

UNM Sustainability Advisory Council Spring 2026 Meeting Summary

Date: March 4, 2026

Time: Noon – 1:30 PM

Location: Physics and Interdisciplinary Sciences (PAIS) Building, Room 2540

The Sustainability Advisory Council convened for its Spring 2026 meeting to discuss implementation of the University of New Mexico Sustainability Strategic Plan and identify opportunities for collaboration across campus units.

Sustainability Strategic Plan Update

The Office of Sustainability provided an overview of the recently released UNM Sustainability Strategic Plan, a five-year roadmap designed to guide environmental sustainability efforts across the university. The plan was developed through a year-long process that included campus interviews, focus groups, town halls, and a campus-wide survey.

The plan focuses on two core areas:

- **Transform Campus Operations** – advancing sustainability through campus infrastructure and services
- **Build Sustainability Engagement and Culture** – integrating sustainability into education, events, governance, and campus life

Together, these areas include nine goals and a series of actions and metrics designed to support implementation over the next five years.

Implementation Highlights

Several initiatives supporting the plan are already underway across campus, including:

- **Energy and Climate**
 - Progress toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with the State of New Mexico's climate goals
 - New all-electric buildings and expanded solar capacity on campus
 - Ongoing planning for a grid modernization project that could significantly reduce campus emissions
- **Water and Land Use**
 - Efforts to reduce water consumption through improved irrigation practices
 - Mapping of underutilized turf areas to transition to drought-tolerant landscaping
 - Continued stewardship of UNM's nationally accredited arboretum and Tree Campus Higher Education designation
- **Waste Reduction**
 - Efforts to increase landfill diversion through waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting strategies
 - Pilot initiatives to expand recycling at campus events
- **Food Systems**

- Initiatives to reduce food waste and support food recovery
- Expansion of programs that connect surplus food from campus dining to students experiencing food insecurity
- **Transportation**
 - Efforts to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commuting
 - Expansion of EV infrastructure and electrification of portions of the university fleet
 - Programs encouraging biking and alternative transportation to campus

Building a Culture of Sustainability

The strategic plan also emphasizes strengthening sustainability awareness and engagement across campus. Current and upcoming efforts include:

- Applied learning opportunities that connect students with campus sustainability projects
- Campus events and programming such as Bike to UNM Day, Earth Month activities, and the Sustainability Expo
- Expanded communications and outreach to highlight sustainability initiatives
- Development of a **Sustainability Corps**, a student program designed to connect sustainability efforts across campus and promote peer-to-peer engagement

Council Discussion

Council members discussed ways their units are already contributing to sustainability efforts and identified opportunities to support implementation of the strategic plan. Key themes included:

- Leveraging partnerships and community connections
- Using procurement and operational decisions to advance sustainability goals
- Expanding student engagement and awareness of sustainability initiatives
- Strengthening communication and storytelling around UNM's sustainability progress

Next Steps

The Sustainability Advisory Council will continue to support implementation of the Sustainability Strategic Plan and explore opportunities for collaboration across campus units. Future meetings will focus on key sustainability topics and identifying ways the Council can help advance UNM's sustainability goals.