

Executive Summary

The Center for Land Use and Sustainability (CLUS) of Shippensburg University (SU) serves as a key resource in South Central Pennsylvania, fostering healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities through applied research, experiential learning opportunities, and interdisciplinary, cross-sector partnerships. The CLUS strives to be a leader in transforming scientific research into social innovations that promote a thriving economy while preserving resources and reducing the impacts of climate change.

Over the past five years, the CLUS has demonstrated success by securing 28 grants and contracts totaling over \$2.2M. Through these externally funded projects and additional small-scale community collaborations, 14 SU faculty and 33 students representing ten SU departments and three colleges have engaged in high-quality interdisciplinary research, supporting community partners at local, regional, and global scales. With this documented success, a \$1 investment in the Center from Shippensburg University generates \$2 in revenue.

This strategic plan outlines measurable goals and outcomes for 2020-2025, and was developed to help prioritize resources, increase participation of affiliate scholars across departments, and facilitate information and resource sharing. As we look to the next five years, the CLUS will focus on the following five goals:

1. Support the growth of healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities throughout Pennsylvania and beyond
2. Foster experiences and facilitate development of diverse skills and knowledge that prepare students to pursue meaningful career pathways
3. Connect affiliate scholars to the community through research and partnerships that advance interdisciplinary, sustainable solutions
4. Elevate Shippensburg University's regional leadership role in sustainability and technology
5. Build the Center's organizational resilience and financial sustainability

The next five years will bring an exciting new chapter for the Center, with the potential for many new partnerships and initiatives. While pursuing new initiatives, the CLUS will continue to focus on its core values related to sustainability, justice, equity, student success, excellent scholarship, and collaboration. The stories of engagement and real-world impacts from our projects will continue to be something to celebrate within our University and across our region, serving as a model for other institutions in the State System.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Fostering healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities through applied research, experiential learning opportunities, and interdisciplinary, cross-sector partnerships.

Vision

Be a leader in transforming scientific research into social innovations that promote a thriving economy while preserving resources and reducing the impacts of climate change.

Values

The following values guide the work of the CLUS:

Fostering Sustainability, Justice, and Equity

Our view of sustainability is holistic, encompassing environmental, social, and economic perspectives. We strongly support informed decision-making processes that consider social determinants of health and creative placemaking to support healthy growth of our communities while preserving resources and opportunities for future generations.

Student Success

Through applied research with faculty and community partners, students build professional networks and skills that prepare them for the workforce or further studies, while addressing sustainability challenges.

Professional Excellence

All work affiliated with the CLUS should represent excellent scholarship, meet or exceed current professional standards, and adhere to the highest ethical practices.

Collaboration

Today's social, economic, and environmental challenges require an interdisciplinary approach. Successful collaborations are built on respect, consensus building, diversity, open-minds, and willingness to learn from each other- the CLUS strives to embrace these practices.

Goals, Strategies, and Outcomes

Goal 1: Support the growth of healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities throughout Pennsylvania and beyond

Strategy 1: Invest in partnerships that advance sustainable communities and economic development

- Pursue grant-funded (private or public) applied research projects that leverage the Center's expertise to help communities better address issues related to planning, environmental stewardship, social determinants of health, and creative placemaking
- Connect with local business, civic, government and nonprofit partners to develop a list of focused research projects suitable for student-faculty research (undergraduate and graduate level); market these opportunities to students and faculty and facilitate the working relationship with external partners; when appropriate, pursue funded opportunities with partners that grow out of these relationships
- Support development of public-private partnership opportunities for faculty, staff and students throughout the University (e.g. Soil Hub workshops, Brew Science program)

Strategy 2: Leverage the Center's home in downtown Shippensburg to create stronger relationships between the University, community residents, and local businesses

- Connect the community to campus through events, exhibits, programs, and networking opportunities
- Provide space for faculty scholars to use downtown location to bring SU expertise to the community (e.g. exhibit space, sustainable farming practices, land use planning)
- Continue supporting campus-community collaborative efforts (e.g. Strengthen relationship with Downtown Organizations Investing Together committee and participate in First Fridays); participate in and support organized Shippensburg community events

Strategy 3: Work with the public to understand complex social, economic, and scientific issues related to climate, land use, and sustainability

- Strengthen relationships with community stakeholders through CLUS events, such as the Sustainability Field Conference, climate forums, etc.
- Partner to develop or support programming and resources for children and youth in the community (e.g. K-12 curriculum development with local watershed associations, ESTEEM workshop) to introduce land use and sustainability themes at an early age

- Share stories, information, and resources about student and faculty research projects and public-private partnerships online (e.g. student-faculty research spotlights), through the Center’s website, newsletter, and social media

KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators)

- Number and dollar value of grants and contracts secured to offset SU investment in the Center; Number and dollar value of funded Center research and partnership projects
- Interactive and continually updated list of applied research opportunities for faculty and students to reference, with an easy mechanism for community partners to contribute
- Number of community partners from business, civic, education, government and the nonprofit sector regionally, nationally, and globally
- Number of children and youth engaged in learning opportunities
- Number of attendees at CLUS community, educational, or outreach events.

Goal 2: Foster experiences and facilitate development of diverse skills and knowledge that prepare students to pursue meaningful career pathways

Strategy 1: Create innovative opportunities for students across departments to participate in CLUS scholarship, research, and applied coursework

- Solicit input from industry thought leaders and employers to identify the technical and soft skills required for the future workforce
- Support additional opportunities for students across campus by promoting internships, research credit, and funding through institutional grants (e.g. SURE), in addition to current support offered through paid student fellowships related to grants and contracts
- Collaborate with Institute for Public Service and Sponsored Programs (IPSSP) to develop “CLUS Symposium” at Minds@Work as a venue for students and faculty to share research
- Support the Department of Geography and Earth Science in the development of an applied sustainability studio course that will create opportunities for students to collaboratively engage with community partners in sustainability challenges
- Partner with Fashion Archives & Museum of Shippensburg University to develop a sustainability of clothing exhibit and opportunity for students across disciplines to contribute
- Augment paid student research fellow positions through SU Foundation account

Strategy 2: Enhance student mentorship, professional development, and networking opportunities

- Increase student participation in professional meetings and conferences to expand their professional networks

- Mentor student fellows to help develop technical and communication skills when working with collaborators to complete projects; partner with the Department of Communication/Journalism when possible
- Identify other professional development opportunities for students that align with industry workforce trends and gaps, such as the Job Shadow Program hosted by the Career, Mentoring and Professional Development Center

KPI's (Key Performance Indicators)

- Development and success of CLUS research fund program to support student scholarship
- Increased participation in total number of students and departments represented every year
- Measurable increase in number of student participants in CLUS symposium at Minds@Work
- Students are better connected to the region and more prepared for the future workforce; students have more opportunities to stay local
- Number of student presentations or posters
- Adoption of a new assessment system for CLUS graduate and undergraduate student fellows to better understand program impacts, including past successes and areas for improvement relating to student experience

Goal 3: Connect affiliate scholars to the community through research and partnerships that advance interdisciplinary, sustainable solutions

Strategy 1: Increase engagement of faculty and students across disciplines to develop integrated solutions to sustainability challenges

- Collaborate with College of Arts and Sciences to develop small grant funds to support innovative scholarly pursuits, with proposals reviewed by affiliate scholars
- Engage additional affiliate scholars and student fellows across departments by supporting and coordinating research, service-learning, and collaborative projects
- Strengthen ties at the programmatic level with the Sustainability program and other departments by pairing research with course requirements
- Strategically pursue projects that align with current research goals of faculty across campus; actively support collaborations across disciplines in larger longer-term projects that integrate academics and align with program and departmental goals.
- Rebrand “affiliate scientists” as “affiliate scholars” to be more inclusive across disciplines

Strategy 2: Improve communications with affiliate scholars

- Market the services that the CLUS provides to support scholarship on campus (project management, networking and outreach, supporting research proposals, grant management, spatial analysis and mapping, etc.) and opportunities to get involved
- Educate the campus community on the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability, and benefits of collaboration across social, economic, and environmental disciplines

- Provide opportunities for student and faculty scholars across departments to engage and network, such as a regular CLUS symposium
- Regularly share grant opportunities, events, and resources with affiliate scholars
- Facilitate information sharing about faculty incentives through the Institute for Public Service and Sponsored Programs to encourage pursuit of external grants
- Develop and implement data management plan, style guide, and additional guidelines for affiliate scholars to ensure product standardization and longevity of deliverables to community partners

KPI's (Key Performance Indicators)

- Number of faculty engaged in CLUS activities and projects across SU departments
- Number of faculty and students that have applied to and received funding from grant program; track associated departments and impacts of scholarship
- Number and dollar value of grants and contracts run through the Center by faculty to utilize CLUS resources; tracked by department
- Number of faculty projects over the course of the year supported by CLUS students (e.g. making a map to visualize research results)

Goal 4: Elevate Shippensburg University's regional leadership role in sustainability and technology

Strategy 1: Contribute to success of faculty, staff, and student-led campus sustainability initiatives

- Contribute technical expertise to the efforts of the campus sustainability coordinator and Department of Facilities Management and Planning for the implementation of sustainability components of the Campus Master Plan and development of Campus Climate Commitment initiatives; participate in planning activities related to the Campus Climate Commitment, helping to assess areas for improvement and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or develop partnerships to support community resiliency planning
- Optimize student recruitment efforts through existing CLUS network and identification of connected networks and untapped opportunities; partner with the Office of University Communications and Marketing; the Office of Professional, Continuing, and Distance Education; Graduate Studies; and other units to develop outreach materials to more easily share Shippensburg University resources with working professionals (i.e. GIS certificate, Sustainability major, Brew Science, etc.)
- Engage more students, faculty, staff, alums and donors in campus sustainability initiatives

Strategy 2: Share technical expertise to facilitate adoption and use of geospatial and other technologies by faculty, staff, and students

- Facilitate communication efforts of the Institute for Public Service and Sponsored Programs, College of Arts and Sciences, and other centers/units by supporting the creation of outreach materials based on emerging geospatial technology in which SU and PASSHE already invest, such as story maps or other interactive spatial platforms
- Continue to work with the Department of Facilities Management and Planning and the Office of Educational Intelligence & Technology to collaboratively pursue technology solutions that support cutting edge student-faculty research, and enhance the campus community
- Effectively promote the mapping services already offered by CLUS student fellows to support the integration of spatial data and geophysical technology in faculty research

Strategy 3: Elevate Shippensburg University's identity and visibility as a leader in sustainability throughout the state and within the PASSHE System

- Partner with Shippensburg University Magazine to develop a regular sustainability focused section to highlight SU initiatives and CLUS opportunities and successes
- Enhance and increase SU representation in regional sustainability partnerships and coalitions (e.g. Pennsylvania Environmental Resources Consortium, the South Mountain Partnership, Kittatinny Coalition, Cumberland County Food System Alliance)
- Document and promote the framework of the CLUS across the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) to serve as a model for how external funds and community connections can be leveraged to promote student success, faculty and staff professional development, and scholarly work
- Connect to relevant PASSHE System Redesign teams (i.e. Workforce Readiness) and engage in the execution of plans
- Develop pathways for students from other PASSHE institutions to participate in scholarship efforts related to sustainability as CLUS student fellows or interns

KPI's (Key Performance Indicators)

- Increased use of geospatial technologies across campus to promote and enhance the work of students, faculty, staff, and the institution
- Number of students from other PASSHE institutions participating as interns or CLUS student fellows
- Number of institutions or organizations that SU provides expertise related to land use and sustainability or to develop partnerships
- More faculty recognize and utilize geospatial approaches in their research
- Increased media coverage of CLUS activities or research projects each year

Goal 5: Build the Center's organizational resilience and financial sustainability

Strategy 1: Develop an organizational structure that supports growth and increases capacity

- Establish an advisory council comprised of industry and community partners, SU alumni, students, faculty, and administrators to provide guidance on strategic direction and relevant workforce needs; expertise related to assessment and finances
- Prioritize development and execution of a staffing plan to meet programmatic, development, and administrative needs of the Center
- Clearly define leadership roles and structure in relation to programming; create a succession plan for current Center leadership
- Articulate benefits and responsibilities associated with being a CLUS affiliate scholar; empower affiliate scholars and students to advocate for and celebrate the Center
- Invest in CLUS staff professional development to increase capacity and enhance performance

Strategy 2: Prioritize mission-driven projects that generate revenue and support organizational self-sufficiency

- Develop and implement criteria for assessing potential projects that consider staff, student, and faculty capacity, expertise, and opportunities for growth
- Prioritize development of large, longer-term, and multi-year funding streams
- Develop a system to track and manage staff, faculty, and student project timelines, customer relationships, budgets, reports, and deliverables

Strategy 3: Diversify funding streams

- Work with SU Foundation to target the CLUS as a key initiative for fundraising
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a CLUS endowment
- Decrease reliance on annual SU investments through external grants and contracts
- Strategically identify new revenue-generating partnership opportunities with philanthropy, the business community and the public sector
- Explore options for developing a corporate sponsorship program, and expanding affiliation outside of SU (i.e. through membership fees to provide regional resources/services)

Strategy 4: Improve communications to support long-term brand durability

- Work with students from the SU Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter to develop communications and marketing plan to promote the CLUS brand and enhance messaging to clients and donors

- Enhance, maintain, and improve digital outreach assets, including website, newsletters, story maps, and social media to more deeply engage and retain our target audiences, including donors, sponsors, and grantmakers
- Ensure CLUS logo and materials coordinate with other sustainability-related products produced by the university
- Invest in branding and materials (e.g. shirts, pins, nametags, etc.) to support sense of ownership and pride for affiliation with CLUS for staff, students, scholars, and supporters

KPI's (Key Performance Indicators)

- An 8-12 member advisory committee or advisory council will meet at least twice annually to provide guidance and generate donations
- Dollar value of revenue through external sources to offset SU investment in staff positions each year; dollar value of revenue through external sources to augment scholarship efforts of CLUS leadership, affiliate scholars, student fellows, travel, and other research or service activities
- Leadership roles will be defined and leadership will actively engage in strategic plan implementation; there will be diverse representation of disciplines in CLUS leadership
- Annual strategic planning retreat with leadership and advisory committee to review alignment, plus regular meetings for strategic direction
- Increased number of long-term funded projects or partnerships to decrease overall time spent on project management
- Staff and faculty are able to balance current and projected workloads to maintain high-quality products and mentorship of student fellows
- Staff, faculty, and students have the expertise to meet client needs, with respect to both timeline and deliverables
- Improved tracking of student and affiliate scholar participation and commitments