

Sustainability Committee – Spring 2017 Meeting I

Date: Tuesday, February 21

Location: Fresh Food Company Conference Room, Moody Towers

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Attendees: Andrea Trevino, Emily Merrell, Esmeralda Valdez, Jeanne LaMontagne, Jeff Feng, Jennifer Rea, Kayshewa Cahmupathi, Kokila Jayasekera, Kristin Wintersteen, Mackenzie Wysong, Melissa Halstead, Nikhil Schneider, Rosie Ashley, and Stephanie Coates.

I. Introductions

Members went around the table and introduced themselves and suggested the committee to discuss sustainability behavior changes they are attempting to modify either in their personal or professional life.

Some modifications were increase bike usage, increase plastic bag recycling, decrease in single use plastic bottles, increase in cardboard recycling, recycling glass at home, native plant gardening, K-cups recycling, usage of pesticides, gardening, decreasing food waste and going paperless.

II. Sustainability Updates & Upcoming Events

- a. Tree Campus USA Certification
- b. TRACS conference presentation on March 6 from 2pm-3pm
 - i. Conference: March 5-7, 2017 at Texas A&M Commerce
- c. RecycleMania
 - i. Electronics Drive, Student Center Drive, Fri., Feb. 24 8am to 1pm
 - ii. February Sustainability Meetup- Music Library room 220 Tues., Feb. 28 11am to 1pm

Melissa added reschedule pocket prairie event for Fri., March 3rd from Noon to 3pm.
- d. NRG Power Plant & Petra Nova Tour- Wed., March 15 from 10 am to 1pm
- e. Earth Week
- f. Campus bike policy, storage space, b-cycle proposal

III. Invitation of departmental committee contacts

Melissa described Stephanie Coates idea to involve departmental liaisons to serve as voluntary points of contact between the Sustainability Committee and Office, and various departments on campus. Jeanne LeMontagne suggested presenting this idea at a quarterly building coordinator meeting and asking for volunteers there. Esmeralda Valdez recommended developing a sustainability ambassador program to recruit allies from different offices and departments and researching different university programs.

IV. Vote Sustainability Committee Bylaws

7 of the voting members present voted in support of the by-laws. The remaining voting members need to be contacted for their input. Melissa stated, will follow up as an action item.

V. Committee Updates and Projects

- a. People soft grants online data base

Mackenzie Wysong announced that the move-out donation program would continue this year through the Salvation Army and Houston Textile Recyclers.

No progress has been made on accessing the Peoplesoft grants online database or creating an ongoing database for sustainability research.

VI. Creation of subcommittees

- a. Significant feasible sustainability performance gaps

i. Special Projects

Sustainability Literacy Assessment

Employee educators program

Andrea Trevino elaborated on the Lunch & Learn program hosted by the student center, in which several committee members were interested. The Student Center is currently pursuing other methods of publicizing the events, and is hoping to get more student involvement.

Sustainable Coog certification (in order to create 'green' teams)

Melissa hopes to create a sustainable coog certification, possibly through AccessUH, that would help address the staff education portion of STARS, and could possibly be tied into the sustainability ambassadors program that Esmeralda mentioned.

ii. Collaboration

Departmental Sustainability Leader/Liaison

Building Operations and Maintenance- retrofitting

Jeanne is unsure as to whether or not building retrofits are adhering to LEED silver standards. She suggested that committee members could call project managers and ask about these standards being met. This type of activism could help remind upper administration of these policies that have been established.

iii. Policies

Tree campus policy

Bike policy

Future policies: energy, waste, indoor air quality, purchasing, water, greenhouse gases

iv. Ad-hoc

VII. Open Forum

Kristen, Jeff, Emily and Esmeralda discussed the state of open-access research publication, since support for open-access research is a big portion of STARS. According to Kristen, there are structural issues that prevent open-access support from becoming widespread. Many researchers compete with one another for funding, and there is pressure to publish research in more notable journals because it influences chances of tenure. To achieve greater support

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for open-access research publication, large changes will have to occur in the provost office, especially in the way research publication is valued.

There is a need for clarification on what this credit entails, whether it refers to all research, or just sustainability research, and if it matters where the open-access publication occurs.

VIII. Next Meeting scheduled Tuesday, April 25

IX. Action items

- a. **The Office of Sustainability will send out polls to sign up for a sub-committee and meeting times. Melissa will connect with Facilities regarding the building coordinator program.**
- b. **Obtain 2 other votes to approve bylaws.**