

Sustainability Subcouncil Notes, 11/27/2023

Present: Elizabeth Murphy, Patty Jones, Susan Martinis, Danika Ford, Madhu Khanna, Miriam Keep, Stephanie Hess, Jeremy Neighbors, Ehab Kamarah, Morgan White, Eric, Brian Bundren, Iowa Mwilambwe, Michael DeLorenzo

- 1) Education: Sustainability General Education Requirement
 - a. Strong effort to collect feedback from college deans and faculty and incorporate that into the proposal.
 - b. College deans and faculty don't want to add extra credit hour requirements for students. With the option there is no additional burden for students.
 - c. The option is the preferred option going forward, which will be resubmitted to college deans and then to the Gen-Ed board for review.
 - d. iSEE has put together a list of over 50 classes that could qualify for the sustainability option. Colleges have the option to add more. We hope adding this option will spur demand for more classes with sustainability focus.
 - e. Not clear if this would improve our STARS (Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System) score. They are revising their ranking system for education.
 - f. Students' transcripts will show they opted for sustainability option. There may be an option to add a certificate later on, but want to focus on sustainability general education option as a first step.
 - g. Student groups are collecting student feedback on the proposal. Need to address misperception that this is creating new credit hour requirement. Illinois Student Council is involved. Vice Chancellor Martinis recommends also involving students on the Senate Executive Council.
 - h. We expect the process to take a year or more. The Gen Ed Board will likely have detailed questions about how classes qualify.
- 2) Green Research Program
 - a. Still working out job description for Green Research Coordinator. There is a preference for a PhD but we could potentially hire someone with research experience in lab management with a master's degree.
 - b. Reminder from Vice Chancellor Martinis to emphasize the importance of safety in future presentations to emphasize that remains a strong priority.
 - c. Working on budget. Next step is finding funding. Really need someone who can focus on these efforts. Can try to get different groups to contribute funding, pilot for four years and then evaluate success.
- 3) Plastic Waste Reduction
 - a. Need DIA to lead these efforts with iSEE and F&S, take ownership. More that can be done.
 - b. Will explore options for less expensive bins, pros/cons of different models, whether they need to be movable. There is a need for matching infrastructure and very clear labeling.

- c. Possibility to connect with Orange Krush, student athletic groups, to get them involved in collecting waste. Importance of messaging at the stadium, possibly during the game, but don't want to take away from advertising dollars.
- 4) Carbon Credits
- a. We haven't verified any carbon credits beyond 2018.
 - b. Ten year agreement with Second Nature has expired. We could hire broker directly instead of going through Second Nature, if we were to continue sales.
 - c. It is unlikely we could find additional buyers who will not use the carbon credits to offset their own emissions. The demand is largely from companies looking to reach net zero through offsetting. We could explore if it is possible to get a higher price.
 - d. We do not generate credits for *keeping* emissions down, only for reducing year-to-year. Once we get to zero we would stop selling carbon credits.
 - e. Sold carbon credits have to be added into our carbon accounting.
 - f. We are working on a scope for a consultant to map out scenarios for the university to get to net zero. We can ask the consultant to look into this issue.
 - g. Need analysis by F&S to see what can be done with funding and understand if it could be used to get us to net zero more quickly. Further reductions are going to become more costly.
 - h. About \$2.2 million from carbon credit sales from have been allocated, \$1.4 million remaining.
- 5) Closing thoughts
- a. Add Clean Energy RFP scope to agenda for Sustainability Council
 - b. Solar Farm 3: there is some land near Springfield that could be used for solar. Looking at 70 acres for 50,000 megawatts.