

URDANETA CITY UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON CONSERVATION, RESTORATION, AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Policy Code: UCU-ENV-2024-05

Effective Date: January 2024

Approved by: Office of the Acting University President

I. RATIONALE

Urdaneta City University (UCU) upholds its unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability in alignment with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**—particularly **SDG 15: Life on Land**. This policy seeks to ensure the **conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems** associated with the University, including forests, mountain areas, drylands, and other green spaces that contribute to biodiversity and ecological balance.

As a learning institution, UCU recognizes the importance of integrating environmental protection into education, research, and community extension services. This policy strengthens UCU's role in preserving natural resources, mitigating environmental degradation, and fostering a culture of ecological responsibility among its stakeholders.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To promote the **conservation and restoration** of forests, mountain areas, and drylands associated with the University.
2. To ensure the **sustainable use and management** of terrestrial ecosystems in university and community extension areas.
3. To encourage **academic research and community projects** that contribute to biodiversity conservation and land rehabilitation.
4. To support the **long-term ecological resilience** of natural environments surrounding UCU.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the **Urdaneta City University community** including faculty, staff, students, and partner organizations engaged in academic, research, and extension activities within or associated with terrestrial ecosystems managed or influenced by the University.

IV. POLICY GUIDELINES

A. Conservation and Protection of Terrestrial Ecosystems

1. UCU shall **maintain and protect green spaces** within campus premises and affiliated areas, ensuring that these serve as models of biodiversity and ecological balance.
2. The University shall **adopt environmentally responsible land-use practices** in all its operations and projects.
3. Encroachment, illegal logging, or any form of destructive activity within forested or vegetated areas under UCU jurisdiction shall be **strictly prohibited**.

B. Restoration and Rehabilitation Initiatives

1. UCU shall implement **tree planting, reforestation, and land rehabilitation programs** in collaboration with local government units, barangay councils, and environmental organizations.
2. Priority shall be given to the **rehabilitation of degraded or eroded land** within and around university extension areas.
3. The **Center for Community Development and Extension Services (CCDES) and Environmental Management Unit (EMU)** shall oversee the planning and monitoring of restoration activities.

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C. Sustainable Use and Resource Management

1. Any utilization of land, soil, or forest resources for academic or research purposes must be conducted under **strict environmental protocols** to prevent degradation.
2. UCU shall promote **sustainable farming, permaculture, and agroforestry practices** in its community extension programs.
3. The University shall encourage the use of **native and endemic plant species** in landscaping and reforestation activities.

D. Education, Research, and Community Engagement

1. Environmental education and land conservation principles shall be **integrated into academic curricula and research initiatives**.
2. The University shall **partner with government agencies (DENR, LGUs) and NGOs** for the implementation of conservation projects and awareness campaigns.
3. Students and faculty shall be encouraged to **participate in outreach and extension programs** promoting sustainable land management and biodiversity protection.

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Office of the Acting University President:** Provides policy direction and ensures institutional compliance.
- **Chief Operating Officer and Vice Presidents:** Supervise implementation across academic and administrative sectors.
- **Environmental Management Unit (EMU):** Leads conservation, monitoring, and data reporting initiatives.
- **CCDES:** Coordinates community partnerships and extension activities related to ecosystem restoration.
- **College Deans and Student Organizations:** Promote participation in sustainability programs and advocacy campaigns.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- The EMU shall conduct **annual assessments of terrestrial ecosystem conditions** associated with UCU.
- Reports on conservation progress, reforestation outcomes, and biodiversity data shall be submitted to the University Administration.
- Continuous improvement measures shall be implemented based on evaluation findings.

VII. PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

- **First Violation:** Written warning and environmental seminar participation.
- **Second Violation:** Community service in reforestation or clean-up programs.
- **Third Violation:** Administrative sanction or suspension from environmental project participation.

VIII. EFFECTIVITY

This policy shall take effect immediately upon approval and dissemination to all Urdaneta City University stakeholders. Continuous review and enhancement shall be conducted to ensure long-term sustainability and alignment with national and global environmental goals.

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