

FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Florida Gulf Coast University definition of environmental sustainability flows from the University Mission to “practice and promote environmental sustainability.”^[1] Building on the classic definition of sustainable development, this means operating in a way that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”^[2]

A broad understanding of environmental sustainability is considered in FGCU’s teaching, in learning, in curriculum, in scholarship, in research, in service, and in operations. The University is an Affiliate of Earth Charter International and draws inspiration from the Earth Charter vision. The Florida Gulf Coast University Guiding Principles illustrate the aim to instill “in students an environmental consciousness that balances their economic and social aspirations with the imperative for ecological sustainability.”^[3] The issues related to “economic, social and ecological sustainability”^[4] are embedded in Florida Gulf Coast University’s history and mission. This understanding of environmental sustainability is a broad, multifaceted concept that cultivates, in the words of the Earth Charter, “respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.”^[5]

The Florida Gulf Coast University definition of environmental sustainability establishes goals of climate neutrality, renewable resource use, and preservation of habitat while recognizing the limitations imposed on the University by procurement practices and fiduciary responsibilities. Achieving this definition of environmental sustainability is a participatory process requiring collective engagement of the University community members.

^[1] Florida Gulf Coast University Mission. Available online at <http://www.fgcu.edu/info/mission.asp>

^[2] World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future*. London: Oxford University Press. p. 43.

^[3] Florida Gulf Coast University Guiding Principles. Available online at <http://www.fgcu.edu/info/mission.asp>

^[4] Florida Gulf Coast University Guiding Principles. Available online at <http://www.fgcu.edu/info/mission.asp>

^[5] Earth Charter Initiative. *The Earth Charter*. San Jose, Costa Rica. 2000. Available online at <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Read-the-Charter.html>