Minutes | Engagement and Planning

DATE: FEBRUARY, 22 2019 | TIME: 02:30 PM – 5:00 PM EST | LOCATION: EMPIRE COMMONS CONFERENCE ROOM

ATTENDANCE:

- **Present:** Holly Barker-Flynn, Dylan Card, Zach Fisher, Jameelee Ford, Lynn Greabell, Brad Hershenson, Jennifer Horn, Sarah Johnson, Meghan Popcun, Olivia Pounds, Cheryl Simmons, Randy Stark, Doug Sweet
- **Absent:** Pamela Alexander, Sam Axley, Langie Cadesca, Jordan Carleo-Evangelist, Sandy Damhof, Amani Edwards, Laurie Garafola, Maggie Hartley, Mary Hunt, Kristin Marshall, Alfredo Medina, Robert Murphy, Brenda Seckerson, Sheila Seery

MEETING OVERVIEW:

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: MEETING GOALS, AGENDA, AND CORE VALUES

The working group session was led the following facilitators:

- Meghan Popcun: Assistant Director of Orientation and Transition Programs and Chair of Engagement and Planning Working Group
- Dylan Card: Past GA for Sustainability Office and past President of Sustainability Student Group
- Brad Hershenson: Current GA for Sustainability Office

All members in the working group introduced themselves and shared what excited them about the sustainability plan. We then discussed the goals and agenda for the meeting and the core values that will guide all working group sessions.

Meeting #1 Goals:

- Gain a clear understanding of current state
- Understand operational definitions of planning terms
- Develop list of opportunities for the strategic plan
- Begin shaping list of prioritized opportunities into draft, high-level goals and supporting strategies
- Provide an overview of the next steps for the planning process

Meeting #1 Agenda:

- Welcome
- Review goals, agenda, and core values
- Introductions
- Review of focus area and current state
- Develop and prioritize draft goals
- Summary
- Next Steps
- Strengths and Improvables

Core Values:

- Full Participation
- Assume Good Intent
- Collective Wisdom
- Shared Responsibility
- Radical Transparency
- Have Fun!
REVIEW OF CURRENT STATE: BASELINE INFORMATION

The facilitators reviewed the Baseline Information document which includes an overview of many Engagement & Planning activities that have taken place in recent years.

Baseline Feedback

- Gap in engagement - there is a core group of students and staff that are highly engaged, and the rest of campus has a low level of engagement
- There should be a central place for delivering information on sustainability initiatives - and that should be well advertised
- Engage UAlbany platform could help connect students with service opportunities around sustainability (bridge the gap between need and interest)
- We need to foster more connections between students and faculty/staff around this issue
- We need to expand our following, use social media to get our message out
- Surprised about how many engagement activities that have been taking place

ACTIVITY 1: WORKSHEET

Participants worked with partners to answer key questions around the Engagement and Planning area of Sustainability and then shared with the entire group.

What Else Could We Be Doing?

- Include partners more in outreach, i.e. tagging them on social media
- Educate campus community on UN global goals
- Celebrate sustainability more (Earth Day)
- Better pipeline of information around sustainability
- When we share information about sustainability, include an action step that someone can take to learn more or get more involved
- Include a page on Sustainability in the Orientation guidebook given to new students and family members
- Analyze data on sustainability, share reports with the community
- Create a standard feature in the faculty/staff Today at UAlbany that includes data on sustainability
- Have Green Scene students participate in freshman orientation, perhaps at ThinkFast program. Include sustainability trivia questions in Orientation.
- Promote new Purple Threads program and market as a sustainability initiative
  - Look at other, existing initiatives and how we can market them as sustainability
- Provide students with reusable bags - helps to both reduce waste and as a marketing tool for sustainability (could include tips on how to be more sustainable on the bag)
- Have consistent graphics related to sustainability
- Market sustainability in the Residence Halls (social norms posters are well known - maybe something like that)
- Place information on the back of suite doors
- Give freshman students mock electricity bills like we do to students on Empire Commons - perhaps just at the end of each semester.
- Bring back Give ‘N Go program
- Offer leadership development to students
- Have a Sustainability RA position that attracts interested students, rather than just recruiting from RAs after they are hired.

**What Could We Be Doing Better?**
- Tracking and assessment
- Use Engage UAlbany platform to recommend service opportunities based on interest
- Showcase sustainability on campus
- Tell stories about students involved in community service
- Partner with CDTA and CDPHP to expand the bike share program on campus and make it free to students.
- Address food waste and food insecurity - program that flash freezes hot food so it doesn’t spoil and either donates it to community organization or offer it to students.

**What Could We Stop Doing?**
- Give ‘N Go program is not as effective in practice. Students often just dump trash and items we wouldn’t want to donate. It is a lot of work to manage.
- We need more data of what is and isn’t working.
- At a certain point we need to stop discussing and start doing.
- We also need to stop adding new things and just improve and scale on what we already have.
What would we do with a magic wand?

- Institutionalize sustainability on campus - every office is involved in sustainability
- All students, faculty, and staff have access to a bike on campus for free
- Hold regular farmers markets on campus (expand partnerships with farmers and community organizations)
- Expand gardens so that students, faculty, and staff can engage in agriculture
- Partner with CDTA to expand bus routes that are available to the UAlbany community
- Address food insecurity - offer students three free meals per semester. Allow students to donate their campus meal plan money at the end of the semester to other students or organizations.
- Have a sustainability expert in each area of campus.
- More partnerships in the Albany community.
- More community involvement in UAlbany events and more faculty and staff volunteering in the community.

ACTIVITY 2: REVIEW OF DRAFT GOALS

The working group reviewed the following draft goals that had been previously created and provided feedback.

Staff Development:
- Include sustainability in all job descriptions and provide training during orientation

Participation in Public Policy:
- Increase staff and faculty engagement in sustainability related public engagement efforts by XX people/XX%
- Be more involved in national organizations
- Increase public engagement/community outreach by X% from the baseline by XX
- University at Albany is recognized as a contributor to the greater Albany community
- Be more involved in national organizations

Climate Action and Sustainability Plan:
- Making this plan happen!

Inclusive Governance:
- Continue working on the current Faculty Diversity Initiatives
- Get students more involved in advocacy, i.e. investment, renewable energy

Assessing Employee Satisfaction:
- Address campus perception through better PR
Communication:
- Develop a robust external sustainability communication strategy and schedule
- Develop a broader communication/marketing plan that incorporates messaging from across the campus
- Develop a robust internal sustainability communication strategy and schedule
- Incorporate visible sustainability elements in buildings to create a culture

Feedback on Draft Goals
The goals around communication are strong - we need a clear strategy and messaging across campus. However, some other goals are too generic and unclear. For instance, since we are already involved in national organizations, which ones do we need to be more involved in?

ACTIVITY 3: CREATE UPDATED GOALS
After brainstorming new ideas and reviewing existing goals, the group worked to create and organize new Sustainability goals for the campus. Goals were organized under five different areas.
**Vision:** *Inspirational: The desired state; big picture, inspirational framework for UAlbany*
- Sustainability is a recruitment tool: Undergraduate Admissions markets UAlbany as a sustainable campus and recruit students interested in sustainability
- UAlbany is aligned with UN global goals
- UAlbany is recognized as a contributor to the greater Albany community
- Alumni are engaged, sustainable citizens: UAlbany alumni are educated in sustainability and contribute to making their communities sustainable
- UAlbany celebrates sustainability
- UAlbany is known as a sustainable campus and for having a sustainable culture

**Goal:** *Aspirational: an aspirational description of what Albany would like to accomplish. It is intended to serve as a guide for choosing current and future courses of action/opportunities*
- Broaden what we think of as sustainability (vis a vis UN sustainability goals)
- Increase staff and faculty engagement in sustainability-related public engagement efforts by xx people/xx%
- Be more involved in national organizations / Maximize meaningful involvement in national organizations
- Using data to tell the sustainability story
- Be a regional resource for other businesses or organizations

**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*
- Close gap between student & faculty/staff engagement
- Incorporate in various training/education programs for faculty/staff online education
- Employee satisfaction: address campus perception through PR
- Address food insecurity
- Encourage active participation of faculty/staff in community and campus sustainability efforts
- Expand transportation options for faculty/staff and students
- Get students more involved in advocacy, i.e. investment, renewable energy
- Get students more involved AND trained in effective advocacy
- Increase knowledge of New Students around Sustainability

**Action:** *Steps to take, a breakdown of important steps that will support the strategies for each goal*
- Add Sustainability Page in Orientation Guidebook
- Add more bikes to campus
- Add bus routes - CDTA and UAlbany shuttle buses
- Establish a recurring farmer’s market
- Increase the graduate student living wage
- Include sustainability in all job descriptions and provide training during orientation
- Showcase stories of student volunteering

**Task:** *Granular action items to assign*
- Look at strategies of other gold-rated campuses
- Incorporate visible sustainability elements in buildings to create a sustainable culture
- Make this Sustainability plan happen!
- Continue working on the current faculty diversity initiatives
- Assess and improve employee satisfaction
- Develop sustainability communication strategy
- Ensure adequate staffing to implement Sustainability Plan

WRAP UP: STRENGTHS AND IMPROVABLES

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<th>Strengths:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Kept on time</td>
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<td>● Synergy among ideas</td>
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<td>● A lot of existing success in this area to build on</td>
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<td>● Good facilitation</td>
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<th>Improvables:</th>
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<td>● Needs more implementers involved in the discussion</td>
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<td>● We spent too much time going over the baseline information, the group was tired during the brainstorming</td>
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<td>● We should sort the ideas while we come up with them, not after</td>
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Bike Rack

- Items were placed in the “bike rack” if they are related to other areas of Sustainability (Curriculum & Access, Operations, or Research & Development).
  - L-LC in Sustainability
  - Recycling of wire hangers at Purple Threads
  - Review of campus waste protocol
  - Offer reusable bags with a UAlbany sustainability logo
  - Electricity metering in the residence halls
  - Encourage digital pay stubs to reduce paper
  - Alternative transportation options (bike share)
  - Automatic faucets and lights

REVIEW OF NEXT STEPS:
At our second meeting, we will review and prioritize the goals from the first meeting. New goals may also be added. At the end of Meeting #2, goals will be solidified and we will begin working on developing strategies to accomplish the goals.