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## We're Not Like Those Crazy Hippies: The Dynamics of Jurisdictional Drift in Externally Mandated Occupational Groups

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**Abstract.** External actors often advocate for organizations to address a wide range of societal concerns, such as diversity, equality, and sustainability, and organizations have frequently responded by establishing new positions to oversee these demands. However, calls to address social problems can be broad and unrelated to an organization's primary objectives, so the external mandates that underpin these new positions do not easily translate to clear task jurisdictions inside organizations. Furthermore, previous studies have found that the tasks that are pursued by occupations established through external pressure often diverge from what external groups had envisioned for these new roles. This study addresses the question of why this divergence occurs. It does so by examining the formation of the occupational group of sustainability managers in higher education. Through fieldwork, interviews, and analyses of longitudinal archival data, this paper uncovers the dynamics of jurisdictional drift and shows how jurisdictional drift unfolded first through sustainability managers' confrontation of their jurisdictional ambiguity, and then through their efforts at performing neutrality, in particular by trading external Politics for internal politics and trading values for standards. Additionally, it uncovers how the sustainability managers attempted to partially realign their jurisdiction with their external mandate, but did so in a concealed manner. This study illuminates the process of how jurisdictions can come to drift away from mandates, highlights the importance of studying how mandates are translated into jurisdictions, and also furthers our understanding of the formation of externally mandated occupational groups.

Organizations face ongoing pressures to respond to societal concerns, such as those related to equality, safety, and climate change, and one response that has been taken in the face of these pressures is the creation of new roles that have theoretically been established to address these concerns. In fact, external pressures has laid the foundation for the creation of numerous occupational groups, including affirmative action officers (Edelman et al. 1991), diversity officers (Dobbin et al. 2007), ethics officers (Chandler 2014), recycling managers (Lounsbury 1998), and corporate social responsibility managers (Risi and Wickert 2017). However, despite external groups' hopes that these occupations will become agents of change within their organizations, most studies of occupations that have originated in this way have found that their pursuits frequently fall short of what external groups had envisioned for their work (Berrey 2015, Edelman 1992, Edelman et al. 2011, Edelman et al. 1991, Kalev et al. 2006). Consequently, organizations often fail to address complex social problems, such as diversity, equality, and sustainability, even when they establish roles centered on these concerns.

In this regard, there is often a divergence between the mandate that underpins these types of occupational groups and their ultimate jurisdiction (i.e., the set of tasks that are under their purview (Abbott 1988)). While a mandate is the shared understanding of the purpose for an occupational group (Hughes 1958), I define an "external mandate" as one that has been articulated primarily by individuals or entities outside of an organization. These mandates can be founded on regulatory changes (Dobbin, 2009, Dobbin & Kelly, 2007, Edelman, 1992, Kellogg, 2009), but they often originate from external groups such as social movements that call on organizations to alter their policies and practices to address social problems (Briscoe and Gupta 2016, Briscoe and Safford 2008, King and Soule 2007, McDonnell et al. 2015, Soule 2012, Weber et al. 2009). While an external mandate establishes the justification for a new role, it does not specify the day-to-day work of the resultant occupational group; that is, it does not define an occupational group's jurisdiction. Thus, the boundaries of these groups' jurisdictions need to be negotiated across and within organizations in order to translate external pressures into internal pursuits. Exactly how this translation occurs, however, remains unclear; most previous studies of occupational formation have focused on

mandate construction (Fayard et al. 2016, Nelsen and Barley 1997) rather than on how mandates translate to jurisdictions. For instance, Dobbin's (2009: 3) study of personnel managers, whose positions were established from the civil rights movement and ensuing legislation, describes the transition between the articulation of the personnel managers' mandate and their work as a brief handoff, writing that the new occupational group took "the baton and were running the next leg of the relay on their own." Describing this transition as a momentary baton pass obscures what is likely a much more complex process. Therefore, the question remains of how external mandates are translated into an occupational groups' daily pursuits and why their resultant jurisdictions often come to diverge from what external groups had envisioned for their roles.

This paper investigates the above question through the case of sustainability managers in higher education. This setting provides a revelatory case (Ragin and Becker 1992, Yin 1994), as sustainability manager positions in colleges and universities were established largely due to external pressure to expand organizational "responsibilities" in this area. Without a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities, the new sustainability managers engaged in a years-long process to define their jurisdiction. Through examining data from participant observations, interviews, and extensive longitudinal archives, I find that the sustainability managers experienced what I term "jurisdictional drift," whereby their jurisdiction diverged from their mandate.

Importantly, in this paper I identify the processes that underpinned this jurisdictional drift: *confronting jurisdictional ambiguity* and *performing neutrality*. Through the latter process, of performing neutrality, sustainability managers cut a substantial number of tasks from their early conceptualizations of their jurisdiction. They justified these cuts through two activities: 1) *trading external Politics for internal politics*, and 2) *trading values for standards*. The tasks that they eliminated were primarily related to social justice issues. In the eyes of the movement that had advocated for the sustainability manager positions, social justice was seen as equally as important as environmental concerns. But sustainability managers were concerned with being labelled as politically-motivated or subjective, and therefore they included elements

in their jurisdiction that they judged to be neutral (such as efficiency measures, building standards, and changes in energy sources), while cutting task areas such as same-sex partner benefits, faculty racial and gender diversity, pay equity, and endowment transparency. These cuts resulted in a jurisdiction that drifted substantially away from the sustainability managers' external mandate. However, I also find that after jurisdictional drift had largely occurred, the sustainability managers attempted to realign elements of their work with their mandate; they did so, however, in a covert fashion, and therefore the final process that I observe in this study is *concealing jurisdictional expansion*.

In uncovering the processes that resulted in jurisdictional drift and attempted realignment, this paper details how occupational groups that are established from external mandates, which are often based on calls to address broad and endemic social problems, translate those mandates into practicable work inside their organizations. As such, this research helps to explain how and why the resultant jurisdictions for these types of occupations often fall short of what external groups had envisioned for their roles.

## **OCCUPATIONAL CREATION AND EXTERNAL MANDATES**

### **Mandates and Jurisdictions in Occupational Creation**

Most studies of occupational groups have focused on how established groups navigate change—for example, when they encounter technological shifts (Barley 1986, Nelson and Irwin 2014), regulatory change (Kellogg 2009, 2011a,b; Wiedner et al. 2020), or peer-driven pressures (Howard-Grenville et al. 2017). While questions of change within established occupations are fundamental to understanding occupational evolution, the question of how occupational groups form in the first place has received much less attention. This is despite the fact that, as Nelsen and Barley (1997: 619) aptly asserted, “no question could be more central to the study of work than how new occupations arise and acquire jurisdictions.”

Within those studies that have answered this call to examine occupational formation, the concepts of “mandate” and “jurisdiction” have been central to their theorizing and analyses. A mandate provides an occupational group with “the proper conduct with respect to the matters that concern their work” (Hughes,

1958: 287). Mandates justify why a new occupational group should be created to carry out work that is not being attended to, thereby establishing what Abbott (1988) termed a “vacancy” for a new group. Furthermore, mandates provide the appropriate “modes of thinking and belief” (Hughes, 1958: 287) that are embodied by those doing the work. In this way, they serve as the basis of a group’s ability to stake a claim over a certain domain of tasks (Nelsen and Barley 1997).

Scholars have identified numerous sources for occupational mandates (Anteby et al. 2016), including regulatory change (Edelman et al. 1991), technological shifts (Elias 2007, Kahl et al. 2016), jurisdictional conflict (Kellogg 2014), and the establishment of paid work that was previously carried out by volunteers (Nelsen and Barley 1997). Past studies have also focused on how individuals in nascent occupational groups can shape their mandate. For example, Nelsen and Barley (1997) found that early emergency medical technicians (EMTs) worked to change the culture surrounding the provision of emergency response services from a primarily volunteer-staffed service to one based on an emerging occupational group that was seen as deserving of remuneration and role formalization. Fayard et al. (2016) argue that service designers constructed a mandate for their group by distinguishing themselves from other occupations not only in terms of offering a different skill set, but also by emphasizing that they held a different set of values. Overall, scholarship on mandates has tended to focus less on what, exactly, an occupational group does, and more on the justifications for why a group should exist.

The concept of jurisdiction, on the other hand, refers to the day-to-day work of professions or occupations, or the set of tasks that are within a group’s purview. As Abbott (1988:64) observes, a “jurisdiction is a simple claim to control certain kinds of work.” The literature also emphasizes that for professions, jurisdictional claims, or the legitimate claim to control an area of work, are seen as arising from the abstract knowledge and expertise that a profession has built over time. Under these circumstances, as Abbott (1988:64) further notes, “there is usually little debate about what the tasks are or how to construct them.” However, with occupational groups, which tend to rely less on claims of possessing abstract knowledge, it is less clear how tasks come to fall within their jurisdiction. This is especially true for new

occupational groups. And, one can argue, jurisdictional claims would potentially be even more unclear for occupations that are created to attend to social, rather than organizational, problems.

The general approach to studying jurisdictions has been to focus on “who” controls certain task areas by investigating the relationships between different groups in order to understand how they come to dominate certain areas of work (Anteby et al. 2016, Bechky 2003, Chown 2020, DiBenigno 2018) and leave others by the wayside (Huising 2015, Kellogg 2014). Yet, for new occupational groups, and especially those asked to address social problems, there is ambiguity regarding what tasks they should even attempt to pursue. As these new groups set about the process of developing expertise in response to new mandates, they need to determine which tasks should be associated with their nascent occupation. This process has less to do with the “who” and more to do with the “what” of jurisdictions—the content and boundaries of jurisdictions for new occupations. Thus, it requires examining how new occupational groups translate their mandates into jurisdictions. Furthermore, it is important to consider how this process unfolds at the field level. While many studies have highlighted how key elements of occupational construction are negotiated within organizations, where individuals in new roles craft identities, carve out jurisdictions, and structure tasks on-the-ground (Bechky 2003, 2011, Huising 2015, Kellogg 2014, Nelsen and Barley 1997), there are also essential processes that occur at the field level (Fayard et al. 2016, Kahl et al. 2016), whereby occupational group members interact with one another across organizations. Examining processes at this level has been an invaluable approach to understanding the evolution of occupational groups such as service designers (Fayard et al. 2016), chemists (Howard-Grenville et al. 2017), and production planners (Kahl et al. 2016). Hence, in this study I take a field-level approach to understand the process of translating mandates into jurisdictions for sustainability managers.

Despite the theoretical centrality of mandates and jurisdictions in studies of occupational formation, these two concepts have rarely been examined in relation to one another. Moreover, a common assumption is that new occupational groups mainly focus their efforts on shaping their mandate, which then sets the direction for their jurisdiction. For example, in Nelson and Barley’s (1984) aforementioned study on EMTs,

the authors stress that mandates are essential for gaining the institutional resources that then enable occupational groups to compete in jurisdictional battles. Similarly, although Fayard et al. (2016) recognize that “gaining an occupational mandate,” and “legitimizing and solidifying an occupational jurisdiction” are two different “stages” of occupational emergence, their study focuses exclusively on how service designers constructed their mandate. They then describe the jurisdiction as flowing from the mandate rather than investigating it as a process of translation: “once a mandate is established, practitioners’ sense of solidarity and identity gives them moral authority to claim that their ways of conduct and thinking related to the work are appropriate and relevant” (Fayard et al. 2016: 272). While a mandate may indeed do these things—bring about institutional resources, provide a sense of solidarity and identity, legitimate a mode of thinking, and define how a new occupational group should act—it does not mean that it defines what, exactly, an occupational group should do, or the set of tasks that is within their jurisdiction.

There are reasons to question the assumed innate connection between mandates and jurisdictions, and the idea that there is little work required to connect the two together. For instance, when mandates are ambiguous or based on loosely defined terms that are under construction themselves (e.g., mandates to manage “diversity,” “equality,” or “sustainability”), it may be unclear what tasks the occupations built on these mandates can claim. Furthermore, as noted, there are numerous cases where jurisdictions diverge significantly from mandates, as has been found with roles like affirmative action and diversity officers (Edelman et al. 1991, Kalev et al. 2006); to date, there is no comprehensive explanation of how or why this is the case. Therefore, this paper goes beyond questions of mandate construction to investigate processes of mandate translation. In the following section, I describe how previous work provides the theoretical foundation for considering the role of external mandates in the creation of new occupational groups.

### **External Mandates in Occupational Creation**

Although external mandates are a common route for occupational creation (see, e.g., Dobbin (2009), Edelman et al. (1991), and Lounsbury (2001)), organizational theory has not sufficiently problematized how this type of origin might affect occupational construction. Indeed, even though Abbott

(1988) recognized that both technological and social changes can create openings for new occupations, numerous studies have examined the role of technological change while relatively few have focused on social changes, which are often brought to the fore through pressure on organizations from external groups (Margolis and Walsh 2003).

In two prominent studies of occupations created from external mandates, Edelman et al. (1991) and Dobbin (2009) find that the occupational groups they study—affirmative action officers and personnel managers, respectively—faced an extreme amount of ambiguity regarding their jurisdictions. Both occupations were founded largely in response to legal changes; nevertheless, it was unclear what, exactly, individuals in these new positions were supposed to do in their day-to-day work to remedy inequality in their organizations. Dobbin (2009) notes that most personnel managers ended up pursuing prototypical professionalization ambitions, engaging in practices that did not always align with their mandate but which furthered their professional goals. Edelman et al. (1991) find that the affirmative action officers' jurisdictional boundaries were unclear and that they often lacked authority over tasks that conformed to their external mandate. Yet, these authors attributed the variation in the degree to which affirmative action officers implemented mandate-aligned work to individual-level differences. The scholars emphasized that differences in the degree of fidelity to the mandate could be understood through individual strategies and attributes such as personal ambitions and appetite for conflict. As such, their study importantly highlights the challenge of ambiguity that is brought about from external mandates. However, its focus on the level of the individual obscures processes that may have also been unfolding at the field level, across organizations, that would have resulted in entire occupational jurisdictions constructed around a similar set of tasks. In fact, over time the occupational groups of affirmative action officers and diversity managers eventually came to pursue a similar set of activities in their work, including implicit bias training and mentoring programs (Kalev et al. 2006). It is worth noting that past studies' neglect of the role of field-level processes is probably due not to a lack of interest among researchers but rather to a lack of suitable data (i.e., data that enable one to trace the construction of jurisdictional boundaries over time across organizations).

While affirmative action officers and personnel managers were established in part through regulatory change, it is likely that new occupational groups established mainly via an external mandate without a legal underpinning face even more ambiguity regarding how to translate external demands to internal practices. Therefore, it is also worth considering external mandates that arise in the absence of legal changes, which I recognize as originating primarily from social movements. Although Abbott (1988:149) briefly touched on this idea, noting that “social movements often identify problems, which later become potential expert work,” this research agenda has not been sufficiently pursued. Social movements work largely outside of institutional systems to change existing practices that they view as contributing to wider social problems (McAdam and Snow 1997). Movements have played and continue to play a fundamental role in the creation of new occupational groups such as recycling officers (Lounsbury 1998) and corporate social responsibility managers (Risi and Wickert 2017), which are not underpinned by regulatory changes but have become commonplace in many organizations.

In sum, in order to understand why occupations formed in response to external mandates often diverge from, or fall short of, the hopes that external groups had for their roles (see, e.g., Kalev et al. (2006) and Edelman (2016)), we must clarify the processes by which their jurisdictions become established in the first place. Given the lack of existing scholarship on external mandates and on the relationship between mandates and jurisdictions in general, in the following I examine the case of sustainability managers in higher education to further our understanding of these processes.

### **RESEARCH SETTING: SUSTAINABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In the late 1990s, college and university students in North America worked alongside non-profit organizations in what they termed the “campus sustainability movement” to advocate for higher education organizations to address an array of social, environmental, and economic concerns (Eagan and Orr 1992, Lounsbury 1998). The movement’s efforts ultimately resulted in the creation of new positions to manage this so-called “sustainability.” In 2004, the first sustainability coordinators were hired by Dartmouth

College and Oregon State University. The following year, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology hired a sustainability director, as did Yale University, and numerous schools soon followed suit. Over the next decade, the occupational group of sustainability managers grew substantially within higher education. By 2016, there were an estimated 2,000 sustainability professionals in the sector in the United States and Canada. This growth was marked by major milestones, such as the creation of a professional association in 2005, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

AASHE became the central organizing body for sustainability managers in higher education, hosting online conversations and annual conferences and facilitating the creation of a standardized assessment tool called the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). The STARS tool guided sustainability managers' work and gradually became the standard for practicing and assessing sustainability in higher education. By 2016, STARS was being used by over 400 colleges and universities, and the data collected through STARS were being fed into green school rankings published by The Princeton Review and the Sierra Club. In the following sections, I present and then examine multiple sources of field-level data that enable me to trace the process by which the jurisdiction of sustainability managers (as reflected through changes in STARS) was constructed and changed over time.

## DATA AND METHODS

I adopt a field-level approach that combines data from observations, interviews, and archival sources. Table 1 outlines a chronology of the key developments within the occupational group of sustainability managers and the contours of the data that support the analyses for each period.

-----Insert Table 1 about here-----

### Observations

I first sought to identify the specific tasks that sustainability managers carried out in their day-to-day work. Hence, I started my data collection with participant observation (Emerson et al. 2011). I observed a sustainability manager at a private university in the United States, spending 50 hours in the field over four

months in 2015. After each interaction, which lasted between 2–6 hours, I recorded field notes. Observations included participating in a waste audit, attending faculty meetings to discuss integrating sustainability into the curriculum, observing trainings with student “eco-reps” who encourage their peers to adopt sustainable living habits, and witnessing discussions of how to add sustainability requirements to a contract for a new food supplier. Each week I also wrote memos to begin the iterative process of understanding and analyzing the observations while continuing to gather data (Emerson 2001, Emerson et al. 2011). In addition to this participant observation, I attended the 2016 AASHE conference, the largest regular gathering for sustainability managers in higher education.

Based on these observations and in conjunction with examining the literature on occupational formation, I began to question how the sustainability manager positions first came about as well as how these managers ultimately focused on the task areas that comprised their work. In particular, there were some issues that seemed, from an outsider perspective, to be “sustainability issues,” that the managers were not engaged in formally, while others that seemed less aligned with sustainability formed a key focus of their work. I therefore decided to gather interview and archival data to help me understand these processes.

## **Interviews**

Between 2015 and 2017, I conducted 29 semi-structured interviews with sustainability managers in higher education in North America in order to understand the history of their roles and task areas. I recruited participants through a purposeful sampling strategy (Strauss and Corbin 1998) to comprise a diverse group of colleges and universities that varied based on geography, student body size, and school type (e.g., private, public, religious, Ivy League, etc.). The interviewee characteristics are shown in Table 2. I received a 69% response rate and all but one of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Two-thirds of the interviewees were women and one-third were men, which aligns with the gender identity of survey respondents in AASHE’s biannual occupational group survey. On average, interviewees had been working in campus sustainability for eight years.

-----Insert Table 2 about here-----

The interviews lasted an average of one hour each and were semi-structured, enabling me to capture consistent information across participants but also encouraging interviewees to share information beyond the questionnaire. The interview questionnaire focused on five areas: (1) participants' background; (2) history of their position and the occupational group; (3) individual and occupational identity; (4) organizational structure and task areas; and (5) efforts and strategies for change. When I asked participants why they engaged in certain task areas and not others, they frequently brought up how STARS guided their work. For example, interviewees reported that they followed the tasks outlined in STARS, that their committees were structured according to the areas in STARS, and that they set goals by first consulting STARS. STARS had also been an important resource in guiding the work in my participant observation setting. Through these accounts, I recognized the disciplining nature of STARS in defining the jurisdictional boundaries for sustainability managers. I therefore set out to collect archival data that would enable me to trace how STARS was created, including the process by which decisions were made about what would fall within and beyond this occupational group's jurisdiction.

### **Archival Data**

Based on sustainability managers' accounts of the role of STARS in reflecting and shaping their work, I gathered archival documents on the creation of STARS, as outlined in Table 1. Importantly, I was able to retrieve previous versions of documents and websites through the Internet Archive, a large-scale non-profit digital library that captures websites and their contents over time. Like all archives (digital and physical), the Internet Archive is not comprehensive, but it was an essential tool for accessing documents during my period of interest, as websites and online activity facilitated the development of STARS but these sites have been dismantled or updated over time. The creation of STARS began in 2006 and the first full version of the tool was released in 2009. As shown in the chronology in Table 1, between 2006 and 2009, there were three drafts of STARS, with two periods for comment. Every time a new version of STARS was drafted, there was a round of review whereby hundreds of nascent sustainability managers gave anonymous feedback on the proposed task areas that would be in their jurisdiction. Through this

process they negotiated 122 proposed indicators to determine what should be added, what should be eliminated, and what should be changed. A committee of sustainability managers and AASHE representatives then took these reviewer comments into consideration, made changes to the draft, and released an updated version for comment. This process was repeated until the occupational group finally settled on an operational version of STARS in 2009. I collected all of the versions of STARS as well as the full archive of 1,347 comments from sustainability managers on the drafts. The STARS data are unusually valuable in that they enable me to trace jurisdictional change longitudinally at the level of the occupational group, uncovering processes that clarify how work gets structured but that have proved challenging to study to date.

### **Analyses**

I began my analyses by reconstructing the historical trajectory of the establishment and evolution of the occupational group of sustainability managers through the archival documents, following the tenets of organizational archival research as outlined by Ventresca and Mohr (2002). I first read all of the archival material in chronological order to understand the full temporal arc of how the occupational group was established and how its jurisdiction was defined over time. Throughout this process, I paid particular attention to actors, settings, and contestation in the texts.

After seeing this historical trajectory, I returned to the archival documents that allowed me to trace the development of sustainability managers' jurisdiction through the multiple iterations of STARS and the comments on each draft. I then coded the 1,347 occupational group reviewers' comments, classifying each one according to the following considerations: (1) whether it suggested adding, eliminating, or changing a task area in STARS; (2) if yes to the first consideration, the task area that it addressed; and (3) the justification that was given for making the change. Next, I applied a second round of coding to the justifications, classifying them according to the various ways by which the occupational group members argued for drawing jurisdictional boundaries to determine what should be "in" and what should be "out." After coding the comments, I examined the result of the occupational group members' comments, coding

each proposed task area in the drafts of STARS to see if each one was ultimately (1) eliminated, (2) relatively unchanged, (3) strengthened, or (4) weakened through the review process.

In concert with analyzing the archival documents, I also analyzed my field notes and interviews. I employed an inductive, code-building approach to my field notes and interview transcriptions that followed the tenets of iterative coding from grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 2009). In the first stage, I used in vivo coding, which captures phrases verbatim (Miles et al. 2013). Through this first-stage analysis, I recognized that the interviews and field notes could best illuminate two key areas related to my research question, namely, (1) the construction of the mandate for sustainability managers and (2) how sustainability managers responded to their jurisdictional constraints, especially when confronting tasks that aligned with their mandate but were outside of their formal jurisdiction. I therefore focused on these two areas in the subsequent stage of my analysis, in which I applied descriptive codes to the text.

### **FINDINGS: JURISDICTIONAL DRIFT AND ATTEMPTED REALIGNMENT**

As I describe in the following, the processes of jurisdictional drift and attempted realignment occurred through three steps, as shown in Figure 1. The first two steps are confronting jurisdictional ambiguity and performing neutrality, and these both relate to how jurisdictional drift unfolded. The step of confronting jurisdictional ambiguity shows how sustainability managers recognized and began to respond to the fact that their external mandate resulted in a high degree of ambiguity regarding their jurisdiction. After this recognition, sustainability managers began to build and shape their jurisdiction, and they did so by engaging in performing neutrality. Through performing neutrality, the sustainability managers cut a substantial number of tasks from their early conceptualizations of their jurisdiction, justifying these changes through two activities: (1) trading external Politics (i.e., particular political ideologies, signified with a capital “P”) for internal politics, and (2) trading values for standards. The tasks that they cut were primarily related to social justice issues. According to the movement that advocated for sustainability manager positions, social justice issues were seen as equally important as environmental concerns. However, sustainability managers were concerned about being seen as too political or values-driven, and therefore

included elements in their jurisdiction that they judged to be neutral, while cutting task areas that they feared would make them look biased or subjective.

These cuts resulted in a substantial jurisdictional drift away from the sustainability managers' external mandate. After this drift had largely taken place, there was attempted realignment of the jurisdiction with the mandate, and this process was underpinned by a step that I refer to as concealing jurisdictional expansion. In the following sections, I describe each of these processes and their underlying activities in greater detail.

-----Insert Figure 1 about here-----

## **Confronting Jurisdictional Ambiguity**

### ***Inheriting and interpreting the external mandate***

Across the majority of the interviews, sustainability managers attributed their mandate to the work of a pre-existing movement, organized in large part by students who advocated that higher education organizations should expand their “responsibilities” to encompass new social and environmental concerns and hire individuals to oversee this broad new area of work. For example, in response to the question “Tell me about the origin of your role. Why was it created?”, two sustainability managers who were among the first to hold their positions answered, “the students had been calling for a sustainability person for a while” (1009) and “the students had been advocating for it” (1011). Another said, “So before I came there was a student group called ECOS. I have been made to understand that ECOS actually advocated for an Office of Sustainability [here]” (1001). Additionally, one sustainability manager recounted the process of events at her school, saying:

The students were really pushing for this. The students wanted to see sustainability happen, and they had this huge conference when the former president was here. And that is what started a lot of the movement. It was like okay, these are the things that we can do, here's some of the big picture objectives. And the students went to the new president, and he said, “Okay, make the position...” It was student driven, and they pitched it to [the president]. He signed off on it and basically said, “Facilities management, go find a person.” (1034)

One of the sustainability managers I interviewed had worked at an Ivy League school for almost two decades and had witnessed how this movement had changed the expectations and role structure within her organization. She had initially worked in environmental compliance, but she explained how pressure from the sustainability movement had pushed the organization beyond a concern with compliance and toward an expanded set of voluntary commitments related to a wider range of issues in the name of sustainability:

Around the Kyoto Protocol, when it was being discussed at the international forum, there were students on campus who formed a student activist group called Kyoto Now .... They convinced the administration to be the first private entity to independently commit to the Kyoto Protocol. So it took off from there ... through that we created our first professional sustainability position here. (1018)

This individual left the compliance office to become the organization's first director of campus sustainability. While the compliance office still existed, it mainly focused on adhering to regulations, while her new position in sustainability represented a broader mandate to pursue tasks beyond those required by regulation.

Many of the sustainability managers also told me how the mandate was constructed for their occupational group as a whole (not just their individual roles), recounting detailed narratives that reflected a shared understanding across organizations that the campus sustainability movement had primarily articulated their mandate. For example, one of the first sustainability managers in higher education in the United States said that a "movement was definitely foundational in terms of motivating and designing the early higher education moves into sustainability" (1003). Another concurred, saying that sustainability manager positions came about due to efforts from "a grassroots movement, probably around the 90s" (1007). Archival data from the time also support the role that the sustainability movement played in establishing this occupational group. In 1992, the National Wildlife Federation, a key player in the campus sustainability movement, advocated for the creation of sustainability manager roles, as noted in the following:

...student-based initiatives are not without their shortcomings. Limited by their two- or four-year stay on campus, students are often rendered powerless when it comes to shaping campus policy. Thus, they gravitate toward projects that offer short-term results. Administrators are needed to infuse the programs with elements of long-range planning. (Keniry and Trelstad 1992: 120)

Drawing on similar justifications, in 2005, students presented their administration at Carleton College with a report advocating for the creation of a full-time sustainability coordinator, writing:

We have sought, and continue to seek, permanent college-supported transformations that will turn the campus into an ecologically responsible and literate community. While many student groups work towards this same end, we have recognized that their efforts have been ineffective, potentially duplicative, and fleeting—once a leader graduates, the movement tends to quickly die out...A sustainability coordinator would provide the necessary expertise, commitment, authority, and experience. (Carleton College)

Similar efforts unfolded at numerous colleges and universities. In 2009, Northwestern University's new president received 1,500 postcards advocating for the creation of a full-time sustainability position (Olles 2009). A movement leader who commented on the campaign said, "We need a sustainability coordinator to work with the students and the administration for a greener future. I urge everyone to sign the petition and take some of the burden of greening our campus off of the students" (Solares 2009). A new sustainability manager position was established following this campaign.

When I asked interviewees what the movement had envisioned for their roles, they sent me resources that showed how the sustainability movement went beyond the historical concerns of environmentalism. A 104-page organizing guide from the campus sustainability movement illustrates the wide range of issues that proponents were mobilizing around, including animal rights, environmental racism, recycling, Indigenous rights, global warming, health care, white privilege, class domination, safe working environments, oppression, establishing a living wage, unionization, and wilderness protection (SEAC 1999). In theory, sustainability managers were brought in to address this broad range of issues. As another resource indicated, sustainability advocates incorporated "issues of race, class and injustice with the [environmental] movement's traditional goals of preservation and conservation," (Schneider 1991) and pressured organizations to address three categories in their sustainability work: (1) environmental concerns,

(2) social justice issues, and (3) economic equality, often termed the “triple bottom line” or the “three-legged stool” (Brundtland 1987, Scoones 2007). The stool analogy emphasizes that advocates believed that true sustainability requires balancing these three areas.

### *Voicing commitment to mandate*

Somewhat surprisingly, none of the individuals I interviewed said that they were deeply involved in the campus sustainability movement prior to becoming sustainability managers. They had worked in a range of settings, including non-profit organizations, international development, local government, law, architecture, as well as other departments in higher education such as procurement and student affairs. Nevertheless, interviewees (including those who had been in their current role for many years) expressed a strong commitment to the mandate for sustainability and described how they saw their roles as important to a broader movement. One manager stated, “I certainly see myself as being part of a movement. I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t know how I couldn’t be” (1021). This individual’s tone indicated that she felt that her role was inseparable from the movement. Another expressed a similar feeling, saying, “I think we’re part of a movement” (1020). One interviewee gave a more philosophical perspective on how he saw his connection to the movement and the importance of the sustainability movement overall:

I think sustainability is part of a larger series of movements that basically have extended from the women’s rights movement in the 1920s to the civil rights movement, the equity and diversity movement, and now the sustainability movement, which I feel like encompasses without usurping the past movements of basically growing our moral sphere of compassion and concern at a time when, for those who are indoctrinated or heavily invested in this stuff, [we] realize that we’re at an inflection point in human history where this movement is needed. It’s an urgent movement that aligns with other movements for justice, compassion, consideration, when we know that we have not considered the environment well and our relationship to it. (1015)

Interviewees used terms like “passion” to describe their motivations for becoming sustainability managers, and discussed the financial or personal sacrifices that they had made to take on these roles. For example, one manager said, “My passion within the environmental movement is personal...back in Milwaukee my job was super unfulfilling and so I volunteered a lot of my time. And now my passion is fulfilled by my job” (1022). Another sustainability manager echoed this idea, saying, “I mean I’m here

because of the passion, not the money” (1004). A third explained, “The job that I have, people have to do it because they love it because you are not going to get rich doing this job.” (1020)

Finally, the sustainability managers recounted behaviors and practices that exemplified their identity connection to the movement that had articulated their external mandate, telling me that they served on local government committees, volunteered, read books by movement leaders, were politically active, took part in marches, and followed climate negotiations. One said, “We compost at home. I don’t drive to work, I take the train and the bus. I subscribe to environmental newsletters and try to follow what’s going on in the media, like the [Keystone] XL pipeline” (1007). Another said, “I was active during one of the first Earth Days” (1014) and a third told me that she attended the global climate negotiations in Paris.

These findings demonstrate that the individuals who became sustainability managers identified with the movement that advocated for the establishment of their occupation and they were committed to the external mandate. Far from being “sell-outs” or bureaucratic lackeys, they sought to implement change in line with the ambitious mandate that they inherited. Sustainability managers were aware of the broader movement’s history, activities, and priorities. In their personal and professional lives, they evidently attempted to model the prefigurative behavior that they sought to see adopted everywhere.

### ***Recognizing jurisdictional ambiguity***

The sustainability managers emphasized that although they had an external mandate from a movement, the exact boundaries of their jurisdiction, or the set of tasks that were in their purview, were unclear. One recounted how he felt when he first entered into his position, saying, “I didn’t know shit really...There wasn’t anything to know, there weren’t any books to read; we were making this up as we went along” (1003). Another described how she felt when she was hired, noting, “When I started, no one knew what they were doing” (1013). One interviewee admitted, “Even when I got the position, I was like, ‘What? What is this position?’” (1002). When I asked another manager about whether or not their job description aligned with their day-to-day work, he answered, “Umm, you’d like to think that. The reality was that this job description was thrown together in about two days” (1019). A high-ranking sustainability

manager described how she tried to establish a strategic plan for sustainability at her organization when she started in her new role:

So I asked [the Provost], “Well do you think we could do a strategic thing on sustainability too?” ... And the Provost said, “I want you to look at it broadly.” You know, sustainability, like just sustaining things broadly, it doesn't really mean anything. So there were some questions in the charge that were unclear. (1014)

This confusion was a common experience across interviewees, especially among those who started in their roles prior to the development and deployment of the STARS tool.

### *Coordinating to reduce jurisdictional ambiguity*

When sustainability managers realized that they were facing an ambiguous jurisdiction, they began to turn to one another for information and guidance. One interviewee explained how individuals in these new positions quickly began to coordinate across their organizations, recounting, “There were five people in the country I think—literally five people were working at universities in the United States when I started. And so I quickly found out who they were and we started having phone calls” (1003). Another said, “I felt like I was on the phone all the time...asking for advice and support” (1013). A third recalled how she organized a regional network of people across four states: “We figured we might as well learn from each other” (1011). Similar coordination efforts soon led to the creation of the professional association AASHE in 2005, and one of the first projects AASHE organized was the development of STARS, the evaluation tool that would codify a shared understanding of sustainability managers’ work. Archival documents show that the early sustainability managers aimed for STARS to “become the ‘standard’ for how sustainability would be practiced in the higher education community” (HEASC 2006). In this way, the central purpose of creating STARS was to define the occupational group’s jurisdiction.

Documents show that, at first, the sustainability managers set out to create a jurisdiction that would closely match their mandate, stating that STARS should cover “all the dimensions of sustainability (health, social, economic and ecological) and all the sectors and functions of campus” (HEASC 2006). In fact, the first draft of STARS, which was compiled by a committee of early sustainability managers, consisted of a

comprehensive list of task areas that actually aligned very closely with the external mandate from the campus sustainability movement. It balanced social concerns equally alongside environmental issues and included task areas such as same-sex partner benefits, faculty racial and gender diversity, pay equity, and endowment transparency. Therefore, for a brief period, the proposed jurisdiction for sustainability managers in higher education did indeed align with their external mandate. There are two important reasons to note this initial alignment. First, it indicates that the nascent occupational group was being guided by the external mandate that had largely been established by a movement in this case. Additionally, it shows that the jurisdiction for sustainability managers did initially follow the existing theoretical understanding of mirroring the occupational group's mandate.

### **Performing Neutrality**

After the sustainability managers drafted a comprehensive list of task areas within their proposed jurisdiction that matched their external mandate, they began to engage in a field-level negotiation over what would be in STARS. And it is through this process of collectively discussing these proposed tasks and revising their jurisdiction accordingly that I observe the process of performing neutrality, which eventually resulted in a jurisdiction that drifted away from the sustainability managers' mandate. The end result of this jurisdictional drift is evident from my analysis of the final state of each indicator (or task area) that was proposed to be included in STARS, whereby I recorded if each one was eventually (1) eliminated, (2) relatively unchanged, (3) strengthened, or (4) weakened. The results of this analysis are shown in Online Appendix A and summarized in Table 3.

-----Insert Table 3 about here-----

The first draft of STARS contained four task categories: (1) Social Responsibility & Community Engagement, (2) Operations, (3) Governance & Finance, and (4) Education & Research. As demonstrated in Table 3, over the subsequent drafts of STARS, the proposed indicators in the Social Responsibility & Community Engagement category (which mainly represents the social justice issues) were eliminated and

weakened more than the proposed indicators in any of the other categories. Through the process of creating STARS, 63% of the proposed Social Responsibility & Community Engagement indicators were eliminated. In comparison, 19% of the proposed indicators were eliminated in Operations, 17% in Governance & Finance, and 26% in Education & Research. As shown in Online Appendix A, in the Social Responsibility & Community Engagement section, many indicators related to diversity were cut, as were those related to social mobility and those that would have covered domestic partner benefits, health care benefits, parental leave, and gender pay equity. Over time sustainability managers decided to exclude these areas from their work.

In terms of how this jurisdictional drift occurred, the longitudinal data from the creation of STARS show that the sustainability managers engaged in a process of “performing neutrality,” whereby they sought to exclude tasks from their jurisdiction that they anticipated would be judged by others (e.g., university administrators, trustees, individuals in other occupational groups) to be too political, biased, subjective, or values-oriented, at the same time that they prioritized keeping or adding tasks to their jurisdiction that they believed would be seen as neutral. As noted, this step of performing neutrality was conducted through two main activities: (1) trading external Politics for internal politics, and (2) trading values for standards.

### ***Trading external Politics for internal politics***

During the sustainability managers’ multi-year, field-level negotiation of their jurisdiction through the creation of an operational version of STARS, they engaged in a process of trading external Politics for internal politics. In other words, early occupational group members advocated for the elimination of task areas that they perceived to be “too political,” arguing that if they engaged in this work they would be viewed by others (primarily those with power in their organizations) as partisan, or aligned with a particular political ideology—that is, Politics with a capital “P.” At the same time, they raised worries about upsetting the local politics of their campuses and emphasized that they should adjust their efforts accordingly to conform to those internal affairs—that is, politics with a lowercase “p.” Hence, while the movement for

campus sustainability and the external mandate that stemmed from it had embraced Politics, the occupational group traded Politics for politics in the pursuit of appearing neutral.

In comments on the first draft of STARS, one sustainability manager raised concerns that some of the proposed areas of work would be seen as too “Political,” and suggested that the next version of STARS should include “a paragraph about how these criteria match efforts in the business sector to be more sustainable in policies and practices. This will help move it away from the conservative/liberal problem” (0.4 Reviewer 22). Another expressed similar fears, stating, “I have reservations because of what I see as a definite political emphasis in the draft” (0.4 Reviewer 33). Others who commented on early drafts described why they worried about their work being viewed as too Political and why they should strive for neutrality:

It was my understanding that this was to be a technical document. It is not; rather it is a political document and there are way too many controversial positions taken in the document that will lose support for sustainability rather than garner support. If this document is supposed to be a political document, then I misunderstood its purpose and I would submit my resignation from the Technical Advisory Committee because I am not interested in pursuing the political aspects of sustainability. ... Many of the issues, especially the social issues, in this version of STARS will cause divisiveness and cause way too many people to classify persons pushing sustainability as “do-gooders,” “tree huggers,” or some other derogatory term. (0.4 Reviewer 17)

Through the commenting and revision process, many managers argued that task areas related to social issues in particular should be removed. For example, one individual commented:

There is over-emphasis on social responsibility and community engagement, which seems to reflect an underlying political agenda...While I do understand and appreciate that environmental stewardship is one aspect of the broadest definition of sustainability, I still think that the STARS survey is too heavily weighted to the social justice elements. (0.4 Reviewer 39)

Another early sustainability manager echoed this concern by saying that that the inclusion of so many social issues made it look “like there’s an ‘agenda’ that is being pushed” (0.4 Reviewer 31). Following these comments, many areas in STARS that represented the “social” leg of the stool were indeed cut. But the concerns about being perceived as too Political continued. In arguing for eliminating a task area that was focused on establishing same-sex domestic partner benefits (one of the few social issues that remained in STARS after the first revision period), one person commented: “If I were to share this credit with our

campus community, it would likely be split down anticipated lines. My question to you is this: Is this a sustainability-related area, or is it opportunistic?” (STARS Pilot Results). In light of this warning that the inclusion of domestic partner benefits would divide the campus along partisan lines, the task area was subsequently removed from STARS.

At the same time, in trading external Politics for local politics, early sustainability managers embraced the anticipated concerns of local politics. For instance, one individual commented,

I am concerned that community colleges, a huge sector where we haven't seen a lot of growth in sustainability, may be reluctant to participate because they are more tied politically to their local community than university campuses and thus might be reluctant to take on the political aspects of the draft. I would hate to have them turned off to STARS by the inclusion of political requirements that they or their community may not support. (0.4 Reviewer 33)

This individual justified excluding indicators that might be seen as too partisan, or Political, because they were worried about local politics. Another commented specifically on a set of indicators related to college affordability and social mobility, stating that, “This area may ‘stretch’ the definition of sustainability beyond the point where trustees may be prepared to accept it” (0.4 Reviewer 14). When this same individual reviewed the Operations section, they judged these to be acceptable to local political interests, writing that, “The variables and indicators subsumed by this area are appropriate and reasonable considerations for boards and institutions” (0.4 Reviewer 14).

Overall, the comments on the various drafts of STARS show that the sustainability managers did not drop politics altogether as they negotiated their jurisdictional boundaries. Rather, they made internal politics, or their anticipated concerns of local communities, trustees, and boards, their top priority. Simultaneously, the managers labeled many of the social justice-related task areas as “too Political,” voicing concerns that they would be seen as “pushing an agenda.” They warned that if they did not drop these Politicized task areas, those who held power locally would label them as “do-gooders” or “tree-huggers.” Interestingly, the fine-grained evidence shows only an anticipation of political problems rather

than any real experiences of political run-ins or inter-occupational disputes over task areas; this suggests that this aspect of translating an external mandate into a jurisdiction was largely a process of self-censoring.

### *Trading values for standards*

Alongside trading external Politics for internal politics, the sustainability managers also engaged in trading values for standards in the process of performing neutrality. In their construction of jurisdictional boundaries, sustainability managers emphasized that their work should exclude tasks that only stood up to a values-based evaluation, while they should attempt to pursue tasks that would stand up to a standards-based evaluation. Again, this process represents a divergence from the mandate that the movement had established for their roles, which was inextricably connected to enacting a set of values such as equality, diversity, and respect for the environment. Instead, the emphasis on standards represented concerns that their work be seen as measurable, accountable, and objective.

In raising such concerns, one sustainability manager argued that the task area of improving social mobility through college admissions should be cut from STARS because it had “all sorts of values imbued in a question like that” (0.4 Reviewer 39). The individual continued:

I just wanted to give you my general reaction, because if I react in this way (and I'm very much oriented towards sustainability in all aspects), then it's an indicator you could get more negative responses from others and a disinclination to participate. There are too many social questions, many of them very vague and probably not particularly measurable.

Another said that the wording of some task areas sounded “too value laden” (0.4 Reviewer 22). In commenting on the first draft of STARS, one manager vividly expressed trading values for standards by providing the following feedback on the Social Responsibility and Community Engagement section (which included “social justice” concerns such as paying a living wage, supporting diversity, and providing health care benefits):

I think these are important issues. However, I disagree that these are sustainability issues that should be rated. I don't see a single criterion I would include in STARS...On my campus, our sustainability efforts have focused on collecting statistical data that are factual. Once that data is collected, we

can have sound data to develop campus policies around which consensus can be obtained so that sustainability is something that the entire campus community can support. (0.4 Reviewer 17)

Following comments like these, this section ultimately had the largest number and percentage of indicators eliminated from it.

Other sustainability managers focused on concerns of measurability and commensuration. For example, criticisms were raised regarding whether or not to include indicators in the early drafts of STARS that aimed to promote the inclusion of “underrepresented groups” on campuses. Reviewers questioned whether there were “clear standards on what this means,” and stated that the tasks that were associated with this area were “too vague” to be used for “quantitative analysis” (0.4 Reviewer 30). One reviewer labeled diversity “a highly problematic measure” (0.4 Reviewer 35) while another called it “a computational swamp” (Survey 0.4 Reviewer C). Another argued for the elimination of tasks in this area based on measurement concerns, writing:

There is no objective rubric against which to judge the potential impact of the actions recognized by the “Community Relations and Partnerships,” “Diversity, Access, and Affordability,” and “Human Relations” sections... they are not comparable on a level playing field—they’re apples and oranges. (0.5, Reviewer 2)

As this evidence shows, sustainability managers called for the elimination of task areas that they perceived as justified more by values than standards. In order to do this, they stressed that their work should be limited to those areas that could be measured through statistics and facts, which they framed as neutral. Again, as with the previous activity, sustainability managers raised concerns regarding how task areas that reflected their mandate from the movement might be seen as biased or subjective. They voiced these concerns by describing that there could be a “disinclination to participate” while arguing that their aim should be to gather “statistical data that are factual” in order to reach “consensus” in their organizations. As with trading external Politics for internal politics, the arguments and justifications for trading values for standards reflected a process of self-censoring in an effort to appear more neutral.

### **Resultant Jurisdictional Drift**

Based on this pursuit of performing neutrality, the sustainability managers eliminated and weakened many areas of work that aligned with their mandate, resulting in jurisdictional drift. As mentioned, the majority of the indicators that they cut were from the Social Responsibility & Community Engagement category, and those included issues such as diversity, social mobility, and gender pay equity. All of the issues that were eliminated had been flagged by sustainability managers as being too Political or values-driven. It is important to note that this jurisdictional drift occurred even though (a) the sustainability managers voiced a commitment to their original external mandate and (b) the contours of the jurisdictional boundaries that they drew initially matched this mandate.

It is worth considering alternative explanations for this particular case of jurisdictional drift. Accordingly, in Online Appendix B, I present the results of a follow-up analysis of possible alternative explanations. This analysis indicates that the most likely alternative explanation, which is possible inter-occupational jockeying over these task areas, is not supported by the data. Individuals were arguing for restricting their jurisdictional boundaries primarily based on anticipated reactions to their potential task areas. The findings here, therefore, expand on the dominant scholarly perspective that jurisdictions are carved out mainly through battles with other occupational groups. While those battles would likely still ensue, in this case, the jurisdictional boundaries diverged from the external mandate very early on in the occupational group's work, preempting and affecting any decisions about what tasks this group would even attempt to pursue within their organizations.

### **Concealing Jurisdictional Expansion**

In 2009, the sustainability managers reached a shared understanding regarding their jurisdictional boundaries, codified through STARS, and the first operational version of STARS began to guide the occupational group's work. The managers that I interviewed noted that during this period, movements advocating sustainability in higher education—especially those organized by students—had died down somewhat. Despite the fact that sustainability managers were no longer pursuing the original agenda as mandated by these movements, many advocates for sustainability seemed to see the establishment of

sustainability manager roles as the positive end result of their campaigns. There was continued optimism that these roles would institutionalize sustainability within their organizations as planned. One sustainability manager said that the widespread creation of sustainability manager positions was “taking the teeth out of the activism” (1018). As she explained, “It’s less student protests and activism driving their institution to do things and now many of my students work as staff in our sustainability office.” Another manager commented, “I think that a well-organized infrastructure of inclusion takes away the angst of disenfranchisement” (1019); a third observed, “We don’t have sit-ins happening and you don’t see much of that anymore” (1029).

However, only a few years into this relative settlement, a new wave of pressure from a sustainability-related movement began to gain momentum. This movement, known as the “divestment” movement, urged colleges and universities to divest their financial investments from fossil fuel companies. It was characterized by protests, demands for broader representation on investment committees, and signature campaigns in support of divestment from fossil fuel companies (Smith 2013). Soon, the nascent group of sustainability managers was caught in the middle of this issue. While divesting from fossil fuels largely aligned with their mandate for sustainability, it was not in their formal jurisdiction. In fact, through the process of performing neutrality, sustainability managers had cut three of the seven proposed areas in STARS that were related to finance and investment and weakened one additional area, resulting in a significantly watered-down set of finance-related tasks within their jurisdiction.

The question of how sustainability managers handled the issue of divestment, which epitomized the divergence between their mandate and their jurisdiction, is a crucial one. In theory, one would expect that the managers would either ignore the issue (as it was outside of their jurisdiction) or work to expand their jurisdiction to incorporate divestment and sustainable investing expertise, to start to codify more areas of abstract knowledge (Abbott 1988). I find, however, that the sustainability managers followed neither of these pathways. Instead, they began to engage in activities to encourage divestment (i.e., to partially realign their jurisdiction with their mandate), but they did this in a concealed fashion. As sustainability managers

navigated these changes, three underlying processes were central to their efforts toward concealed jurisdictional expansion: (1) experiencing jurisdictional constraints; (2) straddling movement and professional identities; and (3) performing mandate-aligned insurgency work.

### *Experiencing jurisdictional constraints*

I asked sustainability managers what they did when they encountered an area like divestment, which fell outside of their formal jurisdiction but arguably aligned with their mandate. Most interviewees responded by discussing the constraints they faced in addressing such issues. For example, one individual discussed his frustration with, “the limited scope that I've been tasked with” (1019). He continued, highlighting the fact that the occupational group’s jurisdiction did not cover social or economic concerns as much as environmental concerns:

I think we keep talking about sustainability as this three-legged stool. Yet we ignore the social responsibility and that side of our responsibility entirely. We focus on the environmental piece almost to the exclusion of the others. I think we’re getting a little bit better about some economic awareness...But social justice is still something that barely even registers. (1019)

With the issue of divestment in particular, sustainability managers often described their personal support of the issue, or acknowledged that it aligned with their mandate, but simultaneously described feeling that they could not or should not engage directly in pro-divestment tasks. For example, one manager noted, “I mean the divestment movement to me I think is great. But you know I don't feel like we have any overwhelming sense of pressure to be able to do that” (1021). Another explained her constraints as follows:

So you know caring about issues like this [divestment], those are my people. I mean you know that’s me. That’s really where I’m wired. That said, I’m also a member of the administration and I’m just, I’ve done work for a long time in this area and so I feel like I have some idea about what works and what doesn’t work so well and getting something moved ahead. (1027)

One individual had attempted to include goals for divestment in his school’s sustainability plan in response to divestment movements on campus, but that he was later asked to remove them:

Yeah, divestment is a really tough one because basically I’ve been told by my boss that it’s not my sandbox so I have to stay away from it...Our original sustainability plan, when we set it up, had some, at least language from comments that came in for that [divestment from fossil fuels] but it wasn’t something that my supervisor wanted in there so we basically took it out. (1011)

When I asked why they were not able to openly engage in the issue, some sustainability managers further framed the challenges they were facing in terms of jurisdictional constraints. One said, “That's not my job, to tell the university how to invest their money. When issues like that come up that it's like, there's only so far I can go” (1014). Another vividly described their fears of engaging in what he saw as a very contentious issue, saying, “Many of us can't openly advocate for divestment on our own campuses, lest we be branded as fomenting revolution and get fired or marginalized” (1003). Yet another individual was similarly worried about how engaging in divestment might jeopardize her position:

We exist at the will of the institution. And if you are a pain in your institution's side and are causing them a lot of grief and aggravation you will not exist. So we exist. We might nudge people or we might, like I'm letting our financial people know all of the divestment stuff that I'm aware of that comes across my desk that's relevant to them. But we would never lead a campaign for divestment, we would never lead a bottled water ban campaign; that's not our place. (1001)

As the sustainability managers recounted the constraints that they felt in addressing divestment—which they categorized as an issue that was not in their “sandbox,” even if they did see it as aligned with their mandate — I noticed that they were often expressing a personal support for issues like divestment, which aligned with their external mandate. So, I decided to ask them more about their identity because I was unsure how they would feel, almost a decade after the establishment of their occupation, about their ongoing connection to the external group that had largely established their mandate.

### *Straddling movement and professional identities*

Although many interviewees recounted how they identified with the wider movement for sustainability, they provided more nuanced accounts of their identity when I asked more detailed questions, such as why they were not pushing harder or more publicly for causes that they identified with (e.g., divestment). For instance, despite their stated passion and commitment, managers were adamant that they did not want to be perceived as “activists.” In fact, they often talked about activists in a disparaging way and were careful to distinguish themselves from them.

One sustainability manager rejected the term “activist” saying, “I guess I hesitate there because I feel like that’s too...there’s a lot of baggage that comes with that [term]” (1004). Another expanded on her identity as follows:

I consider myself part of the movement for sure, but I don’t necessarily consider myself an activist...I guess when I think of an activist, I think of someone who works really hard but at the end of the day has a hard time accomplishing anything. They put in a lot of effort but it rarely gets anywhere...I don’t want to be standing up there shouting or protesting at people. I want to be like water on a rock, you’re quiet, dripping away slowly, you’re there but people don’t really see you, but you’re eventually able to break the rock apart. (1013)

Similarly, another individual said:

I don't consider myself an activist... and I think to be able to do our job well, actually we should not be activists...what it really comes down to is just we want to be very evidence-based...It's not about saving the world just because we want to save the whales. (1025)

Later on, in the same interview, this sustainability manager added: “We work pretty hard to steer clear of advocacy and perceptions of advocacy because in order to be influential we have to be really careful about how we're perceived” (1025). When I continued to probe as to whether the sustainability managers primarily saw themselves as part of a movement or a profession, many reflected on how the process of professionalization had occurred over the brief period of the occupational group’s establishment. One interviewee reported feeling like she was part of something that was “[i]nitially more of a movement and now really a profession.” (1018). She was also careful to emphasize, “We’re not like those crazy hippy sustainability people” (1018).

Taken together, these findings indicate that over time, sustainability managers came to embrace an identity that closely matches what has been termed “tempered radicals” (Meyerson and Scully 1995). They maintained an ongoing identity with the campus sustainability movement, but they wanted to avoid being labeled as politically motivated and values-driven activists. They saw activists, who are prototypical movement members, as individuals who protested and shouted in the street but did not accomplish much. Instead, they wanted to be seen as neutral and as professionals, and to pursue their work quietly but effectively. This straddling of movement and professional identities helps to explain why sustainability

managers remained cautious about outwardly confronting their organizations' practices in areas outside of their jurisdiction, even with renewed external support for their broad mandate.

### *Performing mandate-aligned insurgency work*

The last activity that I observed in this stage of attempted jurisdictional realignment was performing mandate-aligned insurgency work, which builds on the previous two activities. I first saw evidence of this activity during my participant observation when I witnessed how the observed sustainability manager navigated the divestment issue. Early on in the observation, when questioned about his role in divestment, the manager flatly stated, "The students can do that. I'm not going to take a stance on that." However, over the following months, he arranged the funding and student support to bring the most prominent public figure in the divestment campaign to speak on his campus. When I attended the resultant event, I saw a group of students wearing bright orange "Divest" shirts introduce the movement leader, who rallied hundreds of people and posed for pictures after the talk. Anyone in the audience would have assumed that the students on stage—rather than the sustainability manager sitting quietly in the back row—had orchestrated the event.

After seeing this sustainability manager conceal his work to catalyze support for divestment, I asked other sustainability managers how they were navigating the issue. I found that many were engaging in similar work. I asked one individual, "Is divestment an issue your organization is considering right now?" He stood up and closed the door to his office, then turned to me and said, "Oh yeah...And this is a time where you know, I don't say this to most people, but this is a time where I really shaped the dialogue on the topic" (1017). He went on to call his efforts in this area "insurgent sustainability work," and explained why he was working this way:

We don't have authority. Sustainability directors in any institution don't have authority. They have potentially a mandate or some other authority that someone has said—right? Like a commitment, a goal, a responsibility. And they have their will. Everything else is about co-opting other folks' resources and using their interests and their motivation toward doing this work and just trying to shape it toward the ends that we see will advance an institution's sustainability impact. (1017)

This individual recognized that sustainability managers had a mandate, and even explicitly referred to it, but also described it as having limited power in enabling their work in some areas. Another interviewee recalled a conversation with their supervisor about the role that they could play in the divestment issue: “My boss is like, ‘We can do stuff behind the scenes, but in no way can we be seen as the ones pushing for this’” (1002). The manager who had previously said that divestment was not in their “sandbox” said, “I try to be as supportive as I can around the edges...I try not to get quoted in the student paper.” (1011)

Other individuals emphasized how they directed their efforts to further work outside of their jurisdiction at students in particular, whom they saw as capable of bringing the necessary stakeholder pressure to change their organizations. For example, in response to the question of whether or not their students were involved in divestment, one manager said, “Well they haven’t gotten real serious about it yet so I’m going to challenge the students here” (1003). Another described her efforts in this area as follows:

We have a student sustainability class, and I’m like, “You guys have so much power. You don’t even realize the power you have. And so if you start putting that to good use, you can make much more change than I’ll ever be able to make if you use that collective power.” So I tell them that. And I say, “Don’t tell anyone I said that, but that’s the truth” [laughter]. (1002)

One interviewee stated, “I feel like my job is building activists to be active activists...So what I try to talk to the students about is to embrace their power” (1015). He also stressed that with this type of work “the goal is to not be seen” (1015).

Overall, sustainability managers reported that they aimed to shape the conversation regarding divestment, but to not be seen as doing so. They described their efforts as working “around the edges” or “behind the scenes” while confiding in me that they did not want people to know how they had “shaped the dialogue” in their “insurgency” work. One individual vividly tied this all together, connecting the activities of experiencing jurisdictional constraints, straddling a movement and a professional identity, and engaging in insurgency work:

I think most people who become sustainability officers, they have to be strategic activists, right? They’re clearly still an activist but signing ... petitions and leading student movements is a little bit more tricky once you are you know essentially an administrator at a four-year institution. So

you know, I always feel like it's your job to support students, give them the information they need but not to provoke mutiny [laughs]. It's delicate, it's a fine line. (1023)

### **Attempted Realignment**

The three activities described here exemplify how sustainability managers responded to jurisdictional drift. First, when they perceived a task area as outside of their jurisdiction but aligned with their mandate, they typically felt constrained in expanding their work into these areas. Second, they retained a partial, or straddled, identity with the movement that had established their external mandate, but were also adamant about distinguishing themselves from outright activists and ensuring that they were seen as professionals. Working in an area that one is not being recognized for deserves an explanation. In this case, by identifying with the movement that established their external mandate, sustainability managers sought to further their work in mandate-aligned areas. But due to their continued concern with performing neutrality, the managers concealed their jurisdictional expansion. They worked behind the scenes to mobilize others to advance causes like divestment while giving the impression of staying within their formal, "neutral" jurisdictional boundaries.

## **DISCUSSION**

By examining the establishment of sustainability managers in higher education, this empirically grounded study unpacks the field-level, longitudinal processes by which external mandates are translated into occupational jurisdictions. Although several studies have recognized that occupations can be established to respond to pressure organizations face from external groups (Chandler 2014, Dobbin 2009, Dobbin et al. 2007, Edelman et al. 1991, Lounsbury 1998, 2001; Risi and Wickert 2017), to date, scholars have not identified or theorized the process by which external mandates are translated into concrete task areas for new occupational groups. Furthermore, as organizations face growing calls to address social problems, such as gender and racial inequality, climate change, the ethical deployment of technologies, and employee and community health and well-being (Briscoe and Gupta 2016, Ferraro et al. 2015, Margolis and Walsh 2003), external mandates will likely continue to underpin the creation of new occupational

groups; this makes it even more important that we understand why these groups often fall short of achieving what supporters of their external mandate had hoped they could achieve within their organizations (Dobbin 2009, Edelman et al. 1991, Kalev et al. 2006). The primary contribution of this paper is to build theory regarding why and how this is the case—that is, why mandates and jurisdictions diverge in these settings. The study accomplishes this in two ways: first, by defining and unpacking the process of jurisdictional drift; and second, by explicating the formation of occupations created from external mandates.

This paper pursues these contributions by examining the co-construction of mandates and jurisdictions instead of assuming that the two are tightly coupled, or that new occupational groups solely concern themselves with constructing their mandate. Most scholarship on occupational formation has focused on the construction of mandates (Fayard et al. 2016, Nelsen and Barley 1997) or on jurisdictions separately (Anteby 2010, Bechky 2003, Chown 2020). It has not examined in detail how mandates travel inside organizations and how they connect (over time) to jurisdictional construction. Moreover, a central assumption of theories of professions and occupations is that once a “vacancy” is created (e.g., from a technological shift), a new occupational group will fill the available space within this vacancy (Abbott 1988). Of course, this process is subject to new occupational groups expending considerable effort to construct their mandate by building a shared understanding regarding the purpose for their roles (Fayard et al. 2016, Hughes 1958, Nelsen and Barley 1997). However, after those mandates have been crafted, it is often assumed that they enable occupational groups to stake a claim over a clear domain of tasks. While this existing perspective of the link between mandates and jurisdictions holds true in many settings, it nonetheless lacks an explanation for when things do not unfold in this manner or for when new occupational groups do not pursue the full set of tasks that would correspond to their mandate. By shifting focus away from mandate construction and toward the translation of mandates into jurisdictions, this paper reveals how and why occupational groups may pursue a narrower set of tasks than their vacancy or mandate allows for. It also shows how this can result in divergence between a mandate and jurisdiction, especially for occupations that are established to address social problems.

In the case of sustainability managers in higher education, an external social movement articulated a mandate that theoretically opened up a broad space of potential task areas. However, the sustainability managers did not attempt to fill all of that available space through translating their mandate into a jurisdiction, instead choosing to pursue certain tasks and drop others. A key finding of this paper is that one of the sustainability managers' primary concerns in constructing their jurisdiction was ensuring that their work appeared neutral. Through performing neutrality, managers engaged in trading external Politics for internal politics and trading values for standards as they determined what to pursue in their work. In turn, they proceeded to self-censor their work based on these concerns, narrowing their potential jurisdiction from the available task vacancy. The recognition of these activities builds on research that has begun to identify why occupational groups may selectively exclude tasks from their jurisdiction. For example, studies have found that groups choose not to take on tasks that they worry will be perceived as low-status or "scut" work (Huising 2015, Kellogg 2014). Rather than concerns about status, I find that the narrowing of this occupational group's jurisdiction is based on concerns about appearing biased in one's work (i.e., toward a particular political ideology or value system in this case).

I also find that, in response to renewed pressure from movements, the sustainability managers did pursue a partial realignment of their jurisdiction with their mandate, but they did so in a concealed fashion. Unlike in some cases, where professions or occupational groups have sought to "hive off" work (Huising 2015) or disengage from certain tasks, the sustainability managers actually sought to re-engage in some of the task areas that they had cut from their jurisdiction (e.g., divestment from fossil fuels). These findings provide a crucial theoretical pathway by which occupational groups that have been established to address social problems can publicly embrace a narrowed jurisdiction while continuing to further their true mandate behind the scenes. This process could help explain previous puzzling results from studies within the area of diversity management that show that having a diversity manager in an organization matters more for achieving diversity outcomes than having other policies and practices in place (Kalev et al. 2006). Evidently, the role itself has an effect above and beyond the formal practices that the role is tasked with. In

other words, perhaps for those occupational groups that are established to address social problems, their most valuable form of influence lies in their ongoing “insurgency” work rather than their formal jurisdictions. This insight offers some hope that these occupations can further real change, even if they appear to be purely symbolic (Berrey 2015, Edelman 1992).

One of the primary factors that enabled realignment between jurisdiction and mandate in this case was the identity that sustainability managers held. Similar to Dobbin’s (2009) findings on early personnel managers, my findings showed that the sustainability managers did not come directly out of the movement themselves. However, they did voice a strong commitment to their mandate, describing their passion for this work as what might be termed a calling (Berg et al. 2010, Wrzesniewski et al. 1997). Therefore, this is not a case where disinterested individuals were brought in simply to appease stakeholder pressure. At the same time, the sustainability managers’ allegiances were not only to the movement; they also wanted to be seen as “professionals” rather than “do-gooders,” or “activists.” In this way, they embraced an identity that is very close to what has been termed a “tempered radical” (Meyerson and Scully 1995). Previous work on tempered radicals has provided excellent theorization regarding this identity, but it has mainly explored it in the context of individuals involved in voluntary employee advocacy groups (e.g., through cases of addressing LGBT workplace discrimination and same-sex partner benefits). In this paper, I extend the idea that the tempered radical identity can also be pertinent to individuals in roles that are formally tasked with addressing social problems inside organizations.

It is important to highlight, however, that it is unlikely that identity alone can explain these attempts at jurisdictional realignment. The issue of divestment received considerable renewed movement pressure and attention, who advocated for organizations to expand their nascent sustainability work into the investments space. Yet, outside of divestment, the majority of tasks that the sustainability managers cut from their proposed jurisdiction (e.g., efforts to address college affordability and same-sex partner benefits) were not reignited by movements and were in turn not pursued by sustainability managers at a later date, even in a concealed fashion. This finding indicates that initial external pressure and the articulation of a

mandate for a new occupational group is probably not enough to ensure that these new occupations pursue some of the more contentious task areas inside organizations, which are often necessary for deeper and lasting change. However, it also shows that renewed external pressure can shift attention to these issues (Chandler 2014) and can help legitimate jurisdictional expansion into these areas. Indeed, we see this process occurring in other contemporary cases where occupational groups' work is being shaped by movement activity—for example, through increased pressure on human resource managers in light of the #MeToo movement and on diversity managers in light of the Black Lives Matter movement.

This study's findings on jurisdictional drift and attempted realignment are particularly relevant for furthering our understanding of occupations that are created out of external mandates. Specifically, this case reveals a number of reasons why external mandates deserve greater attention. Individuals who enter into new roles that are created out of external mandates join organizations where many, if not most, of the organizational members may not understand or agree with the purpose for their roles. In fact, the mandate for these roles may even be to work against some of the core taken-for-granted practices within organizations—as was the case with personnel managers when they were brought in after the civil rights movement with a mandate to change hiring, promotion, and redundancy practices (Dobbin 2009). A similar conflict has been highlighted recently in relation to philanthropy professionals, who face a paradox in pursuing community goals when they diverge from organizational goals (Pamphile 2019). Of course there is a certain lack of internal buy-in or understanding of new roles even among occupational groups that do not rely on an external mandate (e.g., the EMT research by Nelsen and Barley (1997)); however, external mandates result in a different and more complex set of challenges and considerations since they are not articulated by the hiring organization nor primarily by the new occupational group members themselves.

In entering externally mandated roles, individuals not only face confusion or resistance among their colleagues, but they also face ambiguity regarding their jurisdiction; this is especially the case when roles are created to address a social rather than an organizational problem. In these cases, there is often little a priori consideration of what individuals in these newly created roles should actually be doing in their work,

since hiring an individual into an externally mandated role is frequently done to appease external stakeholders. Therefore, these roles are not seen as fulfilling a functional need in the traditional sense, unlike positions that are set up to fill technical or processual gaps, which have been the predominant lenses for studying why new positions are created and how their work is assembled (Anteby et al. 2016, Cohen 2013). Again, while all new occupational groups face a certain degree of ambiguity when roles are first established, the degree of jurisdictional ambiguity is likely to be even more extreme for occupations that are created out of external mandates.

The case of sustainability managers in higher education shows how an occupational group that is established from an external mandate responds to this jurisdictional ambiguity. In doing so, it highlights that it is not just differences in how individuals in these roles approach their work that determine their jurisdictions (Edelman et al. 1991), but jurisdictional boundaries are also drawn based on cross-organizational interactions. This is not to say that intra-organizational mechanisms do not matter (e.g. prior work on sustainability has highlighted how issue-selling (Howard-Grenville 2007) and the quality of situational or relational interactions (Soderstrom and Weber 2019) affect whether or not pursuits are ultimately achieved). But this paper also contributes to a growing understanding that we need to pay closer attention to how occupations are also structured at the field level (Howard-Grenville et al. 2017, Kahl et al. 2016). Even though individuals entering new roles initially face extreme ambiguity in their jurisdictions, the wider occupational groups which they belong to eventually settle on a relatively standardized set of tasks: diversity managers have ended up pursuing training initiatives instead of quotas, recycling managers have focused more extensively on waste management rather than on preventing waste, and ethics officers have come to craft ethical statements instead of building enforcement mechanisms for ethical breaches. Field-level interactions play a central role in structuring the work of entire occupations. They deserve more attention in furthering our understanding of occupational formation and change.

### **Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research**

The main limitations of this study stem from (a) the fact that this case is unusual in some fundamental ways and (b) methodological choices that may obscure some elements of the full picture. The findings are most extendable to similar settings, where movements or external groups without a legal underpinning (e.g., professional associations, customer advocacy groups, or clients) are central to shaping the mandate for new occupations. However, there is an important boundary condition with this particular context, which is that the movement for campus sustainability was comprised of individuals who were also the primary customers of these organizations—students. Yet, even in this case of a group of movement actors who theoretically have greater influence over the target organizations since they also comprise their customer base, the sustainability managers still experienced jurisdictional drift. Hence, from this boundary condition, we can theorize that jurisdictional drift may be even more extreme in cases where movement members have less ongoing influence. It would be interesting to compare the case of sustainability managers to cases where a mandate is articulated by a more peripheral group of movement actors, and also to cases that comprise different types of external mandates (e.g., those built on regulatory changes).

In addition, the methodological choices in this study could have inadvertently resulted in missed opportunities that future work could explore in greater detail. The first consideration is that this study is mainly focused on how activities progressed across organizations, which somewhat obscures the activities that unfolded inside organizations. Ethnographic methods would likely be best suited for investigating these processes on the ground in greater detail. There is also an opportunity for future work to simultaneously examine interactions within organizations as well as occupational group-level interactions, which both influence how mandates get translated into jurisdictions. A further caveat is that I have only studied the first decade of this occupational group's formation. Therefore, there are opportunities to examine the activities that follow on from those identified in this study. For example, it is possible that attempts at jurisdictional realignment begin as concealed efforts but ultimately result in formal jurisdictional expansion.

Finally, future research could investigate how external groups that articulate the need for new positions (e.g., social movements or regulators) attempt to shape the ongoing work of the occupations that they helped establish. It would also be interesting to explore how those external groups are shaped by the

very occupations that they helped create. This latter extension would build on work by Edelman (2016), who has noted that the legal community, which once played a central role in advocating for positions like affirmative action officers and diversity officers, subsequently came to defer to the expertise of these occupations when judging an organization's adherence to affirmative action or diversity practices. Future work could focus on the processes by which external groups shape the creation of new occupational groups, and are in turn shaped by them, as well as how external groups may further influence the work that these externally-mandated occupational groups carry out over time.

### **Conclusion**

This study helps to explain why occupational groups based on external mandates so often fall short of furthering those mandates. In the case of sustainability managers in higher education, the occupational groups' jurisdictional boundaries diverged from their mandate mainly through their attempts to perform neutrality, as they aimed to exclude tasks from their purview that they feared would make them appear too Political or values-driven. The end result was jurisdictional drift, whereby the work that sustainability managers pursued excluded certain key areas in an effort to appear more neutral. This study also examines how jurisdictional drift (once established) is approached over time, specifically, through concealed attempts at realignment when there was renewed external pressure to address new task areas. This realignment was also enabled by the fact that sustainability managers maintained an ongoing identity with the movement that articulated their mandate. With these factors in place, the sustainability managers pursued "insurgency work" behind the scenes to progress an issue that was outside of their formal jurisdiction but aligned with their external mandate. In sum, this study details how occupational groups established by external mandates to address social problems come to pursue certain tasks overtly, others covertly, and importantly, allow some areas of work that are theoretically aligned with their mandate to fall by the wayside.

**Table 1.** Key Occupational Group Developments and Data Sources

Year(s)	Development in Occupational Group	Data Sources
1999-2005	Campus sustainability movement mobilization	Archival Documents, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) Organizing Guide (104 pages)</li> <li>• Eagan, D. J., &amp; Orr, D. W. (1992). <i>Campus and environmental responsibility</i>. Jossey-Bass. (112 pages)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 452 pages)</i>
2005-2007	AASHE founding and start of STARS development	Archival Documents, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abstracts for AASHE Conference: "Developing a Campus Sustainability Rating System (63 pages)</li> <li>• AASHE "Sustainability in Higher Education Assessment Framework" (SHEAF) Instruction Manual and Submission Form (64 pages)</li> <li>• Campus Sustainability Rating System (CSRS) (14 pages)</li> <li>• AASHE STARS Steering Committee Participant List (3 pages)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 185 pages)</i>
2007	Release of STARS 0.4	Archival Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AASHE STARS for Colleges and Universities Version 0.4 (21 pages)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 21 pages)</i>
2007-2008	Comment Period on STARS 0.4	Archival Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Responses from Strategic Advisory and Technical Advisory Committee on STARS 0.4 (49 pages)</li> <li>• STARS Pilot Conference Calls Agendas and Notes (54 pages)</li> </ul> STARS Reviewer Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on STARS 0.4 (92 pages, 610 reviewer comments)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 195 pages)</i>
2008	Release of STARS 0.5	Archival Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STARS for Colleges and Universities Version 0.5 (118 pages)</li> <li>• STARS Pilot Phase 1 Guide (60 pages)</li> <li>• STARS Pilot Phase 2 Guide (61 pages)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 239 pages)</i>
2008-2009	Comment Period on STARS 0.5	STARS Reviewer Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on STARS 0.5 (139 pages, 737 reviewer comments)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 139 pages)</i>
2009	Release of STARS 1.0	Archival Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STARS for Colleges and Universities Version 1.0 (267 pages)</li> <li>• STARS Pilot Results (348 pages)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 615 pages)</i>
2010-2016	Continued formation and standardization of occupational group	Field Notes and Memos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observational data from fifty hours of participant observation with a team of sustainability managers and from a conference of sustainability managers in higher education. (105 single-spaced pages)</li> </ul> Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 semi-structured interviews with sustainability managers (522 pages transcribed)</li> </ul> <i>(Total 627 pages)</i>

**Table 2.** Interview Participant Characteristic

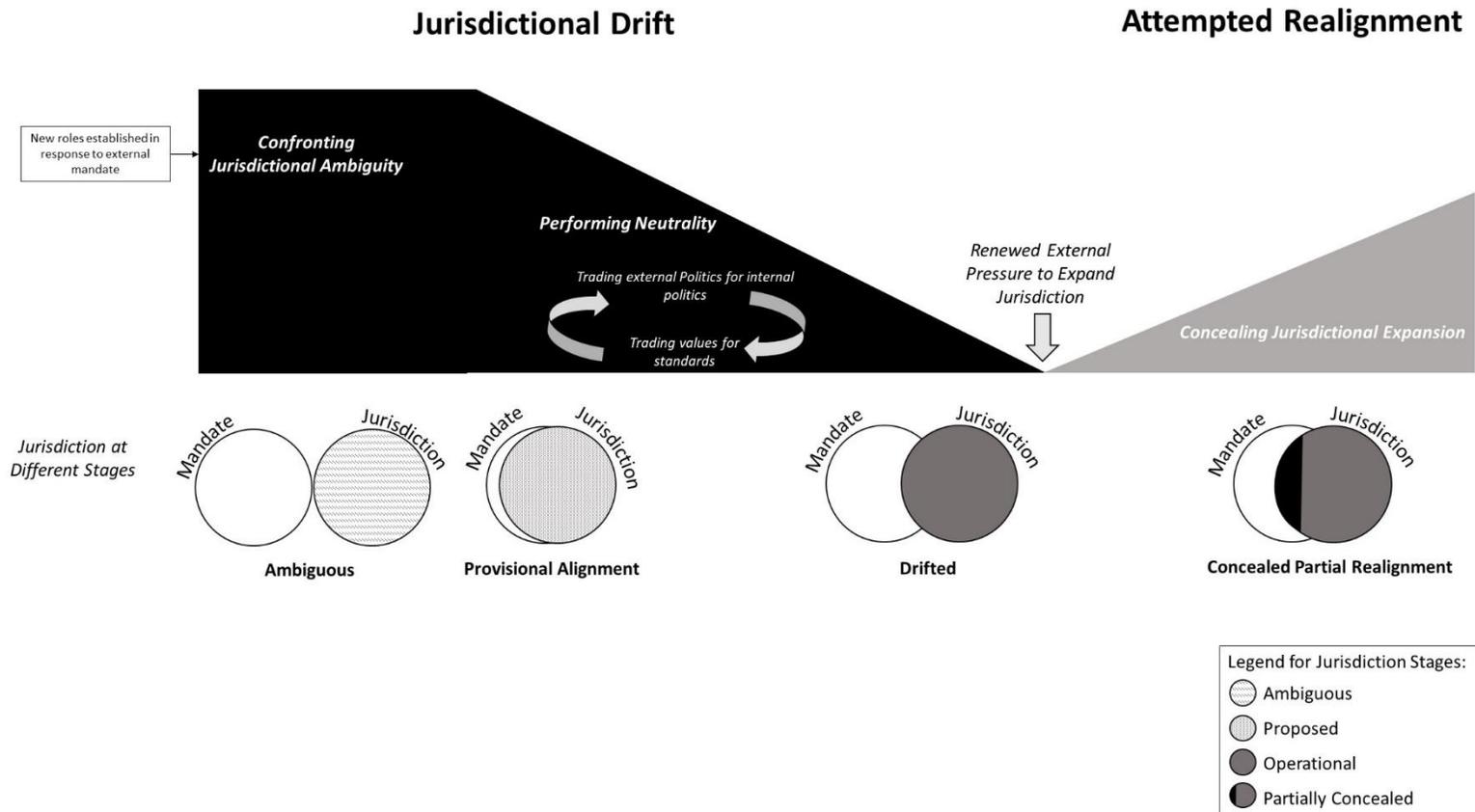
<b>Position of Interviewee by Type of Institution</b>	<b>Institutional Control</b>	<b>Student Population*</b>	<b>Institutional Region</b>
<b>Research Universities</b>			
Former Vice President Sustainability Coordinator, Sustainability Initiatives	Public	68,000	United States: Western
Communications Director, Office of Sustainability	Public	64,000	United States: Southern
Chief Sustainability Officer	Public	43,000	United States: Midwestern
Sustainability Program Manager	Public	39,000	Canada: Western
Director of the Environmental Center	Private	35,000	United States: Western
Sustainability Director	Public	33,000	United States: Western
Campus Energy Coordinator	Private	33,000	United States: Eastern
Associate Chancellor for Sustainability	Public	33,000	United States: Western
Assistant to the Provost for Sustainability Initiatives	Public	29,000	United States: Midwestern
Director, Campus Sustainability Office	Public	23,000	United States: Southern
Director of Council on the Environment	Private	22,000	United States: Eastern
Director, Institute for Environmental Sustainability	Public	22,000	United States: Midwestern
Director of Sustainability Initiatives	Private	16,000	United States: Midwestern
Manager of Sustainability Programs	Private	15,000	United States: Southern
Director of Sustainability	Private	6,000	United States: Eastern
Director of the Office of Sustainability	Private	21,000	United States: Midwestern
	Private	20,000	United States: Midwestern
<b>Master's Colleges</b>			
Director of Sustainability	Public	15,000	United States: Western
Sustainability Manager	Public	10,000	United States: Western
Assistant Director for Campus Sustainability & Residential Initiatives	Public	7,000	United States: Eastern
Manager, Office of Sustainability	Private	6,000	United States: Eastern
Chairman, Sustainability Committee	Private	2,000	United States: Southern
<b>Baccalaureate Colleges, Arts &amp; Sciences</b>			
Global Food Studies Coordinator	Private	3,000	United States: Eastern
Sustainability Manager	Private	2,000	United States: Midwestern
Director, Office of Sustainability	Public	2,000	United States: Midwestern
Director of Sustainability	Private	1,000	United States: Southern
<b>Community Colleges</b>			
Sustainability Data Assessment & Reporting Officer	Public	21,000	Canada: Eastern
Sustainability Manager	Public	17,000	United States: Midwestern
Sustainability Coordinator	Public	15,000	United States: Midwestern

\* Full-time student population, rounded to the nearest 1,000 for participant anonymity

**Table 3.** Outcome of STARS Indicators

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Proposed Indicators</b>	<b>Number (and percentage) Eliminated</b>	<b>Exemplars of Eliminated Indicators</b>	<b>Final Number of Indicators in STARS 1.0</b>
Social Responsibility & Community Engagement	32	20 (63%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Health care Benefits</i></li> <li>- <i>Benefits for Domestic Partners</i></li> <li>- <i>Admissions Diversity</i></li> <li>- <i>Fair Labor Code of Conduct</i></li> <li>- <i>Living Wage for Contractors</i></li> </ul>	12
Operations	36	7 (19%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Commuter Options</i></li> <li>- <i>Organic Campus</i></li> </ul>	29
Governance & Finance	23	4 (17%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Investment: Endowment Transparency</i></li> <li>- <i>Dedicated Sustainability Funding</i></li> </ul>	19
Education & Research	31	8 (26%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Graduation Requirement (course in sustainability)</i></li> <li>- <i>Sustainability Literacy Survey – trend (increase in sustainability awareness)</i></li> </ul>	23

**Figure 1.** Process Model of Jurisdictional Drift and Attempted Realignment



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## Online Appendix A. Tracing the Outcome of Indicators in STARS

### Proposed Social Responsibility & Community Engagement Indicators

Section Title	Original Credit Title	Final outcome
Affordability and Social Mobility	Social Mobility – Trend	eliminated
Community Service	Community Service Coordinator	eliminated
Community Service	Community Service in Job Descriptions	eliminated
Community Service	Work Study and Community Service	eliminated
Community Service	Work Study and Community Service – Trend	eliminated
Diversity	Diversity officer	eliminated
Diversity	Admissions Diversity	eliminated
Diversity	Faculty Racial and Ethnic Diversity - Trend	eliminated
Diversity	Faculty Gender Diversity - Trend	eliminated
Diversity	Administrator Racial and Ethnic Diversity - Trend	eliminated
Diversity	Administrator Gender Diversity - Trend	eliminated
Diversity	Departmental Diversity Plans	eliminated
Diversity	Non-Discrimination Statement	eliminated
Diversity	Benefits for Domestic Partners	eliminated
Fair Labor Practices	Fair Labor Code of Conduct	eliminated
Fair Labor Practices	Living Wage - Contractors	eliminated
Fair Labor Practices	Healthcare Benefits	eliminated
Fair Labor Practices	Graduate Student Employee Benefits	eliminated
Fair Labor Practices	Under-represented Groups Pay Equity – Equal Pay for Equal Work	eliminated
Human Resources	Parental Leave	eliminated
Community Service	Student Community Service	relatively unchanged
Community Service	Student Hours Contributed in Community Service	relatively unchanged
Diversity	Measuring Campus Diversity Culture	relatively unchanged
Diversity	Support Programs for Under-represented Ph.D. Candidates	relatively unchanged
Fair Labor Practices	Designated Suppliers Program	relatively unchanged
Human Resources	Staff Professional Development in Sustainability	relatively unchanged
Affordability and Social Mobility	Affordability – Trend	weakened
Diversity	Diversity committee	weakened
Diversity	Under-represented Groups Graduation Rate - Trend	weakened
Fair Labor Practices	Workforce Well-being	weakened
Fair Labor Practices	Independent Monitoring of Logo Apparel	weakened
Fair Labor Practices	Living Wage - Staff	weakened

### Proposed Operations Indicators

Section Title	Original Credit Description	Final outcome
Materials and Recycling	Paper Consumption – Trend	eliminated
Prerequisite	Environmental, Health and Safety Regulatory Compliance	eliminated
Purchasing	Environmentally Preferable Purchasing.	eliminated
Purchasing	Environmentally Preferable Purchasing – Trend	eliminated
Purchasing	ENERGYSTAR Procurement	eliminated
Transportation	Commuter Options	eliminated
Water and Landscape Management	Organic Campus	eliminated
Buildings	Indoor Air Quality	relatively unchanged
Buildings	Green Cleaning Service	relatively unchanged
Climate	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory	relatively unchanged
Energy and Climate	Energy Intensity – Trend	relatively unchanged
Energy and Climate	Renewable Electricity Consumption	relatively unchanged
Energy and Climate	Renewable Energy Consumption	relatively unchanged
Energy and Climate	GHG Emission Reductions	relatively unchanged
Materials and Recycling	Waste Minimization – Trend	relatively unchanged
Materials, Recycling, and Waste Minimization	Electronic Waste Recycling Program	relatively unchanged
Materials, Recycling, and Waste Minimization	Hazardous Waste Management	relatively unchanged
Planning and Development	Campus Master Plan	relatively unchanged
Planning and Development	Campus Design Specifications	relatively unchanged
Planning and Development	LEED-EB Trend	relatively unchanged
Planning and Development	LEED-CI Trend	relatively unchanged
Prerequisite	Recycling program	relatively unchanged
Purchasing	Green Seal Procurement	relatively unchanged
Purchasing	Environmentally Preferable Furniture Purchasing	relatively unchanged
Transportation	Air Travel	relatively unchanged
Transportation	Alternative Transportation	relatively unchanged
Water and Landscape Management	Irrigation Water Consumption Trend	relatively unchanged
Purchasing	Sustainable Food Purchasing	strengthened
Purchasing	Computer Purchasing	strengthened
Materials and Recycling	Waste Diversion Rate – Trend	weakened
Purchasing	Environmentally Preferable Paper	weakened
Purchasing	Non-meat Dining Options	weakened
Transportation	Fleet GHG Emissions – Trend	weakened
Water and Landscape Management	Storm water Management	weakened
Water and Landscape Management	Potable Water Consumption Trend	weakened

### Proposed Governance & Finance Indicators

Section Title	Original Credit Description	Final outcome
Funding	Reinvestment Mechanism	eliminated
Funding	Dedicated Sustainability Funding	eliminated
Institutional commitment	Shared Governance	eliminated
Investment	Endowment Transparency	eliminated
Community relations and partnerships	Public Policy Engagement	relatively unchanged
Community relations and partnerships	Financial Incentives for Public Service Careers	relatively unchanged
Community relations and partnerships	Outreach & Partnerships Carnegie Designation	relatively unchanged
Human resources	Staff Professional Development in Sustainability	relatively unchanged
Human resources	Sustainability in New Employee Orientation	relatively unchanged
Human resources	Employee Peer-to-Peer Sustainability Outreach Program	relatively unchanged
Institutional commitment	Guiding Documents	relatively unchanged
Institutional commitment	Sustainability Implementation Plan	relatively unchanged
Institutional commitment	Sustainability Officer	relatively unchanged
Investment	Shareholder Engagement	relatively unchanged
Investment	Committee on Shareholder Responsibility	relatively unchanged
Investment	Proactive Sustainability Investments	relatively unchanged
Public engagement	Community Sustainability Partnerships	relatively unchanged
Public engagement	Sustainability in Continuing Education	relatively unchanged
Sustainability infrastructure	Inter-Campus Collaboration on Sustainability	relatively unchanged
Sustainability infrastructure	Sustainability Recognition Program	relatively unchanged
Institutional commitment	American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment	weakened
Investment	Investment Screening	weakened
Prerequisite	Sustainability Committee	weakened

### Proposed Education & Research Indicators

Section Title	Original Credit Description	Final outcome
Curriculum	Graduation Requirement	eliminated
Curriculum	Student Exposure to Sustainability – Trend	eliminated
Informal education	Student Organization	eliminated
Literacy	Sustainability Literacy Survey – Threshold	eliminated
Literacy	Sustainability Literacy Survey – Trend	eliminated
Research	Funded Research – Trend	eliminated
Research	Internal Research Grant – Trend	eliminated
Research	Research Center	eliminated
Co-curricular education	Sustainability-Related Competition	relatively unchanged
Co-curricular education	Sustainability in New Student Orientation	relatively unchanged
Co-curricular education	Sustainability Outreach and Publications	relatively unchanged
Co-curricular education	Student Sustainability Outreach Program	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Sustainability-Related Academic Courses	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Sustainability Courses by Academic Department	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Sustainability-Focused Graduate Academic Program	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Sustainability Immersive Experience	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Course Development Incentives	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Academic Program or Department	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Non-Credit Sustainability Courses	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Sustainability-Focused, Non-Academic Certificate Program	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Curricular Engagement	relatively unchanged
Literacy	Sustainability Literacy Survey – Baseline	relatively unchanged
Research	Research Inventory	relatively unchanged
Research	Faculty Involved in Sustainability Research	relatively unchanged
Research	Departments Involved in Sustainability Research	relatively unchanged
Curriculum	Course Designation	strengthened
Research	Research Incentives	strengthened
Curriculum	Course Offering – Trend	weakened
Curriculum	Tenure, Promotion, and Hiring	weakened
Literacy	Sustainability Literacy Survey – Phased	weakened
Literacy	Sustainability Learning Goal	weakened

## **Online Appendix B. Examining Alternative Explanations**

I conducted a follow-up analysis of the sustainability managers' comments on STARS to explore the possibility that perhaps they were avoiding tasks that were either already managed by another occupational group or that they viewed as potentially leading to considerable conflict with another occupational group. The primary consideration in this case is that many of the issues that were eliminated or significantly weakened – such as same-sex partner benefits, health care, equal pay, and parental leave – could be seen as more within the jurisdiction of human resource professionals.

In order to investigate whether or not concerns about encroaching into the jurisdiction of other occupational groups were driving the cutting of certain tasks, I went back and coded each of the 1,347 reviewer comments for whether or not they mentioned another occupational group in their justification for whether or not they thought they should be engaging or not engaging in certain work. Through this coding, I found that only 70 comments, or about 5% of the overall comments, mentioned another occupational group. The most frequent groups that were mentioned were: (1) facilities managers; (2) faculty; (3) administration; (4) sustainability committee members; (5) dining staff; and then finally (6) human resources. Human resource managers, who seemingly would have had the greatest potential jurisdictional conflict over the indicators that were eliminated, were only mentioned 6 times in the comments. Furthermore, the occupational group that was mentioned the most, facilities managers, have a jurisdiction that is most closely aligned with the STARS category of Operations, which is the category where the majority of indicators remained relatively unchanged or were strengthened. The final version of STARS had more indicators in Operations than in any other category. As a final check, I qualitatively examined all of the mentions of other occupational groups in the STARS comments, and it became clear that other occupations were primarily discussed in relation to how the sustainability managers could influence other groups, for example how they could encourage dining services to start composting or how they should work to integrate sustainability into faculty tenure requirements. In sum, these additional analyses provide further evidence that the processes that resulted in jurisdictional drift were not heavily influenced by sustainability

managers' concerns with avoiding work that they perceived to be overlapping with the jurisdictions of other occupational groups.