

Global University Leaders Forum (GULF)

**ISCN/GULF SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS CHARTER**

The signatories of the ISCN/GULF Sustainable Campus Charter acknowledge that organizations of research and higher education have a unique role to play in developing the technologies, strategies, citizens, and leaders required for a more sustainable future. Signature of the present charter represents an organization's public commitment to aligning its operations, research, and teaching with the goal of sustainability. The signatories commit to:

- implement the three ISCN/GULF sustainable campus principles described below,
- set concrete and measurable goals for each of the three principles, and strive to achieve them,
- and report regularly and publicly on their organizations' performance in this regard.

***Principle 1: To demonstrate respect for nature and society, sustainability considerations should be an integral part of planning, construction, renovation, and operation of buildings on campus.***

A sustainable campus infrastructure is governed by respect for natural resources and social responsibility, and embraces the principle of a low carbon economy. Concrete goals embodied in individual buildings can include minimizing environmental impacts (such as energy and water consumption or waste), furthering equal access (such as non-discrimination of the disabled), and optimizing the integration of the built and natural environments. To ensure buildings on campus can meet these goals in the long term, and in a flexible manner, useful processes include participatory planning (integrating end-users such as faculty, staff, and students) and life-cycle costing (taking into account future cost-savings from sustainable construction).

***Principle 2: To ensure long-term sustainable campus development, campus-wide master planning and target-setting should include environmental and social goals.***

Sustainable campus development needs to rely on forward-looking planning processes that consider the campus as a whole, and not just individual buildings. These processes can include comprehensive master planning with goals for impact management (for example, limiting use of land and other natural resources and protecting ecosystems), responsible operation (for example encouraging environmentally compatible transport modes and efficiently managing urban flows), and social integration (ensuring user diversity, creating indoor and outdoor spaces for social exchange and shared learning, and supporting ease of access to commerce and services). Such integrated planning can profit from including users and neighbours, and can be strengthened by organization-wide target setting (for example greenhouse gas emission goals). Existing low-carbon lifestyles and practices within individual campuses that foster sustainability, such as easy access for pedestrians, grey water recycling and low levels of resource use and waste generation, need to be identified, expanded and disseminated widely.

***Principle 3: To align the organization's core mission with sustainable development, facilities, research, and education should be linked to create a "living laboratory" for sustainability.***

On a sustainable campus, the built environment, operational systems, research, scholarship, and education are linked as a "living laboratory" for sustainability. Users (such as students, faculty, and staff) have access to research, teaching, and learning opportunities on connections between environmental, social, and economic issues. Campus sustainability programs have concrete goals and can bring together campus residents with external partners, such as industry, government, or organized civil society. Beyond exploring a sustainable future in general, such programs can address issues pertinent to research and higher education (such as environmental impacts of research facilities, participatory teaching, or research that transcends disciplines). Institutional commitments (such as a sustainability policy) and dedicated resources (such as a person or team in the administration focused on this task) contribute to success.

As signatories to the ISCN/GULF Charter, we strive to share our goals and experiences on sustainable campus initiatives amongst our peers and other stakeholders. A key instrument for this is our regular reporting on progress under this Charter, which will be supported by the Charter stewardship (provided by the GULF group) and the Charter secretariat function (provided by the ISCN).

Signatory's organization:

Signatory's name/function:

Date:

UNIVERSITY OF  
CAPE TOWN

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Mas. Pui

30 May 2012

## **APPENDIX**

### **1. Who can endorse the Charter, and how long is this commitment binding?**

Joining the group of signatories of the ISCN/GULF Charter is open to any organization involved in research or higher education that plans, builds, or maintains multi-building complexes dedicated to these activities anywhere in the world. By signing the Charter, an organization becomes a member of the ISCN Network (see below). The organization's commitments to the Charter are valid until it withdraws its Charter endorsement. It can do so at any time by written notice to the Charter's secretariat provided by the ISCN.

### **2. Who maintains the Charter Process?**

The Charter is maintained in a joint initiative of the Global University Leader Forum (GULF) and the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN). Overall stewardship of the Charter process, and a leading role in disseminating the Charter among leaders in organizations of research and higher education, is provided by GULF, which is convened by the World Economic Forum and brings together presidents from twenty-three universities around the world to address key issues for universities and society at large. The secretariat function for the Charter process is provided by the ISCN, which is under the auspices of Novatlantis, an entity of the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, and facilitates a worldwide experience exchange between senior administration and faculty with responsibility for sustainability on campus. The ISCN's secretariat function includes the support of an active, in-depth knowledge exchange between signatories in the ISCN's four working groups, which focus on campus excellence awards, charter and guideline development, sustainable decision processes, and integrated approaches to facilities, teaching, and research. In addition, the ISCN develops and maintains Charter Guidelines that add further detail to the explanations provided under each of the Charter principles concerning concrete issues that might be considered.

### **3. How does the Charter relate to other sustainable campus commitments?**

The ISCN/GULF Charter complements pre-existing and more regionally or topically focused initiatives on sustainability in higher education. Consistent with the ISCN's mission to act as a global "network-of-networks" on campus sustainability, it aims to enhance, rather than replace, other commitment processes with a framework that is open to all organizations worldwide that want to commit to continuous action and regular, public reporting on campus sustainability. Close cooperation and exchange with complementary initiatives is a key operational principle of the ISCN.

Earlier international initiatives include the 1990 Talloires declaration and the United Nations "Decade for Higher Education for Sustainable Development, 2004-2013," with its related Regional Centres of Excellence and dedicated Chairs at several Universities. To these, the ISCN/GULF Charter adds a strong focus on integration of research, scholarship, teaching, and operations, as well as regular public reporting on self-set goals under the Charter's principles (comparable to the Communication of Progress reports by corporations endorsing the UN Global Compact). It also gives organizations that have endorsed regional or topical networks and commitments - such as the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) or AASHE in North America, Copernicus Campus or HEEPI in Europe, the Tongji Declaration in China, or the IARU Presidents Statement on Campus Sustainability - the opportunity to share their commitments and achievements publicly with an open, global community of colleagues.

### **4. How was the Charter's text developed?**

The Charter is based on discussions in the ISCN's Working Group II and dialogues between ISCN and GULF members on how the charter can best serve as a commitment to sustainability by leading organizations of research and higher education.

The majority of the text was drafted by Ariane König (University of Luxembourg and co-chair of the ISCN WG II), in collaboration with the group's other co-chair Joseph Mullinix (National Univ. Singapore), Bernd Kasemir and Matthew Gardner (Sustainserv), Julie Newman (Yale Univ.), and Roland Stulz (Novatlantis). Strategic inputs by the participants of the "leadership track" at the ISCN/GULF conference in Lausanne, as summarized by Hans-Björn Püttgen and Kristin Becker van Slooten (EPFL) were key for preparing the current version. Inputs by the ISCN members T. Refslund Poulsen (Copenhagen Univ.), D. Brem (ETH Zurich), A. Kildahl (Univ. Hong Kong), M. Adomssent (Univ. Lüneburg), R. Bland (Cornell), F. Gröndahl (KTH Stockholm), N. Heeren and K. Hoeger (ETH Zurich), M. Kunz (ZHAW), S. Lynham (Anglia Ruskin Univ.), A. Meier and W. Natrup (Basler + Partner), P. Obrdlik (Brno Univ.), R. Sigg (Intep), and H. Tan (Tongji Univ.) provided the foundation for developing the present Charter text. Discussions with the other three ISCN Working Groups - led by their co-chairs Claude Siegenthaler (Hosei Univ.), Leith Sharp (Harvard Univ.), Erika Meins (Univ. Zurich), Steve Mital (Univ. Oregon), Katja Brundiars (Arizona Univ.) and Per Lundquist (KTH Stockholm) - also provided valuable contributions in developing this Charter.