Sheridan | Get Creative	THE SHERIDAN COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING	
TITLE: Sustainability Policy		
Date of Approval: September 9, 2014 **Effective Date: September 9, 2014**	**Mandatory Review Date:** June 1, 2017	**Approved By:** ☐ Board of Governors ☒ President's Council ☐ Senate

1. Purpose

Sheridan is focused on preserving and enhancing natural and social capital to allow future generations to enjoy a quality of life that is equal to or greater than our own. As an academic institution, employer, investor and community partner, Sheridan strives to become the institutional model for how a 21st century organization practices sustainability - balancing economic, social and environmental priorities as a responsible corporate citizen.

Accordingly, this policy outlines the framework by which sustainable practice intersects the varied facets of Sheridan activity, with the aim of fostering an institutional culture defined by informed and responsible decision making that reflects the crucial balance between these economic, social and environmental priorities, by:

1. Affirming institutional commitment to operating within a "sustainable" model
2. Confirming The Natural Step principles as the science-based boundary conditions
3. Expressing the breadth of Sheridan operations involved
4. Confirming existing operational commitments

2. Scope

This policy applies to any person making decisions on behalf of Sheridan that have material impact on sustainable practice, as defined in the Related Documentation (Section 5). Decision makers include Board members, employees and others including volunteers, consultants and contractors engaged by Sheridan to provide services.

3. Definitions

Climate Change – In the context of this Policy, refers to the significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns that the world is currently experiencing – often referred to as "global warming".

Environmental Degradation – The deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil, including the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of wildlife.

IECMP – The Sheridan Integrated Energy and Climate Master Plan. This Plan details a combination of strategic investments in energy efficiency, distribution and supply, intended to reduce institutional risk associated with utility pricing, produce environmental benefits, and generate curricular opportunities.

Natural Capital – The stock of natural ecosystems that yields a flow of valuable ecosystem goods or services into the future.

Social Capital – The expected collective or economic benefits derived from cooperation between individuals and groups.

Social Equity – Fair access to livelihood, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs.

Social Justice – The ability of people to realize their potential in the society and geographic location in which they live.

Sustainability – Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable practice requires finding balance between economic, social and environmental priorities.

The Natural Step – A non-profit organization founded in Sweden in 1989 by scientist Karl-Henrik Robèrt, which promotes application of The Natural Step framework. The Natural Step framework sets out four science-based system conditions for the sustainability of human activities on Earth. See Appendix A for details of The Natural Step framework.

Zero Waste and Net-Zero-Waste – Redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused and no trash is sent to landfills, similar to the way that resources are reused in nature.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) – Any gaseous compound, such as carbon dioxide, that traps heat in the Earth's atmosphere, and contributes to the greenhouse effect.

4. Policy

4.1 Overarching Principles

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission formally defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", thus establishing the core principle of balancing current needs with those of future generations. When interpreted more broadly, sustainable practice requires a balanced implementation in three crucial areas: environmental sustainability, financial/economic sustainability, and social sustainability.

To promote consistent, informed and responsible decision making around its sustainability practices, Sheridan has formally adopted the four science-based sustainability principles of The Natural Step (See

Appendix A for more detail). These principles provide a framework through which Sheridan can consider its professional practices.

4.2 Policy Statement

This policy expresses Sheridan's commitment to enmeshing sustainable practice within the varied facets of Sheridan activity, with the aim of fostering an institutional culture defined by informed and responsible decision making that reflects the crucial balance between economic, social and environmental priorities. Sheridan meets this commitment by:

- challenging ourselves to continuous improvement and developing innovative solutions in business operations to address issues of energy and water use, waste reduction, air quality improvement, and product procurement;
- working to ensure that all members of the Sheridan community continuously seek to minimize adverse impacts that Sheridan's activities have on the environment and society;
- Considering applications of sustainability thinking in its professional practices; and
- demonstrating to students, employees, partners, community and the world how a 21st century organization carries out its core operations and advances long-term institutional objectives while navigating a forward-looking, informed, evidence-based sustainable path

Through consistent application of The Natural Step principles to the following areas, Sheridan will establish its path to sustainable practice:

1. Sheridan will strive to help students, through their experiences at Sheridan, achieve environmental awareness and exposure to leading-edge sustainable practice within the context of current and emerging world issues. Sheridan seeks to help students become conscientious stewards of the planet.
2. Sheridan strives to prepare the next generation of global citizens to address the difficult challenges of global climate change, environmental degradation, social justice, and social equity.
3. Sheridan will strive to leverage its position as a leader in creative programming to address sustainability challenges with innovations in energy and water use, waste reduction, air quality improvement, and product procurement that will meet and potentially exceed its mandatory compliance commitments.
4. Sheridan will seek to consistently act in ways that preserve and enhance natural and social capital to allow future generations to enjoy a quality of life that is equal to or greater than our own.
5. Sheridan will take every opportunity to minimize adverse environmental and social impacts of its facilities operations.
6. Campus operations, including procurement and food services, will seek ways to mitigate and improve the environmental and social impacts associated with delivery of services.
7. Sheridan will develop, publish and implement comprehensive plans and frameworks that guide Sheridan's commitment to specific and carefully-defined sustainability objectives. This includes:
    a. The Sustainability Plan
    b. The Integrated Energy and Climate Master Plan (IECMP)
    c. The Zero Waste Plan

d. Annual Sustainability Report

8. Sheridan will embrace transparency and accountability, as cornerstones of driving its sustainable transformation, by publically sharing its sustainability metrics and institutional sustainability performance. This includes, wherever possible, establishing infrastructure for monitoring, processing and measuring resource consumption and pricing at the building level, and allowing access to this information.
9. Sheridan seeks a world-class reputation for energy management and performance, which includes maintaining a high-performance physical infrastructure that uses energy in the most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally-responsible manner possible.
10. Sheridan seeks a world-class reputation for zero waste policies, practices and results. This entails a comprehensive approach, discipline, processes and infrastructure that reduces both waste and its impact in the most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible manner.
11. Sheridan will take all reasonable steps to be a net-zero-waste higher education institution by 2020, in accordance with the Sheridan Zero Waste Procedure and Zero Waste Plan.
12. Per the Sheridan Energy Procedure and IECMP, Sheridan will strive to reduce energy consumption by 50% by 2020 relative to 2010 energy consumption, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy use by at least 40% during the same period.
13. Sheridan will make a concerted, institution-wide effort, led by the Office for Sustainability, to identify relevant qualifications and specifications for any new buildings and to consider sustainability criteria when reviewing bid documents.

4.3 Compliance

When members of the Sheridan community fail to comply with this policy, they jeopardize a strategic objective and hamper collective institutional goals. Community members are expected to strive to comply with this Policy.

4.4 Responsibilities

The Office for Sustainability will be responsible for supporting the Sustainability Policy and Related Documentation, including Procedures and Plans.

The role of the Office for Sustainability is to coordinate and facilitate sustainable practice across Sheridan. As the central voice for sustainability at Sheridan, the Office addresses campus sustainability issues, provides advice and guidance, collects and disseminates information, enhances and promotes existing sustainability efforts, suggests and facilitates new initiatives – including those for curriculum and education, fosters dialogue across various departments, and helps develop new institutional policy and strategy.

5. Related Documentation

Sheridan Sustainability Procedures
Sheridan Commissioning Procedure
Sheridan Sustainability Plan
Integrated Energy and Climate Master Plan (IECMP)

Appendix A: Sheridan Sustainability Principles

At its most basic, sustainability refers to the ongoing survival of the planet's various life forms. The planet's ability to support mankind and other species into the future is in question, as many of society's current practices have proven to deplete resources, generate pollution, degrade ecosystems and create social inequity. As well, the environmental and atmospheric conditions that support life on Earth are increasingly affected by anthropogenic climate change.

In its ground-breaking report, the Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", thus establishing the need to balance current needs with those of future generations. When interpreted more broadly, sustainable practice requires a balanced implementation in three crucial areas: environmental sustainability, financial/economic sustainability, and social sustainability.

Sheridan has formally adopted the four science-based sustainability principles of The Natural Step: [1]

Principle 1: We must eliminate our contributions to the systematic increase of concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust (e.g. heavy metals and fossil fuels).

> This means substituting our use of certain minerals that are scarce in nature with others that are more abundant, using all mined materials efficiently, and systematically reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.

Principle 2: We must eliminate our contributions to the systematic increase of concentrations of substances produced by society (e.g. plastics, dioxins, PCBs, DDT and neonicotinoids).

> This means substituting certain persistent and unnatural compounds with ones that are normally abundant or break down more easily in nature, and using all substances produced by society efficiently.

Principle 3: We must eliminate our contributions to the systematic physical degradation of nature and natural processes (e.g. over harvesting forests, destroying habitat and overfishing).

> This means drawing resources only from well-managed eco-systems, systematically pursuing the most productive and efficient use of resources and land, and exercising caution in all kinds of modifications of nature, such as overharvesting and the introduction of invasive or non-native species.

Principle 4: We must eliminate our contributions to conditions that systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their basic human needs.

[1] Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt, Founder, The Natural Step

> This means offering products and services and changing practices, suppliers, and business models to those who demonstrate, through their policies and practices, that human rights are respected, income-making barriers are removed, safe and healthy work environments are provided, and living conditions allow local communities to meet the needs of citizens.

These principles provide a framework through which Sheridan can consider its professional practices.

Sheridan can apply these principles to develop and refine strategies to ensure consistent progress toward long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability using a method called *backcasting*. In backcasting, a successful outcome is imagined in the future, and, after assessing current conditions, determination is made on what steps need to be taken today to reach that vision of success. This approach has proven to be more effective for sustainability planning than forecasting, which tends to rely on currently known conditions and produces a more limited range of options