

## Sustainability Sub Council 3-30-22

Attendees: Ehab Kamarah, Morgan White, Madhu Khanna, Jennifer Fraterrigo, Jessica Nicholson, Adam Davis, Kim Kidwell, Elizabeth Murphy, Bill Stewart, Luis Rodriguez, Lowa Mwilambwe, Brent Lewis, Meredith Moore, Brian Bundren, Jack Reicherts, Jeremy Guest, Mike DeLorenzo

1. Introductions
2. Sustainable Land Management Plan
  - a. Adam Davis chairs SLM Committee, created by iSEE
  - b. 3300 acres of research lands on campus; Animal Sciences and Crop Sciences are the two managing entities of these lands
  - c. Most fall acres do not have cover crops
  - d. Impacts of the lack of cover crops:
    - i. Erosion
    - ii. Externalities of pesticides (e.g., decline in frogs)
    - iii. Large nutrient loading in Mississippi River Basin (dead zones in Gulf of Mexico)
  - e. Soil degradation on campus yields to waterlogging and erosion, compaction, poor access to irrigation, degraded structure and nutrient content.
    - i. As a result, many researchers have decided to move off-campus.
  - f. Managing animal waste
    - i. Because of the volume/weight of animal waste, confined to a particular area
    - ii. Soil overloading
  - g. Sustainable management on Campus Research Farms (Animal Sciences is doing a good job of increasing cover crop usage)
  - h. Priority practices
    - i. Composting = waste into stable/lower volume substance, stabilizing nutrients, substance that is easier and lighter to spread
    - ii. Cropping system diversification = continuous living cover (cover crops), extended rotations (more crop species diversity)
    - iii. Agronomy handbook chapter on Sustainable Land Management Practices (need for a chapter outlining/bringing together SLMPs in one place); a post-doc could help write this to also serve as a foundation for outreach and education
  - i. Approval requests: **composting for animal manure, cropping system diversification, hire post-doc for agronomy handbook chapter**
    - i. Committee approves these requests
  - j. Next steps: more concrete recommendations needed; Madhu and Adam will follow up with German Bollero to determine next steps
3. Sustainability in Gen Ed requirements
  - a. 3 credit-hour gen-ed category within Natural Sciences and Technology for a course in sustainability and environmental topics
  - b. Created course list to fulfill requirement
  - c. Sustainability definition added to proposal
  - d. 24% of students previously enrolled in these courses (21-22 academic year); proposal implementation would yield an estimated 67% of students enrolled in these courses
  - e. Stepping stone toward a standalone gen-ed requirement

- f. Will incorporate learning outcomes in proposal and will continue to connect with Deans to evaluate courses that meet the requirement
  - g. Gen-ed Board was charged with being a liaison to the students working toward this objective
  - h. Next steps – follow up meeting with Jessica’s group (ISG Sustainability Committee), Luis, Eric to discuss how to build this coalition to get the broad support from academic units needed to move this forward
4. Waste Reduction Strategies
- a. Multiple stakeholders involved in this effort including Zero Waste iCAP Team and Auxiliaries
  - b. 1.5 million plastic bottles purchased/disposed of in a given year
  - c. Plastics are accumulating rapidly at recycling facilities (including our Waste Transfer Station) and in such cases, the material may be diverted to the landfill
  - d. Proposed recommendations: water drinking behavior survey, water filter system tracking
  - e. Proposed strategies: **Goal is to align campus priorities on sustainability with purchasing. To that end, we are interested in partnering with Coke to reduce plastic waste.**
  - f. Suggestions:
    - i. Engage Coke in a discussion about our campus sustainability goals and how they can help us meet them
    - ii. Investigate technology to dispense the beverages in a particular container (e.g., as implemented at certain stadiums, Disney, etc.), which would be distributed to students at the start of the school year
    - iii. Housing is committed to these efforts. Efforts should be made to further evaluate digestion/composting options. There is an opportunity for a circular economy approach since we produce miscanthus. Can we become a model and demonstration site (living lab) of this circular economy practice?
    - iv. Where could additional filler stations be added around campus? Next step will be to conduct survey.
    - v. Sustainability/iCAP will likely be included in Campus Strategic Plan (this is a priority of the Chancellor and President); how can we coordinate with other universities in our system to each be a demonstration site? A system approach is needed.
  - g. Further next steps
    - i. What opportunities are there to engage with Coke? Clarification of language is needed to move forward and what changes could be made to incorporate sustainability.
5. Campus Landscape Master Plan
- a. Campus Landscape Strategy (2019) with key recommendations incorporated directly into the iCAP
  - b. Concluded stakeholder input sessions; shared vision of campus
  - c. Keep iSEE informed as work progresses
6. AASHE STARS (shifting to Platinum)

- a. AASHE STARS report submitted every three years; most recently submitted February 2022 and the next report will be submitted February 2025
- b. Opportunities for improvement (waste, energy, buildings, food purchases, curriculum, etc.); earn 13 points to reach platinum status
- c. Many initiatives as part of this meeting today will likely increase our total points.