

UF Sustainability Committee – Minutes

11/17/22, 12:30-2:30pm

Virtual Zoom meeting

Attendees:

Members: Ariel Pomputius, Angie Brown, H  l  ne Huet, Flora Iff-Noel, Sidney Ruedas, Jessica Sheffield, Jessica-Jen Stonecipher, Matt Williams, Stephan Willias

Excused: Elizabeth McAlister, Mariela Pajuelo Rubina, Jeff Boissoneault, Sofia Buonanno, John Duncan, Leslie Thiel

Absent: Meredith Beaupre, Jodi Chase, Nancy Clark

Guests/Non-Members: Liz Storn

Call to Order

12:30

Approval of Minutes

Jessica Sheffield moved to approve the minutes from October 20, 2022. The motion was seconded by **H  l  ne Huet**.

Old Business

Central Energy Plan

No updates at this time

Collaboration with Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee

Ariel asked what the Sustainability Committee would like to see as areas of collaboration? **Stephan Willias** suggested that a focus on both biking and buses would be a good area for collaboration. **Ariel** said that she has been thinking a lot about the bus issues, and is curious what or how we can advocate for more funding or other support. **Matt Williams** asked **Angie Brown** about who pays the staff/faculty portion of RTS funding. **Angie** said that she will look into it. **Matt** suggested that perhaps the Committee can advocate for increasing the staff/faculty contribution to RTS. Right now staff/faculty pays approximately \$2million, and student fees contribute approximately \$13million. **Flora Iff-Noel** liked this idea.

Flora also asked about having UF buses supplement RTS buses. **Matt** responded that there are only 2 UF buses – campus connector buses. There are also UF Health shuttles.

Ariel noted that in discussions with Scott Washburn (Chair of PATAC), that new buses, if they aren't electric, also emit greenhouse gases and are cumbersome for bikes to maneuver around.

Angie asked about the specific bus issues so that she can discuss it within UF HR. **Ariel** replied that the bus service has decreased and there is significant time between buses for many routes, making it hard for staff and faculty to get to or from work in a timely manner. TAPS had started expanding service prior to March 2020, and are now looking to re-start some of these programs such as the Express Routes, but there are funding challenges. She noted as well that Scott and Jeremiah said that ridership has

decreased since COVID. **Matt** also noted that TAPS is classified as an Auxiliary and cannot get state funding.

Flora asked about the incoming UF president's stance on climate change and sustainability. **Matt** replied that in the faculty forum, Dr. Sasse stated that he recognizes that climate change is real and humans are responsible for it, but disagrees with the solutions proposed by the Federal Government. He also noted that his role at UF will be different from his role as a senator. Dr. Sasse believes that innovation is the way that we'll solve climate issues. We've been taking a look in our office to determine which solutions identified in the CAP Update include innovation that we can highlight.

Flora also asked about whether we should request a meeting with the new president about the Climate Action Plan Update. **Matt** replied that we're working with upper-level administration on these questions. **Matt** also noted that no president has attended one of the joint committees in the past, but they could.

Hélène asked if any aspect of sustainability included in any of the rating metrics? **Matt** replied no, and that what is included is minor. **Angie** asked if there is a way that we could tie sustainability into the AI initiatives across the University? **Liz** mentioned that we are discussing what our peers are doing across the country and in Florida to move sustainability and climate action forward when we meet with upper administration. **Hélène** agreed that comparing ourselves to other Florida institutions helps. **Matt** agreed and said that we also leverage those comparisons to help with projects across campus such as installing more solar on campus. **Matt** also said that we tend to be conservative on our AASHE STARS credits – such as not claiming that we do an employee orientation for sustainability. **Angie** said that she would be happy to help with such efforts!

Stephan said that he can help with data analysis as well. **Angie** suggested that we also analyze the bus routes using AI/Transportation Institute.

A long discussion was held about a variety of ways to reduce the number of people driving to campus including discounted carpool parking passes, carpool lanes, presentations to faculty groups, flyers in the parking garages, stipends to not drive, permits that only allow parking on certain days, discounts at local bike stores, and entry into a competition for people who don't drive to campus. Additional discussion was held about ways to help TAPS with funding, including solar on parking garages.

When **Ariel** goes to PATAC, she will discuss Carpool Parking passes, potential incentives to reduce driving, along with the idea of supporting smaller and more sustainable vehicles.

New Business

Jessica-Jean mentioned the need of students in Quest 3 who will need research and internship opportunities. She wondered if there was interest from the Sustainability Committee to pair faculty/staff and their ongoing initiatives to collaborate with Quest 3?

Angie wondered whether a "sustainability mixer" where students & faculty interested in sustainability could meet and collaborate would be useful? **Matt** suggested it as an Earth Day activity. **Hélène** mentioned that the libraries have done a "conversations with strangers" program that might also work well for this as well and have the resources to help. **Matt** mentioned that there had been past efforts to re-craft the mission of this committee to focus on Campus as a Living Lab, and the Office of

Sustainability has also worked on a website to collect potential ideas and keep track of the outcomes from each class. Matt noted that we are looking to hire a new position that will likely have a role in this initiative.

Office of Sustainability Updates

Climate Action Plan Update

Have gotten positive responses from higher-level administration and are working on strategy for moving it forward.

Campus Bicycle Planner

Jacob has moved on to a new position with REI, so we are discussing how to reimagine that role and how to fill it.

GCSHE

For everyone who registered, all sessions are available through the end of December. If any committee members have sessions they've particularly enjoyed, please tell **Liz** and she can share the slides with the committee in January.

Matt said that one of the most interesting sessions he watched was about carbon shadow pricing

Liz will share the Green Labs at UVA session with **Stephan**

Roundtable updates

Stephan – EH&S is working on a Green Labs program

Meeting Adjourned

Hélène motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:54 pm, **Jessica-Jean** seconded the motion.