



Scope of Work

Prospectus: Aligning Sustainability with Leadership Priorities

1 June 2015

Background

Since 2009, operational, administrative, and sustainability staff and faculty from the Big Ten and several additional schools have been meeting on a semi-annual basis to discuss environmental stewardship and sustainability issues. This Big Ten and Friends Environmental Stewardship Group was an outgrowth of the Big Ten Financial Officers group, which had expressed an interest in long-term planning for environmental issues. The meetings have provided a space for status reports, peer guidance, resource sharing, and collaboration on topics ranging from sustainability tracking and reporting to sustainable purchasing. Now in its fifth year, the group now identifying as the Big Ten and Friends Sustainability Group (BTFS), is primed for new collaboration and collective impact.

At the BTFS meeting preceding the 2013 Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Conference in Nashville, the idea emerged to develop a "state of sustainability" report for Big Ten schools and "friend" institutions. A core planning group of sustainability officers began developing the report concept, and a subsequent workshop was held in Portland in October 2014 (again pre-AASHE Conference). This workshop in Portland was attended by 27 people from 18 institutions, and resulted in a significant refinement of the report concept, now envisioned as a prospectus.

Scope

The idea of developing a "snapshot" of Big Ten and Friends sustainability performance has evolved into a collective effort to answer the following question for large research institutions: how do we articulate and measure the value of our sustainability activities in terms of mission-level institutional priorities, at both individual and collective scales? Prospective Higher Education institutional priorities have been initially organized in the following six categories:

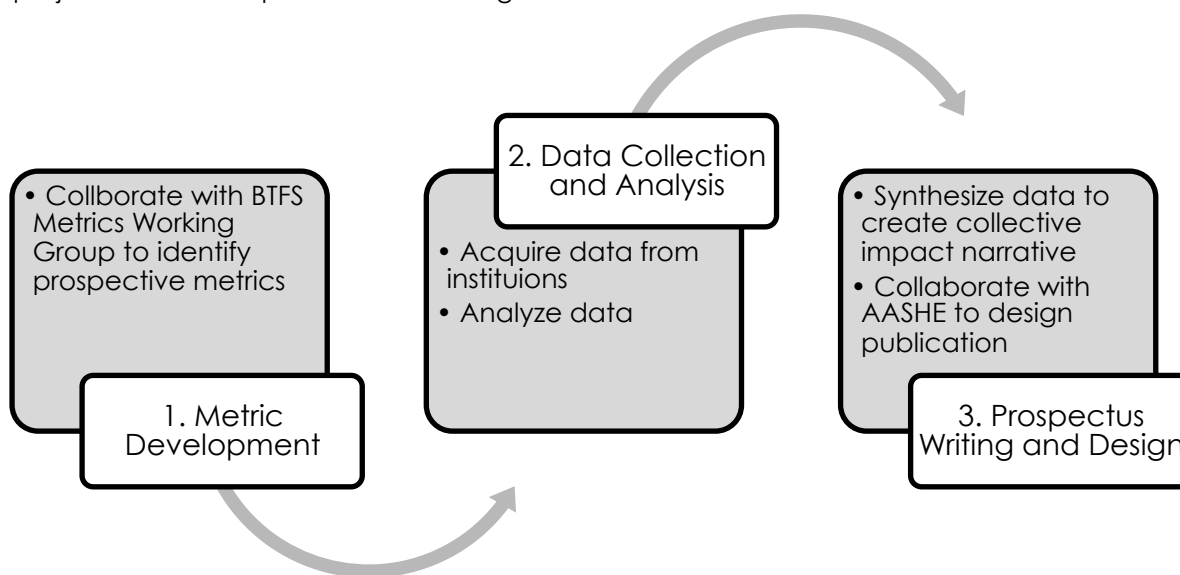
- Delivering educational value
- Catalyzing impactful research
- Supporting financial stewardship and affordability
- Fostering strategic partnerships
- Enhancing diversity and inclusion
- Cultivating leadership and innovation

Ultimately, the ability to articulate the value and impact of our sustainability activities in mission-relevant terms would be a powerful tool in further shaping our efforts, as well as the role of higher education in the societal challenge of sustainability. In addition, the potential power of the BTFS group, as representative of large, public institutions, in shaping national and global approaches is significant. However, extensive discussions have highlighted the need for two things before such an impact statement can be made: 1) preparatory work in establishing mission-relevant expressions of the value created by sustainability activities is needed, and 2) conversations with upper level

administrators so that our institutions can respond appropriately to the statement of impact. We are proposing that both can be achieved through the development of a prospectus that attempts to answer the following questions:

- **Making the Case:** What unique role do public research institutions play in advancing sustainability? When we align sustainability with institutional priorities, what impact becomes visible that was not visible before? Are we assuming the correct priorities?
- **Measuring Success:** Which metrics best capture institutional priorities? Based on the prospective metrics, what is our collective impact?
- **Framing the Conversation:** What are we capable of both individually and collectively? How can we use this information to refine or restructure our strategies and approaches? What untapped potential exists both within our institutions, and collectively across higher education?

The project will be completed in three stages as illustrated below:



We anticipate the project should be completed by late September, with the bulk of time devoted to metric development and data collection and analysis. The timeline below illustrates these steps in more detail. Partner comment periods are integrated throughout the project.

Based on conversations with BTFS stakeholders, we estimate the prospectus will be 6-8 pages in length with four main sections: 1) project purpose, background, and scope; 2) prospective metrics for measuring the value of sustainability based on institutional priorities; 3) initial findings on the collective impact of Big Ten universities based on these metrics; and 4) next steps: convening a conversation about collective impact. The summary section below outlines the anticipated duties of the coordinating organization, consultant, and partner institutions.

Summary

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) will serve as a partner organization for this project, handling financial arrangements with the project consultant, Emilie Rex. Emilie served as Indiana University's assistant director of sustainability for five years before becoming an independent sustainability consultant. This will be her second publication, created with AASHE support. The first, the [Guide to Creating & Managing Sustainability Internship Programs](#), was published in the fall of 2014.

AASHE will contract¹ Emilie to facilitate the creation of the prospectus document, including:

1. Facilitating prospective metric development with the Metrics Working Group,
2. Developing and communicating an efficient system for data collection,
3. Collecting, keeping secure, and analyzing the data,
4. Making data available to all institutional liaisons,
5. Creating a space for and soliciting stakeholder feedback throughout the process,
6. Writing and designing the prospectus, and
7. Developing a web/print presence for the prospectus.

It is anticipated that partner institutions will:

1. Designate a liaison to work with the consultant,
2. Respond to requests for feedback and data,
3. Participate in several phone calls to discuss data provided, and
4. Link to the prospectus through institutional website (if applicable) once completed.

Timeline:

We anticipate the project will begin June 1, 2015 and remain in effect until October 31, 2015. A tentative timeline for the prospectus includes:

- June 15: Metrics sub-committee finalizes metrics
- June 15-July 10: Metric feedback and data collection
- July 10--24: Data analysis
- August 21: First draft completed
- August 24-31: Open comment period
- September 4: Second draft completed
- September 4-11: Design period
- September 14-18: Final comment period
- September 21: Publication complete

Funding:

Each partner institution is asked to make a \$2,000 contribution to the creation of the prospectus. As the coordinating organization, AASHE will collect these funds and distribute them to the consultant as work is completed. AASHE will invoice schools individually. Funds can be paid between May 20, 2015 and July 31, 2015.

Partnerships:

Two organizations have agreed to support this project:

- **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education:** AASHE has graciously agreed to handle financial arrangements for the project, including invoicing partner institutions and paying the consultant.
- **Committee on Institutional Cooperation:** The CIC has informally agreed to help convene a conversation between partner institutions once the prospectus is complete.

¹ Because AASHE will not be involved in content development or review, the prospectus will be released with AASHE support, but not as an official AASHE-partnered publication.