Road to a Sustainability Coordinator
South Dakota State University’s Journey to Hiring Their First Sustainability Coordinator

1. Identified Need
Campus’ Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Committee highly recommended hiring a sustainability coordinator.

Upon completion of SDSU’s first Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s STARS report, it was noted that a sustainability coordinator would be vital to advancing campus’ sustainability efforts.

2. Compared Efforts of Peer Institutions
Connecting with our peer institutions allowed us to learn about the duties of and benefits to having a sustainability coordinator on their campuses. In addition, we solicited information regarding where the position was housed, to whom the position reported, the organizational structure of their campus sustainability efforts, and what types of sustainability positions they had. Through this research we could show our administration how we compared to similar universities.

3. Pinpointed Benefits and Supporting Facts
Sustainability trends in higher education were found in Princeton Review’s “2015 College Hopes & Worries Survey” and AASHE’s “State of Sustainability in Higher Education.”

Student input, including how they ranked SDSU’s sustainability efforts and if it was important to them, was documented.

A list of benefits and justifications to having a sustainability coordinator were created.

4. Aligned Position Goals with University Values
In addition to setting out the sustainability coordinator’s duties, it was also important to align the position’s goals with the University’s values. It was specifically highlighted how the sustainability coordinator would help SDSU live the sustainability core values, several of which include sustainability. It was also noted that campus planning and master plans included several sections pertaining to campus sustainability and that many campus departments had vocalized an interest in working with a sustainability coordinator.

5. Drafted Job Description
Using information gathered from other universities and job descriptions, our Human Resources drafted a job description.

6. Proposed to Budget Committee and Approved by the President
Documents outlining the benefits, higher education trends, university alignment, and financial needs were presented to the budget committee. Once approved by the Budget Committee, the President gave the final approval.

7. HIRED OUR FIRST SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR!