

# Sustainability Liaison: Connecting Graduate Students to Sustainability

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Carbon Neutrality Initiative Fellowship

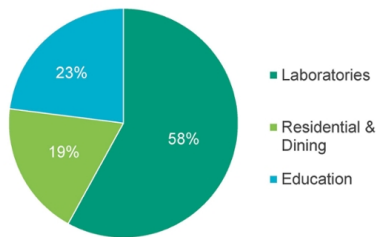


## Motivation

Across the University of California (UC) system, research laboratories use approximately 50% of all campus energy. On the University of California, Riverside (UCR) campus alone, that equates to 126.3 GWh annually. Improving the energy efficiency of laboratories will lend considerable progress towards the ultimate goal of carbon neutrality.

By and large, graduate students are carrying out the majority of the research activities in laboratories on UC campuses. From routine laboratory behaviors, to physical laboratory configurations, to purchasing of new equipment, the decisions and actions of graduate students in labs have the potential to enact widespread reductions of energy related emissions. For these improvements to be realized, an educational intervention is needed to affect the laboratory practices of graduate students.

Energy Usage at UCR



## Collaboration



UCR's Office of Sustainability (OOS) currently administers a Green Lab Certification program, in which laboratory managers can voluntarily request an audit from OOS staff, followed by education and resources to maximize water & energy efficiencies and minimize the carbon footprint of their research activities. OOS is seeking to proliferate the adoption of the Green Lab program, and wishes to reach graduate students researchers.

Concurrently, UCR's Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the governing body for graduate students on campus. Its mission: "to advance, through our advocacy and programs, the academic, social, and physical environment of current and future graduate students at the University of California, Riverside."

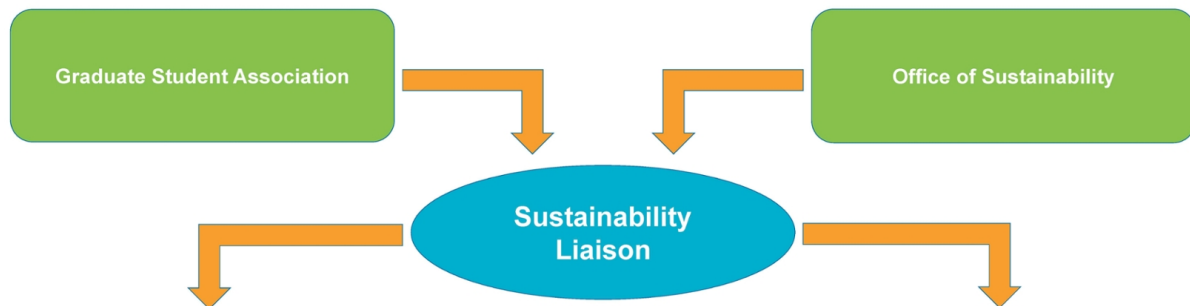
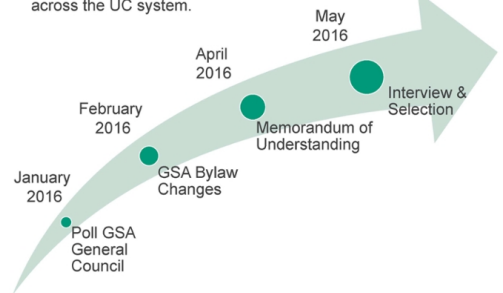
Thus, a mutually beneficial relationship was identified between OOS and GSA to move UCR towards carbon neutrality. A liaison between the two entities would be created to engage the graduate student community as a whole, specifically those working in laboratories, and expand the Green Labs program.

## Implementation

As a joint venture between UCR's Office of Sustainability and Graduate Student Association, the creation of the Sustainability Liaison was implemented by the following actions:

- Poll GSA General Council to gauge support
- Draft & Approve GSA Bylaw changes
- Develop and Publish a Memorandum of Understanding between GSA & OOS
- Interview and Selection Process

All GSA members were eligible to apply for this position, and the Sustainability Liaison Designate will begin the term September 1, 2016. This is the first position of its kind across the UC system.

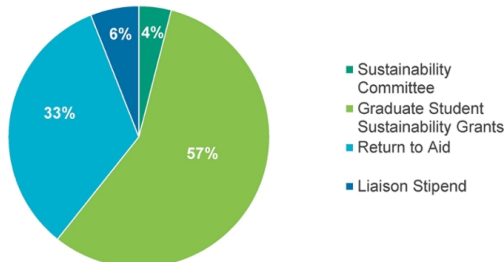


### Responsibilities Under GSA

- Chair new GSA Sustainability Committee
- Increase sustainability of GSA events
- Pass a Graduate Student Sustainability Fund Referendum; the first of its kind across the UC system at the graduate level

A fee of \$1.33/student/quarter would provide the operating budget for the GSA Sustainability Committee, the stipend of the Sustainability Liaison, satisfy return to aid, and provide ~\$9,000/yr for Graduate Student Sustainability Grants. These grants will empower graduate students and their respective organizations to help reduce the environmental impact of the campus through student led projects and initiatives.

Graduate Student Sustainability Fund



### Responsibilities Under OOS

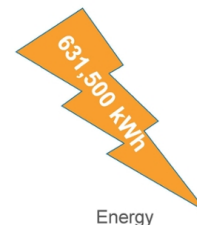
- Expand Green Lab certification program
- Chair the Council of Sustainability Representatives (College/School level)
- Represent the graduate student community on the Chancellor's Sustainability Steering Committee

The Council of Sustainability Representatives, along with OOS, determines the best sustainability practices for different types of work environments (e.g. chemistry lab, computer lab, greenhouse, etc.) The Council and OOS train voluntary Sustainability Officers, which incorporate this knowledge and share it with their lab. This program will produce immediate reductions in UCR's carbon footprint, and because the program addresses behaviors, the effects of more sustainable choices should persist continually.

Annual Savings



Water



Energy



Waste