

Next Generation Sustainability

Here at MIT, we have set out to establish a Next Generation Campus Sustainability Platform

What do we mean by this?

In 1990, institutions of higher education were called upon by an international group of leading [university presidents](#) to align colleges and universities with the underlying principles and essential competencies necessary for sustainable development. These thought leaders were able to envision the unique niche that higher education fills in shaping and responding to these unprecedented global circumstances via research, education, experimentation, innovation and the operational performance of our campuses.

Nearly twenty-five years later, it is time to take stock, ask important questions, and assess the campus sustainability models and subsequent impacts that have taken place since 1990 in an effort to build the most impactful models moving forward. Examples of these pressing questions are:

- Have the incremental changes on our campuses (e.g.. biodiesel in our buses, composting, car sharing) led to the transformative models that are required to be sustainable?
- Are the targets and frameworks that have been established, ranging from greenhouse gas emissions to water and waste goals, aligned with the science of these systems?
- Have we reached a tipping point of successes to empower our engineers and designers to integrate cutting edge technologies into aging systems and new designs?

These are merely a sampling of the types of questions that we need to ask to ensure that we are committed to continuous improvement as a field and the advancement of a transformative model for sustainability moving forward. We need to couple the findings to these questions with another set of questions to produce the highest impact and cutting edge model.

- How can future energy needs be met in a world that projects a 40% increase in demand by 2030?
- How can we ensure access to clean water for a growing population in 2030 when in 2014, 1/5 of the population lives in water scarce regions?

- Are we prepared to ensure food security and feed a population of 8.9 billion people in 2050?

We are committed to exploring these questions as we launch the Institute's Office of Sustainability. We encourage you to check back often as we leverage the collective intelligence of the MIT community to seek answers to these questions, ask new and better ones, and build a campus sustainability platform that is informed by the next generation of solutions.