STATE OF NEW YORK

542

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 5, 2023

Introduced by Sen. JACKSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the university of the state of New York environmental sustainability office

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 235-c to read as follows:

§ 235-c. Environmental sustainability office. 1. The regents shall establish an environmental sustainability office within the university of the state of New York to lead the coordination, planning and implementation of policies, programs, and processes to fulfill the university's sustainability obligations and targets cohesively, across all university campuses, and at the system level. Sustainability obligations include, but are not limited to, reduction in energy use, prevention of waste and achieving material circularity, carbon emissions reduction, social equity and justice, and engagement and outreach strategies included within these and other sustainability focus areas.

2. The head of the office shall be the director of environmental sustainability who shall be appointed by the regents and have the following powers and duties:

a. Lead institutional planning to fulfill university sustainability commitments and represent the university's sustainability goals in system-wide and campus level planning.

b. Set consistent sustainability standards, across a multitude of related focus areas, system-wide, including but not limited to, system and campus level clean energy master plans and zero waste circularity plans.

c. Leverage expertise available across university campuses to pilot and elevate sustainability programs, projects and research.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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d. Closely collaborate and coordinate with stakeholders across state agencies to achieve operational sustainability alignment and feasibility.

e. Serve on state and national committees involved in creating policies and making decisions concerning sustainability.

f. Further the university's investment in sustainability across campuses so as to maximize its return on investment, while achieving the university's sustainability commitments.

g. Develop methods and processes to monitor performance and develop and evaluate projects and programs concerning sustainability.

h. Assist the office of general services, and other relevant stakeholders, in procurement of commodities and services that advance the university's mission, while achieving sustainability goals, and ensure that sustainability is a key component in the procurement of services and products.

i. Direct the environmental sustainability office by setting performance goals prioritizing responsibilities, developing work processes, supervising staff, creating a repository of resources, and managing the budget of the office.

j. Provide expertise to campuses in need of direction and support in pursuing sustainability-related projects and programs, and deliver outreach, engagement, and training to campuses.

k. Guide sustainability measurement and data analysis at the university system and campus levels. The director shall lead sustainability performance reporting and advise on the development of performance indicators on system-wide and on campuses to monitor progress towards goals.

l. Originate innovative fiscal and infrastructure solutions and evaluate the feasibility of implementation across the university system, and seek external funding and resources through advancement, grant writing, and partnerships.

m. Develop processes for campus sustainability funds, including project feasibility, budgeting, and monitoring progress, and manage the fiscal solvency of such sustainability funds.

n. Oversee opportunities for student participation in sustainability initiatives through internships and volunteer service, and further curricular innovation and interdisciplinary programs.

o. Cooperate with other universities, state and local agencies, and nonprofits that advance sustainability locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to further the university's leadership and advance environmental sustainability externally.

p. Perform other related duties and special projects.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.