

COMMITTEE: University Environment Committee

MEETING DATE: November 21, 2019

PERSON PRESIDING: Carol Goodwillie

REGULAR MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Carol Goodwillie, Jennifer Valko, Lisa Beth Robinson, Tammy Lee

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Joyce Sealey, Chad Carwein, Tim Christensen,
a student body rep has yet to be appointed

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: n/a

ACTIONS OF MEETING: Approval of minutes

Edits needed:

Agenda Item: Emails to the committee regarding concern for: preservation/protection of the hawks on campus, leaf blowers

Discussion: Since there are already laws which protect the hawks, this is more a question of drawing attention to the issue. Suggestions included getting students to make videos that could be shown on campus. Possible offices that could house the project are sustainability but also News Services. Another possibility would be to have ornithology students work on the issue. Tim suggested hosting a photography competition.

It was also noted that the increase in emails to the UEC is a direct result of visibility created by our survey. Carol has been approached by faculty about recycling on the medical campus and the leaf blower issue (on the survey) was mentioned again. Chad noted that he and John McGill have responded to the person. One challenge is that ECU is down 70 positions in Facilities and 8 in Grounds. There's no extra money and 800 acres have to be covered on a biweekly basis.

Action Taken: Chad will reach out to these groups, bring back information to the committee in January. He will also talk with Sue McRae in Ornithology. The response to the faculty member concerned about the leaf blower issue will be shared with the committee.

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

Agenda Item: Confetti/champagne cork & bottle litter on campus

Discussion: Suggestions include promoting biodegradable confetti, having Facilities put up signs requesting that people clean up after themselves, adding a note to students' graduation instructions/cap and gown packages. It was also suggested that this idea could be part of the graduation instruction email from the Registrar. Locations for the signs would include the fountain, the "ECU" letters at the new student center, and on the steps of buildings. It was noted that a lot of the photographers are ECU students, so they are one group we could target for communicating these suggestions.

Last May was the most amount of litter in recent history. The Sustainability office is planning to activate the notifications/signage starting at Spring break. Targeted areas will be the fountain, Cupola, ECU signs in the yard and new student center. There will also be educational blasts on social media.

It was also suggested that we find out if the bookstore is selling confetti and see if they could sell "Ecofetti" instead. Another positive suggestion is to promote the use of bubbles rather than confetti. There is confetti with wildflower seeds but Grounds were unhappy with that.

Action Taken: mentioned in the discussion.

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

Agenda Item: Improving recycling on campus.

Discussion: Tim discussed the Honors 4500 class doing a signature project that included a trash audit. They're running into a block in that they want to use statistics and test different types of recycle bins to put in different locations and do waste audits every week to see which work best but the University won't allow them to have anything but the purple recycling bins. Part of the block is coming from the University Standards Committee. Tim elaborates on the students' process, Human-Centered Design. The students gather data and information for people to pivot and find the best way forward. If something doesn't work, they try something else. It's an engineering process to find the best way forward. It does take some time. There is further discussion of the students' approach.

Chad notes that the university does not have the budget to replace bins. There is a brief discussion of the EcoPirates' desire to relabel the bins but even this is problematic. This evolves into a discussion about what can/cannot be recycled, and issues with contamination. The need for domestic recycling markets, now that China will no longer accept our trash, is also discussed. The process of what happens after recycling leaves our campus is explained, and the challenges with contamination are described in detail.

Jennifer asked which restaurants, i.e. Starbucks, are the major sources of high volume trash/recycling, and suggested several proactive steps such as giving students multi-use cups/bottles when they arrive on campus. Joyce notes that these go unused, both plastic and metal, and that the students' favored items are the ID holders. When asked if students could be given a discount for using these cups/bottles, she reported that the students had been offered 25 cent discounts and it still did not get the students to use the eco-friendly items. The Beverage Committee is pushing for ECU to get a beverage contract with an alternative to plastic bottles. Recyclable aluminum cans may be one solution. Lisa Beth suggested signage with the recycling numbers (of what can/can't be recycled). Jennifer suggested promoting recycling via the screens all over campus-so much visual information is presented in a constant flow. The discussion also included detailed descriptions of Starbucks' recycling, the "Know your Nos", and additional signage at restaurants on campus. Joyce informed the committee that by January, every place on campus should have compostable straws. The committee suggested promoting these efforts on campus so students are aware and encouraged to participate in recycling. Joyce suggested that the CoAD classes address this issue.

Action Taken: nothing specific.

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

Agenda Item: Survey results

Discussion: Carol noted Kyle Chapman's assistance and the beautiful summary that he created. The committee obtained information about people interested in sustainability research and their interest in being connected with others working with them. Susan pulled that information into a table.

We talked about the possibility of developing a natural areas website and it was agreed that this could be nested in the Sustainability website as a standalone page. Tammy noted that we need a link where people can see the list of people working on/with sustainability.

Chad pointed out that when you look through the results, people were excited about the areas but only 50% want to use it for teaching/research, and 50% want to use it for recreation. In the past there has been hesitation to encourage people to use those areas for recreation because of liability issues. Consensus by the committee after discussing the issue further is that we need to talk with John Gill before the U says that the areas are available, especially on the website. There is also conversation about what trail maintenance needs to be done before opening the areas, and that this is best done in fall, especially tick (insect) bombs.

It is suggested that the Pocosin site is also mentioned on the website, as well as a place the CRW used to use for a training area (by the Belk building).

Chad included an update on the STARS survey. The majority of faculty self-reporting on including sustainability in their course content/research came from Brody, the Dental School, and Business. About 60-65 said “no, I don’t teach/do any research about sustainability”. The biggest response rate was from the departments that don’t do it. He is still having trouble getting information on the teaching. The natural sciences have been very responsive.

If anyone is working with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), please report.

Action Taken: Chad will work on creating a “live” document with this information. Jennifer will send a follow up to the engineering folks and Tim will report work with the honors college.

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Happy New Year!

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 23rd.

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:

- Make progress on planning the natural areas webpage
- Continue discussion of building and workplace health
- Updates from Chad Carwein on issues previously discussed: STARS rating, confetti issue, faculty sustainability group
- Reports from Chad Carwein on new initiatives