

# Summary of 2020 UF Climate Action Listening Sessions

As part of ongoing efforts to gather input from peer institutions and the University of Florida community, the UF Office of Sustainability (with support from the Florida Climate Institute) hosted 2 public listening sessions, one in February and one in December of 2020. This summary document has been compiled by the UF Office of Sustainability and includes all of the comments and input received.

## Overview

Each listening session consisted of a short presentation from Office of Sustainability staff followed by small group breakout discussions organized by topic area. Participants in each small group were able to record their comments and questions through sticky notes (physical and virtual). Each small group was assisted by Office of Sustainability staff and student interns. The date and location for each listening session are outlined below:

### Climate Action Listening Session 1

February 2020

J. Wayne Reitz Union Rion Ballroom

### Climate Action Listening Session 2

December 2020

Virtual via Zoom

These sessions were highly attended by UF students, staff, faculty, and alumni, as well as Gainesville community members, resulting in **156 comments and questions** across several topic areas. The comments and questions received through both listening sessions have been combined and organized by topic area below, without alteration.

## Comments & Questions from Attendees

ENERGY + BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
<b>Comments</b>	
1	UF provides an example to the state & nation for energy use and built environment
2	Include climate goals & greenspace standards into "top 10 school ranking"
3	DO NOT SACRIFICE environmental goals for US News ranking & make climate a priority
4	Join "Cool Schools" List of Sustainable universities (Sierra Club list)

5	aspirational goal: hold UF to a higher standard, not Florida's standards as top 7 university
6	Involve energy experts in making *ambitious* goals for UF to curb climate change as much as possible
7	Solar panels everywhere! We are wasting the sun, tall buildings, and exposed roofs
8	- 100% clean, renewable energy - NO fossil fuel (coal, oil, gas) dependence whatsoever - both of the above by 2030 - IPCC guidelines
9	Increase renewable energy infrastructure at UF
10	Consider land use change/refurb costs (i.e. build solar farms, not buildings)
11	Carbon tax or solar initiative for UF sports
12	Exploring other renewable energy sources such as biomass at GRU
13	Not renew a contract with Duke Energy, instead of investing in commercial solar panels and taking advantage of solar real estate on campus.
14	LEED certifications on ALL <del>new</del> buildings
15	Using students who are capable of doing audits for LEED existing buildings
16	LEED certifying existing buildings on campus (to Gold Standard)
17	Renovate (if needed) DON'T DESTROY Maguire/UVS Graduate housing and its beautiful landscape
18	Building audits study
19	Plans for phased campus building audits
20	Involve sustainability/conservation professors/students every single step of the way
21	Follow IPCC recommendation, Cut total emissions 50% by 2030, Eliminate GHG emissions by 2050
22	meet IPCC standards for carbon reduction (50% by 2030, 100% by 2050)
23	Avert/Cancel plans to build new fossil fuel plants
24	Do NOT build fossil fuel plants on campus (i.e. natural gas)
25	Electric or <i>non-powered</i> (human-powered) lawn trimming equipment
26	Stronger tree protection code (no unnecessary removal, planting trees/bushes everywhere feasible like medians, next to roads, etc)
27	Reforestation - many trees have been cut down on campus and not replanted. Trees will be beneficial for sequestering carbon and are necessary for campus wildlife.
28	property use changes
29	Anaerobic digestion on campus
30	Academic and operational arms collaborating
31	Student involvement - SG collaboration
32	Incorporating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into existing plans
33	Connective sustainability research and solution-oriented student/faculty think tanks
<b>Questions</b>	
34	Will UF have an energy master plan?

35	Where can I find data or a page monitoring UF's progress on renewable energy? Does such a page exist?
36	What are your thoughts on creating a Climate Action Forum monthly to update us on your progress to achieving 100% renewable energy?
37	Are we seeing a significant impact from UF's current climate initiatives?
38	How is UF making its way to reach carbon neutrality by 2025?
39	Is new production on campus considering carbon neutrality of buildings? Designing for high efficiency and implementing self-sufficient energy plans
40	Are we still receiving money from Exxon Mobil and the fossil fuel industry?
41	Are we still receiving money from the fossil fuel industry? If so, how are we actually taking steps to environmental sustainability?
42	If there is no official contract with Duke energy, why hasn't UF divested already?
43	If there is no official contract with Duke Energy, in what ways can UF take advantage of its solar real estate to counteract and mitigate fossil fuel usage from Duke.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Comments

44	Autobus around campus
45	Buses only lanes
46	extended bus hours/accessibility
47	safety at bus stops
48	4 aspects of safety on bus (getting to stop, waiting at stop, in the bus, walking to destination)
49	2. buses: Increased route coverage to promote <i>safety</i> and <i>access</i>
50	safer transport for cyclists
51	protective bike lanes
52	Bikes: Improve cyclists' <i>accessibility</i> and <i>safety</i>
53	--> accessibility & safety <--
54	partner with city for bike increase, bike lanes
55	Divest from fossil fuels (x2)
56	UF Neutral Coalition
57	up supply chain
58	1. cars: reduce the need to <i>access</i> campus via car
59	greatly expand access to EV charging stations & end 4 hr time limit

### Questions

60	Intends to ramp up transition to eclectic vehicles, will UF be adding charging stations at every parking space? Current charging stations require drivers to walk back and forth since they have a time limit.
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61	Are ev as good as gas when considering emissions?
62	Uber scooter to campus?
63	Is a carbon offset setting a problem?

## ACADEMICS

Comments	
64	* Required <del>climate change</del> sustainability course
65	* Incorporating sustainability into every class & major
66	* mold discussions around what will interest students
67	provide more immersive education experiences
68	incorporating sustainabilities studies into pre-existing courses and majors to make sustainability more personal and interesting to those who have had no previous exposure
69	Applying sustainability studies to specific courses & majors, makes climate change more personal, interesting & engaging
70	VR classes to gain more experience learning and bring students to care about this
71	Heavener: improve, Mandatory sustainability and business course, not just about reducing waste but explains how business must be grown in a complete system
72	required sustainability/environment course
73	grad program in sustainability
74	Having a required course for every major about climate change: replacing good life (quest)
75	Engineering: an actual class for sustainable building material education, required.
76	Required coursework: having it within the first summer or semester because that's the time that students have the ability to take these classes. Can count for other things like a technical elective.
77	Recenter focus from the global scale. Large consumer demand in corporations, reduce consumer demand reduces large corporation waste.
78	Mandating classes concerning energy consumption, either as a credit course or QUEST, to increase student knowledge about the subject and promote action
79	Every student must have a baseline education on climate crisis - climate change
80	Provide more opportunity for research & involvement in student professor relations
81	incentives for departments -> sustainability capstone courses- have students research department sustainability efforts or businesses
82	Research: sustainable and regenerative solutions: find different ways as students we can be more sustainable, use recycled materials, papers, compost
83	Labs: UF can possibly give grants to research those topics.
84	advertise sustainability events better
85	digital/information literacy (library guide & resources)

86	implement sustainable interest at preview (create a guide)
87	sustainable tracking for grads - students show social respons. (green cord)
88	presentation/discussion at preview
89	ecological footprint tracker
90	Include anecdotal evidence that will reinforce the idea that every person is affected by climate change and have the power to make a difference
91	<i>Stories over facts</i>
92	unbiased resources
93	Climate change is not a religion! Is bipartisan. How affects everyone, animals & pets, how eat & breathe plastic
94	Visual representations of waste within dining halls, to get people aware of how much waste they produce. Also, saving food.
95	How much waste is produced in a day, Leveda Brown Waste Place. TV showings, visual representations. Show different steps (carbon footprint in a year, the number of straws thrown out, other sustainability tips in Turlington.
96	Understanding individual impacts
97	Visual representations and reminders. Good for people who cant afford to add another class to their schedule.
98	Sustainability: Reitz events, Gatornights, documentary viewings, set up tables plaza/reitz/turlington interactive representing sustainability (the difference between plastic and paper)
99	Reminders for people to take materials like straws. On printers choose double sides. Lots of reminders
100	Learning about how to help on the local scale, people's attitudes become discouraged.
101	Divest UF!!
102	Personal impact, leaving the lights on, throwing everything away instead of recycling. Recycling gets thrown away because people throw food away with recycling. Dorms, sustainable living.
103	Alternative ways for heating and cooling buildings. Updating older AC units.
104	move out collection day
105	schoolwide initiatives & backing of environmental student orgs
106	create a coalition between universities to collaborate in sustainability initiatives
107	Aspirational goal for UF
108	Best use for classrooms
109	paperless courses -> incentives for faculty
110	more involvement w/ climate action/policy open to all students/staff regardless of opinion
111	Climate Action Plan; Greenhouse gas emissions, 15% employee 5% student 2% waste 1% miss, electric vehicle charging, solar generation 78% increase 5 yrs, 100/3000 classes

112	Compost: energy group. Waste 1% lack of places on campus to recycle/compost, not known about.
113	Documentaries, larger events. How we can get people more interested that aren't naturally drawn to the subject.
114	Minimizing waste within SG

## OFFSETS + FINANCE

### Comments

115	Offset all emissions generated after neutrality date
116	what else could be offset? electricity, *food
117	goal: carbon neutrality! Accurate footprints
118	introduce carbon education in mandatory events (registration, preview, etc.)
119	provide incentives to why we should increase offsets / why people should get involved
120	best way to incentivize people towards better decisions? education of all to understand emissions results
121	educational opportunities giving <i>action</i> items
122	carbon education awareness on carbon footprints/ info sessions (offsets & finance)
123	show a sense of scale when it comes to carbon impact
124	in "The Good Life" class include tips to reduce student footprint
125	educate people on the subject, decrease and offset
126	increase/retain participants & expand Neutral UF Coalition and add students
127	more projects like CWC
128	Holding monthly forums to routine bring the Office of Sustainability and stakeholders together

### Questions

129	Not to be too blunt - but I worry UF prioritizes profits over the environment. How can we count on them to make the environment a priority.
130	I don't think there are any rational obstacles other than UF's desire for profits over climate.
131	How do you accurate calc a footprint?

## RESILIENCE

### Comments

132	The university has a huge voice and power. It should use that power to be verbal about its ideas on sustainability. Work on refusing unsustainable practices, companies, and decisions. If the university refuses something that something will listen
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133	To become an example university for the State of Florida and the USA
134	UF is a top 10 institution...but not in climate literacy...it is time to be a model
135	self reporting, AASHE, Neutral Coalition
136	DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS
137	UF market so businesses not adjacent from UF can benefit -> heal bonds b/t UF & greater gainesville community
138	resilience officer for the community, sort of like a UF IFAS extension but for climate change
139	more interaction with the community & youth voice
140	Resilience/preventative action. *More education (better informed whole student community), proactive action, storms/extreme weather, heat/warmer temperatures, ozone/air quality, health consequences from extreme heat & poor air quality, bring changes to community too, interact w/ community housing, helping FL as a whole (sea level), educating student climate change -> *mandatory course
141	Comprehensive introduction to how to compost/why composting is important -> have section at preview. Can advance message of #beatwaste
142	How to be a green gator, a section at preview
143	education is most effective when it starts early, get to students before they can get to campus and form adverse habits
144	-> mandatory sustainability class to educate all students on the reality of climate change, global warming, and living sustainably
145	-> spread the sustainable message & practices by speaking more about composting, renewable energy, etc. Provide composting stations to students living on campus
146	communicate to the public about the importance of reducing emissions, importance of humanities -> like the good life, heal divide b/t the university and the local community, make a climate change course mandatory
147	To only engage and interact with companies and vendors that make an active effort to reduce their carbon footprint
148	Hold a conference of all UF orgs and bust out a plan in a week...we have so many gifted minds here and it is going to take a whole year
149	expand resources to Field & Fork Pantry and Farm -> more intense weather -> more difficult farming conditions. Fund for students that have family impacted by climate crisis (south Florida)
150	Not just resilience but also prevention -> they go hand in hand -> is resilience a necessary topic?
151	Intersectionality- not only in regards to identity but also other social issues i.e. affordable housing and poverty
152	Honestly, it is disappointing to not include the other points such as water usage -> lacking ambition
153	follow an NAACP ECJC model for UF enviro orgs

154	Lobbying to change the fact that UF is a state-mandated energy area for Duke Energy to give freedom to choose more sustainable sources
<b>Questions</b>	
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156	Honestly, it is disappointing to not include the other points such as water usage -> lacking ambition

## Thank You

If you were a participant in one of these listening sessions, your time and effort is greatly appreciated. If you are interested in learning more about the ongoing process to update the UF Climate Action Plan, getting involved or participating in a future listening session, please visit the UF Office of Sustainability website here:

<https://sustainable.ufl.edu/campus-initiatives/uf-climate-action/>

Please reach out to the UF Office of Sustainability with any questions or concerns at [info@sustainability.ufl.edu](mailto:info@sustainability.ufl.edu).