

## **USC Sustainability Committee**

Meeting minutes for May 1, 2017

Attendance:

- In the room: Darren Ruddell, Paul Adler, Dan Mazmanian, Andre Ouellette, Lessa Grunenfelder, Esther Margulies, Josh Goldstein, John Silvester
- On the phone: Jeremy Kagan
- Meeting minutes: Lessa Grunenfelder

### **Review of Prior Meeting Minutes**

Minutes approved. Darren reminded the group that minutes are posted on senate sustainability committee website. Currently all minutes are available, the 2030 strategy is posted, and an end of year report is being prepared.

### **Academic Senate Meeting**

Darren and Andre updated the group that the academic senate is preparing for an election of new officers, and ballots have gone out. Paula Cannon emailed that the final senate meeting is May 10<sup>th</sup>, and there will be an update on the sustainability forum and campus climate at that meeting.

### **USC Sustainability Forum/ 2030 Update and Next Steps**

Takeaways: Good turnout, excellent work by students, lacking in time for discussion and solicitation of feedback (the event was more of a series of presentations than a true dialogue). Ainsley Carry wants to double down on 2020 and discuss 2030 in more detail.

A discussion of the forum led to a general discussion by the committee about current progress and next steps. Darren proposed to send an update summary to Michael Quick and perhaps plan a retreat over the summer to move plans forward. He is also in discussions with Paula about an end of year report. Paul raised the question if we, as a committee, should set up a meeting with the Provost's office or the Dean's task force. Consensus was that the most viable plan is to begin with discussions with Yannis Yortsos and the Deans. The general sense from Dan is that it is currently unclear what the Provost wants to do – and might therefore be best to await a response based on the work of the task force, sustainability committee, and student feedback. According to Paul, the Dean's committee is operating under an unclear timeline. The

first meeting was Saturday, and was very open ended. It is possible the committee will work over the summer, but is working to build initial momentum. Dean Yortsos is eager to hear from our committee. If we go to the Provost directly, Paul mentioned that the likely response is a question of what we are doing with respect to education and research – which our plan is currently vague on. It is important that we clarify the role of the faculty.

We have held our event, the students have spoken, and we are now tasked with determining where we go from here to keep the momentum going. Darren posed the question of what a follow up should look like after the sustainability dialogue – what is the plan to double down on 2020? What can we accomplish, how can we accomplish it, what is the funding situation? The first step in addressing these questions will be for Darren and Paul to hold an informal meeting with Dean Yortsos to discuss a path forward. According to Paul, Yannis wants input from our committee on education and research specifically and is supportive but short on ideas. A meeting with Yannis is the current priority, but a parallel effort will also be taken to meet with Mark to discuss the 2020 plan.

Regarding follow ups to the event: no sign up list was circulated to gather email addresses, but Paul pulled emails from the RSVP list to announce the website which will be used to solicit feedback.

Darren mentioned one specific attendee concerned about landscape and biodiversity on campus – she has been encouraged to propose content to add that as a domain to the 2030 plan. The committee will work to vet that content. Esther suggested feeding that through the USC faculty in landscape architecture. This provides a good test case and precedent for the committee – encourage feedback and vet it internally.

Other meetings to arrange: Esther mentioned that there is a new dean in the architecture school, she and Darren will arrange to meet with him over the summer (likely July). The academic senate has a planning retreat in August – Paul Rosenbloom is the incoming president. Darren will talk with Rosenbloom to ascertain his key focus areas for next year and talk about getting on the agenda to discuss sustainability.

### **Update on City of LA Sustainability Efforts**

Dan brought up announcements from the city in the past week that are relevant to sustainability research. Matt Petersen needs help forwarding the plan for the city. The mayor has a new taskforce in collaboration with UCLA (who has committed resources and an environmental center). Matt is a Trojan – but is working closely with UCLA because they have the capacity to deliver the outcomes the city needs. We can't reach that level without commitment from the Deans. We need institutional support. The timing on this is unfortunate because Matt wanted to work with USC, but needs more immediate outcomes than we can deliver.

Paul raised the question: can USC carve out a contribution? A goal could be for USC to bring forward a research capacity that is unique. Currently we are not in the game. We have no center or endowment in the area of sustainability. Josh echoed Paul's comment, suggesting we might identify gaps at UCLA that we can target. This was related back to the plan to have a meeting with Yannis Yortsos, and in that meeting to discuss possibilities for working with the city. Jeremy mentioned that the mayor has ties to USC and may be able to put pressure on the administration to move sustainability forward.

### **Environment Fair**

Esther provided a summary of the survey distributed to attendees, which result in roughly 50 responses. The majority of attendees were staff members. There was no faculty responses to the survey. Students overwhelmingly responded that being a world leader in sustainability research and education was very important to them. Overall sustainability grades were summarized. From staff: 24% A, 60% B, 12% C, 4% D, 0% F. Students: 0% A, 44% B, 22% C, 22% D, 11% F.

Dan made the point that employees and staff are a large part of what pushes corporations toward sustainability. Darren mentioned that the last sustainability steering committee meeting included a presentation by Zach Manta about a student survey that was conducted. At the steering committee meeting it was proposed to do a similar survey to reach faculty and staff. As the senate sustainability committee we should make a recommendation to proceed with this survey.

The student survey garnered a large response from students (was pushed through housing). Jeff de Caen and Naomi from the staff assembly can help with staff response rate, and the academic senate can work the faculty end. In formatting the survey key questions must be carefully considered to gather useful information and avoid survey fatigue (is sustainability a consideration when selecting a place to work?)

### **Undergraduate Student Government Endorsement**

Darren reported that the 2030 proposal was endorsed by the UGSG in a unanimous vote on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Staff Assembly Presentation**

Thursday of this week Darren will present the 2030 plan to the staff assembly.

## **Graduate Student Government**

The graduate student government has concluded meetings for this academic year but will have a presentation on the 2030 plan early next academic year.

Regarding support from university groups: we have a strong coalition supporting the proposal. Paul mentioned that if these groups have endorse our proposal, we should bring representatives from all groups together for a discussion. We should not simply take their endorsement and not loop them in further. We should reach out to thank them for support and let them know we are working on an opportunity to get together and present ideas to the administration. It was proposed that we email to let them know that when we ramp up again early next year we will keep them informed and work together to present a united front.

## **Research/Education Component**

Josh raised the important question of what the faculty research piece of the sustainability plan should look like. Making a center or institute involves considerable top-down efforts. Do we have a sense of what our contribution should be? Without this, what do we plan to discuss with Yannis?

There was a discussion of the history of the research/education domain. Paul summarized that it had been generally accepted that Antonio Bento would take the lead, but that direction has become a bit unclear. It was suggest that we solicit broad parameters from Yannis about what he is looking for and go from there. Meeting with Yannis should be viewed as preparatory for making future plans. Darren mentioned that it may be strategically poor planning to put the bulk of the responsibility into one person/plan, and Dan mentioned the difficulty he faced in getting staffing and support for research and teaching. Our committee might need to develop a forum to discuss the research/education component, but it was agreed that the first step should be the meeting with Dean Yortsos.

Dan brought up the possibility of looking to peer institutions for a model. Specifically, the University of Michigan, which is organized similarly to USC, has been successful in getting a sustainability initiative going under similar constraints to what we are facing. The organizational scheme will have to come organically from higher-up, but we should anticipate questions and look to structural models that might work for us. We should be there to support the administration.

## **Summary of Progress this Year and Brainstorm for Next Year**

Darren is looking to prepare an end of year report. He will draft the report and send it to Paul, followed by the full group. The report will be posted to the website to show what we have accomplished, what is ongoing, and our priorities for next academic year.

Darren will follow up with senate executive board for feedback on people they might want to include on the committee next year. Any committee members with suggestions for people to add to the sustainability committee should provide names to Darren. There is also interest in starting an education and research sub-committee.

Paul mentioned that in a previous meeting we had started a list of ideas on what we could do as a committee moving into next year. That list was revisited to consider what our role should be moving forward:

- A Daily Trojan article ran – Darren will distribute it to the committee – see link: <http://dailytrojan.com/2017/04/26/academic-senate-to-host-sustainability-2030-forum/>
- Respond to 2020 plan based on progress report from Mark and Hallie. Give feedback on where we feel the priorities should be for next year. Strategic meeting needs to take place to discuss how to move forward – ideally this summer, if not early fall.
- GE requirement in environmental sustainability and literacy. Should we explore if this is worth putting effort into? Contact Steve Lamy, who was tasked with GE updates
- Curriculum gaps – should a committee like ours (or maybe the Dean’s task force) go school by school to calibrate gaps and catalog existing programs addressing sustainability? Currently efforts are not united and some programs pay no attention to sustainability issues – a report card from our committee could be valuable. STARS report showed we have relatively few courses. That said, courses may exist, but it is worthwhile to gauge how they fit into the required and existing curriculum. What are the sustainability resources in the university and how do we move toward a realistic and interdisciplinary curriculum? The best approach may be to tackle this school by school. Perhaps we need one representative from each school on the sustainability committee – this is something to consider when seeking new committee members. Other components: Look to program accreditations like ABET – is sustainability included? Academy grand challenges (NAE, etc.).

Wrap-up: good year with some forward progress and a laundry list of things to work on!

#### **Action Items:**

1. Meet with Yannis to discuss how to best align and advance efforts on sustainability in Education & Research and to help develop the Provost Task Force (**Darren and Paul**)
2. Meet with Mark and Halli to discuss priorities (and roadblocks) for advancing the 2020 Plan (**Darren and Paul**)
3. Touch base with incoming Senate President Paul Rosenbloom to discuss planning priorities for the 2017-2018 academic school year (**Darren**)

4. Establish dialogue with members of USG, GSG, and SA in our efforts to advance sustainability at USC. We want their input and engagement (**Darren**)
5. Meet with incoming Dean from the School of Architecture (**Esther, Darren, Paul**)
6. Gather input and/or recommendations for serving on the Senate Sustainability Committee for the 2017-2018 academic school year (**everyone**)
7. Discuss adding GE requirement in sustainability to the undergraduate curriculum. Reach out to Steve Lamy for input (**Darren**)
8. Conduct an analysis of sustainability in the USC curriculum – this effort will need to include cataloging courses, academic programs (majors, minors, etc), and accreditation programs (**Darren**)
9. Make preparations to administer a sustainability survey to faculty and staff during the 2017-2018 academic school year (**Darren**)