributions to sustaining human rights. In Haiti, under the leadership of several faculty members and the non-profit organization [HOPE Haiti Outreach Pwoje Espwa](#), students, faculty and staff have supported the development of education, health and human rights in the region of Borgne, Haiti. Study, research and service projects have been undertaken and have made substantial differences in the lives of residents, students, faculty and staff.

Additionally, in Ghana, building upon a partnership with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana, Geneseo has built a program for student teachers who work in the KNUST Basic School as well as other local schools to gain international experience in education. Additionally, a faculty member in Biology regularly teaches a course in [Global Health in Ghana](#) during the summer session. These experiences have assisted local

residents and partners and have immeasurably enhanced global understanding of human rights issues for all participants.

On the Geneseo campus, programming and policy development in the areas of sexual assault, gender identify, LGBTQ support and diversity have expanded campus understanding and advocacy for human rights. Safe Zone training has been undertaken across the campus; gender-neutral restrooms have been established; and preferred name policies have been put in place. The campus Diversity Plan has been completed and is now incorporated into the new campus strategic plan, Geneseo 2021. The [President's Commission on Diversity and Community](#) continues to support initiatives across the campus that seek to enhance a richly diverse community where human rights are modeled and actively supported.

Communication on Engagement: Labor

As a campus of the State University of New York, Geneseo is engaged in the collective bargaining activities of several different unions. Though unions negotiate their contracts with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, the campus sustains active labor-management conversations and endeavors to create a fair and positive working environment at the institution.

Several efforts over the past three years have aimed to improve working conditions and to further ensure non-discriminatory practices in hiring, evaluation and support. Notably we have instituted a new software system for the hiring process that has greatly improved access and communication in all stages of hiring. Greater training for search committees, greater transparency in the process for both applicants and committees, and more timely processing are resulting in better hiring practices.

While we are guided by the regulations of the State of New York in our human resources practices, we also aspire, guided by our campus Diversity Plan, to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff through strong hiring practices and excellent support for those hired. These new hiring systems show promise in meeting that goal.

The campus is also a leader in the State University of New York in support of both local and MWBE businesses and has made excellent progress in meeting the New York State goals in these areas. [Procurement policies](#) guide purchasers to MWBE suppliers, and a new [anti-sweatshop policy](#) has been implemented throughout the SUNY system.

Communication on Engagement – Environment

It is in this area of the ten principles that Geneseo has been most active in the past three years. In the four areas of organization and planning; research and curriculum; student and community engagement; and facilities and sustainable practices the campus has made notable progress in the past three years.

Organization and planning

The campus has developed a Sustainability Statement that has guided our progress since 2012:

SUNY Geneseo calls upon all members of our community to embrace sustainability as a core value, including a commitment to its constitutive principles of ecological, social, and economic justice. We recognize the critical role of higher education in creating a sustainable society. Through teaching, research, service, and institutional conduct we strive to nurture the values, skills and knowledge necessary to sustain and enhance human and non-human life on the planet.

The college understands that sustainability is a process of building support for societal and intergenerational equity and a shared sense of responsibility for the ethical stewardship of our social and natural environment. We endorse the broad scientific consensus that human demands on the planet threaten the ecological, social and economic resources upon which our global society depends.

As a public liberal arts college, we seek solutions to these increasingly complex, interdisciplinary problems that are consistent with our shared values and ideals. Recognizing that the promotion of sustainability is central to the mission of the college, SUNY Geneseo calls upon its faculty, students and staff to foster a culture of sustainable and responsible citizenship on campus. By minimizing the environmental impact of our institutional operations and integrating the principles of sustainability throughout our academic disciplines and co-curricular life we can begin to realize a more profound and enduring form of prosperity for current and future generations.

Leadership is provided by the [Office of Sustainability](#), created in 2014, and by the President's Commission on Sustainability, created from the Sustainability Committee in 2012.

In the Spring of 2016, a new [Strategic Plan](#), Geneseo 2021: Seeing Beyond the Horizon, was completed for the campus. One of the core values identified in the plan is "Sustainability – advancing just principles of ecological, social, and economic stewardship." The fourth Focus Area of the plan is "Resilience and Sustainability" and includes objectives around sustainable practices, facilities, and public awareness.

All of these developments in organization and planning give a clear mandate for pursuit of the UNGC principles in the years ahead. It was notable that in the strategic planning process, students spoke out actively in support of sustainability issues and insisted on a strong presence

for sustainability goals in the strategic plan. The Division of [Student and Campus Life](#) energetically supports student interest in this area, and the [Campus Auxiliary Services](#), which operates as a separate 501-C3, also pursues its own ambitious sustainability initiatives in partnership with the College.

Research and curriculum

Campus interest in sustainability is evident in both the research and teaching of our faculty, students and staff. Over [40 courses](#) are currently designated as containing content relating to environmental sustainability. Faculty and students alike pursue research in a variety of areas related to sustainability.

Two recent projects are notable for their research and outreach. First, the Geneseo eGarden was established as a vehicle for campus and community engagement around alternative energy and sustainability. The State University of New York at Geneseo has allocated a one-acre plot, on campus, for the construction of an energy garden, known as the eGarden. The eGarden runs off-grid and acts as a sustainability demonstration project. It is also a learning facility for students and a research field station for faculty and local entrepreneurs. The eGarden has a 3.5 Kilowatt, 12-foot diameter wind turbine atop a 60-foot-high steel mono-pole, a 0.5 KW solar water heating system capable of generating 120-degree water, and two 1,200-watt sun tracking photovoltaic solar-panel arrays by the end of the year. Several Solar Air-Heaters will also be designed, built and operated by students to aid in the heating of the eBarn. The eBarn will house battery storage, power convertors, computers and other electronic devices for monitoring and controlling the facilities energy collectors. A composting facility within the eBarn will be constructed which will utilize black soldier fly larvae as a means of converting pre and post-consumer food waste into a liquid fertilizer and a high protein animal feed. The food waste will be collected from the dining halls and delivered to the eGarden by a diesel truck that has been converted to run on waste vegetable oil. Initially the oil will come exclusively from the dining facilities on campus but eventually will be supplemented by local businesses as well, allowing for community engagement in Geneseo's sustainability initiatives. The additional oil gathered from these businesses will be used to fuel a vegetable-oil electric generator and furnace that will supply electricity and heat to the composting facility. In addition, four small ponds have been built to cultivate algae. The Algae will be chemically converted into bio fuel that can be burned in the eBarn oil furnace. This eGarden is a collaborative effort between college faculty, campus facilities services, students, administrators, Campus Auxiliary Services (aka. Food Services) and the office of sustainability. It is a well-integrated effort using the skills and knowledge of the campus community to educate students and a means to construct a working facility that's runs off grid. Development of the eGarden has progressed rapidly, and new ideas emerge for capitalizing on its potential.

A second initiative, the partnership with the Letchworth State Park Humphrey [Nature Center](#), which opened officially in July, offers excellent opportunities for student and faculty research and for public outreach. Student interns have already completed research projects in invasive species and in water quality; students have also completed service projects in the park and are

developing historical and informational display materials for the Center. They are also working with park naturalists to develop programs for school groups and families who visit the Center. An advisory committee of campus and park staff and students provides direction for development of the partnership and helps to identify desirable projects.

Student and Community Engagement

In addition to the engagement offered by projects already described, there are several student organizations on campus that further the activities of students in the area of sustainability. A listing of these groups can be found [here](#). EcoHouse is a living learning community on campus that advances the work of sustainability; GEO, the Geneseo Environmental Organization, supports many activities on campus and in the community; FORCES (Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship) is a relatively new student group working with the Letchworth State Park partnership and with the community; and the GOLD program (Geneseo Opportunities in Leadership Development) offers a Jade Certificate with workshops offered by campus and community presenters.

Facilities and Sustainable Practices

The past three years have seen substantial progress in sustainable practices in facilities and grounds, as well as the opening of several remodeled facilities with improved environmental systems.

[Monroe Hall](#) reopened in 2013 as a residence hall including geothermal heating and cooling, rain water harvesting, and variety of other ecological features; the building received a LEED Gold rating. Doty Hall, reopened in 2013 as an administration building sharing use with the county Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities, also features geothermal heating and cooling, rainwater harvesting, porous pavements, recycled content products in many places, and other sustainable features. Bailey Hall, an academic building, reopened in 2014 and features heat-pump technology, Energy Star equipment, and natural light treatments such as skylights to illuminate interior spaces. The Letchworth Dining Commons was also significantly remodeled during this period and received a LEED Silver rating for its energy conservation and design features.

The Commission and the Office of Sustainability continue to monitor campus practices and to provide leadership in environmental stewardship. These groups participate in AASHE and complete our reports for the President's Climate Commitment. The campus holds a Silver rating in the STARS program. The 2016 STARS report is available [here](#); our high marks on engagement and on coordination, planning and governance reflect some of the programs described above.

Communication on Engagement: Anti-Corruption

As part of the State University of New York and an agency of the State of New York, Geneseo is regulated by a considerable body of policies and standards. Policies on ethics and internal controls can be found [here](#). Sections 73, 73-a and 74 of the Public Officers Law give guidance on standards of conduct and conflicts of interest. These policies are aimed at preventing corruption, favoritism, and abuse of official position.

Campus training reinforces these policies and provides information for all employees on internal controls and practices.

It should also be noted that in the Campus Auxiliary Services, which has its own Board, similar practices are followed. There are always at least four student members of this Board, as well as several elected faculty members and at least two community members. The training provided to this Board includes ethics as well as financial training; for many students this Board has provided their first experience with the responsibilities of serving on a non-profit Board.

Geneseo models and practices anti-corruption policies in accord with the principles of the UNGC.

Future Engagement: Seeing Beyond the Horizon

In accord with the newly completed strategic plan, the Geneseo campus looks forward to a period of rapid and growing engagement with UNGC principles and sustainable practices. The key goals as we move toward our next Communication on Engagement are:

1. To increase our engagement and communication around UNGC principles

The Commission on Sustainability is supporting a year-long project with the Office of Communications illustrating the Ten Principles in relation to events and projects on the Geneseo campus and around the world.

2. To strengthen sustainable environmental practices on campus and in all facilities and renovations.

The Office of Sustainability is increasing its participation in grounds management and in facilities rehabilitation and maintenance. We anticipate improvement in our carbon footprint through these and other measures.

3. To broaden community awareness of sustainable practices through research and programming.

Through projects such as the eGarden and the Letchworth State Park partnership, we plan to strengthen our outreach to the community on sustainability and environmental stewardship.