

University of Iowa News Release

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Mason appoints UI Sustainability Steering Group

When University of Iowa President Sally Mason announced a sustainability initiative in April, she expressed her desire to harness the brainpower and entrepreneurial skills of faculty, researchers, staff and students to make the campus, and the world, a better place.

To help guide that process, Mason announced the appointment of a seven-member Sustainability Steering Group on Monday, June 9. The members are Barry Butler, dean of the College of Engineering; Jordan Cohen, interim vice president for research; Phillip Jones, vice president for student services; Lola Lopes, interim provost; Doug True, senior vice president and treasurer; Gordon Williams, interim CEO of UI Hospitals and Clinics; and Jonathan Carlson, senior associate to the president and professor of law and international studies.

Mason earlier indicated that the Sustainability Steering Group's first task would be "to conduct a comprehensive review of the university's environmental policies to assure that they promote exemplary environmental behaviors by the university." She has asked for a report from the group by the end of the summer.

"We cannot neglect our responsibility as stewards of limited resources and energy, and our campus continues to demonstrate its commitment to reducing its dependence on fossil fuels," Mason said in announcing the steering group's formation. "But there is so much more to do, from improving our understanding of the environmental challenges we face, to developing new technologies through our research efforts, to educating students to become innovators who can help solve many of the energy and environmental crises we face today."

Mason announced the sustainability initiative in an Earth Day address April 22, a month after the Faculty Senate passed a resolution to promote a more sustainable campus.

In addition to the Steering Group, Mason hopes to create five new, tenured, interdisciplinary faculty positions dedicated to supporting the UI's sustainability efforts; create an Office of Sustainability within Facilities Management that will support and promote sustainability efforts on campus; and create a faculty-led taskforce that will investigate how to make sustainability an integral part of the UI's academic mission, exploring both curriculum and degree offerings as well as opportunities for research and innovation in the area of sustainability.

Mason said these steps would build on the university's already impressive track record of resource stewardship, and provide greater opportunities for students who want to pursue research and careers related to the environment, global climate change, renewable energies and similar topics.

As part of its ongoing sustainability efforts, the UI already burns oat hulls to replace 20 percent of the coal in its power plant, oversees a number of successful recycling programs on campus, and has adhered to "green" standards in the design and construction of new campus buildings. The university is also ahead of many of its peers in joining with industry in such efforts as the Chicago Climate Exchange and in campus planning through the UI's Energy Conservation Advisory Council.

A list of other highlights of sustainable practices and initiatives at the UI is available at <http://news-releases.uiowa.edu/2008/april/042208sustainability-highlights.html>.

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