



Office of Sustainability
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Sustainability Advisory Council (SAC) – Executive Summary

Kick-off Meeting, October 7th, 2020

10:00am - 11:30am

[Full recording available here](#)

Attendees

Mandela Barnes	Guest Speaker
Laurent Heller	Guest Speaker
Karl Scholz	Guest Speaker
Eden Inoway-Ronnie	Guest
Alex Pierce	Guest
Steve Ackerman	SAC Member
Mo Bischof	SAC Member
Jacob Dolence	SAC Member
Cheryl Gittens	SAC Member
Mark Guthier	SAC Member
Emma Heins	SAC Member
John Horn	SAC Member
Chris McIntosh	SAC Member
Sarah Schutt	SAC Member
Natalie Tinsen	SAC Member
Giri Venkataramanan	SAC Member
Nola Walker	SAC Member
Michael Williams	SAC Member
Katherine Ackley	Student Subcommittee Member
Frank Adams	Student Subcommittee Member
Isaac Eskind	Student Subcommittee Member
Tyler Katzenberger	Student Subcommittee Member
Loren Latts	Student Subcommittee Member
Grace Martin	Student Subcommittee Member
Catie McDonald	Student Subcommittee Member
Marina Minic	Student Subcommittee Member
Cecilia Vanden Heuvel	Student Subcommittee Member
Josh Arnold	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Alex Frank	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Deb Gurke	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Tracy Harvey	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Nathan Jandl	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Cathy Middlecamp	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Missy Nergard	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff

Summary Notes

I. Welcome

II. Wisconsin & Sustainability

a. Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes

- Campuses must be leaders and we are doing that now
- Wisconsin is behind in addressing issues of climate change, but we are bringing science back, for example, joining the US Climate Alliance
- Wisconsin has created the Office of Sustainability and Energy, set clean energy goals, and managed a task force on climate change that engaged all members of the public
- Racial inequity was further exposed by the pandemic
- This work has never been done before in Wisconsin, but with these efforts, we can answer the call and we can be a global leader
- Our work extends across the state, across the globe
- We owe this to our children and we must prioritize sustainability and equity

III. Council Charge

a. Provost Karl Scholz

- There is a strong history of sustainability in academics from UW–Madison
- In 2010 the campus task force pushed this work forward
- The academic component of sustainability includes:
 - Experiential learning (solar panels, recycling, lighting initiatives)
 - Learning from others (teams of students driving sustainability projects)
 - Classroom learning (linking policy, economics, math, climate, arts, and humanities)
- All of these efforts fulfill the Wisconsin Idea
- The SAC will provide recommendations on how to align the university's mission to advance sustainability at UW–Madison

b. Vice Chancellor Laurent Heller

- This topic is SO important, we cannot wait any longer
- It is sad that we have fallen behind but we need to admit that and use that drive to move things forward
- As an example of the impact of our campus, on average 40% of emissions come from commercial facilities and UW–Madison is the largest commercial facility owner in the state of Wisconsin, this means that what we do here really does matter

c. Director of Sustainability Missy Nergard

- History of sustainability goes back 10,000 years
- Microplastics (an imagined systems approach)
 - Professors develop safer textiles that do not shed microplastics
 - WARF helps create a patent for athletic gear with Under Armour
 - We use the same textiles for our graduation robes
 - Working together we bring clarity to our mission
- We may have fallen behind, but we have not fallen apart

IV. Team Debrief

a. *Break out into small groups*

b. *Key takeaways from each group*

- Listen, listen and listen—take it all in
- Pay attention to opportunities for collaboration and linkages, personal networks; who else should be part of our conversation?
- Intentionally include people who have not always been included
- Sense of responsibility and excitement around the opportunities for collaboration
- Excitement about the momentum behind this and interest in the deep time connection to the history of sustainability on this land
- Concern about how to maintain momentum in the face of other priorities
- A lot of talent and interest from the students, one of their main jobs will be maintaining communication channels to the student body
- Students want to ensure that they hold administrators accountable
- The plan should include diverse voices and flexibility (for new voices and unforeseen circumstances)
- Remember why we are doing this—we are doing this for our lives and the lives of generations to come
- We need to be open to the necessary solutions (even if they are expensive or hard)

V. How we got here

- We must acknowledge the harm that we have done (referring to indigenous heritage and our role in history) as well as the racism many prominent environmental leaders exhibited—this is a conflict we need to address as we move forward
- Sustainability is about optimization
- Check in with our mental models
- Compartmentalization is problematic—systems thinking is key
- [2010 Sustainability Task Force report](#) was the first strategy created
- The problems are connected—these are wicked problems

VI. Our Way Forward

- [Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating system](#) will be used as a benchmarking tool and a framework
- Priorities are action statements and we will support them with specific initiatives that can show how we can achieve an intended outcome
- Defining impact and feasibility will frame our prioritization process
- We are planning for two sets of [campus listening sessions](#)
- A fancy report is not a successful outcome; we need action!

VII. Communications & Next Steps

- Please submit a headshot and bio of yourself for the website
- Please let us know if you have any suggestions

VIII. Closing Remarks

- Let stakeholders know about listening sessions and come to the listening sessions yourself!
- Staff will be sending out invites for the next session and an email with next steps