

Sustainability Committee Meetings

10-10-19, 12:30 – 2:30 PM

2345 Reitz Union

Attendance:

David Lucier
John Duncan
Ravish Paul
Dustin Stephany
Cindy Craig
Andrew Zimmerman
Chris Martinez
Matt Williams
Allison Vitt
Ariel Winter

Phone:

Mehmet Genc
Amy Stein
Kristin Joys
Wilcley Lima
Jiri Hulcr
Lauren Berkow

Non-members/Guests:

Debbie Lescault

- **Committee operations**
 - Andrew Zimmerman: Motion to approve minutes; approved unanimously
- **Updates on Committee graduation litter-reduction proposal**
 - No updates on proposal that Ariel Pomputius (not yet present- arrived later) had agreed to draft with David Lucier and Amy Stein to review.
 - David Lucier gave brief overview of the original proposal and the need to collaborate with Director of Commencements Stephanie McBride.
 - Andrew Zimmerman agreed to take the lead with support from Dustin Stephany who is interested in measuring the impact of any actions taken.
- **Roundtable Updates**
 - Lauren Berkow: The Department of Facilities within Shands has won an Energy Star award for their work on reducing energy use within the Cancer Hospital. Additionally, they will be going live with the sustainability website on the UF bridge within the next few months.
 - Amy Stein: There will be the second annual Solar Celebration Day tabling event sometime in the next month (date pending) to celebrate the tripling in size of solar panels on the Law School Bruton-Geer building.
 - Jiri Hulcr: How did the process for approval work in terms of funding so that others can learn how to encourage these processes in their own departments?
 - Amy Stein: The conversation came up in the course of discussion with the Dean about larger renovations of the buildings.
 - Matt Williams: The Dean had strategic funding for this specifically and was able to accomplish it independently.
 - Jiri Hulcr: The Austin-Carry forest facilities would possibly be a good candidate for solar renovations.
 - Matt Williams: Recommends reaching out to IFAS Direction of Operations in the Office of Facilities Planning and Operations, Kevin Heinicka. Since Austin-Carry is an off-campus facility, there may be other considerations.
 - Jiri Hulcr: Are there tax benefits to installing solar on off-campus buildings?
 - Matt Williams: No, as it is still part of UF and therefore a non-taxed entity.

- Andrew Zimmerman: Are there sustainability goals for the university, specifically in terms of carbon reduction? Do we use a ranking system?
 - Matt Williams: Yes, there is a goal for campus neutrality by 2025. The Office of Sustainability is currently in the process of evaluating the university's current standing and how to move forward in relation to that goal. In terms of ranking systems, we only recognize the AASHE STARS system and will be submitting our application within the next month or so. We currently rank as silver and would like to reach gold. This system has over 140 credits and many different groups on campus provide data. The Sustainability Committee would be well-suited to take responsibility for some of these credits. In 2015, we did submit data to Sierra Club which, although it receives more press, does not have a rigorous or scientifically based rating system. There was no information given on how to improve rankings, indicating that this rating system is extremely arbitrary and not worth the time and effort of the Office of Sustainability staff.
 - Andrew Zimmerman: Is there another sustainability ranking system we should consider adopting that receives more press than AASHE STARS?
 - Matt Williams: Our office receives dozens of requests to adopt various ranking systems and experiences survey fatigue attempting to respond to them all. There is one that is based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that may be worth adopting if the Sustainability Committee would be willing to take a leading role in overseeing it.
 - Andrew Zimmerman: Is it worthwhile to adopt a less rigorous sustainability ranking system for the good press?
 - Matt Williams: Yes, otherwise there is no way to improve standing over time and becomes a waste of employee time.
 - Andrew Zimmerman: UF leadership strongly values press and prestige, so flashy sustainability programs may receive a lot of support.
 - Allison Vitt: There are points in the AASHE STARS for innovative programming that we regularly apply for. There are several awards given to universities that have very prestigious and advanced sustainability initiatives.
 - Wilcley Lima: On the Business Services side, they're very aware of the importance of effective story-telling and impact on perception. With the Gators BEAT Waste station, there has been a lot of emphasis on that type of communication.
 - Kristin Joys: Would it be worthwhile to have students evaluate the six public universities ranked higher than UF on the US News rankings to see what sustainability innovations they've adopted and are marketing well?
 - Allison Vitt: The US News rankings does not incorporate sustainability as a metric unfortunately.
 - Andrew Zimmerman: Who ranks gold and platinum above UF in AASHE STARS?
 - Allison Vitt: That is public information that we can send out **action item*****
 - Jiri Hulcr: Is emphasis on ranking really as important as focusing on sustainability for sustainability's sake?
 - Andrew Zimmerman: UF leadership is highly motivated by prestige and ranking. That interest could be used to advance sustainability goals simultaneously.
 - Matt Williams: To Kristin's earlier point, it would be useful to look at university's ranked higher than UF to identify innovative ways UF could improve its sustainability and prestige. Also, in agreement with Andrew's earlier point, the UF Board of Trustees and campus leadership are motivated by rankings. The Office of Sustainability conducts gaps analysis of STARS credits to identify some opportunities for growth and innovation. It would be useful for the Sustainability

Committee to take responsibility for some of the AASHE STARS credits, such as AC-1 which looks at sustainability focused and related course syllabi.

- Andrew Zimmerman: What has been UF's progress towards carbon neutrality goals?
- Matt Williams: The goal was to have 17% reduction by 2019 and we have reached 18% if accounting for campus growth over time. The goals set in the initial Climate Action Plan did not account for growth, so overall, emissions have increased. There are currently some things in motion including a steam project that could potentially reduce campus emissions by up to 25%. Currently, 82% of emissions come from buildings/infrastructure 17% from transportation, and 1% miscellaneous. In terms of transportation, there is interest in encouraging staff/faculty to use RTS bus system more.
- Chris Martinez: As a daily user of the bus since 1988, he notices a negative perception of using the bus. Are there ways to encourage its use among faculty and staff?
- Matt Williams: The Sustainability Committee would be well-posed to look into that further and collaborate with infrastructure committees such as the Parking and Transportation committee. RTS uses passenger miles to determine route's value, so that is a factor in the challenge of encouraging faculty/staff to use the bus system.
- Chris Martinez: The new express route to/from Haile is a good sign.
- Wilcley Lima: There's a lot of interest in collecting and analyzing RTS rider data, but RTS is not there yet.
- David Lucier: The Sustainability Committee should form a sub-committee to investigate collaboration with other committees and eventually presenting something to Transportation and Parking Services.
- Allison Vitt: The Office of Sustainability hosted the Sustainable Transportation Fair on Wednesday, October 9th and thanks those that participated. In recent years, the Fair has incorporated an electric vehicle (EV) expo to encourage personal and departmental use of EV's.
- Allison Vitt: Next week Wednesday, October 16th is Bike to Campus Day. Stop by Plaza of the Americas for coffee, breakfast items, and lots of information about campus cycling programming.
 - Ariel Winter: How has attendance been so far for the Wellness Wednesday Farmer's Market Ride?
 - Allison Vitt: Although there has been a lot of expressed interest, so far the attendance has been low and the Bicycle Programming Coordinator Jacob Adams is looking into ways to improve messaging around the event to encourage attendance. Committee members are welcome to reach out directly to Jacob Adams with their suggestions.
 - Chris Martinez: Other factors like lack of produce in September/October and the weather could be affecting attendance.
- Ariel Winter: The UF Libraries Green Team is hosting an event on November 21st in Smathers 100 from 2:00 – 3:00 PM with a speaker from the Climate Reality Project. Additionally, the Health Science Library hosts coffee events during midterms and finals weeks and has switched to using compostable cups and other items. How can they compost them?
 - Allison Vitt: Classic Fare can provide composting bags on request. Compost bins can also be requested for events on campus through Facilities Services.
- Andrew Zimmerman: Is there no where on campus with non-industrial or publically available composting?
 - Matt Williams: Not currently due to major issues with contamination. The Gators BEAT Waste station has been a pilot project that utilizes interns to ensure proper sorting and reducing contamination. However, if departments on campus encourage their procurement teams to only

buy compostable cups, plates, silverware and other materials, this would help reduce the possible contamination rate and make an argument for more access to composting across campus.

- Andrew Zimmerman: There were paper towel composting signs in the bathrooms in his building, but they are no longer there. ****Action item**
- Andrew Zimmerman: Can he personally put things he knows are compostable in those paper towel bins?
- Matt Williams: No, because then the onus to identify items as compostable or not falls on staff. However, if we're only purchasing compostable things campus-wide, that makes it simpler.
- Chris Martinez: Is there anything wrong with setting up a composting bin outside the office? He is currently collecting compost from his office and taking it home.
- Matt Williams: Yes, because there have historically been issues with rotting things that attract pests.
- Allison Vitt: Additionally, there is a huge difference between what can be composted in your backyard and industrial composting.
- Wilcley Lima: There is a huge educational gap and opportunity here and the Gators BEAT Waste station has piloted a model that really stresses education. Even with interns, very detailed signage, and lots of training, there have been loads rejected due to contamination. In the long-term, the campus is headed in a positive direction towards allowing composting across campus, but we are not there yet.
- Matt Williams: Alachua County's eco-industrial park is currently discussing with researchers and business owners how to potentially work with an industrial composter. They are looking to obtain pilot materials from the campus within several months which would then lead to discussions about who would adopt the financial burden of processing this compost.
- Andrew Zimmerman: What is the value in purchasing compostable materials if they are not being composted?
- Chris Martinez: Bio-reactive landfills will still break them down and are therefore much better than plastic and styrofoam alternatives.
- Matt Williams: In fact, the Alachua County uses bio-reactive landfills.
- Wilcley Lima: Wanted to bring attention to the Alachua County Solar Co-op that helped him get solar panels installed on his home today!
- Dustin Stephany: UF just received its first Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) gold certification for the Whitney Labs construction which included solar installation.
- Matt Williams: The Sustainability Committee has a responsibility to populate the meeting agenda prior to the meeting, so members should please try to submit items when the call for agenda items is sent out.
 - Jiri Hulcr: Is it possible to host Zoom meetings?
 - Wilcley Lima & John Duncan: Will work on finding a room equipped for Zoom.
 - Matt Williams: In the past there have been technical issues with Zoom. Additionally, the Faculty Senate does have a policy that members need to be physically present for meetings if they are on campus.
- John Duncan: Motion to adjourn. Unanimously seconded.

Meeting concluded 1:29 PM