

## Sustainability Task Force – Spring 2016 Meeting II

March 11, 2016

Student Center South, Heights Room (224)

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Attendees: Elsie Myers, Jeanne LaMontagne, Nikhil Schneider, Sarah Kelly, Kristina Michel, Kokila Jayasekera, Kayshewa Chamupathi, Sujata Gautam, Gabriel Durham, Eve Esch, Kristin Wintersteen, Jeff Feng, Stephanie Coates, Alex Robinson, Mackenzie Wysong

---

### 1. Updates from Office of Sustainability

- a. New committee webpage: [uh.edu/sustainability/campus-initiatives/committee](http://uh.edu/sustainability/campus-initiatives/committee)
  - i. Meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations will be added to this webpage.
- b. Bike report finalized
  - i. Some questions in the report address the surrounding areas of campus, not just the campus itself.
  - ii. The Houston Bike plan is currently under review, and BikeHouston is looking for feedback. You can view the current draft and make comments [here](#).
- c. Big belly design vetting
  - i. The previously proposed design was not approved by leadership, who would like it to have more red. Red reflectors were proposed as a “weatherproof” solution, as colors will tend to fade over time.
  - ii. Sarah will be working with the leadership to finalize a design.
- d. Sustainability policy in review
  - i. We should receive feedback on the policy in May.
  - ii. The policy can be viewed here:  
<http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/review/mapp/campus163.htm>. Please review the policy and submit your comments.
- e. Distribution support:
  - i. Pocket prairie fundraiser: [crowdrise.com/grassrootsforchange](http://crowdrise.com/grassrootsforchange)
    1. We have so far raised \$2,500 of our \$12,000 goal, which will cover the cost of the plants, seeds, tools, and everything necessary for establishing the prairie. A long-term management plan and signage will be the biggest additional costs. Please help promote the event.
  - ii. STARS press release
    1. We should continue promoting the fact that UH is STARS Gold.
  - iii. Electronics Recycling Drive: April 1: [uh.edu/recyclemania](http://uh.edu/recyclemania)
    1. Any questions about what can and cannot be recycled at the event can be forwarded to Sarah.
- f. Earth Day Houston and Earth Week
  - i. Review of calendar

1. Earth week will be from April 18<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. UH will participate in Houston Earth Day on April 16<sup>th</sup>, which will be held at Sam Houston Park. Kokila will reach out to Chemical engineering professors and Kayshewa will contact a materials science researcher about having a table at the UH booth. Gabe will see if there are any anthropology-related groups that can come and run a tabling. Craig Whitfield may be able to attend as well. A grad student working with Dr. Lefer can likely do a balloon launch.
2. On April 19<sup>th</sup> the Office of Sustainability will host a Garden Event  
 On April 20<sup>th</sup>, MVP will screen a movie related to water, either "Tapped" or "Flow".  
 On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the Office of Sustainability will host a meetup relating to food.  
 On April 22<sup>nd</sup> the Residence Hall Association will host a different event at each of the seven residence halls, and participants will have a card to get stamped at each event. MVP will host an event at the Centennial Gardens in Hermann Park.  
 On April 23<sup>rd</sup> the pocket prairie will be established on campus.
  - ii. Additional potential events
    1. UH Energy may host a scavenger hunt on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, put on by the energy ambassadors.
- g. Sarah Out: March 14-22
2. Creating and reviewing Campus Sustainability Committee Bylaws
  - a. Review of other committee bylaws
  - b. Terms
    - i. Student terms will be one year.
    - ii. Kristin Wintersteen will be on leave during the Fall 2016 semester, but will still be able to participate in committee activities.
  - c. Additional members
  - d. Chair and vice chair
  - e. Community grievances
    - i. The committee should have a designated time during which they can hear grievances from students, faculty, staff, and the community. This shouldn't happen every meeting, more likely on a quarterly basis.
3. Side projects updates: <http://bit.ly/STFprojects>
  - a. Kristin Wintersteen has been working on the E&S curriculum, and the GEDS curriculum. She is also pursuing grants. Sarah will check with the City of Houston Office of Sustainability to see what grants are available.
  - b. Stephanie and Mackenzie have made contacted a few organizations who are willing to pick up donated goods during move-out. The biggest challenge will be collection times

to ensure that the bins do not overflow. The process will then be evaluated to determine which organization was the most effective.

#### 4. Open Forum

- a. Jeff Feng mentioned that the industrial design program hosts an event to give students the opportunity to solve sustainability-related issues.
- b. The state of sustainability address has not been scheduled, and will depend on Sarah's availability.
- c. Sarah has submitted a request for a project fund, and for the Office of Sustainability to be funded directly by the university instead of through the department of Auxiliary services.
- d. If sustainability is indeed an initiative of the campus, it should be part of our contracts and policies. Is there a way for the Sustainability Committee to be involved in the review of these contracts and policies to at least make recommendations?

#### 5. Tour of Student Center: Indoor recycling group

- a. Current recycling setup
  - i. There are currently only a few recycling bins around the Student Center, which are emptied by student employees.
  - ii. Student Center employees who wish to recycle must empty their bin to the building's central recycling location themselves, because it is not in the contracts of the custodial staff to handle recycling.
  - iii. The Game Room, which is operated by UH and not Aramark, does not currently recycle.
  - iv. There is a trash compactor and a cardboard compactor (both roughly the size of a tractor trailer) at the Student Center loading dock, and most of the cardboard in the facility is recycled.
- b. Possible future expansions
  - i. Building-wide recycling will require some infrastructure changes and regular recycling pickups will need to be coordinated with facilities management.
  - ii. The online form for renting event space can include a section to have the event be a "zero waste" event. The event coordinators would be provided with recycling and compost bins and trained on where to take the collected material.
  - iii. The cardboard compactor could be replaced with a compactor for all recyclables, and a separate cardboard baler could be purchased for the loading dock. Logistics such as personnel training and keeping the cardboard dry would need to be addressed.
  - iv. Eve and Matt will be meeting with the final companies competing for the new Student Center custodial contract to see how they would implement recycling.
  - v. Half of the existing trashcans could be wrapped with a design to brand them as recycling bins.

