

Environmental Sustainability Committee

Meeting Notes

9/21/22, 11am-noon via Zoom

Attendance: Mike Bryson (faculty CAS), Kathy Bliss (staff Office of President), Gina Buccola (faculty CAS), Keira Carpenter (student CAS), Anne-Marie Cusac (faculty/admin CAS), Aden Detres (student CAS), La Vonne Downey (faculty CAS), Sophia Gallo (student CAS), Eddy Green (faculty CAS), Monica Kunavich (staff SCH Campus), LaDonna Long (faculty CAS), Kayla Nelson (student CAS), Laura Nussbaum-Barberena (admin PRC and OSR), Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza (admin McNair Program), Sarah Maria Rutter (admin Honors Program), Olivia Salazar (grad student CAS), Bob Tenuta (faculty CBA)

Quick Overview of Sustainability Planning at RU (2014-15): slideshow presentation by Mike Bryson reviewing process and goals of original plan, which expired in 2020

Planning Workshop Format Ideas:

- Advertise to everyone (University students, staff, faculty, alumni, and administration)
- Hold 2-3 Meetings
- Have in the afternoons and evenings
- Have in-person (hybrid?) and on Zoom
- Include food or provide some other incentive (Cookout at SCH campus did really well)
- Host in CSEIE space (WB3) or HSSI/Stem Center (AUD 8)
- 1st round: educational workshops
 - Topics: sustainability at RU, UN Sustainable Development Goals (Lavonne Downey said she could run this), plan overview, importance of campus sustainability efforts to RU mission and reputation
 - Get attendees up to speed on sustainability in order to lay groundwork for planning action meetings
- 2nd round: action meetings
 - Brainstorming and idea generation of concrete plans to revise the Strategic Sustainability Plan
 - Doing assessments of current status (going through curriculum, going through buildings, energy/water/waste audits, confirming 2015 plan's successes/failures/continued projects) or delegating these assessments to people
 - Discuss Indigenous land stewardship and Land Back movement (and, more generally, relation of sustainability to social/environmental justice)
 - Prioritizing work at Schaumburg and Chicago campuses equally

- Revising plan document (content, not wordsmithing)
- Discussing a reading (or providing short documents for background info)

Ideas for Sustainability Projects and Initiatives

- Campus Engagement:
 - Advertise more of RU's sustainability efforts beyond our physical building to encourage people to get involved
 - Use sports games in Arlington Heights and Goodman Center as places to advertise or do an activity (before or after the game)
 - Use athletics team volunteering as an advertising opportunity for both the teams and campus sustainability effort
- Assessment/Idea Gathering
 - Have a consistent open avenue for people to report what they see being done, concerns, questions, ideas, reports, etc. (ideally, a single webpage)
 - Have a volunteer team walk around and assess campus facilities in Chicago and Schaumburg
 - Survey students and see what they are interested in and care about
- Re-prioritize the Schaumburg Campus
 - Get attention for the courtyard, medicinal gardens, and pear trees, and bring back the nature walk
 - Create an RU Green "chapter" or parallel organizational sustainability team
 - Revive the community garden (in parallel with the WB rooftop garden), both of which are fallow currently
- Integrate climate change and sustainability across the curriculum
 - Survey our current curriculum integration of sustainability and UN goals
 - Develop EXL courses for various disciplines to tend to green spaces at Schaumburg and Chicago campuses
 - Put together a resource list (and free textbooks from OpenStax) for English 102 Research classes to research sustainability topics; work with Library staff on this
 - Recruit students from across departments to engage in professional skill-building opportunities such as infographic creation, research, tests/labs, marketing, etc.
 - Utilize student workers within and outside the work-study program to find grants
 - Develop Indigenous studies classes in sustainability
- Encourage volunteering for sustainability initiatives such as gardening and trash pick ups
 - Through Athletics teams (who are required to do monthly service events)
 - Through Career Services for resume building
 - Through collaborations with other student organizations

- Persuade university leadership to support sustainability efforts
 - Fulfills our social justice mission as well as ethical responsibility to reduce our ecological footprint (incorporating the Principles of Environmental Justice and the UN Sustainable Development Goals)
 - Encourages student recruitment
 - Enhances student retention
 - Strengthens university finances and reputation
- Integrate sustainability into the University's existing Strategic Plan
- Reorganize the Environmental Sustainability Committee as a more formal body to increase participation, make it more representative of the whole school, provide more consistent/reliable support for projects, and leverage university funding

Next Steps & Upcoming Events

- Migrant Clothing Drive: see SUST blog and email osalazar01@mail.roosevelt.edu
- Tuesdays 5-6PM: Heller College of Business and Sustainability Department collaboration on 1 credit-hour course featuring 3 alumni panelists (late Nov and early Dec)
- American Dream Reconsidered Panel featuring Kiera Carpenter and two SUST alumni (Dan Lyvers '21 and Yessenia Balcazar '17) discussing sustainability in an urban context
- Campus Sustainability Month in October: check SUST blog and RU Green instagram for events and activities

Notes respectfully submitted by Sophia Gallo and edited by Mike Bryson