

## Sustainability Task Force – Fall 2015 Meeting I

October 23, 2015

Stadium Parking Garage, Room 123

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Attendees: Gabriel Durham, Belkis Hidalgo, Joujou Zebdaoui, Rick Beltran, Joana Tan, Kristin Wintersteen, Stephanie Coates, Kayshewa Chamupathi, Sujata Gautam, Nikhil Schneider, Alexander Robinson, Jacquie Vargas, Paul Brokhin, Sarah Kelly

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### I. Introductions

- a. Sarah Kelly introduced herself and explained her role as the program manager for the Office of Sustainability.
- b. Committee members introduced themselves, their role, and their interest in sustainability.
- c. Sarah Kelly explained that this meeting would mostly consist of getting everyone up to speed regarding sustainability efforts at the university, but that future meetings would facilitate more discussion.

### II. About the Office of sustainability

- a. Ongoing Projects
  1. A partnership with athletics to implement recycling at tailgating events is being pursued.
  2. The university STARS report, found at <http://www.aashe.org/> is almost completed. The office is awaiting the letter from the president. Sarah Kelly mentioned that our campus received full points for research and innovation but operations needs improvement.
  3. The office is continually identifying partners to work with. The UH building coordinators, the Harbach Ripley community center, the NCAA Final Four, and the Green Alliance Sports Summit are all potential groups.
  4. The office has partnered with students from the College of Architecture to design and create a shed and shade structure near the campus community garden.
  5. New designs for the outdoor trash and recycling solar compactors are in development.
  6. The process for requesting trash and recycling bins for events needs to be streamlined.

7. The Sustainable Coog Certification and Green Office certification is expected to launch in Spring 2016.
- b. Outreach and Events
  1. Sustainability Fest will be on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> in Lynn Eusan Park from 11:30-1:30
  2. The office started a new Sustainability Meetup program in the Fall 2015 semester. The two meetups focused on resilience and sustainable architecture.
  3. The office manages the Campus Community Garden, which holds volunteer events several times per month.
  4. You can subscribe to the office newsletter at [www.uh.edu/sustainablecoog](http://www.uh.edu/sustainablecoog).
  5. The State of Sustainability Address is scheduled for January 25<sup>th</sup> 2016, from 11:30 to 1:30 at the Rockwell Pavilion.
  6. Subcommittees: The office works with Tree Campus USA and the Bike Advisory Committee. Sarah Kelly invited proposals for other subcommittees.
  7. The office has partnered with MVP for Rock the Campus, celebration of Texas Arbor Day that will involve several beautification projects on campus.  
[http://www.uh.edu/mvp/events/rock\\_the\\_campus.html](http://www.uh.edu/mvp/events/rock_the_campus.html)
  8. Recyclemania, Earth Week, and Bike to UH day are other events that the office organizes.

### III. Sustainability at the University

- a. The university's sustainability policy can be viewed at <http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/mapp/14/140101.pdf>
- b. The Office of Sustainability is working on the integration of its mission into the campus master plan.
- c. Buildings, water, and energy
  1. Energy and water sub meters on each building on campus could be invaluable in reducing each building's energy and water consumption.
  2. The central plant currently reclaims condensate to reduce water usage, and boasts a solar array on its roof that provides 23% of the plant's power.
  3. Cougar Woods Dining Hall is the only LEED certified building on campus. It is LEED silver.
  4. The office is pursuing the integration of sustainability items into building design guidelines, such as bike racks and rainwater management. The building design guidelines can be found at <http://www.uh.edu/facilities-planning-construction/Vendor%20Resources/owners-design-criteria/design-guidelines/>
- d. Academics and Research
  1. Many new electives have been integrated into the Energy and Sustainability Minor. There are now about 60 approved electives for the minor.

2. The university operates the Coastal Prairie Center, which maintains and protects over 300 acres of the endangered ecosystem.
3. The university also conducts air quality monitoring, and has stations on top of Moody Towers.
4. The Center for Superconductivity is also housed at the university.  
<http://www.tcsuh.com/>
- e. Campus as a living laboratory
  1. The greenhouse gas inventory is a project started by Dr. Barry Lefer and then beginning in 2013, led by students in the Intro to Energy and Sustainability class, which aims to calculate the university's total greenhouse gas output from all sources, including commuters.
  2. The Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship has potential for partnering with sustainability initiatives.
  3. Patrick Peters' Graduate Design and Build Studio has constructed two projects on campus. The office is hoping to have the garden shed and shade structure built by that group.
  4. The Office of Sustainability is working to have a pocket prairie on campus, which volunteers would plant during Earth Week 2016 and could be integrated into curricula and research.
  5. There are plans for a campus orchard on the site currently occupied by parking lots along Cullen Blvd. near the McDonalds. This could potentially be implemented during the summer and next fall. This project also has potential for outside funding through the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation.
  6. Fundraising opportunities were discussed. There are opportunities for community grants through Whole Foods and grants from large energy companies. The task force came to the consensus that a student green fee would be unfair to students, as it is up to the university to fund sustainability projects. At the AASHE conference, Sarah Kelly found that one university's sustainability fund was \$365,000 dollars per year.

#### **IV. Task Force Items**

- a. The group discussed its title, and decided that the Campus Sustainability Committee was more appropriate. This will be formally adopted after the new campus sustainability policy is approved.
- b. There are still several items on which the group needs to reach a consensus.
  1. The structure of the task force needs to be finalized, including any additional members.
  2. The frequency of the meetings, as well as the possible regular attendance from outside speakers will also be established.

3. Meeting structure also needs to be determined.
4. Leadership within the task force needs to be decided upon.
5. How can we best improve campus and community collaboration?
6. In terms of campus feedback and recommendations to leadership, how will such proposals be made?

## V. Other items

- a. The task force will identify a budget/fundraising goals.
- b. The task force discussed the idea of having a lecture series related to sustainability, and explored the option of making these more department specific.
- c. Rick mentioned that he is working on ensuring that computers are shut down overnight to save power, which should launch in November 2015.
- d. The group mentioned the need to improve support from the administration, but did not finalize the approach to improve support.

## VI. Action Items

- a. Research RecycleMania and suggest ideas at the next meeting.  
<http://recyclemaniacs.org/>
- b. Consider waste minimization and diversion practices and suggest ideas at next meeting to Facilities leadership, including indoor recycling, events and responsible parties.
- c. Identify projects you want to work on and propose projects to task force.
- d. Review the campus sustainability policy draft.
- e. Examine the structure of other university committees to make recommendations regarding the structure of the task force.

## VIII. Next Meeting

- a. Time: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- b. Date: November 20, 2015
- c. Location: Stadium Parking Garage Conference Room