



TO: James B. Milliken, Chancellor, U. T. System Administration
FROM: The U. T. System Student Advisory Council
DATE: April 27th, 2020
RE: Compliance with UTS 169

The University of Texas System policy, UTS 169, describes the initiatives that are intended to “provide scope, direction, and expectations underlying U. T. System’s Policy on Sustainable Practices and to identify best practices to facilitate compliance with this policy.” The creation of UTS 169 Sustainability Practices reflects the commitment of the Board of Regents to create a sustainable environment for students, faculty, and staff. The U. T. System Student Advisory Committee is in agreement with, and supports the UTS 169 policy and its requirement that all institutions give sustainable practices increased attention. UTS 169 delegates oversight authority to the Executive Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs and to the President of each institution. In addition, the policy stipulates that actions may be curtailed when budget is constrained, which provides institutions leeway in determining their level of compliance to the Policy.

UTS 169 requires each institution to “...complete an annual plan and report detailing the impact of the institution’s sustainability efforts” (Section 19 of UTS 169). However, the Council was unable to access these annual reports for most institutions, indicating a lack of accountability at the System Administration level. Table 1 lists the U. T. institutions that complied with section 19 of UTS 169 and submitted their reports. Additionally, it is our understanding that U. T. System failed to follow-up with the institutions that did not comply with the UTS 169.

The 2008-2009 Student Advisory Council submitted recommendations regarding environmental sustainability practices to the Board of Regents, and it is alarming that few of the suggestions have been adopted. For example, the 2009 recommendations cite that the UTS 169 policy standards do not “set comprehensive evaluation criteria and quantifiable standards” for U. T. institutions to follow. Thus, one of the Council’s requests was for the U. T. System to create an assessment tool for evaluating each institution in order to gauge and promote progress toward environmentally responsible practices. Evaluative criteria would assess the categories of Administration, Climate Change & Energy, Food & Recycling, Green Infrastructure, and Student Involvement. In its response to the 2008-09 SAC recommendation, System Administration pledged to develop a methodology to “grade” institutions. It is concerning that there has been little to no accountability from the U. T. System to ensure that U. T. institutions are adhering to the outlined sustainability guidelines.

Therefore, the 2019-2020 UT System Student Advisory Council recommends:

1. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs for U. T. System holds each institution accountable for completing an annual report that details their sustainability practices, in accordance with U. T. System policy.
2. U. T. System makes the sustainability reports publicly available, and easily accessible on the website.
3. Section 17 of UTS 169 establishes a sustainability steering committee, and it is our understanding there was previously a systemwide group. We recommend reestablishing a committee including student representation, but at each individual institution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Table 1: List of U. T System Institutions that Complied with the Section 19 of UTS 169 and Submitted Their Reports

Institution	Campus Sustainability Policy Operationalization
U. T. Austin	Yes
U. T. M.D. Anderson Cancer Center	Yes; 2017 strategic plan
U. T. Health Science Center – San Antonio	Yes