

## University Policy: Sustainable Purchasing

**Policy Category:** Sustainability

**Subject:** Sustainable Purchasing

**Responsible Executive:** Chief Financial Officer, Vice President & Treasurer

**Office(s) Responsible for Review of this Policy:** Sustainability, Purchasing

**Related University Policies:** American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment; Green Building Policy; Green Cleaning Policy; Talloires Declaration; Zero Waste Policy

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### I. SCOPE

The policy provides guidelines, information and resources for developing sustainable purchasing practices that apply to procurement conducted by all University departments and offices for ongoing consumables, durable goods, facility alterations and additions, and mercury-containing lamps.

### II. POLICY STATEMENT

Consistent with American University's goal to "Act on our values through social responsibility and ... an active pursuit of sustainability," the purpose of this policy is to guide University procurement in ways that advance social responsibility and environmental sustainability by using, maintaining, disposing or re-purposing, goods and services which: improve energy, water, and material efficiency; utilize renewable materials; advance the University toward carbon-neutrality or net positive renewable energy production; eliminate waste, especially hazardous materials; enhance the physical campus environment; protect and enhance the health of the campus community; encourage AU employees to adopt sustainability practices; offer additional consideration to vendors with sustainable production, distribution and end of life management systems or services; support locally produced goods and services; educate the University campus and the extended community about sustainability.

### III. DEFINITIONS

*Best Value:* A result intended in the acquisition of all goods and services based on consideration of total cost of ownership, product lifecycle impacts, human health and equity concerns, product quality and performance, and vendor quality of service.

*Product Lifecycle Impacts:* The social and environmental costs and benefits resulting from a product over its life span, from raw material acquisition, manufacturing, distribution, use, maintenance, and end of life management.

*Total Cost of Ownership:* The real cost for a product, encompassing materials, installation, maintenance, anticipated repairs, necessary monitoring, and end of life management.

#### **IV. POLICY**

##### **Sustainable Purchasing Guiding Principles**

University personnel shall strive to achieve the following goals: conduct purchasing in conformance with LEED EB O&M 2009 standards, at minimum, and in accordance with the following principles:

1. Utilize procurement to act on the University's values of social responsibility and environmental sustainability;
2. Support the University policy of striving to produce zero waste, by reducing overall consumption and shifting to products with reduced product lifecycle impacts;
3. Support the University commitment to eliminate and offset our greenhouse gas emissions;
4. Consider total cost of ownership, rather than purchase price, when evaluating the financial competitiveness of procurement contracts;
5. Require sustainability standards and certifications whenever they are available, with preference for those which are developed by third-parties through balanced stakeholder processes, and which are independently verified throughout a product's chain of custody;
6. Continuously improve sustainable purchasing practices; and
7. Serve as a model of sustainable purchasing to our community of consumers and suppliers.

##### **Sustainable Purchasing Goals**

In accordance with the university's Sustainability Plan, Climate Plan, and Zero Waste Policy, university personnel shall aim to achieve, at minimum, the following goals:

1. Ongoing Consumables:
  - a. Achieve sustainable purchases of at least 60% of total annual spend;
  - b. Purchase only 100% post-consumer recycled content paper by the end of CY 2015;
  - c. Support fair trade by sourcing Fair Trade certified products;
2. Durable Goods:
  - a. Achieve sustainable purchases of at least 40% of total annual spend on electric powered equipment;
  - b. Achieve sustainable purchases of at least 40% of total annual spend on furniture;
3. Reduced Mercury Lamps: At least 90% of all mercury-containing lamps contain no more than 90 picograms of mercury per lumen hour.
4. Facility Alterations and Additions: Achieve sustainable purchases of at least 50% of annual spend on materials for facility renovations, demolitions, refits, and additions.
5. Bottled Water: Purchase no single-serve bottled water for university consumption by the end of CY 2015;
6. Food: Source at least fifty percent of dining services food from sustainable sources, according to LEED criteria, by the end of CY 2016
7. Apparel: Source from apparel suppliers who conform to the Fair Labor Association's code of conduct and who have been included in the Designated Suppliers Program by the Worker Rights Consortium, as applicable

## **V. FREQUENCY OF REVIEW AND UPDATE**

Any party mentioned in the Policy section above may initiate review and update at any time. The Office of Sustainability will initiate review and update not more than two years from the effective date, or date of last review or update, whichever is most recent.

## **VI. EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPROVAL**

This Policy is effective as of January 14, 2010.  
Last reviewed and updated April 19, 2013.