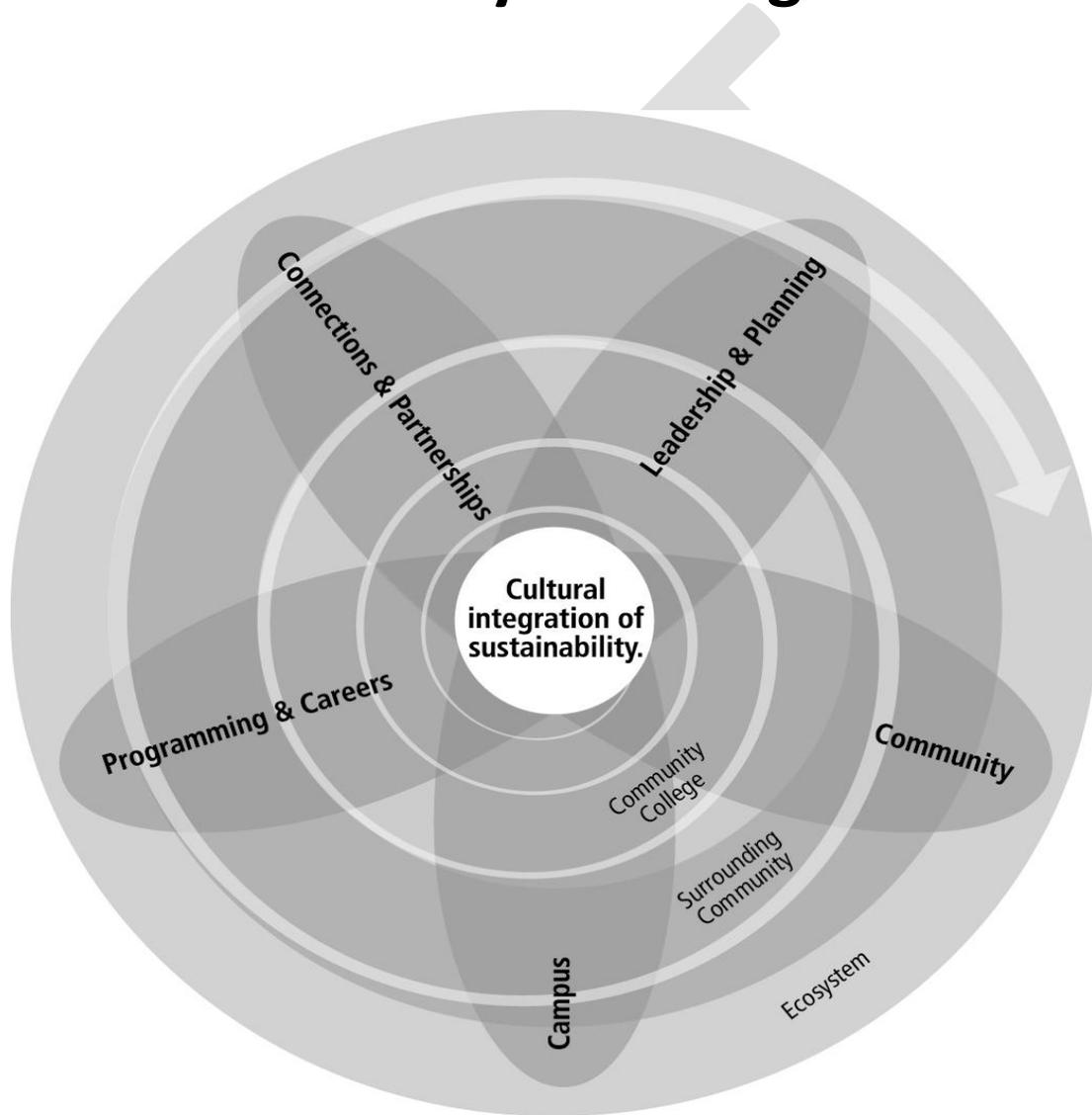


# Triton College Sustainability Planning Guide



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## Executive Summary

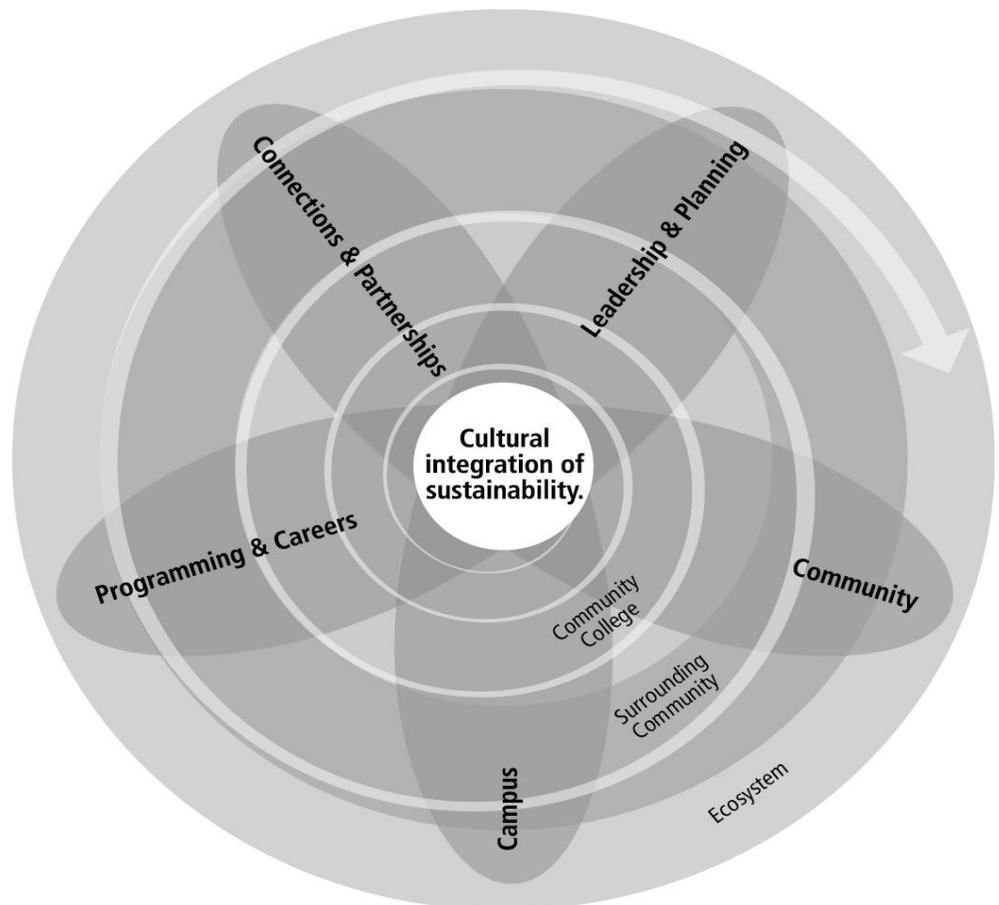
Triton College is in the fortunate position of having forged ahead with projects, programs and initiatives designed to increase physical sustainability on campus, as well as creating a culture of sustainability and integrating sustainability concepts into our academic programs--all without having a formal guide. Now, however, the institution is at a crossroads. We could continue with ad hoc sustainable development in the hope that an emphasis on sustainability would continue to increase in an organic fashion, or, better yet, we can take stock of what we have done and create a formal, yet flexible guiding document that is reflective of our current status and will provide guidance for the future. Thus, the Triton College Sustainability Planning Guide not only is growing out of aspirations for the future, but also is solidly grounded on a base of accomplishments already achieved.

The Triton College Sustainability Planning Guide works to create a shared vision of holistic sustainability throughout Triton's sphere of influence, embedding sustainability into Triton's everyday workings and culture. The scope and content was driven by Triton's role as an educational institution, as well as a leader within the local community. This guide illustrates Triton's dedication to teaching, promoting and modeling sustainability on campus and in the community.

This document is formatted to have a mission, vision and five goals that advance the development of a culture of sustainability. Each goal governs areas of focus, within which initiatives can be developed to implement the goals. It is structured so that stakeholders in different areas can utilize specific portions of the document as a guide for developing projects, programs and initiatives relevant to their areas of responsibility and concern. The goals of this document are not free standing or linear in progression, but overlapping and inclusive, as demonstrated in the figure to the right.

Triton's sustainability goals are:

**Goal 1: Organization, Leadership and Planning** - Triton will strive to incorporate the triple bottom line of sustainability into its institutional structure, governance, and planning for the future.



**Goal 2: Programming & Workforce Training** - Triton will incorporate principles and practices of sustainability into all educational programs, so that students will become environmentally aware, active participants in the green economy workforce and sustainable society of the future.

**Goal 3: Campus** - By managing the physical aspects of the campus, including built and natural elements, and anticipating necessary climate change mitigation and adaptation, with a goal of continually improving sustainable practices, Triton will systematically reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint while working to improve local, and by extension, regional ecosystems.

**Goal 4: Community Engagement** - Through the programming and services it offers, and by serving as an exemplar of a culture of sustainability, Triton College will strive to influence, collaborate with, and inspire its surrounding communities while serving as a resource and example in the implementation of sustainability.

**Goal 5: Communication, Connections & Partnerships** - Triton College will foster public engagement and continue to build connections and formal partnerships within local, regional, state and national communities, for the implementation of a culture of sustainability.

While Triton will be well served by this version of the Triton College Sustainability Planning Guide, Triton's needs and values are likely to evolve and change over time. As a "living document," the guide should be revisited regularly, and if necessary, revised to include new voices, set new goals, identify current best practices and success stories, and inspire the continual development of a culture of sustainability on campus and in the surrounding community. Thus, as a necessary pre-condition to the success of this guide and its ability to be a living document, Triton must establish a system of tracking and measurement of its sustainability efforts, enabling benchmarking, and thus creating the ability to evaluate programming and demonstrate progress over time.

Lastly, in order for the Triton College Sustainability Planning Guide to be most effective, it must be implemented in a whole-system, evolving fashion that works to remove silos and engage across all community stakeholders. Therefore, great effort must be made by college champions—of sustainability in general and of this document in particular—to engage in multiple forms of communication, including dialogue, outreach, and messaging.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Triton’s Sustainability Mission.....	5
Triton’s Sustainability Vision.....	5
Why a Sustainability Planning Guide for Triton College? .....	5
Guiding Principles .....	6
How to Use this Document.....	7
Benchmarking, Tracking & Reporting .....	8
Implementation: Engagement, Making Connections & Progress .....	8
Organizations .....	9
Referenced Documents .....	9
<b>Goal 1: Organization, Leadership and Planning</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Institutional Social Responsibility:.....	10
Coordination, Planning and Shared Governance: .....	10
Health, Wellbeing & Work:.....	11
Investment:.....	11
<b>Goal 2: Programming &amp; Workforce Training</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Program Design & Delivery:.....	12
Student Engagement: .....	12
<b>Goal 3: Campus</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Buildings: .....	14
Energy: .....	15
Fleet and Power Equipment: .....	15
Food & Nourishment: .....	15
Grounds: .....	16
Purchasing: .....	16
Transit: .....	16
Waste:.....	16
Water:.....	17
<b>Goal 4: Community Engagement</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Engagement, Services and Resources: .....	18
<b>Goal 5: Communication, Connections &amp; Partnerships</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Communication: .....	19
Connections and Partnerships:.....	19
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>21</b>

*To be added:*

**Appendices**

Appendix I: List of Past, Present, and Future Sustainability Initiatives (Organized by Goal)

Appendix II: Map of Campus

Appendix III: List of Resources (i.e. CMAP, AASHE, IGEN, +)

# Introduction

## Triton's Sustainability Mission

Triton College is dedicated to teaching, promoting and modeling sustainability on campus and in the community.

## Triton's Sustainability Vision

According to the Bruntland Commission, a sustainable society has been defined as one that is “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting eco-systems.” By developing a campus “culture of sustainability,” in which sustainability is a core institutional value that serves as one of the foundational principles underlying all aspects of campus life, Triton will take its place as a leader in the movement toward such a society. By providing sustainability education we will better prepare our students for the challenges of a future that includes climate change and limited resources but also includes new ways of meeting those challenges. By modeling sustainability, we will demonstrate ways in which sustainability can work to improve our way of life while decreasing our environmental impact. Through outreach and partnerships we will help strengthen the multiple networks of which we are a part, thus amplifying desirable social and economic change.

## Why a Sustainability Planning Guide for Triton College?

“Sustainable, or “green” practices help societies improve the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of the Earth’s supporting ecosystems.”

- The Bruntland Commission

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) defines sustainability in “a pluralistic and inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods, and a better world for all generations.” By definition, sustainability has a tripartite structure that includes social, environmental and economic dimensions, and is often summarized as “people, planet, profit;” or “equity, ecology and economy.” From a business perspective, the three pillars of sustainability are often referred to as “the triple bottom line.”

Because it is a community college, Triton is already well attuned to the needs of the surrounding community and throughout its history has worked to improve the lives of its students by offering affordable education and workforce training, thus helping to improve people’s lives and strengthen the economy. Uniting these fundamental concerns with the need to practice and teach environmental sustainability will enable Triton to prepare students for the future and will enable the institution itself to thrive in the face of the very real challenges posed by climate change, resource depletion and environmental degradation.

Triton College is in the fortunate position of having forged ahead with projects, programs and initiatives designed to increase physical sustainability on campus, as well as creating a culture of sustainability and integrating sustainability concepts into our academic programs. The institution has not done this on its own or without guidance. In 2009 the Greening the Campus Committee was formed as a President’s Initiative and has since worked in an advisory capacity for campus stakeholders. In 2011, the College signed the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact, a commitment which outlines environmental goals and objectives that colleges and universities may adopt on their campuses. Through making this commitment, Triton has received guidance for sustainability initiatives to date, fulfilling the Bronze level of requirements in 2012 and pledging to achieve the Silver level by 2015. In addition, since Triton has been an active member of the Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN), a consortium of Illinois community colleges founded in 2008 for the purpose of working to grow the green economy of Illinois. As an IGEN member, in 2011 Triton created a Sustainability Center focused on campus and community projects and partnerships. In 2013, Triton joined the Chicago

Network for Sustainability in Higher Education (CNSHE), which encourages partnerships among two- and four-year schools on Chicago area-specific initiatives. Through its work within the IGEN and CNSHE communities, Triton has participated in sustainability-oriented conferences and regional and state-wide meetings, campus upgrade projects, training programs for its staff and students, greening curriculum trainings, and created degree and certificate programs associated with the emerging green economy.

Now, however, the institution is at a crossroads. We could continue with ad hoc sustainable development in the hope that an emphasis on sustainability would continue to increase in an organic fashion, or, better yet, we can take stock of what we have done and create a formal, yet flexible document that is reflective of our current status and will provide guidance for the future. Thus, this planning guide not only is growing out of aspirations for the future, but also is solidly grounded on a base of accomplishments already achieved. This guide will enable Triton to implement environmental sustainability in true systems fashion so that it is integral to every aspect of campus life.

## Guiding Principles

“...The "environment" is where we live; and "development" is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable.”

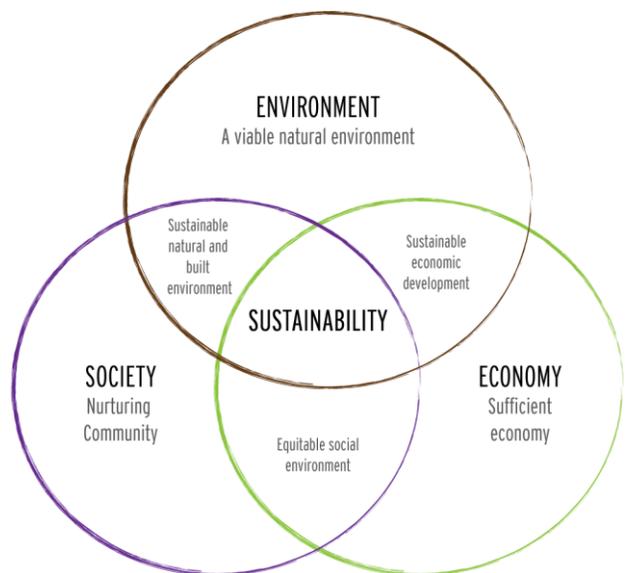
- Our Common Future

“The world faces not only a climate change crisis but also threats to sustainability on all fronts. Thus, it is essential that colleges and universities formally acknowledge these transcendent problems and reorient academic programs to be relevant to the challenges all future graduates will face. Higher education has an obligation to lead in creating a healthy, just, and sustainable society.”

- Cool Campus! A How-to Guide for College and University Climate Action Planning

In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the great Midwestern conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote that, “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” Many people think he was only talking about natural ecosystems and that the “biotic community” consists of plants and animals, but it is important to remember that he also included humans and our needs as part of the biotic community. Another great conservationist, Jens Jensen, a major figure in the creation of the forest preserves that grace the Chicago metro region, on whose land Triton’s own Botanic Garden sits, devoted himself to improving the quality of life for city dwellers. Both of these men, along with countless others, championed sustainability long before the word came to be used in the sense we use it today.

Since 1987, when the Bruntland Commission met and issued its landmark report, “Our Common Future,” the word sustainability has come into increasingly widespread use. The Bruntland report included the now-iconic conception of sustainability nesting at the heart of the three important spheres of human life on earth, the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainability. Now, there was a way to talk about sustainability, not only from a conservation point of view but also, in the guise of “sustainable development,” from a socioeconomic view as well. In the words of the Commission, “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”



**Figure 1: The three pillars of sustainability, also known as the triple bottom line.**

Because sustainability incorporates ethics into its vision of sustainable society, every guiding sustainability document is supported by a set of guiding principles, whether explicitly stated or not, that supply a framework for what gets included in the document. Conversely, the guiding principles are equally influenced by the institution’s mission, vision, and goals.

The guiding principles for this planning guide, and for Triton’s journey towards a culture of sustainability, can be summarized as follows:

- The guide is influenced by Triton’s vision and mission statements, which put the education and betterment of our students and the community first and foremost. In a sense, the journey towards sustainability can be considered an enlargement, or, more fundamentally, simply another dimension of Triton’s vision.
- A culture of sustainability, in which sustainability is embedded in every aspect of the college’s community, organization, education programs, built environment and relations to the wider society, is the ultimate goal of this guide.
- Environmental health is key for providing humans with healthy, sustainable lives. No action exists in a vacuum; there are always “upstream” and “downstream” effects to consider, and sustainability requires a movement towards a reduced environmental footprint.
- Education about sustainability and communication about what is being done will encourage community engagement and further the development of local, regional and state-wide partnerships.
- When planning projects and programs, instituting changes and solving problems, consideration of all three pillars of sustainability should be included in decisions and plans; reconsider and adjust proposed solutions if they are deficient in an area so that sustainable results can be reached.
- Seek input from all stakeholders—students, staff, and community members, and encourage stakeholders—to take ownership in the implementation of the Sustainability Planning Guide. Foster creativity, passion and collaboration.
- Measurement and assessment will help the college meet its goals of implementing socially and environmentally responsible solutions that are also cost effective, will help demonstrate progress, and will help guide future plans.

## How to Use this Document

The overall document provides a framework for the holistic implementation of sustainability throughout Triton’s sphere of influence. This document is formatted to have a mission, vision and five broad goals formulated specifically to advance the development of a culture of sustainability. Each goal governs areas of focus, within which initiatives can be developed to implement the goals. It is structured so that stakeholders in different areas can utilize specific portions of the document as a guide for developing action plans, including goals, projects, programs and initiatives relevant to their areas of responsibility and concern. The goals of this document are not free standing or linear in progression, but overlapping and inclusive. It is a living document, meant to be revisited regularly, and if necessary, revised in accordance with changing social, environmental and economic conditions as well as new developments in the theory and practice of sustainability.



**Figure 2:** This document is meant to be a living document, revisited regularly, and if necessary, revised.

## Benchmarking, Tracking & Reporting

Accomplishment of each of the major goals and subsidiary areas of focus in this planning guide depend on measuring and establishing baselines for the year in which the guide is decided to be in effect and establishing targets to be attained within time horizons to be decided on. Therefore, before substantive, measurable progress can be shown to have been made, Triton College must establish a system of tracking and measurement of its sustainability efforts, enabling benchmarking, and thus creating the ability to demonstrate progress in its initiatives over time. This is a necessary precondition of this guiding document that will function as a foundation for all other goals and areas of focus.

Though Triton continues to follow the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact guidelines, establishing data-based benchmarks will require a different, numbers-based approach. A number of systems offer tracking tools that will enable the college to accumulate data, which in turn will help drive decision making in the future.

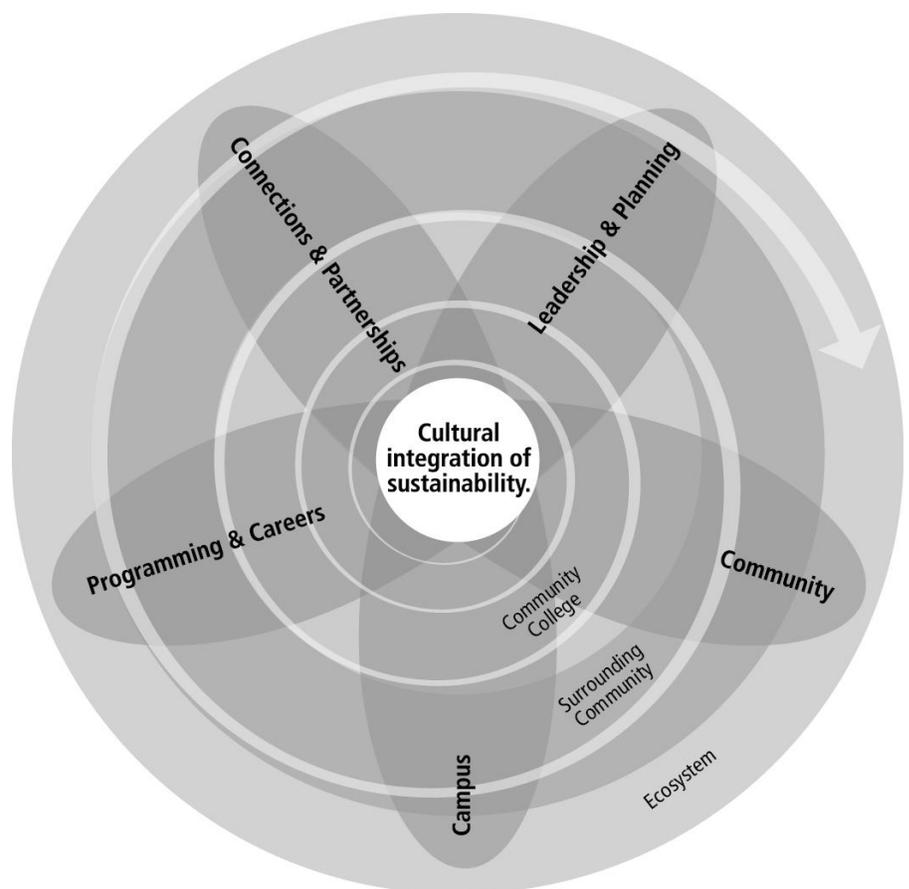
Examples of tracking systems include the following:

- The AAUPCC Cool Campus Inventory is the most widely used tool for measuring and tracking college greenhouse gas emissions.
- The AACC-SEED Green Genome Assessment and Framework can also be used to help track progress.
- AASHE STARS offers a comprehensive system to measure and track all aspects of campus sustainability.
- The Better Building Challenge Portfolio Manager provides an online database and tracking system for municipal building operators and has a version for colleges.

In addition to the implementation and use of a formal tracking tool, progress should also be documented through self-assessment of initiatives, in order to gain qualitative data and a broader understanding of all of Triton's sustainability initiatives (e.g. attendance rates, number of programs offered, participation in other initiatives, and progress of existing initiatives).

## Implementation: Engagement, Making Connections & Progress

Components of this document are interconnected, overlapping and non-linear and have impacts on the community college itself, the surrounding communities, and encompassing ecosystems. (As demonstrated in the image depicted to the right.) To imbed sustainability into Triton's culture, a holistic vision of sustainability and an interdisciplinary, whole-systems orientation will be necessary, as change in one area will have cascading effects on all other areas, requiring a continual process



**Figure 3: Components of this document are interconnected, overlapping and non-linear and have impacts on the community college itself, the surrounding communities, and encompassing ecosystems. As sustainability becomes embedded in Triton's culture, these values will also influence and be shared with other communities in which Triton College participates, as well as the surrounding ecosystem.**

of reevaluation, assessment, and adjustment. This kind of planning and implementation will require stakeholders to put aside siloed thinking when considering what is required and how to best conduct implementation. Additionally, policies and initiatives should be flexible and adaptive in order to capture the full range of benefits of sustainability measures that will increase campus resiliency.

Engagement is necessary across all community college stakeholders. Over the past ten years, as more campus stakeholders have become convinced of the value of sustainability, Triton has made significant progress. However, continued cultural change is not easy, particularly when requiring behavior change on the part of all members of a particular community. Integrating sustainability as a campus cultural value and practice will happen most naturally and completely if change is embraced by a majority of community members.

Change is not a top down, bottom up or lateral process, but is an emergent property of multiple complex interactions that make up the campus culture. Both the overall goals and the projects that comprise the areas of focus will most successfully occur when implemented within and through formal organizational structures as well as informal social networks within the college, with buy-in and contributions made by all groups. Therefore, great effort must be made by college champions—of sustainability in general and this document in particular—to encourage collaboration and engage in multiple forms of communication, including dialogue, outreach, and messaging. This planning guide is meant to be used: only when departments across campus develop and implement actionable projects will its potential begin to be fulfilled.

## Organizations

Through its efforts to strengthen its sustainability initiatives, Triton College has become a member and/or partner with the following organizations:

- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
  - Sustainability Education & Economic Development (SEED)
- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)
- Chicago Network for Sustainability in Higher Education (CNSHE)
- Chicago Wilderness (CW)
- Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPCC)
- Illinois Green Business Association (IGBA)
- Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN)
- Seven Generations Ahead (SGA)

## Referenced Documents

During the creation of the Triton College Sustainability Planning Guide, the following resources were referenced:

- AACC-SEED: The Community College Green Genome Framework: Integrating Sustainability and Clean Technology Workforce Development into an Institution's DNA
- AASHE STARS Technical Manual 2.0
- AAUPCC Greenhouse Gas Inventory Data Requirements
- Cool Campus! A How-to Guide for College and University Climate Action Planning
- Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact
- PlanItGreen: The Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest (implementation managed by SGA)
- Multiple colleges' sustainability plans and documents were surveyed in the process of this document's creation.

In addition, this document has been influenced by the stated sustainability goals of the Greening the Campus Committee, of both the Business Services and Academic divisions of the college, and of the Triton Sustainability Center.

# Goal 1: Organization, Leadership and Planning

**Triton will strive to incorporate the triple bottom line of sustainability into its institutional structure, governance, and planning for the future.**

“An institution’s people define its character and capacity to perform; and so, an institution’s achievements can only be as strong as its community. An institution can bolster the strength of its community by making fair and responsible investments in its human capital.”

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

The health, well-being and effectiveness of an institution is defined by and dependent upon the health and wellbeing of its people, the strength of its internal community and its relations with the greater community of which it is a part. Investment in human resources is integral to the achievement of a healthy and sustainable balance between the social, environmental and economic spheres.

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**Institutional Social Responsibility:** *Triton College will aim to embrace its social, ethical and environmental responsibilities to both its campus community and the wider community of which it is a part.*

Triton already functions as an instrument for positive social change and economic development, by providing education and workforce training. The college not only prepares students for participation in the green economy, but also is an employer within it. By exercising its institutional social responsibilities, the college will have a positive impact on its students and employees, as well as other communities and supporting ecosystems.

Strategies include continuing its attention to: diversity of its workforce; affordability of its educational programs; social justice within programming and community activities; and offering a living wage (sustainable compensation) for employees.

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**Coordination, Planning and Shared Governance:** *In order to integrate sustainability throughout the college, organizational structures and leadership responsibilities will continue to be defined, established, and nurtured in such a way that reflect an institutional commitment to sustainability.*

In so doing, the college will also create and maintain campus structures, processes and staffing positions that promote sustainability and environmental leadership, such as the existing Greening the Campus Committee, the Sustainability Center, and Sustainability Coordinator. This would increase interdisciplinary collaboration across departments and strengthen the educational efficacy of the school.

Strategies include: studying and revising organizational structures and strategic planning with the goal of infusing Triton’s commitment to sustainability throughout the institution; and fostering sustainability literacy and leadership among faculty, staff and students.

The above may encompass changing job descriptions and creating new positions which support Triton’s various sustainability initiatives, whether in facilities, administration, faculty or other staff. An example of this would be a sustainable farm area managed by a dedicated staff member that would serve as a hands-on learning opportunity for students in the sustainable agriculture, horticulture, HIA, and other programs as well as interfacing with sustainable landscaping projects on campus.

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**Health, Wellbeing & Work:** *To achieve its mission in the best way possible, the institution will provide its workforce a milieu conducive to producing constructive and creative work.*

Triton College is not just a physical space, but a community gathered around the purpose of providing and accessing education and workforce training. A strong community is fostered through its investment in its human capital.

Strategies include: providing healthy work environments and spaces; providing faculty and staff professional development opportunities; and promoting a respectful and safe social environment. For additional strategies, see Goal 4, Food and Nourishment area of focus.

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**Investment:** *When considering investment options for college funds, social, ethical and environmental dimensions of the institutions and organizations that they support should be considered. Such investments will be made in a transparent manner so that the Triton community is aware of what it supports.*

Opportunities exist to support sustainable investment in Triton's community. Increasingly, investors are diversifying their portfolios by investing in companies that set industry-wide benchmarks with regard to sustainability. Such investments can increase the positive impacts of these funds and help improve the sustainability of our society.

Strategies include: educating Triton College employees who invest college funds about how to make socially and sustainably responsible investments and highlighting tools that they can use, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices; encouraging and educating the Triton Foundation to consider the social, ethical and environmental impacts of companies when considering investment options; and offering a sustainability fund for college donors or a sustainability related scholarship fund for students.

## Goal 2: Programming & Workforce Training

**Triton will incorporate principles and practices of sustainability into all educational programs, so that students will become environmentally aware, active participants in the green economy workforce and sustainable society of the future.**

“...The College must look across all programs of study to determine where and how sustainability principles fit. In addition, the college must connect this education to operational greening where students apply learning to real-world campus-based energy and environmental challenges.”

- “The Community College Green Genome Framework,” AACC-SEED

Triton has already incorporated sustainability into its campus-wide learning outcomes. This objective will be implemented in multiple, multi-modal ways that span academic disciplines, technical programs of study, workforce training, and continuing education. Assistance can be provided to faculty and staff to help them integrate sustainability and green economy content into most disciplines and general education programs. Another priority can be to continue developing and expanding quality green job/career training for students and workers, while being effectively informed by community and employer partnerships.

The campus already serves as a place where departments work together to, “implement principles of leadership and management by providing work-study and job-shadowing opportunities for students and staff.” This initiative can be further developed to where the campus can serve as a “living lab” where students work on sustainability projects as part of their experiential learning. In addition, the campus itself will function as a demonstration site for a culture of sustainability, becoming a living-learning environment that will exemplify sustainability and thus a place where students and visitors learn not only by overt training but also by osmosis through informal exposure.

Besides academics and classroom activities, Triton offers a wide variety of options for students to become engaged with the campus community. These include numerous student clubs and organizations, student government and participation on campus committees, as well as Triton’s athletic teams. The Sustainability Center and Green Committee have formed relationships with Student Life and campus student organizations such as Program Board, Student Ambassadors and Triton College Student Association with the purpose of increasing student awareness of and participation in sustainability-related events and initiatives. These efforts can be continued and deepened as the College further integrates sustainability into its culture.

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**Program Design & Delivery:** *Triton will continually evaluate course design and delivery in order to incorporate and model sustainability principles, whether in existing courses and programs, or in those yet to be created.*

Strategies include: following AACC SEED Green Genome recommendations for creating and delivering courses and programs; encouraging faculty professional development that will train them in incorporating sustainability principles across the curriculum; and developing new modes of delivery, such as competency-based programs that will prepare students for the emerging green economy by teaching environmental literacy and necessary skills, both technical and soft.

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**Student Engagement:** *Triton will encourage student engagement with sustainability principles by making them integral to student life and co-curricular activities.*

Strategies include: developing and sponsoring events, cultural arts performances and workshops; sustainability-related service-learning opportunities; including sustainability in student recruitment and orientation; student sustainability projects on campus; and environmental and sustainability-oriented clubs.

## Goal 3: Campus

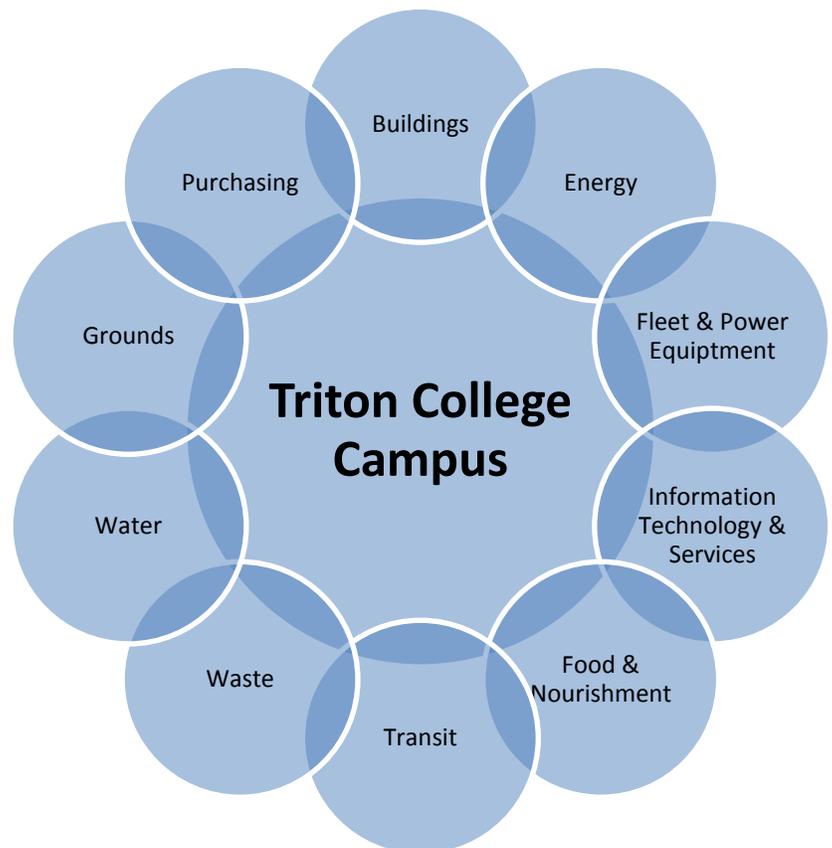
**By managing the physical aspects of the campus, including built and natural elements and anticipating necessary climate change mitigation and adaptation, with a goal of continually improving sustainable practices, Triton will systematically reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint while working to improve local, and by extension, regional ecosystems.**

“The conversation about sustainability has mostly focused on sustainable agriculture or renewable energy or green building, and the list goes on. We’ve brought all of these together into a single pattern where the parts are designed to reinforce the prosperity and resilience of the whole thing.”

- David Orr, speaking about the Oberlin Project

Triton is a large institution; its considerable acreage, multiple buildings, sizable commuting population, and the materials and processes needed for operations and maintenance cumulatively have an immense impact on local air, water, soil, adjacent natural areas-- in short, the entire local ecosystem. The physical operation of the campus is under the purview of the Business Service division and most areas of the division have already instituted green policies and practices. This section’s areas of focus are influenced by these policies.

Strategies include continuing to set goals and develop cost-effective sustainable practices for all components of campus operations. This is vitally important to moving the institution towards developing climate change resiliency through embracing and modeling sustainable practices. Triton’s physical campus and its management should reflect and reinforce the values and principles taught in our classrooms. In addition, professional development opportunities for staff should include training in sustainable practices.



**Figure 4: Categories listed below form an interconnected system in which sustainability initiatives can be implemented throughout campus management.**

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**Buildings:** *Triton will continue to build, refurbish, renovate and maintain its buildings according to LEED principles and standards, striving to support safe and healthy indoor environments while decreasing energy and resource consumption and impact on ecosystems.*

Strategies will continue to include those that are being used so successfully at present and will seek to incorporate new building techniques as they become available to continue to make our buildings even more sustainable and healthier for

occupants. And, as funds become available, continuing to expand energy efficient and conservation measures. In addition, impacts on local wildlife, such as migrating birds, could be considered.

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**Energy:** *Triton will continue to make the campus as energy efficient as possible through retrofits and new projects, such as energy efficient motor replacements, solar thermal systems, and efficient, effective use of building automation systems and cogeneration plant operation.*

Triton has made great strides in the area of energy efficiency over the past ten years. Future strategies include continuing to improve efficiency while taking advantage of opportunities to explore and implement the use of alternative, clean energy sources, such as wind and solar; scheduling classes in clumped areas so that lighting and HVAC costs can be reduced; and the implementation of behavior change strategies that can help students and staff make energy conserving behavior a campus norm.

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**Fleet and Power Equipment:** *Triton will continue to research and implement methods to increase the energy efficiency and reduce the GHG emissions of its fleet and power equipment.*

Triton maintains a fleet of vehicles used for maintenance and facilities, admissions, its police force, and for off-campus trips by staff. The college also utilizes landscaping and sports field maintenance equipment and a various types of power equipment in its campus operations.

Triton already makes good use of electric golf carts in day-to-day campus operations, including one used by campus police. Campus officers also do bicycle patrols. Further strategies to improve the sustainability of Triton's fleet (and power equipment) include: hybrid, plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles and power equipment purchased as replacement needs warrant; bicycles supplied for on-campus use of staff; a (hybrid) car share program implemented for employee trips off campus.

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**Information Technology and Services:** *Triton will continue to explore and implement solutions to increase the energy efficiency of its electronic equipment and systems through using energy-efficient hardware, and utilizing software management programs and user behavior-change strategies and programs.*

Triton's computing and electronic equipment grows steadily more energy-efficient as new equipment is purchased and leased. In addition, electronic equipment at the end of its working life is recycled. However, more can be done. Strategies could include seeking out computer management software, investigating more efficient printing solutions, and using behavior change strategies such as changes in policy, messaging, and contests to help users adopt energy-saving habits.

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**Food & Nourishment:** *Triton will set goals to increase the availability of locally procured, sustainably produced, healthy food to the campus community.*

Triton offers food to its community through a variety of outlets, including a cafeteria, with satellite locations, catering services, vending machines, and a cafe and bakery run by the hospitality program. The college has already made good first steps towards changing campus food preparation and service with its food service vendor's commitment to local

procurement when possible and with its new vending machine that features healthy offerings in recyclable containers. In addition, HIA offers farm to table classes, in which students grow much produce that they use in class.

Additional strategies include: creating a purchasing policy that commits to increasing local sourcing for food, purchasing organically and sustainably grown ingredients; increasing the nutritious foods available in vending machines; and fostering collaboration between Triton's sustainable agriculture program and the various food outlets on campus for the provision of campus-produced foods.

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**Grounds:** *Using data from its GHG inventory, information about our local ecosystem, and with attention to the social needs and economic realities of the campus community, Triton will set goals and implement projects designed to maximize sustainable management of the grounds.*

Triton has a history of maintaining a beautiful and welcoming campus. Green infrastructure has increasingly become a priority. Yet the college can do more to help its green spaces become more sustainable in terms of biodiversity and management practices. Strategies include assessing current practices and making a sustainable landscaping plan that will enable the college to save money by increasing the use of native plants (thereby increasing biodiversity) while reducing the use of toxic chemicals and inorganic fertilizers. Such a plan and its implementation can help the college lower its carbon footprint. For further strategies, see the Water area of focus. Additionally sustainable landscaping could include on-site composting of campus yard waste for use in the sustainable agriculture and horticulture programs.

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**Purchasing:** *Triton will assess all aspects of its procurement strategies, processes and systems and will develop goals and targets to increase sustainable purchasing.*

Green purchasing is both an “upstream” and “downstream” process. Are the purchased goods produced sustainably? Locally? Using recycled/recyclable and/or non-toxic materials? When they are finished being used, are they disposed of responsibly, with as little going to the landfill as possible? These types of questions pertain to everything the college is likely to purchase. Triton already practices green purchasing, and the information services department includes it as one of its stated goals. Further strategies can include developing and following a comprehensive green purchasing policy for the campus as a whole.

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**Transit:** *Triton will assess its single occupancy commuting trips by gas-powered vehicles and will set a goal for a reduction, while working to develop the campus as a hub for alternative and sustainable forms of transit.*

Though the campus itself is bike- and pedestrian-friendly, Triton sits on a kind of island surrounded by busy streets and is directly served by only one bus route. This makes transit to and from our commuter campus difficult by any means other than car. Yet much of our GHG emissions results from single occupancy car trips. Strategies can include incentivizing carpooling and public transit use, while also working with state and county agencies, local municipalities and Pace to improve ease of bike and pedestrian travel and convenience of bus travel.

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**Waste:** *Triton will move towards being a “zero waste” campus by reducing its overall waste, using recycled materials, recycling, and composting.*

As landfills reach capacity and waste disposal laws have changed, Triton has been making progress in its recycling of materials and diverting waste from landfill with its increased use of recycling containers, campus community education,

and policies for disposal of construction and other materials. Further strategies could include increased outreach to students and staff; assessing the amount currently recycled and setting goals and methods for reduction; hiring a recycling coordinator to oversee all campus recycling, including construction materials, e-waste and the like; and instituting a food composting program (perhaps some to be done on campus to provide the sustainable agriculture program with compost, and some to be done through commercial pickup).

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**Water:** *Triton will actively manage water by reducing its use of potable water, reducing rainwater/storm water runoff, and increasing its green infrastructure and sustainable landscaping.*

Triton has made great strides in reducing potable water use by installing automatic faucets in the bathrooms. Other strategies could include retrofitting with low-flow toilets and other water-saving devices. Storm water management has always been of concern, and increased rain events have led to increased flooding. In addition, potable water from Lake Michigan has historically been used for irrigation. With its new parking lots that incorporate underground cisterns for rainwater capture, Triton will greatly decrease its use of potable water for irrigation and improve storm water management. (It will be interesting to see the numbers in terms of gallons of lake Michigan water saved and also if there is measurable flood reduction.) Further strategies could include increased use of sustainable landscaping and green infrastructure such as increased use of bioswales and rain gardens throughout the campus, and capturing water from roofs for use on the grounds.

## Goal 4: Community Engagement

**Through the programming and services it offers, and by serving as an exemplar of a culture of sustainability, Triton College will strive to influence, collaborate with, and inspire its surrounding communities while serving as a resource and example in the implementation of sustainability.**

“As community members and leaders, colleges and universities can be powerful catalysts, allies and partners in envisioning, planning and acting to create a sustainable future in the region and beyond.”

- AASHE STARS 2.0

Triton’s history of community involvement exemplifies the way community colleges are integral to their communities through their missions and positioning within municipal districts. As an educational institution, Triton has always had the social and economic needs and aspirations of its community as its reason for being, and has always taken community engagement and partnerships very seriously. Adding environmental sustainability into the mix will help fully develop all three pillars of sustainability in its surrounding communities. The strategies of communication, engagement and partnership that Triton has always implemented can be put to very good use for this new purpose.

Through this enriched role, Triton will not only serve “as a regional and sector partner for mobilizing community and employer engagement, fostering community education,” but will also be fully “supporting action for environmental sustainability” as it engages as a member of its own district communities, but also in the larger sustainability community.

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**Engagement, Services and Resources:** *By serving as a resource, by developing and maintaining longstanding relationships with local organizations, and participating in community sustainability activities, Triton will help develop and grow a culture of sustainability throughout its district.*

Engagement is key to solving sustainability-related problems and implementing solutions at a community level. Because it is so deeply involved in the life of its district, Triton has the opportunity not only to disseminate ideas and practices, but also to learn from the sustainability advances of surrounding communities. Through continuous engagement with community members and organizations, Triton College can help communities capitalize on their social assets and strengths and help develop green virtuous cycles which not only will increase district-wide sustainability, but also will help green the local economy. In this way, Triton can help infuse sustainability throughout the community life of its district.

Triton already hosts sustainability-related events and partners with local green groups and local educational institutions on projects that help develop broader community engagement, as well as engaging with the larger community beyond its district borders. The work of the Sustainability Center is directly involved with sustainability-related outreach and community engagement, within and without the college.

Engagement, services and resource sharing strategies include: continuing and developing Sustainability Center outreach and coordination of programs; cultural and community education events; folding sustainability themes and content into other college departments’ outreach and engagement programs; expanding sustainability-related partnerships between the college and other entities such as businesses, non-profits, local governments and educational institutions to develop solutions to benefit to the broader community; and helping facilitate inter-community communication and collaboration.

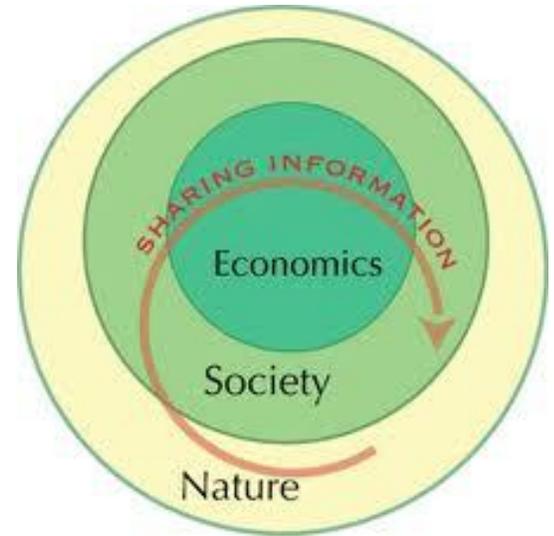
## Goal 5: Communication, Connections & Partnerships

**Triton College will foster public engagement and continue to build connections and formal partnerships within local, regional, state and national communities, for the implementation of a culture of sustainability.**

“Today, global socio-ecological problems are too complex and urgent for isolated actions, and cross-sector collaboration is increasingly required to generate transformational change towards a sustainable future.”

- The Natural Step

Triton College is already making an institutionally significant contribution to the creation of a regional and statewide culture of sustainability by sharing its experiences and expertise within its own community, as well as with businesses, organizations, municipalities and individuals. In addition, it participates in more formal partnerships that can be strengthened and developed to enhance collaboration on specific sustainability-related projects and programming on and off Triton’s campus. Through such partnerships, fiscal and human capital efficiencies can be harnessed in service to the goal of developing the environmentally responsible, green society and economy of the future.



**Figure 6: Sharing information, developing connections and nurturing partnerships helps create and maintain a broad-based culture of sustainability that impacts all sectors.**

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**Communication:** *Triton will share its sustainability initiatives, achievements and innovations with its internal and external communities and will take part in ongoing local, regional, statewide and national conversations.*

Over the past few years, Triton has increased its sustainability-related communications both qualitatively and quantitatively, which has raised the college’s profile and has helped increase its influence in the broader community. These efforts are crucial to helping implement the college’s sustainability goals and helping it engage in the larger conversation with multiple stakeholder groups working to create an environmentally sustainable society. In addition, institutions perceived to be “sustainably minded” are more desirable to potential students and staff and often have better student and staff retention rates.

In addition, because Triton College is a large, multi-faceted institution with many parts working both independently and together, internal communication is vital to sustainability initiatives. By its nature, sustainability requires an interdisciplinary approach; effective actions require effective communication so that silos can be broken down and opportunities for collaboration among departments and institutional peers can be identified.

Communication strategies include: continuing and extending communication efforts through such venues as shared governance structures, conference presentations and participation, faculty and staff publications, various news outlets, and public relations/marketing efforts - including using all forms of social media; and using Triton's sustainability efforts as a recruitment and retention tool for prospective students and staff.

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**Connections and Partnerships:** *Triton will continue to develop internal and external connections and build partnerships with educational institutions, local governments, non-profits and community organizations in order to promote collaboration on sustainability-related initiatives, programming and projects.*

Triton belongs to, and collaborates with, a broad range of public entities, organizations and networks centered on environmental sustainability (including those referenced in the acknowledgements section). These memberships and partnerships have encouraged “virtuous cycles,” or positive feedback loops, by influencing Triton’s own sustainability efforts, while enabling the college to contribute to broader initiatives, including changes at the level of local and state governmental policy. In addition, efforts to create and nurture interdepartmental, interdisciplinary collaborative efforts are a feature of campus life that can be expanded, nurtured, and celebrated.

In the field of sustainability new ideas, knowledge, processes and technologies are continuously being created and shared. Therefore, it is important for Triton to continue to make new internal connections, to engage fully with its external partners, and to continually look for ways to leverage effective, positive change through new and existing partnerships.

Connection and partnership strategies include: continuously developing internal and external connections and formal partnerships; maintaining, encouraging and expanding participation in networking events, activities and discussions in which methods, practices and achievements are shared; identifying resources and projects that can further Triton's sustainability efforts; and fostering a culture of idea sharing and networking throughout campus so that ideas and practices are shared beyond departments and with the surrounding community and various sustainability-related stakeholder groups.

## Conclusion

In recent years, Triton has made great strides in sustainability, to the extent that in many areas it is a leader among community colleges in Illinois. The college is far from starting at the beginning, and the process of researching and writing this document has made clear just how far the college has come. Yet there is more to do, at almost every level of detail. Because sustainability is a process that involves multiple complex systems, the project of creating a more sustainable campus and working with others to create a green, socially, economically and environmentally sustainable society is one that involves constant adaptation and change. Hopefully this document will serve as a guide and inspiration to help the Triton community plan and implement future sustainability initiatives.