

Sustainability Council

Fall 2024

Date: Nov 5, 2024

Time: 11am-12pm CST

Location: OVCDEI, 3080

Attendees: Robert Jones, Madhu Khanna, John Coleman, Jeff Angiel, Lowa Mwilambwe, John Hale, Morgan White, Miriam Keep, Jim Hintz, Brian Bundren, Jennifer Fraterrigo, Rudy Lafave, Natalie Carlisle, Claire Keating, Elizabeth Murphy, Danita Brown Young, Tim Knox, Eunice Santos, Rashid Bashir, Susan Martinis, Barry Benson, German Bollero

Agenda:

iCAP 2025 development process

- 1) Timeline
- 2) Progress on iCAP 2020 Goals
 - a. Greenhouse gas emissions
 - i. We use a platform called SIMAP to input data collected from F&S and other campus entities on things like transportation, energy use, etc. This is primarily Scope 1 and Scope 2; we collect very limited data for Scope 3.
 - ii. Not clear if we will meet the 2025 target – depends on various factors.
- 3) Challenges and opportunities
 - a. Trends in space use and energy efficiency
 - i. Energy efficiency
 1. Low hanging fruit for energy efficiency has been picked. Next round will require more investment. This is part of why there is small recent uptick in energy use intensity (EUI), indicating worsening energy performance
 - ii. Increasing campus footprint
 1. Square footage is continuing to grow, more buildings are planned.
 2. Investment in clean energy production required

iii. Solar Farm 3

1. High demand for solar power from both U. of I. and UIC
2. Most cost effective option would be indirect power purchase agreement. Would require change in derivatives use policy
3. Exploring options like energy storage; this is expensive.
4. Looking at siting Solar Farm 3 between Solar Farms 1 and 2. Electrical distribution lines between Solar Farm 1 and Solar Farm 2 are completely at capacity. Will need to upgrade those lines to support Solar Farm 3. Requires detailed engineering study.
5. Solar Farm 1 technology is relatively outdated. Looking at options if we want to buy the solar farm panels at the end of the ten-year agreement or do a new RFP to improve land use and get more clean energy per square foot. Still looking at cost implications for the different options.
6. Panels are under warranty for 20 years. A solar professor advised they are likely to last 40 years. Power purchase agreement was limited to ten years because of procurement rules.
7. Efficiency has decreased from about 7.2 GWh/year to 6.9 GWh/year.
8. Replacing solar panels would improve efficiency, we don't have exact numbers
9. SSC contributed \$1.05 mil for Solar Farm 1. SSC has also contributed \$375k and \$400k to geothermal projects at CIF and Wymar Hall, respectively. Costs of Solar Farm 3 dwarf the other solar farms. Any support from students will be appreciated.
10. Want to call meetings at System level about the energy strategy, explain why the strategy we proposed is more effective than just buying RECs.
11. Don't have full cost information for Solar Farm 3 at this time. Depends a lot on factors that are not yet finalized, like whether farm will be located on or off campus. Can share more information after the meeting.
12. Many cost implications and land use implications to consider.
13. The acreage needed to meet larger solar demand is not available on South Farms. The College of ACES is still

supportive of the medium scale additional on-campus solar for approximately 30 GWh/year, but not 170 GWh/year.

b. Funding opportunities

- i. Funding opportunities are available for clean energy projects under IRA, Biden-Harris administration. This is a special tax refund program that is available to nonprofits.
- ii. Susan Martinis recommends speaking to Laura Appenzeller at Research Park about these opportunities. She also suggests including a contact from Prairieland Energy Inc. - Angela Jacobs is a good contact.
- iii. Not dedicated to a specific funding path, but want to explore these options.
- iv. Susan Martinis suggest using contacts at DCEO to find out more.
- v. John Coleman says it is important to bring in Paul Redman to these discussions. Chancellor Jones points out we need to bring in System: Paul Ellinger and Mike Wilson, as well as Sarah Crane.
- vi. Important to identify process of how to submit these proposals, who is available to write them.
- vii. CPRG money was just allocated this fall. There will be a call coming up in the spring. This is the most immediate one that we have to prepare for.
- viii. Susan: we've learned the state is not very good at pushing this money out, we should plan to pull on the opportunities.
- ix. Important to identify a person who can work on writing these proposals; will require a deep time commitment.
- x. In conversation with SEDAC to see if we can scale up their grant writing work and see if we can expand it to campus-level efforts
- xi. We should also collaborate with the advancement team on bringing donors and alumni into the discussion and work together to accomplish our climate goals.

c. Divestment

- i. Investments controlled by UI System are beyond the scope of our climate action plan, which is focused on our campus. UI System controls funds that go to our campus.
- ii. Students continue to advocate for greater transparency and communication on UI System investments.
- iii. MSCI indicator is how we judge the performance of Blackrock, i.e. efficacy of stakeholder engagement strategy

- iv. We are not currently pursuing robust Scope 3 emissions tracking; very cumbersome and currently no directive to do so.
- v. Barry Benson supported the proposed next steps on divestment
- vi. Students were interested in providing more feedback about what transparency means to them.
- vii. ISEE will move forward with drafting language for the iCAP aligned with what was proposed during the meeting and circulate for final approval before the next Sustainability Council.

d. Resilience

- i. Tabled.

4) Other discussion

- a. We are completing an initial analysis conducted in-house of various clean energy technologies and pathways achieve carbon neutrality. Next step will be a deeper engineering study. We are also in conversation with alumni to receive their recommendations.
- b. Important to consider our goals when new buildings are constructed...how to raise money for geothermal, etc. Sustainability features are often sacrificed in favor of square footage and/or cost savings.
- c. SSC funds are often pursued to fill gap in funding sustainability features. If campus is committed, these costs should be built in.

5) **Action items:**

- a. F&S to share more background on anticipated costs for Solar Farm 3.0
- b. ISEE follow up with recommended contacts on how to pursue financing opportunities
- c. ISEE to draft language that reflects the divestment discussion.