

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

Sustainability Advisory Committee – Spring 2018

Date: February 12, 2018

Location: Student Center South – Astrodome

Time: 12:00PM to 1:30PM

Attendees: Laura Galloway, Rueben Parish, Jennifer Rea, Bruce Race, Stephanie Coates, Eve Esch, Esmeralda Valdez, Mike Mendoza, Maria Honey

Minutes

I. Welcome

II. Second Nature Research Presentation

a. Review Recommendation – Mike Mendoza

- i. An overview of the research done on Second Nature was presented which included benchmarking and interviewing peer institutions, attending Second Nature webinar sessions, researching Second Nature website, and looking at reporting frequency of Second Nature signatories in Texas
- ii. Alternative resources were also explored and engaged such as establishing a mentoring relationship with Colorado State and networking and engaging with sustainability associations like AASHE and TRACS

b. Findings

i. Pros

1. Second Nature reporting structure has been consolidated to one report
2. Second Nature offers three levels of commitments
3. Second Nature provides some support to develop climate action plans
4. Second Nature makes institutional data available to the public on their website

ii. Cons

1. Second Nature institutions saw little return from the annual Second Nature fee
2. Second Nature school worked with third party consultants/partners or internally to develop climate action plans; with little support from Second Nature
3. Second Nature customer service was minimal.
4. \$5000 annual fee

c. Alternatives

i. Green House Inventory for Climate Action Planning

1. UNH's campus carbon calculator
2. \$300 fee

- ii. AASHE
 1. 800 active members of national and international sustainability professionals
 2. Large and supportive network supporting higher education
 3. Offers STARS sustainability reporting tool
- iii. TRACS
 1. Align our efforts with Texas peer network and efforts
- d. Recommendation
 - i. After research, Office of Sustainability recommends that institution does not sign with Second Nature.
 - ii. Instead it recommends creating a climate action plan
 - iii. Committee members agree. Creating a climate action plan should take priority over signing with Second Nature.
- e. Discussion

Topics discussed:

- i. Developing a policy commitment to sustainability if we don't sign to create accountability measures. Policy rough drafts are available to parties interested in working on sustainability policies
 - ii. Garnering more buy-in from executive administrations. Aligning the climate action plan and sustainability strategic plan with Chancellor Khator's strategic initiatives and university goals
 - iii. Benchmark 3-5 universities that we aspire to academically and on research to see how they are connecting their research agenda / academic aspiration and campus performance. (Expanding the consultant work)
 - iv. Identify schools who have done and climate action plan without the top down directive just in case.
 - v. Get the president need to recognize and support the effort. This needs to be sanctioned planning effort. We need our senior administrators to agree to our efforts.
 - vi. Staff Counsel or Faculty Senate representatives that meet with the Chancellor regularly and could potentially advocate on our behalf.
 - vii. Staff Counsel is also conducting a cultural climate assessment. We might be able to add a couple of sustainability related questions.
- f. Climate Action Plan Preview
 - i. Mike Mendoza presented an outline of the target point included in a climate action plan
 - ii. Office of Sustainability is conducting a feasibility study to implement a climate action plan.

III. Preview New Sustainability Mission, Vision, Goals

- a. Mike Mendoza will send an outline of mission, vision, goals document to the committee to review and comment on
 - i. Objectives

1. Annual report
2. Advisory Committee
3. Policies

IV. Action Items/Learning Outcomes

- a. Find out what we are paying for energy, kW? (Bruce Race and Mike Mendoza)
- b. Outline the order/process for the climate action plan. (Bruce Race and Mike Mendoza)
- c. Look at feasibility of adding a couple of sustainability related questions to the cultural climate assessment (Mike Mendoza and Reuben Parrish)
- d. Benchmark 3-5 schools with academic and research power and see how it is connected to their campus performance – Colorado State #1, University of South Florida, UCONN [bestcolleges.com, Princeton review, sierra club] (Mike Mendoza)
- e. Review the outline of mission, vision, goals document (All committee)

V. Member Announcements

- a. I Heart Student Centers – Wednesday, \$1 ice cream and games 11-1
- b. Farmers Market – Wednesday, Butler Plaza

Meeting adjourned