

## USC Sustainability Committee

06Feb2017 Meeting Notes

Present: Darren Ruddell (Chair), Ed Avol (assigned note-taker), Paul Adler, Jeremy Kagan, Josh Goldstein, Esther Margulies (new member), Lessa Grunenfelder, Jonathon Kagan (Jeremy's brother), Andy Lipkis (Tree People)

On Phone: Howard Greenwald, Dan Mazmanian, Kelly Sanders

Called to Order @ 0842

[Meeting agenda: updates on several activities, presentation by Andy Lipkis on Tree People sustainability activities]

Darren introduced Esther Margulies, a new member of the group. Esther explained that she is an Associate Professor and Assistant Director of the Graduate Program in Landscape Architecture + Urbanism in the USC School of Architecture, with interests and experience in green space, and would like to get involved in committee activities.

### **Reports:**

**Minutes** from the January 2017 meeting were accepted by consensus with no identified corrections or changes.

**Climate Change Letter Circulation/Sign-On Status:** Paul reported that he had spoken with Paula Cannon at the Academic Senate regarding the circulating sign-on letter and the possibility of USC officially taking a stance on climate change with other universities. The Executive Panel of the Senate decided not to send the letter on to President Nikias, noting that "...he doesn't sign these sorts of things..." Additional discussion suggested that the Academic Senate Panel seemed to be saying it was hesitant to act on this because it thought it would not be approved. This raised questions among the committee about the Academic Senate's attitude in pre-judging what might or might not obtain approval, and acting only on likely positive outcomes. Paul suggested, and the committee unanimously agreed, that we should send a letter to the Academic Senate expressing our disappointment that the Senate would decline to even raise the issue with the Administration.

**Invitation/Possible Visit by LA Chief Sustainability Officer Matt Peterson:** a brief update by Ed Avol was provided regarding his December 2016 exchange of emails with Dan Mazmanian regarding the possibility of inviting Matt Peterson to visit USC for a talk with students in a classroom setting, or in a larger forum open to the wider student body, or ... Dan had opined that Matt was quite busy and it would be strategically better to wait and figure out a useful strategy that had some follow-up to it, but that inviting a member of Matt's staff might be possible. Ed reported that based on Dan's input and the committee's endorsement of that approach, nothing more had been done to approach the LA Sustainability Office. A sub-group was proposed (Darren, Dan, and Ed) to work out a plan with the city that could engage Matt (perhaps timing a visit or meeting after the Vision 2030 document goes to the Provost?). Darren

announced that he was making a presentation to the Executive Board Wednesday, and then might be in a position to move forward (through Dan) with negotiations with Matt.

**David Wright letter regarding Sustainability Committee activities:** Jeremy noted that seven sub-committees claimed to be active, per David Wright, but Darrell and Josh countered that they were on some of these sub-committees but hadn't been aware of any activity.

Paul suggested that progress reports and committees should be queried to see if the 2020 Vision goals (and progress towards it) were noted, and if Todd Dickey was aware of any progress on the 2020 Vision goals.

**Sustainability Diagrams:** Darren shared a few Sustainability diagrams detailing how things "worked" at USC. The activities are very fragmented, arrows on the diagrams often go in only one direction, and it was not clear how to get involved in activities through the diagrams. Paul noted that there are often structural problems in large companies, because identified sub-groups cover wide areas of responsibility, do not report directly to the Provost (who oversees the academic role of the University), and the activities only come together at the Office of the President.

Esther offered that Mark Ewalt's sustainability diagram didn't show how students or faculty could feed into this to help USC and suggested the diagrams be modified. Dotted lines might be added to show how boxes connect, or other amendments to the diagrams could/should be made. Paul and Esther will work on diagram revisions, with additional input from Dan.

**Sustainability Strategy:** this has been submitted to the Executive Board for a presentation on Wednesday Feb 8 (by Darren); Lessa suggested that the sustainability diagrams be added as appendices to the report.

Other Activities: Josh reported that he had been in contact with John Onderdunk, Director of Caltech's Sustainability Programs, regarding the Caltech solar proposal. The proposal was to be completed in February, submitted with expected feedback by April. Josh was checking to see if there might be a collaboration possibility with USC in this energy generation & usage facility proposal. Dan noted that Caltech probably was operating under a very different scenario with Pasadena power authorities that USC would be, under the LA Department of Water and Power (DWP).

Jeremy introduced Andy Lipkis, from TreePeople. Andy presented a PowerPoint talk and described some sustainability considerations that explained TreePeople's activities with the City of LA, from the perspective of trees and water sustainability. The importance of rainfall collection and re-directed use was discussed, as were some example park installations in LA and Australia's urban approaches to climate change (given the parallels between Australia's climate change and that of Southern California).

#### **Action Items:**

- 1) Draft a response to the Senate Executive Board regarding their decision not to advance the Climate Action Letter to the Provost and President (**Paul**)

- 2) Decide how to best move forward with a possible visit by Matt Peterson. Darren will contact Dan Mazmanian after presenting the Sustainability Strategy to the Senate Executive Board (**Darren and Dan**)
- 3) Contact organizers of the Sustainability Steering Committee to inquire about the possibility of Academic Senate Sustainability Committee members attending the Steering Committee meeting on Friday, 2/10 (**Darren**)
- 4) Seek input and revise and/or amend the Sustainability Diagram (**Paul and Esther**)

Next meeting of the committee will be Monday Feb 6 from 0830 to 1000.

The meeting was adjourned at 1003.