Office of Sustainability
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Sustainability Advisory Council (SAC) – Executive Summary

Operations Meeting, February 12th, 2021
11:00am - 12:30pm
Full recording available here

Mark Guthier	SAC Member
Emma Heins	SAC Member
Lindsey Honeyager	Guest
John Horn	SAC Member
Natalie Tinsen	SAC Member
Giri Venkataraman	SAC Member
Nola Walker	SAC Member
Michael Williams	SAC Member
Alex Frank	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Deb Gurke	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Andrea Hicks	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Nathan Jandl	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Jake McCulloch	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff
Missy Nergard	Office of Sustainability and Supporting Staff

Summary Notes

I. **Welcome & Goals for Today**
   a. *Engagement Initial Prioritization Results*
   - Sustainability Leadership and Advocacy and Sustainability Co-curricular Learning were at the top of the list while Sustainability Onboarding and Training and Alumni Engagement ranked lowest
   - We also sent out a short "pulse" survey to those campus and community members that attended the listening session to solicit feedback on the engagement focus areas
      o The survey asked participants to identify what focus areas should be prioritized, a small sample size of four participants identified Sustainability Leadership and Advocacy and Sustainability Co-curricular Learning as priorities
      o This survey will remain open for another week

2. **Context for Our Discussion**
   a. *Considerations for Sustainable Operations (John Horn)*

- "What we're talking about today is a personal passion of mine: thinking about how big of an impact operations can have. There are amazing things we can do in this area."
- There are some considerations to be had--for example there are different regulations between a state (capital) project compared to campus-funded projects
  - LEED building certifications is a great example, we can't pursue that anymore because of a former administration
- To avoid this regulation whiplash, we can establish our own standards in facilities and design that serve all campus communities
  - Some ideas are more philosophical: designing space that is adaptive
    - Creating landscapes around campus that take advantage of natural systems (storm water, green infrastructure)
    - New Nick is a good example of us going above and beyond state policies: none of the vegetation requires irrigation. It's all stormwater (see the Campus Landscape Master Plan)
  - There is limitless energy and impact we can make in transportation
  - Even the way we demolish and deconstruct buildings; new buildings have been pushing 96% recycled material!
  - VCFA and the Chancellor know there is a lot of hay to make in this area and are following this very closely
  - We must develop consistent sustainability priorities so all project partners and campus planners know the expectations coming into every project

  b. *Considerations for Sustainability in Operations: Climate Action Planning (Nathan Jandl)*
  - The Chancellor signed the Resilience Commitment in 2019; we signed the resilience commitment and not one of the others administered by Second Nature because the resilience commitment takes a more holistic approach to addressing climate change by incorporating adaptability
    - This is a multi-year commitment and we are just entering year two following our campus-community assessment and annual report; completed campus community connections include:
      - Community: 10 community connection w/ key stakeholders
      - 6 sustainability roundtables
      - 5 peer-to peer university conversations
    - Resilience assessment is the second stage of this commitment where a team from UW–Madison will be analyzing UW's assets and vulnerabilities in the five dimensions of resilience:
      - Financial
      - Health & wellness
      - Social equity & governance
      - Ecosystem services

- Infrastructure
  - We are also updating our Greenhouse Gas Emissions inventory to inform this work
  - The third year of this report focuses on creating a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan which today's conversation will help inform
- We see the work of the SAC and the Resilience Commitment as fully complementary initiatives

c. Considerations for sustainability in operations (Lindsey Honeyager)
- The pandemic has shown us how important our buildings are; there are many things that are hard to adapt and buildings are one of them but not if we design them better and think about their space more inventively
- To make the most of our buildings, we should think about three considerations to strive for more sustainable operations: Design for flexibility, wellbeing and inclusion
  - Future proofing with timeless design
    - Thoughtful and intentional design so that spaces can be adapted for future use and for day-to-day flexibility
    - Enable distance readiness, flexible furniture, tech resources for community users
    - Design for sun lighting, view, use of color which really affects mood and signals behavior
    - Overall we want to create spaces that are warm and welcoming which leads to inclusiveness that communities that everyone belongs here
    - We do this by engaging our users and relying on diverse perspectives, for example:
      - Legacy hall in the School of Business celebrates the contribution of diverse communities.
      - Gender inclusive restrooms, mother's rooms, wellness/ prayer rooms
- We want to move beyond ADA and create spaces that are truly welcoming and usable by all; ADA should be our bare minimum

d. Student Subcommittee Debrief (Natalie Tinsen, Michael Williams)
- Last week we met to reflect on our respective time and experience on campus (dining hall, residence halls, student activities)
- The biggest disparity is the differences in access to composting and comfortable heating and cooling; the system isn't uniform around campus and all students should have access to the best resources; we need to standardize our operations
- We also touched on how important it is to provide more resources to off-campus students
- We spoke about the university transitioning to cleaner energy and away from fossil fuels
- We also talked about a focus on outdoor spaces and expanding green spaces.

3. **Focus Area Overview**
   - Reminder that focus areas came from listening sessions, our staff experience, and from the STARS gap analysis that compares UW–Madison results to peer school results (similar schools and Big 10)
   - We're more aligned with other institutions in the operations category compared to how we stacked up in academics and engagement
   - Comment: We have an opportunity with our operations to be intentional in how we respect and honor the land our university sits upon and the peoples who were here before UW–Madison

4. **Group Discussions**
   - Following our discussion, what resonated with you?
     - OPPORTUNITIES!
     - Sustainable landscape and how we recognize our beautiful geography but also how we pay respect to this Ho Chunk land and how we incorporate teachings, the new Natatorium specifically and its proximity to several effigy mounds on campus...how do we protect, enhance, and teach about these spaces?
     - When we redesign classroom spaces, keep sustainability forefront with an eye to equity and inclusivity
     - Lindsey: Food is very important especially as we come back to campus. There are better choices that are better for the environment and for people
     - I was also very intrigued by the concept of sustainable food. I've learned a lot today because I've barely been on the actual campus. Interesting to learn the inner workings of our classrooms.
     - INSPIRING! ENCOURAGING!
     - I'm very excited about this conversation, I'm very thankful to John Horn specifically who spoke to issues on acting upon the words of a land acknowledgment and future issues with space utilization, I'm excited to see how we move forward with a hybrid model of campus operations

5. **Next Steps**
   - Please complete the survey ranking the operations focus areas
   - Next round of listening sessions are planned for 3/18, 3/23, 3/25
     - We encourage you to share these opportunities with your audiences
   - Look for draft Planning & Administration focus areas in early March