

Sustainability Charter Committee Minutes

Monday, March 15 @ 9:00-10:30 am via Zoom

Present: Matthieu Biger, Michelle Fravel, Joseph Haggerty, Erin Irish, Megan Lindmark, Melissa Meisterheim, Laurie Ponto, Heather Sander

Absent: Sam Schauer, Libby Smith, Amanda Thompson

Liaisons: Stratis Giannakouros

Ex Officio: Rich Hichwa, Jill Irvin, Tony Senio

Staff: Beth MacKenzie, Blake Rupe

Guests: Becky Soglin, Charles Stanier

1. Call to Order

2. Announcements

- Prairie Reconstruction Project at Ashton XC course: Living Learning Laboratory is very active
- 22 faculty are involved
- Thanks to committee member Tony Senio for his efforts on this important project

3. Impromptu new business for this agenda

- CGRER lost state-appropriated funding, what should the next version be?
- Travel grants, research grants currently – is that the most impactful direction for it?
- Could the committee and elements of sustainability be integrated in a future version of CGRER
- Could a Substantiality Institute be created as the next stage of CGRER?

4. TIAA Resolution update

- Faculty council met and motion was passed to bring this to discussion in the full Faculty Senate (vote: 13 to 4); University's position was that the real estate funds that we have access to do not include investments in Brazil so there was some diversity in the vote but no opposition to the resolution)
 - Want to ensure investments not to be used to support illegal/unethical activities

5. Guest Becky Soglin – Johnson County Sustainability Coordinator

- Personal Background
 - Two degrees from UI: MFA nonfiction writing, masters in planning
 - Serves on the Climate Action commission with Stratis
 - Works with Blake and Stratis on sustainability Working Group of Johnson County (includes participation from nearby towns and Iowa City Schools District)
- Comprehensive Plan of Johnson County Sustainability
 - First county to have a sustainability position like this, followed by Lynn county recently
 - Energy, Storm water, Education, Recycling, Transportation, Purchasing, Housing
 - Highlighted examples: solar energy efforts, gardens, LEED buildings, bike events, internal workshop on adaptation in the near future, Iowa River Trail Plan, provide sustainability focused grants, solar power hours (geared toward use at residential homes)
- Questions
 - Efforts that the University could be a good partner for?
 - Research opportunities exist. For example, they are working with the department of public health on efforts.
 - They can also serve as experts for talks/education and serve as mentors for students
 - CRANDIC light rail (from North Liberty to Iowa City) – infrastructure bill will be coming which offers opportunity to pursue this
 - Plans for tree planting following derecho?
 - Lynn county lost 70% of their trees and may likely need volunteers

- Also concerned about fires in parks due to debris so volunteers also likely needed for this effort
- May consider using Earth Day as an opportunity to rally UI students to provide assistance
- Trees Forever may have sign ups as well

6. Earth Day

- Use this day to increase species awareness: If you know about things, you're more likely to care about them
- Scavenger Hunt to Identify 10 new species in your environment, utilize I-Naturalist to identify species, UI-Bio (undergrad group) is very enthusiastic about participation
- Next step: meeting with UI-Bio to formalize these ideas
- Information Dissemination Plans
 - Needs to be developed, Office of Sustainability will help with this aspect
 - There will be constant advertisement as there are multiple events planned for this time, communication will be coordinated

7. 2020 reporting update – Energy Data Points

- Energy use was 1.1% lower even with more buildings on campus
- 42.2% renewable energy on campus

8. College of Engineering – Sustainability in Strategic Plan

- Charles Stanier shared suggested wording to add sustainability to the College of Engineering Strategic Plan
- The new plans are included in the 'engagement' section
- The committee could use this example to make suggestions for ways that colleges may incorporate the language into their own plans
- Part of 2030 goals: have sustainability be a piece of all strategic plans
- Provost website has a template for incorporating DEI in strategic plans, we may consider creating the same for sustainability and ask the Provost to publish it similarly
- Given that we have an approved sustainability general education requirement now, you can see how that will lead to make the case that if it is a pillar to education, it must also be a pillar to our institution so that may likely lead to an overhaul of the pillars of our strategic plans
- Consider inviting Provost and Dean of the CLAS to have this discussion about the place of sustainability in the strategic plan of our institution

9. Revisit Nov '19 Climate Resolution

10. Other avenues to embed Sustainability @ Iowa

- Presidential Search
 - How can the committee make it clear that this topic is important to our institution and in what we want in a leader?
 - Consider participating in interview process with questions in mind:
 - What do you think the role of sustainability is in higher education?
 - How do you plan to address climate change at our institution?
- Biden Administration has made it clear that Climate Change is a focus. What resources might be available?
 - Research dollars are now available, and we need to be positioned to claim those funds
 - Invite government relations individuals so that we can have a direct conversation with them on this topic (state and national level individuals)
 - They can tell us what is going on and we can tell them what is important/interesting (bi-directional conversation)
 - Names: Leanne Hotek, Maddie Bushnell, (Keith Saunders perhaps later given that he is very busy currently in the session)

11. Next meetings:

- a) Apr 19, 2021 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
- b) May 17, 2021 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM