

## **Guidelines for Sustainability Proposals to the Administrative Committee**

Berea College and the Administrative Committee (AC) are committed to identifying and pursuing opportunities for the increased sustainability of the campus community. The following guidelines for sustainability proposals are designed not only to assist the AC in its deliberations about the potential effectiveness of proposals but also to provide guidance for strengthening such proposals before they are submitted to the AC. These guidelines are not meant to be a strict set of criteria but rather serve as a general framework for ensuring that proposals are properly aligned with the College's various commitments and resources.

### **Sustainability Goals**

The goals for any proposal should reflect a broad understanding of sustainability and should attempt to include as many different categories for implementation and assessment as possible. The Berea College Ecovillage goals represent such a comprehensive model for other sustainability proposals and projects at the College. Thus, the following list and description of goals expands on the solid work already completed (e.g., renovation standards, Ecovillage, and the new heat plant) to include a broad range of priorities that should be considered.

- **Ecological Goals:** Projects should reduce resource usage (i.e., energy, water, land, building materials, etc.) and/or increase conservation and efficiency. Will energy and/or material use be reduced? Can typical “waste” products be reused or redirected to address other campus needs? Will the proposed project address multiple ecological problems or goals with a single project or activity? What is the ecological impact on the broader community?
- **Economic Goals:** Projects should be cost-effective and present options for greater efficiency of existing processes and procedures. Does the project save or cost the College money? If savings are anticipated, what timeframe can the College reasonably expect to recover its costs? How would the project impact the local economy (i.e., use local resources, labor, etc.)? Does the proposal consider the economic trade-offs between ecological alternatives or other Berea priorities? If the proposal costs money, what are the educational or other rationale(s) for this expenditure?
- **Educational Goals:** Projects should generate a climate of understanding and education concerning sustainability and should also seek data regarding a project's effect on and meaning to the campus community. What was learned? How do people apply what they have learned? What should be done differently? It should be noted that *all* sustainability proposals should include a significant educational component regardless of whether they relate to an academic curriculum. Education should address both on- and off-campus audiences when possible.
- **Social Goals:** Projects should engage as many different people as possible (i.e., students, faculty, staff, Berea community, etc.). Will the project be sustainable in terms of the human costs (i.e., time and talents)? Will the project be meaningful and realistic to groups other than those proposing the initiative? Will there be opportunities for the campus community to share their experiences and/or provide feedback about the project? Does the project offer opportunities for similar practices in people's lives beyond the College (i.e., in the broader community, in their homes or hometowns, in other social settings)? Also see the section on “Relevance Across Departments.”

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- Strategic Goals: The College has a number of core initiatives (e.g., new general education program, internationalizing the learning environment, technology, etc.), and sustainability is a key, but not sole, focus of human energy and fiscal resources. How does the proposal situate itself in such a strategic framework and way of thinking? More specifically, how does the proposal fit into not only Berea's sustainability initiative but into its other initiatives and commitments as well?
- Relevance Across Departments: In addition to incorporating a broad set of goals, sustainability proposals should also articulate the relevance and attempt to engage the participation of various divisions and departments across campus. For example, how will a particular project contribute to the academic curriculum, service programs, extra-curricular activities, residential life, and/or college ecology (e.g., administration of renovations, energy use, etc.)? Are there similar projects or initiatives that can be used as a model or expanded to incorporate the proposal's goals? An integrative, campus-wide approach to sustainability projects will ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved, that resources and knowledge is shared among various groups who are working on similar projects, and that assessment and modification of existing practices are widely available.

The above general guidelines should assist both the AC and the proposers of sustainability projects in developing strong sustainability ideas and actions. These guidelines also provide a benchmark for quality proposals and their likelihood of success. The more that any given proposal can integrate the ecological, economic, social, and strategic goals as well as engagement of multiple departments and programs, the greater its potential for improving the long-term sustainability of Berea College.

Approved by the Administrative Committee: October 2005