

UF Sustainability Committee – Minutes

1/18/2024, 12:30-2:30pm

Virtual Zoom meeting

Attendance

Members: Angie Brown, Jodi Chase, John Duncan, Jeanne Ewert, Flora Iff-Noel, Mariela Pajuelo, Nancy Clark, Nina Rosenzweig, Andrew Zimmerman, Jessica Sheffield, Leslie Thiele, Craig Money Penny, Matt Williams, Scarlet Seymour

Excused: Jessica-Jean Stonecipher, Kristin Joys

Absent: Creed Greer

Guests/Non-Members: Liz Storn, Kaylee August, Dustin Stephany, Isabell Southern

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:32 PM by **Andrew Zimmerman**.

Approval of Minutes

Nancy Clark moved to approve the minutes from December 14, 2023. The motion was seconded by **Jessica Sheffield**.

Sustainable Buildings Presentation

Dustin Stephany presented on the Gateway Projects located at 2 major entrances to the university. They are seeking a [SITES](#) Green Building Certification. The [Northeast Gateway](#) and [Newell Gateway](#) project received a SITES Gold Certification which is the first university in Florida to achieve this. These projects will promote pedestrian safety and increase foot traffic in these areas. Dustin shared the project's website outlining all of the project's attributes. The projects include reclaimed/recycled materials. Additionally, existing trees were relocated to land within the Alachua Conservation trust.

The Newell Gateway was similar to the Northeast Gateway. This project increased pedestrian access. Furthermore, plaques showcasing the certification will be placed at the sites.

Jeanne Ewert asked about the zero turn mowers and was confused about whether they were robotic or not. **Dustin** said that robotic mowers are used in steep areas that zero turn mowers are dangerous to use. **Matt Williams** mentioned that he's only seen gas powered zero turn mowers in the northeast gateway. **Dustin** said that this was a part of the plan moving forward but that the electric mowers have had technical issues.

Andrew asked about where to access the websites explaining the projects. **Dustin** explained that the information is housed here: <https://facilities.ufl.edu/sustainability/certified-sustainable-buildings/>.

Matt asked about which academic unit gathered the insect data for the projects. **Dustin** said that a [GAI Consultants](#) collected the data.

Matt asked about the SITES certification and the difference between other green building certifications. **Dustin** said that the certification is similar to LEED in that it does not expire. However, they are completing 10-15 year plans for projects that receive the SITES Certification.

New Business

Champions for Change

Liz mentioned that Champions for Change nominations are currently open through March 18th. Committee members can find all of the relevant information for nominations here <https://sustainable.ufl.edu/news-events/champions-for-change-awards/>. She would like the committee to submit nominations for people on campus supporting sustainability efforts. **Matt** mentioned that this is a great way to highlight different individuals doing great things across campus. Our office will compile the nominations to send out to the committee before the March 21st committee meeting. **Matt** also mentioned that the Office of Sustainability could send out the nominations as they come in so the committee could review those instead of all at once.

Report from Infrastructure Council meeting

Matt summarized the Infrastructure Council meeting and explained how it fits within the committee structures. This council receives reports from all of the committees. Walter O'Dell is the chair and is interested in many sustainability initiatives, specifically e-scooters/e-bikes and transitioning to one-way pair roads to increase pedestrian safety. He mentioned discussion around the Duke Cogeneration Facility that was going to be built. They were updated on the new Duke utilities contract. The UF energy building projects are now not being considered. There is also a separate renewables contract, the Duke Clean Energy Connect, where 42% of campus energy is solar powered through the renewable energy purchase program. Additionally, there is a new policy regarding the charging of lithium ion batteries that will need to be addressed in the future.

Old Business

STARS update

Liz updated the committee on the Campus as a Living Lab form (<https://forms.office.com/r/1vh7jrkvF1>). There have not been any submissions and the Office of Sustainability would love for the committee to help forward the form to other faculty. Our office is also taking stock of syllabi related to climate change. **Liz** will make sure to send the list of syllabi to the committee for review.

Climate Action Plan Implementation

Andrew spoke on the faculty and academic related Climate Action Plan actions for this committee to address. **Matt** mentioned that from an academic perspective, the committee could help with doing a climate literacy survey. The Office of Sustainability thought the committee could help with a survey to help fill the gaps on climate related courses that aren't covered by keyword searches. He mentioned that this could help create a workshop to support faculty interested in incorporating climate change into their courses. For example, the [Climate Communication Summit](#) is a great resource for those interested in learning about how to communicate climate action. This summit is accepting registration and will occur next Thursday. Furthermore, the Office of Sustainability would love for the committee to help brainstorm.

Other ways the committee can help with academic related actions would be through data gathering related to climate action related to clubs, organizations, and faculty. From a university wide perspective, the [University Climate Change Coalition](#) (UC3) is a coalition of R1 universities. The main request is that the university form some sort of climate coalition. **Andrew** asked about the timeline for compiling the syllabi and **Matt** said that we could have the rough syllabi compiled for the sub committee meeting by the next sustainability committee meeting. **Andrew** asked who would do the climate literacy study and **Matt** said it would not necessarily be our office, which is more of an operational unit, but through a group that leans more academic.

Sustainability Information to be shared with Departments, etc

Andrew talked about assembling sustainability information to send out to departmental chairs. He would like to assemble the information in the form of a newsletter to go out. **Angie Brown** said that she could help with this. **Liz** said that the committee could help brainstorm topics to compile the resources across campus. **Andrew** said that we should create a subcommittee of non academic staff to brainstorm these topics.

Office of Sustainability Updates

Liz spoke on the events with our office and the aspects of our Earth Month events along with our campus partners. The Sustainability Showcase will be on April 16 from 11-2. The Office would like for the committee to share this event with student organizations and clubs so they can save a spot to table. **Andrew** asked about the sign up form for the tabling event. **Kaylee** shared her email address (k.august@ufl.edu) to connect clubs to our office so that we can help them sign up.

Liz shared that Faculty Senate nominations are currently open until the end of January (<https://senate.ufl.edu/committees--councils/>). The University Committee & Councils Virtual January Open House will be on Wednesday, January 24 1-2pm on Zoom

Matt mentioned that the Faculty Senate is this afternoon. At the last Faculty Senate meeting, President Sasse wanted the faculty to look at reenvisioning the academic core curriculum. This committee might be able to support the restructuring of the core and how to push for climate curriculum in the core curriculum.

Meeting Adjourned

Jessica Sheffield motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:33 pm. **Flora Iff-Noel** seconded the motion.