

Sustainability Mission Statement of the Freie Universität Berlin

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Brundtland Report “Our Common Future”, 1987

Preamble

We at the Freie Universität Berlin understand the special responsibility that universities have in ensuring a healthy planet and high quality of life for this and future generations. As a large, internationally oriented academic institution, we see it as our duty to work toward solutions to urgent ecological and societal problems in our research and teaching. We are a leading educational organization that wants to work together with all members of the university community in creating systematic spaces to learn and experience new ways to shape sustainable development. We know that our credibility will be measured by concrete actions to find sustainability solutions in our area of responsibility in campus management.

We emphasize our commitment with the following sustainability mission statement:

SUSTAINABILITY MISSION STATEMENT

The Freie Universität Berlin orients its research, teaching and administration to the principles of sustainable development. As a university consciously aware of its social responsibility, it is our mission to create spaces for thinking and discussion as well as projects that develop strategies and approaches to solve global future issues. We serve as a role model by systematically pooling and expanding our already strong competences within this area in research, teaching and administration.

We seek transparent and continuous sustainability dialogue with the university community, civil society and the public. As an international network university, open-mindedness and a willingness for international cooperation create the core of our institutional self-image.

Sustainable Research & Teaching

We understand sustainable science as the discipline that dedicates itself – using an understanding of the planet’s limited natural resources – to key global ecological, social, economic and cultural issues. This sustainability orientation is symbolised in our teaching through a strategic approach that broadly integrates sustainability issues into the university curriculum and uses the concept of “Education for Sustainable Development”. Sustainable science and education adhere to the

principles of action orientation, participation and inter- and transdisciplinarity. We are open-minded towards new forms of teaching, learning and knowledge transfer.

As a cross-cutting approach, the concept of sustainability stimulates dialogue between different stakeholders and levels of the university. The Freie Universität supports these dialogues and enables all members of the university community to integrate sustainability into their daily life at the university, in their studies or in their job. Sustainability is a visible and natural part of education and of campus life at the Freie Universität.

Sustainable Campus Management

The Freie Universität's administrative processes and operations are also based on the principles of sustainability. We demonstrate this through external certification of our energy and environmental management and an active health management. Climate protection, energy efficiency and a systematic reduction of environmental impacts have long been essential goals for the whole university. We can already prove measurable success with the reduction of our energy consumption by about a quarter since 2000/01. Our goal for the future is to become a climate-neutral university.

We aim to develop exemplary sustainable solutions in our financial, human resources, procurement, mobility and advanced training management as well as in construction and technical infrastructure. This task has technical, organisational and behavioural dimensions and can thus only be attained through joint effort.

Our mission statement draws on the concept of a continuous improvement process. We understand sustainability as a social and discursive process whose success is not only based on professional management, but also on an open culture of discussion as well as mutual respect. The specific measures and implementation mechanisms for the fulfilment of the Sustainability Mission Statement will be the subject of discussion in the steering committee as well as in the sustainability teams in administration and departments regularly.

Berlin, 14 March 2016

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter-André Alt
Präsident der Freien Universität Berlin

Dr. Matthias Dannenberg Ständiger Vertreter
des Kanzlers