

**Academic Senate Sustainability Committee  
Monthly Meeting Notes from March 1, 2018**

**Note taker:** Kate Svyatets

**Present:**

Darren Ruddell, Ann Close, Kyle Konis, Esther Margulies, Erin Moore

**Phone/video conference:** Camille Dieterle, Jeremy Kagan, Paul Adler

**Guest:** Ellen Dux

*Arrival (11:00-11:05)*

*Updates (11:05-11:45)*

**Introductions:**

Ellen Dux – the new Sustainability Officer, USC. She has broad experience in sustainability and renewable electricity generation in the Los Angeles County and the Ventura County. Also Ellen has experience the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator. Camille -- a professor of behavioral sciences who teaches the behavioral aspects. Then all the present attendees presented themselves.

**Review of prior meeting minutes**

*Action Items Reports*

**Stream and Archive Sustainability Events**

We have a Sustainability Facebook page at USC, and we could capture, stream and archive the events in the future. We could even record on cell phone.

**Sustainability Email Distribution**

List Paul is still compiling about 150 people on the sustainability email list, very close to a workable list. We need to talk about the guidelines about what events should be sent out. We need to decide who will be sending the announcements, too. Now it is mostly faculty on the list, and we need to add staff, too. We might want to have a narrower list, too, for specific issues. Send the info to Paul if you have other names in mind.

**USC Procurement efforts**

There will be more updates.

**Carbon neutral buildings initiative**

We have examples of proposal that have been funded in terms of water use reduction, fixture replacement, and we will need to quantify cost savings and energy savings. As USC does not disclose its energy usage, so it is not easy to make comparison. However, in a report previously, cooling of buildings and fans are the largest consumer of electricity.

We can slightly change the thermostat adjustment, and in this case we will save 30% of energy usage. Cost savings will be about 14.1 cents per KWH. It is a convenient metric for buildings and the energy efficiency measures.

Now we need to evaluate the actual buildings on the USC campus. The investments in new measures will quickly pay for themselves, even if we save just .2% of the energy already used. The most conservative estimate is 1% energy use reduction just adjusting the thermostat by half-a-degree. A two-degree adjustment will give us the 13% reduction. Some students have already took measurements in libraries and around campus overall. For example, the temperature inside was 63 degrees. It is too cold for students to be comfortable. We need to optimize temperatures inside to track the temperatures outdoors, as students first of all dress for the outdoor environment, especially if they bike or skate. The investment is \$50,000 per year. This is money for students, though, as they have different roles in this project.

The app is currently not operational because of the midterms, but next week it will be operational again with little beacons.

The engagement piece of this – a great example is UC Davis. The facilities get feedback from students on energy usage and efficiency, and we could follow their model. Kyle will reach out to UC Davis, to possibly get advice and some metrics that USC could also use. Erin: Anthropology students might be interested, too, looking at different attitudes to climate and their indoor environment.

Kyle: different students have different attitudes. Now the research is going through the IRB process, to collect contact information from students and getting access to the students' email list.

Jeremy: What are the statistics from the other schools? In the benchmarks, the only one is UC Davis – it is currently leading. They quantified the tools in the best way that can be adopted at USC. It is the first study (the UC Davis) that made it campus-wide. Kyle is about to set up a phone call with UC Davis.

If we base the research and thermostat adjustments on real science, there will be less resistance from students and parents. Risk aversion – the USC is risk-averse and we want to avoid hacking this system. So far, we don't have real-time thermostat data, as the data is collected and then needs to be discussed with a time lag (as of the current technology).

We don't need much from FMS until the dash board is done. After the system is implemented, USC can make small adjustments of the temperature. Every month and every season we can adjust set points of thermostats in the library and other facilities. For the first few years, we will be making the easiest adjustments of the temperature. We also need to talk to FMS about longevity – so that if faculty and students leave USC for any reason, the system needs to be institutionalized.

### **Expansion of USC Sustainability Office**

Erin and Catherine explored the size of other universities' sustainability offices. The data is now compiled and has been shared with Mark.

Paul: Paul talked about it with Mark, and one plausible way we can argue for the expansion of the USC Sustainability Office, is that there is nothing at all available at the

Health Sciences campus. We can expand the UPC projects to cover the Health Sciences Campus, and that makes the expansion of the office plausible.

### **Faculty List Teaching and/or Researching Sustainability**

Antonio is working on the list and will present it next time. We want to identify our strengths. It overlaps with our work on creating an email list of people who teach and research sustainability. The Sustainability Committee might not have resources to update such a comprehensive database of research and teaching interests/strengths on regular basis.

Esther has attended a meeting that was focused on identifying the critical mass and the most productive topics of sustainability –related teaching and research at USC. We will continue this discussion in April.

### **USG updates**

They are coming from Philine in a couple of days.

### **Discussion (11:45-12:20)**

#### **Sustainability Forum**

Location and time is identified: Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, noon-2:30 p.m., TCC 350.

Mark has been able to provide the funds for lunch.

The forum was organized in two parts: a lunch session with posters from noon-12:45 p.m. and then 12:45-1:45 p.m. – short presentations, and the general discussion after that with Q&A.

Esther has reached out the Keck School for some presentations on air quality and pollution.

The four presentations: two of them on the ongoing, and two on the forward-looking. There will be at least one student presentation (Philine), a presentation on waste and recycling, a Keck presentation, and Antonio's presentation on the Solutions Lab. Esther and Philine are co-chairs for this event.

Esther will organize a call for posters.

Everyone is allowed to bring a poster to bring to the forum.

Philine is working on a flyer that will be distributed three weeks before the event.

Esther will also create a hash tag for this event.

How many posters can we fit? We can submit a request to film it. Esther will reach out to someone in the architecture or film school. Darren will look up the contacts for filming.

Paul: a third person might be needed on a team. Last year, there were about 80-100 people. Philine will recruit someone from ESA to help.

Erin: we could limit the amount of posters, to 25, for example.

Posters will be due by April 5<sup>th</sup>.

Amber Brown could also be attracted to help with the Forum event, as she is a great coordinator.

Only the top posters will be accepted.

We will finish this discussion at the April meeting.

Mark is happy to provide lunch – we need a headcount of presenters. We can either provide lunch for an approximate number of people, or to set up an RSVP. It is better not to advertise that the free food is available. We need to make sure that the lunch is served in a sustainable way, no plastic or something like Styrofoam.

### **Sustainability Committee – Next Steps**

Paul was in conversation with Paula (she was the president of the Faculty Council before). We are approaching the end of the three-year work for the Sustainability Committee, and we have some accomplishments to be publicized to the Senate. We need to decide moving forward in terms of what role the Sustainability Committee plays on campus. Antonio raised the issue that leading researchers are not interested in facilities and operations. On the other way, the Senate is poorly placed for Antonio's proposal. Research investments is not the Senate's role.

During our next meeting, we need to have a conversation about what our role will be. Do we want to tackle low-level operations, or do we want to be strategic about some major goals.

Kyle: the notion of the campus as a living lab is constantly brought up, and a little more diversity to the research attitudes will be helpful in reaching the benchmarks and the university's objectives. The latest sustainability report, for example, had very little about disclosure of carbon emissions.

Jeremy: the Senate has been the most listened-to organization at the university level that the Administration pays attention to, after the students. Antonio's project is something that we are all passionate about – about teaching and research . Does the Senate want to advocate for such an institution/organization? We can absolutely present research ideas to the Senate.

Esther: it is a timely opportunity to look at what we have done and what we will do in the April meeting.

Darren: we need to bring a voice to the issues that are lacking attention. Most of Senate's committees do not exist indefinitely – after a period of time, new committees are created and the old ones are put on hold.

Jeremy: some committees are almost permanent. The Sustainability Committee might be one of those semi-permanent committees. We also need to decide – who will be an intermediary with the administration (what Halli did before).

Darren: if we align our efforts better, we can work more effectively to address these issues

Paul: the university strategy – there is resistance to making investments beyond the short pay-back period. They are off the table because of the strategic choices, such as improving the university's faculty and attracting the best students. The main priorities do not include sustainability. The strategic investments are not made in sustainability. The Senate could have a very strong voice in this. In this case, we need to focus on the strategic goals and alternative strategy.

Esther: Antonio's Solutions Lab could make strategic recommendations, including the research and financial benefits. What are the policy implications? Such as Title 24, the California Green Building Initiative, etc. So it will be on the agenda for the April meeting.

We need to introduce the Senate Sustainability Committee and talk about its activities at the Sustainability Forum on April 26<sup>th</sup>. The participants of the forum might also provide ideas for us.

**Announcements (12:20-12:25)**

Next meeting: April 5

**Action Items (12:25 – 12:30)**

1. Use USC Sustainability Office's Facebook account to Live Stream and Archive sustainability events (**Ellen**)
2. Finalize Sustainability Email Distribution List and propose plan for updating and managing the list as well as disseminating messages (**Paul and Ellen**)
3. Advance 2018 Sustainability Forum – create flyer, call for posters, and event details (**Esther and Philine**)

*Adjourn (12:30)*

*Upcoming Events*

- March 1: E-Core Weekly Meeting
- March 5: Voices for a Sustainable and Equitable Future
- March 5: ESA Weekly Meeting
- March 8: E-Core Weekly Meeting
- March 12: ESA Weekly Meeting
- March 15: E-Core Weekly Meeting
- March 19: ESA Weekly Meeting
- March 21: Environmental Sustainability Professionals Seminar
- March 22: E-Core Weekly Meeting
- March 25: ESA Weekly Meeting
- March 29: E-Core Weekly Meeting