

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

1/9/2020, 12:30 – 2:30 PM

2350 Reitz Union

ATTENDEES:

David Lucier (Chair), Chris Martinez, Dustin Stephany, Wilcley Lima, John Duncan, Ravish Paul, Mehmet Genc, Cindy Craig, Allison Vitt, Matthew Williams, Corey Farmer, Fiona Hogan

VIA PHONE:

Amy Stein, Kristin Joys, Liz Storn, Ariel Pomputius, Vandana Baweja, Leslie Thiele, Lauren Berkow

GUESTS/NON-MEMBERS:

Katie Karwan, Dale Morris, Grace Gibson, Zakiya Smith-Dore (via phone)

CALL TO ORDER:

Technical difficulties, meeting called to order at 12:35 pm (David Lucier, Chair)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Amy Stein moved to approve minutes from 11/14/19 meeting, seconded by Lauren Berkow. Minutes were approved.

UF WASTE & RECYCLING OVERVIEW

Katie Karwan and Dale Morris from UF Recycling and Solid Waste Management presented to the Sustainability Committee about waste and recycling at UF. The full presentation will be distributed to the entire Sustainability Committee for more detail.

- Benchmarking waste diversion
 - UF has a zero waste goal which entails diverting 90% of waste from landfills
 - The State of Florida goal is 75% waste diversion by 2020
 - In FY 18-19, UF was able to divert 52% of its waste
- Reviewed the list of things/materials currently being diverted as well as the total diversion by material type and tonnage in FY 18-19 highlighting that the largest amount of diversions came from construction and demolition (C&D)
- Reviewed innovations in waste diversion on UF campus currently ongoing
 - Composting for organic materials for 5-6 years- over 1,000 ~~tons~~ of organics were composted last year. This is a highly successful program that has grown considerably, as evidenced by the [#GatorsBEATWaste post-consumer composting pilot](#)
 - ~~Event services like Sustainable Event Certification Facilities Services~~ provides recycling services to ~~over~~ 150 events per year
 - *See presentation for full list*
- Reviewed challenges on campus for meeting zero waste goal
 - Contamination of recycling and composting
 - Wish-cycling (attempting to recycle materials which are not locally recyclable, thus increasing the contamination rate and decreasing the value of recycled product)
 - Limitations of local and regional processing infrastructure

- Fluctuations in demand from global markets
- Production and consumption habits and subsequent impact on waste generation

Katie Karwan and Dale Morris then opened the floor for questions and comments

- Dale Morris: Let's briefly discuss the difference between single-stream and dual-stream recycling.
 - Katie Karwan: Alachua County has a dual-stream recycling program. This means that fiber/paper is separated from bottles and cans. It is challenging to educate people from all over the state and world in Gainesville on this distinction when many of them may be used to single-stream recycling where fiber/paper comingle with bottles and cans.
- Vandana Baweja: Why can't we eliminate single-use plastics altogether? Or at least with concessions?
 - Wilcley Lima: We are moving in that direction and a lot of our brands are moving to cans in the next month or so. Although cans are still single-use, they have much more value as recycled material. We will also be launching new options for the Bring Your Own Mug (BYOM) program (Gator Dining offers a \$0.25 coffee discount at select retail locations on campus- for more information [click here](#)). We're currently looking at redesigning reusable cups to increase uptake. The more that on-campus consumers let vendors know they prefer sustainable options, the better.
 - Vandana Baweja: Could we be using soda fountains like the University of Nottingham? Also, [Vanderbilt just eliminated plastics on campus](#)- could we do that, too?
 - Matt Williams: A lot of that is dependent on which vendors the university is working with. Vanderbilt is working with Coca-Cola and therefore has access to different options than UF who contracts with Pepsi.
 - Wilcley Lima: Pepsi does see UF as a flagship operation and is open to piloting innovative projects here. They may be interested in fountains and I will look more into it.
 - Matt Williams: We also want to be careful to evaluate the whole lifecycle of an option before pursuing it. We want to make sure we're not being more sustainable at one point in a supply chain and negatively affecting another.
- Ravish Paul: How do we compare to the top 10 schools with our waste diversion rates?
 - Katie Karwan: I don't have that information, but please remember that waste is hyperlocal and dependent on local and regional infrastructure. It's useful to look at peer institutions to some extent, but we simply don't have the same infrastructure.
 - Dale Morris: Many come from areas with mandatory recycling which we don't have in Florida.
 - Liz Storn: The reporting varies so much from location to location. It's hard to make apples-to-apples comparison.
 - Matt Williams: We used to compare ourselves to UC Berkeley and we had a higher diversion rate than they did at that time. 52% is a phenomenal rate.
- Allison Vitt: [Per a question submitted by a committee member -](#) What are some of the proactive things we can encourage on the individual level to help reduce waste?

- Dale Morris: Convenience is a big factor in how people manage their own waste. Making waste diversion a convenient default helps people do the right thing more often.
- Katie Karwan: Some other helpful actions for individuals include using reusable bottles, buying things with less/no packaging, intentionally purchasing things in readily recyclable packaging, and familiarizing yourself with things that are readily recyclable by checking some of the online guides (through [Sustainable UF](#) or the [UF Recycling website](#).)
 - Matt Williams: Please remember that all recycling in the entire county goes to the same processor. We're working with the city and county to standardize materials across them and the UF.
 - Katie Karwan: We're trying to make signage, nomenclature, etc. more consistent and standardized by coordinating with the city, county, and UF. There's also interest in a country-wide standard.
- Dustin Stephany: You can obtain a paper recycling box for your office space on campus for free if you ask your Janitorial Services. The Recycling Guide online has a [Recycling IQ](#) test you can play with your cohorts.
 - Katie Karwan: We have 642 centralized office paper collection points on campus (indoor-only) in 182 buildings. Deskside bins are emptied into those.
 - Lauren Berkow: What about at Shands?
 - Matt Williams: Hospital is different than University of Florida and has a different contract for recycling and waste.
- Kristen Joys: Has anyone done research on TerraCycle waste boxes? Is cost the issue with utilizing these?
 - Matt Williams: We intentionally ~~ended killed~~ the TerraCycle program on campus when I arrived. Their model allows corporate entities to pay TerraCycle to say they'll accept materials that they either then downcycle or potentially end up landfilled. It is a greenwashing enterprise. It's very dangerous for people to feel like they can recycle everything when they can't. We'd rather have people well-educated about the topic.
 - Katie Karwan: It's important to note that TerraCycle has access to the same options we do. They're either incinerating trash and calling it zero-waste or being sneaky about it so that the manufacturer can claim their products are recyclable.
- Dustin Stephany: I'd like to share more things you can do to be proactive about waste diversion on campus. You can 1) share the story of the hard work behind recycling on campus.
 - Katie Karwan: If you're concerned about recycled material not being handled properly, you can always contact Building Services and they can make sure that staff are properly trained.
- Dustin Stephany: 2) You can come to campus Collection Day on April 23rd in the O'Connell Center parking lot and bring some of your harder to recycle items. (~~You can check out this list from the Fall 2019 Collection Day to see which items are accepted at the event~~). 3) You can use UF [Property Surplus](#) or Asset Management to get rid of UF materials you don't need or use anymore.
- Dustin Stephany: Can you share things happening that could help us reach 53% diversion?

- Katie Karwan: We're consistently trying to expand our composting initiatives. We're hoping that infrastructure may develop to accommodate that. We will see what happens. Organics is a huge portion of the waste stream that we'd like to capture more of.
- Dale Morris: We're constantly trying to evaluate our bins and messaging to see what may or may not be working. We're more concerned about continued capture of the 52% when the markets are so bad and in a growingly digital world. Glass may not be recyclable soon. There's simply less to recycle.
- Matt Williams: Alachua County has already invested \$4 million into the infrastructure for a Materials Recovery Plant. They are looking for organizations that can stimulate innovation in regional recycling and create jobs. Two UF faculty members have received grants for this project already.
- Matt Williams: Our office offers a [Green Office and Workspace \(GROW\) certification](#) that helps counsel offices on purposeful purchasing to help reduce waste generation.

1:30 PM Katie Karwan and Dale Morris left Sustainability Committee. Chair David Lucier opened the floor to further comments.

- Chris Martinez: Are syngas or plasma gasification options for handling campus waste?
 - Matt Williams: Currently, that technology is cost-prohibitive and very difficult to scale up to community levels. However, Senior Vice President Charlie Lane has awarded two faculty grants to assist with the Alachua County Materials Recovery Park, one of which was awarded to Dr. Bruce Welt who studies plasma gasification. It is also interesting to note that Alachua County has a no waste incineration policy.
 - Wilcley Lima: For my PhD, I studied steam gasification. There is a lot of research and development in that area, but we are still at least 5 years out from it becoming a more viable option.
- Les Thiele: I am working with students to develop video resources about waste. Would the Office of Sustainability be willing to review a script of a video based on the presentation given today? It would be targeted to students.
 - Matt Williams: Yes.
 - Leslie Thiele: For those that may be interested, there is a UF Sustainability Studies project called [Augmenting Sustainability](#) that documents sustainable innovations around the Gainesville area.
- Wilcley Lima: Bottle deposits are a proven method to reduce waste, but are only employed in two states. Is that an option for us locally?
 - Matt Williams: Usually, at the state level, bottle taxes face lots of opposition from businesses. At the county level, anything that might be perceived as a tax does not get any support. However, that would be a huge shift in waste diversion practices.
- John Duncan: How do we recycle batteries and which are recyclable?
 - Liz Storn: The Recycling Guide says to contact EH&S to dispose of rechargeable batteries. Alkaline batteries are not recyclable on campus.
 - Matt Williams: Alachua County Hazardous Waste will accept all batteries. You can also bring them to Collection Day on April 23rd where Hazardous Waste will

be accepting them. Also, I highly recommend the rechargeable batteries which have improved a lot in recent years- check out low-discharge batteries or Eneloop batteries.

- David Lucier: Are minor project contractors recycling? How can we improve that waste diversion waste?
 - Dustin Stephany: Any project over \$2 million is required to sort and report those recycling numbers to myself and Katie Karwan. We're now trying to develop an automated, streamlined process to make \$1 ~~million~~ million the cut off for that reporting. One challenge is that most minor projects don't have enough space to allocate enough bins for proper sorting. So, I am working with the demolition contractors and waste vendors to get the numbers from them hopefully.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS:

- Chris Martinez: Is someone from TAPS coming in to present to the Committee also?
 - David Lucier: Yes, next month.
- Allison Vitt: I've taken a position in Ft. Collins, CO and my last day of work will be January 24th. Fiona Hogan (fiona.hogan@ufl.edu) will take over as the Office of Sustainability liaison to the Sustainability Committee. She will be sending minutes and calls for agenda items moving forward.
- Lauren Berkow: I will be presenting at several conferences regarding sustainability in medicine this coming year including the Integrated Medicine Summit in Cleveland, OH in April.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by Chris Martinez, Seconded by Dustin Stephany. Meeting was adjourned at 1:47 pm.