

## UF Sustainability Committee – Minutes

1/19/2023, 12:30-2:30pm

Virtual Zoom meeting

### **Attendance**

**Members:** Ariel Pomputius, Meredith Beaupre, Nancy Clark, Matt Williams, Stephan Willias, Jessica Sheffield, Mariela Pajuelo, Sidney Ruedas, Sofia Buonanno, Flora Iff-Noel, H el ene Huet, Jessica-Jean Stonecipher, Jodi Chase, John Duncan

**Excused:** Leslie Thiel, Angie Brown, Jeff Boissoneault

**Absent:**

**Guests/Non-Members:** Liz Storn, Rachel Mandell

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 PM by **Ariel Pomputius**, chair.

### *Approval of Minutes*

- **Stephan Willias** moved to approve the minutes from December 15, 2022. The motion was seconded by **Meredith Beaupre**.

### **Old Business**

*Collaboration with Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee (PATAC)*

**Ariel** said there was no current update.

### *Central Energy plant*

**Matt Williams** said there is no update at this time. **Ariel** said that the Infrastructure Council had a presentation from Mark Helms about the Central Energy Plant (and flooding in the library). The bids are in, but as all discussions are internal, unable to provide updates to the public at this time.

### *Champions for Change*

**Liz Storn** and **Matt Williams** presented about the Champions for Change award that the Office of Sustainability hosts in cooperation with Healthy Gators, and the history of what has been done in the past, including presentations on the Reitz Lawn open to the public, or catered award ceremony indoor for awardees & guests. We've invited different people in the past, including CAP participants, etc.

There will be 5 awardees for Sustainability and 5 for Wellness.

The Committee discussed different types of events and what may be the best for this event.

**Ariel** said that she enjoys attending an in-person event, as it is more inspirational and likely better received by recipients. **Mariela Pajuelo** suggested that it would be hard to attract people who aren't directly related to the award ceremony without something for them.

**H el ene Huet** suggested using some of the funding for the ceremony to reward the recipients? **Matt** noted that except for using funding to purchase things in support of the projects, providing rewards is very difficult. **Jessica-Jean Stonecipher** also suggested a raffle or an event swag bag for recipients.

**Hélène** suggested that there be funding to buy books for the libraries with a plaque inside with the winners' names (<https://giving.uflib.ufl.edu/giving-opportunities/books-of-honor/>)

### **New Business**

**Sofia Buonanno** - Agency Head for Gators Going Green (SG organization to improve sustainability on campus). Gators Going Green hosts some events, but generally works with faculty and administration to get more resources for sustainability actions.

**Sofia** is here mostly to talk about Green Cords. Each graduation period, **Sofia** gets emails from students applying for Green Cords. 10 points needed to achieve this - can be things such as major/minor, attending seminars, classes taken, etc. Trying to make this a full 4-year program, so some types of credits have caps on them. The cords used to be picked up at OoS, now picked up at SG office - worked out really well for everyone.

Outreach areas for improvement for Green Cords - would love to get them sent through DCP, CLAS emails nearing graduation. Suggestion from **Mariela** to advertise with the TESI Environmental Leaders Network. <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/earth-systems/uf-tesi-environmental-leaders-network/>.

**Meredith** offered to include information about the Green Cord program in the Honors newsletter.

**Sofia** also discussed the *Unlitter Coalition* - a group of related student groups that have joined together, and GGG is included in that group.

Other initiatives:

- seedling drops (2/15) - outreach campaign
- Monthly Newsletter - relate to other events (e.g. Black History Month) & update people on the sustainability practices done locally, nationwide, and worldwide
- Recycling Initiative with Study Edge
- Speaker Series in cooperation with Dr. Monika Oli
- Fruit Tree Planting with IFAS and Field and Fork
  - Long-term project in cooperation

**Nancy Clark** - appreciates the call-out to DCP/SBE. Mentioned that Kaylee came to present to first year students. She said that she can find a common course and have Sofia (and/or Kaylee) come present to them.

**Jessica-Jean** asked how many students have graduated with Green Cords? **Sofia** wasn't sure - Summer and Fall combined she estimated 50. **Jessica-Jean** asked why students would want to get and stay involved and whether there are any incentives. **Sofia** responded that the Green Cord is kind of a "feather in the cap".

**Jessica-Jean** was curious about how to recognize and reward students who get Green Cords? **Matt** said that the funding is a big challenge, and that it is an area where our office cannot provide funding above and beyond the cost of the cords. **Jessica-Jean** was wondering how to get more students involved. **Jodi Chase** suggested a presentation during Preview. **Meredith** remarked that within the time constraints of Preview, there isn't the ability to add it in at this time.

**Sofia** suggested providing information to the Professors who teach the intro sections to the majors who qualify for credits in the Green Cord.

**Sidney Ruedas** suggested including the information at the Great Gator Welcome in the fall. **Meredith** also suggested reaching out to the First Year Florida classes. **Matt** also mentioned that one of the impetus for the Green Cords was to drive students towards the sustainability-related majors and minors. **Sofia** suggested that perhaps having the different departments email their undecided students to suggest the Green Cords.

**John Duncan** wondered whether there were enough people to staff a table at Preview for the entire summer, as suggested by **Meredith**. **Sofia** noted that summer would be challenging given work and internship requirements.

**Ariel** asked about moving forward? She noted that Sofia is a senior, so new leadership will be in place next year, and wondered how the SC can help with continuity. **Sofia** included in her transition documents the idea of presenting to SC each year. The new Agency Head will be selected at the end of April. **Sofia** also noted that the staff for GGG doesn't get elected until the fall.

**Rachel Mandell**, Senior Campus Planner noted that fruit trees are a very challenging topic, especially in urban areas like our campus. One concern is that they attract pests and rodents, so maintenance is an issue. Additionally, FDOT noted that fruit trees also attract wildlife (e.g. deer), so fruit trees may not be allowed in proximity to state roads. Allergies are also an issue, such as nut trees. Air pollutants and ground toxins can be an issue, so fruit trees may not produce for 6-7 years (and many trees on campus don't even reach that age). **Rachel** noted that she is delighted to be a resource. *Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee* will also be a resource for **Sofia** and the approval body for any tree planting. **Sofia** will be meeting with Anna Prizzia, who is the best person to help GGG with this idea.

**Flora Iff-Noel** was curious why trees don't last very long? In **Rachel's** experience, the trees being studied were street trees, so close to traffic and pollutants, and also had small root areas.

**Sofia** also noted that they are working with Florida Fresh Dining on reinstating the farmer's market.

**Rachel** suggested a YouTube channel for the Speaker Series.

A discussion continued after Sofia left about some of the limitations of fruit tree planting on campus. **Matt** noted that some departments in IFAS asked UF not to plant fruit trees due to diseases such as Citrus Greening and Laurel Wilt. **Jessica Sheffield** also noted that fruit trees take a LOT of pruning and management to be properly productive.

**Matt** asked **Sidney** about any initiatives in Senate? She noted that there have been several resolutions, but they don't have the necessary means to implement these projects. She wants to reach out to Sofia to see if they can work with GGG for resolutions that could lead to projects. **Ariel** noted that initiatives often have weight coming from BOTH the students and faculty senate and/or sustainability committee. **Sidney** said that she'll bring up initiatives that she hears from her constituents to the SC for input. **Matt** suggested including the chair of the Sustainability Committee on the CC line of sustainability-related resolutions.

**Office of Sustainability Updates**

**Matt** said that UF is a sponsor of the Second Nature Climate Leadership Summit (<https://whova.com/web/DEIfll1GWzWfJtskl8F6C5i1cRcVYmMiFxSNHIFkl%404%3D/Agenda> ) and recommended the committee members attend virtually if possible.

**Matt** said that we're also working on our projects and priorities, updating staffing needs and resources, and working on implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

Some of what we're working on is ways to increase staff engagement, including the idea of HR courses (e.g. UF Sustainability 101, How to be a productive Change Agent), working with labs for the Green Lab program, Green Offices, and Building Occupant engagement. We expect to have more to discuss in April with the Committee.

#### **Other Business**

**Ariel** mentioned that Jeff has been the Vice Chair, but will be stepping away from that position. Ariel also would like to step down from the Chair position after this year. She noted the time commitment includes a 30-minute monthly meeting with OoS and the Sustainability Committee meeting. Beyond that, the committee is not a huge time commitment. We will discuss more next month.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

**Jessica Sheffield** motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:06 pm. **Helene** seconded the motion.