

Saint Mary's College of California

Sustainable Purchasing Policy

“Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act. Hence the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise.”

-Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas Veritate, 2009

Our Sustainability Vision

“In fidelity to our educational mission and Catholic principles, Saint Mary’s College is committed to leadership in fostering environmental literacy, modeling a culture of sustainability, and creating an equitable future for all of humankind in harmony with nature.”

In concert with Goal 3C of the Strategic Plan - raising “the visibility of how the campus community can support sustainability efforts” - the sustainable purchasing policy follows our vision by supporting products and companies that exhibit industry-leading environmental and social practices.

Definition

Sustainable purchasing is the practice of purchasing products and services that have a reduced impact on the environment and human health, as compared to competing products or services with similar functions. Sustainable products benefit the local and global environment, improve human health, and often save money immediately or in the long-term.

Goal and Procedures:

Saint Mary’s College will balance environmental, social and fiscal responsibilities in making financially and environmentally sustainable purchasing decisions. We will strive to purchase products with the highest environmental and social standards within its respective industry provided that the products meet acceptable use and performance needs. Priority will be given to materials that:

1. Meet third-party sustainability standards. Examples include:

- Green Seal® or EcoLogo® for cleaning products
- FSC certified for wood or paper products
- Energy Star® for appliances
- WaterSense® for water efficient products
- EPEAT® for electronic products
- Fair Trade Certified for coffee, tea and chocolate

2. Exhibit qualities of Sustainable Products. Examples include:

- Contain high percentages ($\geq 30\%$) of post-/pre-consumer recycled content
- Durable and/or reusable, as opposed to single use or disposable items
- Non-toxic or minimally toxic, preferably biodegradable
- Highly energy-efficient
- Recyclable or compostable at time of disposal
- Made from raw materials that have been obtained in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner
- Manufactured in an environmentally sound manner by companies with good environmental and labor track records.
- Causing minimal or no environmental damage during normal use or maintenance
- Shipped with minimal packaging (consistent with care of the product), preferably made of recycled and or recyclable materials
- Minimize transportation distances (produced locally) as well as campus deliveries

Products that meet the above criteria should appear on the College's preferred vendor lists and will be given priority purchase status.

When appropriate, Saint Mary's College will include a clause in its bidding specifications that reads: "Saint Mary's College is committed to buying products with recycled content or environmentally sustainable alternatives. Please offer any alternatives that you feel are available for this product and supply all relevant specific information about the product including costs."

Implementation

Saint Mary's College Purchasing Department and Sustainability Committee will be responsible for recommending procedures and preferred vendor lists to the Vice President for Finance and Administration that accommodate and monitor the above guidelines. College faculty and staff will be consulted on an annual basis through workshops to identify strategic actions on advancing this policy.

Any existing limitation within Saint Mary's College policy and procedures prohibiting or restricting the purchase or use of sustainable products (as defined above) shall be amended to encourage the purchase and use of sustainable products to conform to this policy.

Approval

Policy approved by the Cabinet and President: June 20, 2016