

**Sustainability Task Force meeting
Auxiliary Services**

Date: April 25, 2014

Location: 220 E. Cullen

Time: Noon-1:15 p.m.

Attendees: Sarah Kelly, Leonard Bachman, David Brammer, Esmeralda Valdez, Mackenzie Wysong, Elsie Myers, Maria Honey, Richard Zagrzecki, Sameer Kapileshwari, Clint Kirchhoff, Bob Browand, Sean York, Shaun Smith, Issam Kadiwala

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Sarah Kelly, the new program manager for the Office of Sustainability, kicked off the meeting by introducing herself to the committee and providing an overview of her background and education.
- b. Committee members then went around the table and provided a quick introduction of themselves.
- c. Sarah Kelly mentioned that future meetings of the committee will not revolve around updates of what the Office of Sustainability is doing. Instead, as the committee is restructured, she envisions the meetings being more for discussion and action.

II. Updates from the Office of Sustainability

- a. Website has undergone changes and improvements
 1. Address is now www.uh.edu/sustainability.
 2. The new web developer for Auxiliary Services worked on overhauling the design of the site, while Sarah Kelly focused on the content, updating and adding information.
 3. This is the first phase of what will be a multiple-phase project.
 4. The site includes an "About" section that talks a little bit more about the actual on-campus initiatives and a little about the university and how it got to the point it is now with sustainability on campus.
 5. Bios have been added of all of the sustainability students.
 6. The campus initiative pages will be broken out into separate pages.
 7. There are links to information about the sustainability minor and some of the programs and courses.
 8. Committee members are encouraged to provide feedback on the website, including information that should be added to it in the second phase of the project.
 9. Esmeralda Valdez stated that this was the first attempt to restructure the website and is only the initial step in the process. She said the whole idea is for the site to be the final point for transmitting information to the internal and external community.

- b. RecycleMania
 - 1. The final activity for RecycleMania was the showing of the movie “The Lorax” at the UC Theater. About 70 people attended. Pizza was provided. Water bottles were distributed and students were encouraged to re-use them.
 - 2. Plans for next year are to return RecycleMania somewhat back to how it used to be approached on campus, which includes getting all student organization involved so it can be more of an outreach effort.
- c. Earth Day Houston at Discovery Green
 - 1. UH Energy coordinated the effort.
 - 2. The Office of Sustainability attended and had about 300 people come to its booth over the course of the day. People who came to the booth could sign up for the Office of Sustainability newsletter, which will make its return this fall. The booth allowed the Office of Sustainability to inform people on all that is being done at UH regarding sustainability. Sarah Kelly was also interviewed for a commercial for the Houston Furniture Bank.
- d. UH Earth Day Festival
 - 1. Event was held April 22 in Lynn Eusan Park from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 - 2. Next year, plans are for the event to be bigger and have more people involved.
 - 3. Future events could perhaps have sponsorship levels and even be opened up to the outside community.
 - 4. This year’s event included a weather balloon launch.
 - 5. There were 20 exhibitors, including Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, Bare Bowls and The Houston Furniture Bank.
 - 6. The first 300 students could get a tote bag with fliers and a meal card. Students could go to every table, listen to the presentation, and get a card signed. Those who received signatures from every table could get a free T-shirt.
 - 7. Approximately 500 students attended.
 - 8. Channel 13 covered the event and interviewed Sarah Kelly. Channel 26 came out later in the day and interviewed her about Earth Day.
- e. Southwest Academy for Management Conference
 - 1. Maria Honey and Sarah Kelly attended this event in Dallas after the UH Office of Sustainability was invited a few months ago to come and talk about campus initiatives and its relation to academics.
 - 2. It was organized by UNT faculty and PhD students.
 - 3. Sarah Kelly said that one of the things brought up at the conference was how universities incorporate sustainability into their curriculum.

III. Short-term and long-term goals

- a. Expand the Office of Sustainability
 - 1. In the short-term, a graduate assistant will be hired who can help write policies, do research and help coordinate the other student workers. Also, the office will look for a student worker to do graphic design work. In addition, a student will be hired

- to fill a bike program coordinator role, which will include researching bike needs on campus, studying bike rack expansion and looking into a possible bike share program.
2. In the long-term, a full-time sustainability coordinator will be hired.
- b. Garden expansion
1. The office will be looking into the possibility of establishing multiple gardens on campus.
 2. The short-term goal is to create a plan for expansion, while implementing that plan is a long-term goal.
 3. Casey Hall, the community garden coordinator, is currently working on a plan.
- c. AASHE STARS submission
1. AASHE is due in November. It is a huge project that is going to require a lot of data
- d. Strategic planning for campus sustainability
1. After the AASHE submission is finished, the Office of Sustainability and the task force can use that data to see where the campus currently stands and then create a strategic plan to improve campus sustainability efforts
- e. Restructuring the task force into a committee
1. Sarah Kelly reported that UT-Arlington has a committee structure where all of the members are chairs of subcommittees, and each subcommittee has a specific goal and focus. That type of structure, she said, may be something that would work well at UH.
 2. Sarah said she will be contacting more universities to see how they do it so that the next time the task force meets, she may have a plan for restructuring that can be voted on.
 3. Task force members were encouraged to provide her with feedback.
 4. Shaun Smith said the typical formula that the committees for other UH auxiliaries follow may be something to look into.
 5. Esmeralda Valdez said the task force needs to think about what the most effective structure for this type of committee would be, as well as how often they should or need to meet.
 6. Shaun said he is in favor of meeting over the summer to work on the restructuring, and Esmeralda agreed with him. She said the sustainability policy will also need to be looked at to make sure it still makes sense for the campus, which has changed and grown quite a bit in recent years.
 7. The task force members were then asked who would be willing/able to participate in a summer restructuring workshop. Those who said they could included Shaun Smith, Leonard Bachman, Elsie Myers, Bob Browand, Sean York and Sameer Kapileshwari. The date and location for the workshop is still to be determined.

IV. Other items

- a. Shaun Smith provided an overview of a sustainability-related student project

1. He took the intro to energy and sustainability course this semester. The curriculum included a group project that researches and assesses something related to energy and sustainability and makes a conclusion.
 2. His group decided to do a carbon footprint analysis for the campus that assesses all the greenhouse gas and its equivalent CO2 output on campus.
 3. The group met with a lot of different stakeholders to get their input on the overall carbon output of the campus.
 4. As part of the project, the SGA introduced a university bill that effectively asks the university to do this inventory and be accountable for its greenhouse gases on an annual basis.
 5. The data could be used every three years for the STARS reports.
 6. The idea was that it would be a collaborative effort between the energy and sustainability students, the Office of Sustainability, all the other stakeholders on campus.
 7. They are trying to make it a student-led effort.
- b. Maria Honey brought up that UH was once again included in the Princeton Review's 2014 Guide to 332 Green Colleges. It marks the fifth straight year that has occurred.

V. Meeting Adjourned

VI. Action items

- a. Review the www.uh.edu/sustainability website and provide feedback and suggestions
- b. Review the AASHE STARS report from 2011
<https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/university-of-houston-university-park-tx/report/2011-02-03/>
- c. Contact Sarah by May 30 if interested in participating in sustainability committee visioning workshop for summer

VII. Next Meeting

- a. To be determined