

**Academic Senate Sustainability Committee  
Monthly Meeting Notes from November 1, 2017**

**Note taker: Lessa Grunenfelder**

**Present:**

Kyle Konis, Paul Adler, Paula Cannon, Catherine Coleman, Ann Close, Darren Ruddell, Lessa Grunenfelder, Josh Goldstein , Karla Heidelberg, Erin Moore

**Visitors:**

Kate Svyatets (Prof in environmental studies program)

Tiana (Co-director of ECore)

Erin Fabris (sustainability coordinator in housing, graduate student in Annenberg)

**Phone conference:** Dan Mazmanian

**Prior business**

October minutes approved

**New business**

**Recycling Attitudes and Behaviors Faculty Survey (Erin Fabris)**

Faculty survey developed as part of a strategic communications class focused on the FMS strategic plan for recycling – currently no data collected about faculty opinions and recycling behaviors/attitudes. University has a 2020 goal of 75% diversion, currently at 52%. Proposal for indoor and outdoor bins funded along with signage and education. New waste hauler (Republic) taking over – no sorting after 2018.

***Discussion/Survey Feedback***

Paula – Add questions about recycling classroom/lab material. Significant non-hazardous plastic waste generated with no way to dispose of.

Josh – Reach out to staff. Main sources of waste seems to be junk left over after meetings, which faculty do not take care of. Perhaps focus more on office space structures. Biohazard question is a big one. Leave space for faculty to indicate interest in helping to resolve such issues.

Darren – Add questions about the office the faculty member works in – does that office participate in sustainability efforts?

Paula – Survey is too generic, not faculty specific. Revise with a more faculty focused introduction (relate to labs, conference rooms, faculty-specific spaces). How can we empower and motivate faculty specifically?

Catherine – Many of us are religious about recycling at home. Offices seem to allow recycling of only waste paper, cans and bottles. It is not clear if we can recycle plastic containers with our current system. Draw a contrast between what faculty do at home vs. what is enabled on campus.

Kate – on Q6 (and perhaps others) add a line for optional comments. Q13 rules differ from municipality to municipality – signage is a key issue.

Paul – Q8 not helpful. List options and have people check off the ones that are recyclable. Sustainability efforts are underdeveloped in general on the health science campus. Hospital waste is an enormous issue.

Josh – We need a clear list from Republic about what we can and cannot recycle.

Dan – consult with other universities who have done this type of survey before, and determine if a survey is the relevant way to communicate this message

*Erin will revise the survey and distribute to the committee.*

### **Capital construction update (Darren)**

Is USC incorporating sustainable design in building? Darren spoke with design manager and architect from Capital who will hopefully join us at our December meeting.

### **Sustainability task force update (Darren)**

Yannis Yortsos met with the Provost and reported modest next steps suggested. He is in the process of summarizing these steps to provide feedback. The level of commitment from the Provost is unclear. Darren will follow up.

### ***Discussion***

Paul – the problem for us as a committee is that the Dean’s task force on security and sustainability is our best shot for serious discussion at the university level. It is not clear how big an opportunity it actually is, but we should continue to push. Do we know what kind of timeline Yannis is working with? The anxiety is we need to be involved before the window of opportunity closes

Darren – there is no window that we know of for deliverables

Paul – other task forces seem to be moving more rapidly

Darren/Paula – The other task forces relate to security and sustainability, homelessness, aging and arts and humanities. At a Provost's retreat it seemed that homelessness has considerable activity, aging is taking a very focused approach (held 2 day symposium). Sustainability is grouped with cyber security which may be problematic for us.

Josh – Is there university funding for the task forces that are making progress?

Paul – Antonio has spoken with Michael Quick and it does not seem like significant funding will be coming from the Provost. What we are doing at this stage is working to get more specific about the research side of sustainability and an organizational approach. There are several ideas that require additional iteration and flushing out. Most helpful next step might be to obtain information about the dean's timeline – when is he hoping to have a report ready?

Ann – Lots is happening at Wrigley (under the umbrella of the College) including a faculty prize for sustainability efforts, etc. How does this fit into larger University-wide efforts?

Darren/Paula – Convergence and entrepreneurship are targets for the Provost – working across schools and branding as an interdisciplinary effort may be the way to go.

Paul – Antonio is also involved in a task force on interdisciplinary research, and there may be money there to stimulate efforts.

Paula – It is a joint task force with the senate. Co-chairs are Alex Capron and Donna Spruijt-Metz. Sustainability is a good scholarly and research-based topic with an interdisciplinary focus that could be grouped in to that effort.

Dan – There is no institutional home for sustainability at USC so there is no champion. Yannis has a lot of resources in engineering on the security side, but that is not the case for sustainability. Moving forward, more broadly, topics associated with environment are being savaged organizationally. Is it time for USC to reframe the challenge? Sustainability may be a politically problematic term.

Paul – We don't need to be hung up on a label, we should focus on the agenda.

*This discussion topic will be further brainstormed via email*

Josh – Or should we think about the lack of a champion and the need to create one? We have a set of people that together with funding and time could lay out plans for an institute – we are waiting for someone to do it and no one is doing it. We have something we could move forward with.

Darren – Perhaps we create a draft of what that would look like, that is an action we could take

Paul – by focusing on Yannis alone we might be missing an opportunity with the deans of Price and Dornsife. Maybe we should reach out more broadly. This is a nice prototype for interdisciplinary work so perhaps we can catalyze something.

### **Environmental policy seminar series (Darren)**

Dean of Price has allocated money for a seminar series. The first speaker presented on Monday. There is chatter about inviting Bill McKibbin – the activist who set up 350.org. More will be discussed later.

### **Carbon neutral building initiative (Kyle)**

The initiative is split into two projects now with the goal of beginning to develop solutions to tie interventions into broader campus initiatives. On mobile sensing - two students have been hired to develop apps. Applying for funding to identify buildings that are overheated or over air conditioned. Instrumenting buildings with beacons. Also working on campus-wide energy benchmarks which require good measurement methods. We need to increase disclosure on energy use and carbon emissions. Facilities has building information models that we can infuse with energy data to calculate potential energy savings from set-point adjustments enabled by sensors. Internet of things group (Marshal and Viterbi) is launching i3 to connect physical infrastructure to the web. We can perhaps use this project as a test bed to plug in to. Mark Ewolt is on board with a mobile sensing app to engage the student body. Students are making the app and would shape the input collected. First pilot study is targeted for April in the shared spaces of the residence halls. ECore students are planning a campus-wide campaign around instrumented spaces on campus via Bluetooth initiated surveys. QR codes also to be posted in classrooms for reporting/complaints related to energy usage.

A PhD student with a background in architecture, spatial and engineering could build a very interesting interdisciplinary PhD out of this work.

What is lacking currently is a strategic communication plan to get students to use the app. Next month a demo of the current version of the app should be up and running

Paul – this seems like the kind of thing that could be marketed aggressively. How does this fit into the 2020 and 2030 objectives? Is there a way to brand this and give it more visibility?

Kyle – the title of the program is TrojanSense (common sense, physical senses, etc). Students need to drive conceptualization of the device, but staff/faculty relationships with mobile devices are different from that of students. i3 is working on USC buildings and city buildings, we could expand this outside of campus.

Dan – TrojanSense is a great way to move forward with demand side management.

Kyle – campus may be required to shed load so with data we can target high use areas and adjust set points.

Dan – Time of use will be critical for the university, we can get in front of it with this system and technology

Kate – we can pilot in large GE classes – get the app into the hands of students

Paula – this can help build community among students. The app can be pitched as a way to engage students to feel part of a larger community. Students want to tap into something more important than themselves.

### **Proposals to advance sustainability in academics**

#### **Professional master's degree (Paul)**

A proposal is under development. Starting point was curriculum assessment. The master's degrees in the same general area that exist already are being identified, as well as a listing of relevant courses in various schools on campus. Working on putting something more concrete together over the next week. Could look more like a common seminar series than a single master's track.

Paula – can we bring in the arts/humanities? Make it truly interdisciplinary and link to multiple wicked problems

#### **GE requirement (Darren)**

Darren met with the dean for undergraduate studies in charge of the GE. He is not in favor of adding a new GE requirement, but is supportive of advancing sustainability across the university. There are currently 8 GEs organized around broad domain areas. There are real challenges in terms of space on campus and curriculum (certain majors simply don't have the units). Proposed a series of alternatives:

- Add something to orientation that introduces students to sustainability
- Undergraduate research symposium could have a sustainability category
- SOAR and SURF – Dornsife research money for students to work with faculty members. A sustainability fund could be added for proposals related to sustainability.
- Sustainability certificate for students across different majors/schools – there is precedent for this at other universities (Arizona State, Columbia, UCLA, etc.)

**Action Items:**

1. Reach out to Yannis to gain insight on when the Task Force on Security and Sustainability will submit their report to the Provost (**Darren**)
2. Prepare a brief memo to distribute to Deans Yortsos, Knott, and Miller that provides an overview of a proposed sustainability program that is integrated across academics, research, and operations (**Darren and Paul**)
3. Prepare a memo with supporting documentation that presents a case for increased resources for the USC Sustainability Office (**Erin and Catherine**)
4. Reach out to Will Berelson to learn more about the proposed sustainability program in Earth Sciences (**Karla**)
5. Prepare a draft proposal for a professional Masters degree in sustainability (**Paul**)
6. Summarize and distribute meeting notes on feedback from Richard Fliegel regarding ways to advance sustainability across campus instead of adding sustainability as a GE requirement (**Darren**)