Sustainability Charter Committee

Friday, September 25, 2015

2:00 PM

University Services Building Room 302

AGENDA

1. Call to order –Brian Thompson and Christine Rutledge-Russell, Co-chairs
2. Introductions for new members
3. Biomass update
4. Classroom consolidation update
5. Discussion for possible letter to incoming president
6. Discussion of committee priorities
7. Next meeting and adjournment

Attachment: Notes from 2015 Sustainability Charter Committee Retreat

Sustainability Charter Committee

September 25, 2015

- Meeting Minutes –

MEMBERS/LIAISONS PRESENT: Liz Christiansen, Barbara Eckstein, Don Guckert, Rich Hichwa, Dawn Kluber, Jake Kundert, Sara Maples, Ben Ross, Christine Rutledge-Russell, Heather Sander, Sarah SanGiovanni, Brian Thompson

OTHERS PRESENT: Shawn Albaugh Kleppe, Ingrid Anderson, Eric Holthaus, Jeff Landgren,

Doug Litwiller

INTRODUCTIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS

Introductions of returning and new members were given.

BIOMASS UPDATE

An update on the Biomass Program was provided, specifically the field day introducing the University’s use of miscanthus grass as a biofuel.

Discussion included the partnerships with ISU, the demonstrable success of burns using biomass, and the measuring of emissions such as CO2. Dr. Betsy Stone recently completed air emissions testing on biomass, [showing that using oat hulls for power has considerable benefits to the environment and human health.](http://now.uiowa.edu/2015/09/bravo-biomass)

CLASSROOM CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

Doug Litwiller reported the results of the 2014 Summer Semester class consolidations in efforts to limit electricity consumption.

Discussion included the

* efforts to include Lindquist and Phillips Hall this season,
* if similar efforts for the winter term were being considered,
* if complaints were received during this trial; and
* if this news has been celebrated with the participating building occupants.

LETTER TO INCOMING PRESIDENT

Committee members were asked if they would support a letter to the incoming president sharing the direction and goals of the committee.

Discussion included using words like “leaders” and “pioneers”, as well as highlighting the shared governance aspect of the committee; extending an invitation to attend a meeting; and not sending the letter until after the official start date of November 2nd.

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Previous priorities of action were shared with committee members and discussed for further clarification and alignment.

Discussion included continued efforts with incentives for the expansion of sustainability-related and focused classes and having Barbara Eckstein act a liaison with the Education Committee; review and development of purchasing guidelines to reduce waste and identify more environmentally friendly resources and perhaps identify a liaison with Purchasing; review the TIER Efficiency Study’s goals in relations to the pressures of implementing its goals; continued promotion of the Eco Hawk program; the use of University property for building carbon sinks; bringing in representatives from Purchasing, Landscape Services, and Dining Services to learn of their efforts in sustainability; and to schedule another half-day retreat for committee members.

SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE

Don Guckert provided an update on the solar power initiatives on campus. Don explained that at this time, it made more sense for the university to invest in energy reduction.

Discussion included the weighing of cost of creating energy versus the cost of energy conservation; the solar system payback; and the message that the visibility of using solar sends.

COMPOST

An update on the collection of organics for composting was provided.

Discussion included signage to educate as well as the results of installing the food pulper and going trayless at Burge Hall.

NEXT MEETING

October 23, 2015 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in room 202 USB.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:**

**Maintain The University of Iowa’s leadership in sustainability**

* Request the UI President, Provost and incoming academic leadership formally establish sustainability as an ***essential*** component of modern undergraduate education at the UI, provide incentives for the expansion of sustainability-related and focused classes, and establish an undergraduate student General Education requirement.
* Request that sustainability continue as a central component of the (updated) UI strategic plan. Request that sustainability be incorporated as a central theme to the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in its (updated) strategic plan.
* Request increased visibility (especially UI’s recycling and composting efforts) and communications of the UI’s sustainability efforts and successes. Sustainability should ***be a central message in its visitor welcoming and student recruitment and orientation activities***. Campus tours given to visitors and prospective students should include information about the university’s progress in building a sustainable campus.
* Request the establishment of a team of Sustainability Ambassadors that could assist the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities in outreach and technical assistance to build resilience and quality of life in Iowa’s communities.
* Review the establishment of a sustainability institute that could bring focus to UI sustainability-related research and scholarly engagement.

**Ensure UI policies and procedures support fair and sustainable practices:**

* Request the establishment of an ongoing campus master planning process that emphasizes climate change adaptation, sustainability and disaster avoidance. This should be undertaken in collaboration with similar planning efforts in the City of Iowa City and surrounding municipalities.
* Request UI Catering employ only sustainable, compostable and renewable materials as a standard practice in its catering services, avoid or ban the use of Styrofoam and single-use items, and provide compost collection at all events where feasible.
* Recommend the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and University of Northern Iowa collaborate on the purchase of local and Iowa-grown foods.
* Recommend the UI increase percentage of dining services food and beverage expenditures that are local and community-based and/or third party verified for sustainability.
* Review UI Purchasing policies, guidelines and agreements to confirm they require new and existing vendors, contractors and franchisees adhere to the UI’s minimum standards and practices regarding
  + environmental performance and
  + employee wages, benefits, working conditions and rights.

Effective policies are especially important in the areas of food and clothing purchasing. The Sustainability Charter Committee should collaborate with other charter committees, such as Human Rights, on the review process. The International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions can serve as guidelines.

* Review the investment management of the university endowment.
* Review the university’s contract with Coca-Cola.

**Ensure student success in sustainability**

* Request a resolution to the location of the student garden; a long-term location should be identified and established. The UI Facilities Management and UI Dining Services should support student gardening efforts and establish expectations for garden operation and appearance. The university should provide planning and operational support by establishing (paid) student work study positions for student garden and volunteer managers.
* Recommend increasing classroom interaction with Facilities Management and UI Housing and Dining to promote the “greening” of the UI campus landscape.
* Review follow-up survey data regarding students who graduated with the Certificate in Sustainability.

**Ensure shared responsibility in sustainability:**

* Request an additional committee member be added to the charter to officially represent the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (requires an amendment to the committee charter).
* Request that a staff liaison from UI Purchasing be appointed (requires an amendment to the committee charter).

**Acknowledge leadership**

* Finally, the Sustainability Charter Committee expresses sincere thanks to President Mason for her leadership in establishing and supporting sustainability as a leading issue on the University of Iowa campus. Her public pledges in 2008, and again in 2010, firmly grounded sustainability as a foundational commitment and a priority for action. The new president should re-affirm the university’s commitment to the 2020 Vision and recommend additional priorities for action, especially in the area of academic offerings. **The committee respectfully requests representation at candidate interviews.**