

STATE OF NEW YORK

6798

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 24, 2025

Introduced by Sens. JACKSON, MAY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher 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:

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

3 § 235-c. Environmental sustainability office. 1. The regents shall
4 establish an environmental sustainability office within the university
5 of the state of New York to lead the coordination, planning and imple-
6 mentation of policies, programs, and processes to fulfill the universi-
7 ty's sustainability obligations and targets cohesively, across all
8 university campuses, and at the system level. Sustainability obligations
9 include, but are not limited to, reduction in energy use, prevention of
10 waste and achieving material circularity, carbon emissions reduction,
11 social equity and justice, and engagement and outreach strategies
12 included within these and other sustainability focus areas.

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

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

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

23 c. Leverage expertise available across university campuses to pilot
24 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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1 d. Closely collaborate and coordinate with stakeholders across state
2 agencies to achieve operational sustainability alignment and feasibility.

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4 e. Serve on state and national committees involved in creating poli-
5 cies and making decisions concerning sustainability.

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

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

11 h. Assist the office of general services, and other relevant stake-
12 holders, in procurement of commodities and services that advance the
13 university's mission, while achieving sustainability goals, and ensure
14 that sustainability is a key component in the procurement of services
15 and products.

16 i. Direct the environmental sustainability office by setting perform-
17 ance goals prioritizing responsibilities, developing work processes,
18 supervising staff, creating a repository of resources, and managing the
19 budget of the office.

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

23 k. Guide sustainability measurement and data analysis at the universi-
24 ty system and campus levels. The director shall lead sustainability
25 performance reporting and advise on the development of performance indi-
26 cators on system-wide and on campuses to monitor progress towards goals.

27 l. Originate innovative fiscal and infrastructure solutions and evalu-
28 ate the feasibility of implementation across the university system, and
29 seek external funding and resources through advancement, grant writing,
30 and partnerships.

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

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

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

41 p. Perform other related duties and special projects.

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