Minutes | Engagement and Planning Meeting 2

DATE: March 28, 2019 | TIME: 02:00 PM – 3:30 PM EST | LOCATION: Massry Center for Business 374


MEETING OVERVIEW:
WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: REVIEW OF MEETING 1 AND CORE VALUES

UAlbany has accomplished a lot in Sustainability in the past ten years. However, there has been no concrete plan to guide our work. That is why we are engaging in this inclusive process to develop goals to guide our work for the next ten years. Our work in sustainability is centered around the CORE: Curriculum and Access, Operations, Research and Development, and Engagement and Planning.

At meeting 1, we engaged in brainstorming about what we would like to accomplish around Engagement and Planning. Some broad themes included communication, data, partnerships, and integrating sustainability across campus. See the meeting 1 minutes for full details.

The goal of today is to review and update the goals that came out of meeting 1 and make sure that we all feel comfortable with them. We also want to draft strategies to research further after this meeting.

There were some improvables from meeting 1 that we tried to incorporate:

1. Too long: This meeting is 90 minutes, shorter than the 150 minutes from meeting 1. We will make sure to stay on time and end by 3:30 pm.
2. Organization of tasks was confusing and repetitive: We have a simplified agenda for today, will avoid repetition.
3. Used too much paper: We only have one handout and are going to use white boards for charting instead of paper.

Reminder of Core Values:

- Full Participation
- Assume Good Intent
- Collective Wisdom
- Shared Responsibility
- Radical Transparency
- Have Fun!

We watched this video of 15 year old climate activist Greta Thunberg speaking at the UNCOP24 climate talks. Part of our mission is to encourage our community to make small, daily changes in their habits - which can make a big difference over time. But our mission is also to teach and empower our students so that when they leave the university, they can make even bigger changes in the world like Greta.
GOAL DISCUSSION: DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA

Goal definition: (Aspirational) As aspirational description of what UAlbany wants to achieve. It is intended to serve as a guide for choosing current actions.

Strategy: (Directional focus) A specific program or project that can be implemented to support the overall goal. It will be measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

Decision making process:
- Strive for consensus
- Majority rule
- Leadership support

How can we improve the goals?
- Is it aspirational?
- Can we create strategies?

Scale of agreement:
1. Cannot support
2. Serious disagreement
3. Do not like, but could support
4. Support, but have major questions
5. Support with minor points of concern
6. Wholeheartedly endorse

GOAL B: BUILD A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY BY INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMMING THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSITY.

The group began by discussing the above goal as a large group.

FEEDBACK:
- Building a culture is high effort but is also high impact
- Goal is aspirational
- Some work in this area already exists, we just need to make the connection
- Help educate people on the sustainable practices they are already participating in
- The statement is clear
- Is the second part “Integrating sustainability programming throughout the campus” actually a strategy?
- Is the first part of the goal “Build a culture of sustainability” actually a mission or a vision? It seems too broad to be a goal.
- Make sure to focus on education and discussion on what is sustainable
- Are we effectively reflecting the UN goals?
- What kind of programming does this mean? How will this reach this goal? The programming may fall into a strategy in this case, it can also mean educating to promote good practices.
- We need strong strategies to implement this aspirational goal of integrating sustainability programming.
- How do we integrate with classrooms and faculty? We have a separate working group on Curriculum, but maybe we need to integrate throughout this process? Should we have a faculty member at these meetings?

CONSSENSUS:
- “Build a culture of sustainability” should be our vision statement for Engagement and Planning
- The next part of the statement should stand alone as the goal

REVISED GOAL: Integrate sustainability programming throughout the university.

OVERALL LEVEL OF AGREEMENT: 5-6
The group then divided into two groups to work through the remaining four goals.

GOAL A: COMMUNICATE UAlbany’s sustainability story to internal and external audiences to recruit and engage students, faculty, and staff.

FEEDBACK:
- Should we include external audiences?
- This is including a lot of different audiences: internal and external/ students, faculty, and staff
- We want external audiences to engage with us
- The statement is not clear
- We want to recruit students, faculty, and staff that are interested in sustainability. Prospective students are looking for universities that share sustainability as a value.
- We also want to engage our entire current campus community - whether or not they are already involved in sustainability efforts.
- Signage on sustainability would help communicate our message
- Communicate, recruit, and engage - > Action words
- Need to simplify
- Like the “Communicate UAlbany’s sustainability story” statement, but too broad on its own.
- Should we remove internal and external audiences?
- Should we remove students, faculty, and staff because that implies only internal audiences?

CONSENSUS:
- Remove internal and external audiences to make statement more clear
- In order to recruit and engage students, faculty, and staff, we are going to have to communicate our story internally and externally. It is not necessary to include in the statement.

REVISED GOAL: Communicate UAlbany’s sustainability story to recruit and engage students, faculty, and staff.

OVERALL LEVEL OF AGREEMENT: 5 - 6

GOAL C: ENSURE THAT ALL UAlbany STUDENTS HAVE THE TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.

FEEDBACK:
- A little broad
- Needs to be inclusive for faculty, staff and students
- An unrealistic goal to ensure “tools” for students to be more sustainable
- Setting a strong goal may be more achievable than saying we will provide opportunities
- We need education to ensure they understand sustainable practices
- When we say ‘community’ do we mean the UAlbany community or the greater Albany community?
- If we are looking to get students involved with the greater community we need to make sure they are getting the correct knowledge and opportunities for them
- Our goal for this could be to educate students how to be sustainable within the UAlbany community so they can go out into the world and apply it throughout their lives
• Education can inspire students and staff to seek the tools and opportunities they need to improve their community, gives hope and direction to those already interested in climate justice
• May need to work further on the wording of the goal

REVISED GOAL: Educate the UAlbany community on sustainable practices and how to incorporate them to improve their communities.

OVERALL LEVEL OF AGREEMENT: 5

GOAL D: DEVELOP MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AROUND SUSTAINABILITY.

FEEDBACK:
• What does meaningful mean? Need to define this.
• Who do we want to develop partnerships? Just students? Everyone?
• We will need more inclusive strategies.
• Does this include partnerships with businesses?
• Partnering is a good start, need to go further
• Like the sentiment of “meaningful” - that makes the goal aspirational. It is easy to have a lot of partnerships that are passive and nothing substantive comes out of them. But meaningful partnerships is a more aspirational goal.
• Maybe using “ongoing” is more specific to what we are looking for
• This is high effort but high impact
  o These partnerships can be high effort and high impact to start them, but can become low effort over time. For example, OTP’s partnership with the RED Bookshelf was high effort to get it started, but now it practically runs by itself.
• Including “around sustainability” is necessary to focus the goal

CONSENSUS:
• We like “community partnerships around sustainability”
• We want to change “develop meaningful” to be more specific
• Action words to consider instead of develop: engage, foster, cultivate and implement
• Words to consider instead of meaningful: persistent, productive and ongoing

REVISED GOAL: Cultivate productive and ongoing community partnerships around sustainability

OVERALL LEVEL OF AGREEMENT: 4.5 - 5

GOAL E: PROMOTE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ASSESSMENT, DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING, AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNANCE.

FEEDBACK:
• What does representative governance mean? And how does this differ from the current university structure?
• Should we include sustainability in the missions of the already existing organizations on campus (SA, GSA)
• Our strategy to create a governance body to oversee sustainability is very important in linking these ideas
• Possible new goal: Develop strategies to promote continuous improvement in sustainability
• The goal is not needed because the assessment and data-analysis should be included within the other goals and does not need to be a separate idea
• Make sure the assessment is happening throughout this plan
• Do we need to form a type of advisory board to ensure the goals are being implemented?
• Make sure we don’t lose track of assessment
• We will need to make sure that there are metrics assigned to all of the strategies

CONSENSUS:
• Remove this goal but implement the pieces throughout the other goals
• All of CORE needs to make sure the plan is measurable, evenly spread and not left to one group

Remove goal and incorporate throughout the sustainability plan.

ASSIGN STRATEGIES TO RESEARCH
Members of the working group are asked to volunteer to research one of the strategies on the list. We are looking for information on other examples of this strategy at other institutions, and insights on how we could best implement the strategy.

• Luke: Expand community partnerships to reduce food insecurity among students
• Jenn and Brenda: Establish a recurring farmer’s market on campus
• Holly: Include sustainability stories in enrollment marketing materials
• Lynn: Increase awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
• Olivia: Offering grants for sustainability programs
• Sam: Strengthen the relationship with the City of Albany
• Doug and Ray: Develop sustainability programming models for offices (Doug) and student groups (Ray)

WRAP UP: STRENGTHS AND IMPROVABLES
Improvables:
• Did not have time to go through strengths and improvables as a group
• Some dry erase markers did not work

Strengths (informal feedback):
• Ended on time
• Productive meeting
• Liked breaking out into groups to get everything accomplished in time
• Liked that there were clear outcomes of the meeting that we accomplished

REVIEW OF NEXT STEPS:
At our third meeting, we will review the research that working group members completed on the strategies and will begin to prioritize which strategies should be included in the Sustainability Plan.