

Cultivating a “Green Campus” at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University through a Far-reaching Sustainability Campaign

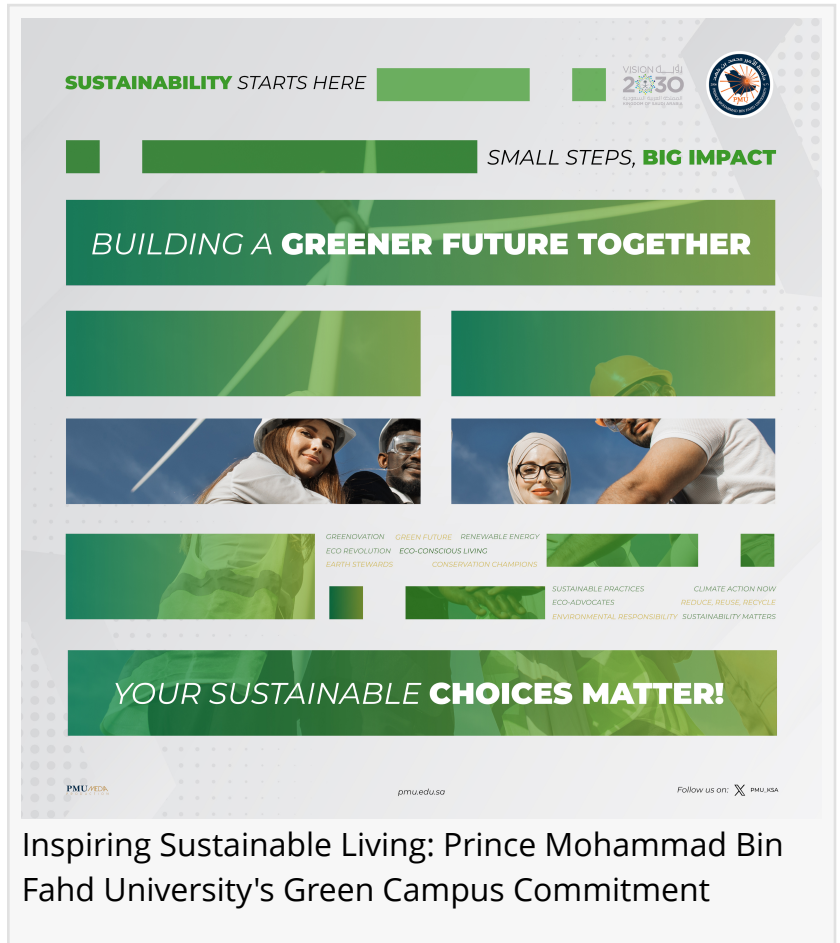
PMU prioritizes sustainability through its "Green Campus" initiative, integrating eco-friendly practices, and fostering academic engagement.

AL-KHOBAR, EASTERN PROVINCE, SAUDI ARABIA, March 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The limits of the Earth are becoming more direly clear as the human population continues to grow and challenges from climate change, pollution, and more loom ever larger.

At Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU), major efforts are underway to slow and even reverse these trends through “green campus” sustainability initiatives. From making buildings more environmentally friendly to increasing energy efficiency and expanding renewable energy utilization, the university seeks to do its part in helping sustain our shared planet.

Critical to these efforts are the academic offerings and research initiatives at PMU. In their teaching and research, faculty are actively engaged in promulgating sustainable development, which seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Overall, the educational environment empowers students to learn about sustainability and to implement it in their careers and communities.

"Sustainability is a key priority at PMU for ensuring that we are responsible stewards of the environment and responsible to each other as global citizens," said Dr. Issa Al Ansari, President of PMU.



Sustainability, in and out of the classroom

Academically, PMU is “greening” the curriculum, incorporating sustainability into various courses and conveying its three essential pillars: environmental protection, social development, and economic growth. Through innovative efforts, the faculty are weaving sustainability concepts into engineering courses, an approach that has been conveyed to the broader world in a recent journal article authored by PMU faculty. Expert faculty are likewise continuing to teach students the most current understanding of the science of global climate change and its impending impacts, while also imparting the knowledge and skills for best-practice sustainability approaches.



A key driver in this regard at PMU is Introduction to Sustainability (SUST1311). The course covers the basic principles of sustainable development, focusing on the consumption of resources such

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We have made significant achievements campus-wide in fostering sustainability, and we expect even more progress in the coming years.”

*Dr. Issa Al Ansari, President
(Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd
University)*

as energy and water and the attendant generation of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. The course uniquely offers field activities, tying into on-campus sustainability awareness campaigns such as the campuswide Sustainability Week observed annually.

Research initiatives at the university are likewise addressing sustainability head-on. In addition to studies published by faculty in international journals, a symposium on new materials and technologies for renewable energy was held last year, featuring research by a PMU faculty member into hydrogen gel for more sustainable aviation,

alongside solar energy advances and decarbonization.

“On the all-important subject of sustainability, PMU is committed to academic excellence for our students and making contributions to the scholarly community,” said Dr. Al Ansari.

An array of impactful efforts

On the physical grounds of PMU itself, green campus sustainability efforts are both far-reaching and highly specific.

At the broad level of campus facilities, PMU became a member last year of the U.S. Green Building Council, the non-profit organization that has developed the international Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ([LEED](#)) green building certification program. Through this affiliation, PMU has undertaken a LEED green campus self-study and analysis. In this way, work has begun on obtaining LEED certification for university buildings via efficient resource use and environmental responsibility in all areas of design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

An important element of obtaining this certification will be upgrading building management systems (BMS) to control energy consumption. A BMS actively monitors building services, including heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, as well as lighting, elevators, pump stations, and so on, offering ample opportunity to slash energy usage. Also contributing to this overarching goal will be the installation of variable frequency drives, or VFDs for short, a kind of motor that efficiently varies the frequency of input electricity.

Other sustainability-gearred changes being implemented are as follows: swapping out the university's internal and external lighting to eco-friendly light emitting diode (LED) technology; establishing one megawatt of localized renewable energy generation by placing solar cells on a campus cafeteria; changing over irrigation systems from standard spray methods to highly efficient drip irrigation; and setting up drinking water fountains to reduce reliance on waste-generating bottled water.

The "go green" efforts extend beyond the buildings themselves and right out into the parking lots. In 2020, PMU became the first university in Saudi Arabia to install electric vehicle charging stations. The fast-charging stations can deliver a full charge in as little as 15 minutes. Everyone at PMU, from university employees to students and visitors, is welcome to use the charging stations to support a growing transition to a new paradigm of passenger vehicles.

"We have already introduced a great deal of sustainability-minded changes and will be introducing many more all over the PMU campus," said Dr. Al Ansari. "The sustainability campaign at PMU reflects the university's commitment to Saudi [Vision 2030](#) and a prosperous world."

Achieving Vision 2030

Vision 2030 is a government program that launched in 2016 and is built on the three pillars of a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation, with goals of diversifying the economy and enhancing health, education, infrastructure, tourism, and other public service sectors. Through its efforts to implement the strategic framework of Vision 2030, PMU is

dedicated to creating a sustainable future for Saudi Arabia. In practice, the implementation is occurring across four domains of energy and campus operations, ecosystems, health, and learning.

Additional focus for this overarching mission has been provided by the [Saudi Green Initiative](#) (SGI). Created in 2021 to follow through on Vision 2030, SGI brings together environmental protection, energy transition, and sustainability programs. In practice, SGI is addressing climate change by boosting Saudi Arabia's use of clean energy and effectively offsetting and reducing emissions.

Another visible and tangible benefit of participating in SGI will be enhancing the campus through the planting of approximately 3,200 trees, helping to cover the university with green spaces. Such spaces not only beautify campus grounds, but also pull carbon dioxide out of the air while providing cooling shade to students and faculty.

Greater recycling and reuse of waste across campus is also proceeding in partnership with a company that specializes in sustainability. Leftover food, for example, along with grass and tree trimmings, will be gathered and converted into natural fertilizer, thus providing nutrients that will support new groves of trees.

From details as small as drinking water fountains to tree placement, scaling up to comprehensive building-wide and campus-wide evaluations of energy thriftiness and resource conservation, the ongoing PMU sustainability efforts are making a difference and are a model for other institutions globally.

"We are excited to do our part in preserving Earth so that future generations may thrive," said Dr. Al Ansari. "We look forward to continuing our drive for sustainability at PMU."

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