



**Eastern Michigan University  
President's Commission on Sustainability  
February Meeting**

2:00pm—3:00pm March 12, 2021 Zoom Meeting

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Present: Commissioners Tom Kovacs, Grace Thompson, Katy Greenwald, Luke Yates, Mary Fallot, Ronald Rich, Kevin Kucera, Savannah Koth, Demetrios Kyprianos, Chris Grant, and visitor Kirsten Olson-Roque

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Approval of minutes**

November 19, 2020 minutes

Kevin Kucera made the motion to approve.

Mary Fallot gave the second

**Motion passes 10-0-0**

**III. Reports**

a. Commission Chairman Report – Tom Kovacs

Chairman Kovacs started his report with the reading of the mission of the commission. Which can be found on the commission website.

STARS is a rating system developed by the Association by Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. It is an international group of universities made up of over 1,000 members.

674 have earned a STARS rating.

15 Michigan Universities have registered. 4 of them Central, Grand Valley, University of Michigan have earned a gold rating.

Eastern Michigan University should be able to achieve the silver rating over the next year.

The covid years are very different than the non-covid years. We can apply and we can use older pre-covid data.

Chairman Kovacs shared a chart of what has been completed so far and what is in progress. It is divided into 4 areas: Academic, Engagement, Operations, Planning and Administration.

It is then subdivided into different goals within each area.

b. Academic Subcommittee Report (Thomas Kovacs)

Three criteria are not complete: Research and Scholarship, AC 5 Immersive Experience, AC 8 Campus as a Living Laboratory, and AC 9 Research and Scholarship.

Commissioner Katy Greenwald talked about Research and Scholarship items. She discussed about putting together a Google form about what faculty are doing about sustainability. She added that we could collect data what faculty are doing in the terms of the University being a living laboratory. Chairman Kovacs added that there are several areas on campus that might be in the area of campus immersion. By sending the Google form to faculty it allows faculty to document and send us the data about these immersion experience areas.

Chairman Kovacs said one area that we are not sure to how to capture the data and construct a survey is to capture commuters to our campus. Do people walk, bike, drive to campus? We need to figure out how to do the survey so it is not bias.

Commissioner Greenwald added that the questionnaires might need to be different depending on which groups they need to go to based on the need for each area.

Chairman Kovacs thought that we should be careful commission wide so that maybe multiple surveys could be grouped. We do not want to become known as the survey group.

c. Engagement subcommittee report (Mary Jane Fallot)

Commissioner Fallot went over the committee sub report.

Commissioner Yates provided the information that we do not have current continuing education courses.

Chairman Kovacs said that there might be areas of the overall report that we do not currently do but might be doing improvement and addressing the area in the future.

Community Partnerships is one that Commissioner Fallot is going to be following up on in the future. She is going to check with other colleges have reported.

d. Operations Subcommittee Report – Subcommittee chair not able to attend today.

Waste Elimination –

Commissioner Grant has reached out to Waste Management but he has not been able to get a response to emails and phone calls.

Commissioner Grant has reports from 2016 and 2017 but is trying to reach someone at Waste Management to get new reports.

Hazardous Waste – Chairman Kovacs will reach out to the Health and Safety Group for data.

Commissioner Grant offered to reach out to them since they are in the same building. OP #20 is the item that pertains to hazardous waste.

e. Planning and Administration Subcommittee Report (Kevin Kucera)

Chris Dotson in Human Resources is going to give information about employee wellness and satisfaction. Commissioner Kucera reported that Kaja is going to enter that into the system next week.

Commissioner Kucera brought up that once this is done we are supposed to have it reviewed by an auditor. Jerry Brocks is an internal auditor and does a good job. We need to give him plenty of time.

Commissioner Kucera has offered to reach out to Jerry Brocks to explain what is needed.

#### **IV. New Business**

- a. Chairman Kovacs shared his screen to share the proposal about adopt the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). Proposal SC-AC-1-2021 states

WHEREAS the Sustainability Commission has adopted the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System \(STARS\)](#) as the framework for fostering sustainability at the university and measuring, documenting and publicly communicating the university's progress toward achieving each of the framework's criteria.; and

WHEREAS a year of full access to the STARS reporting tool will allow EMU to achieve these goals through the following subscription benefits:

- Monitoring progress toward a STARS Rating with automated scoring.
- Receiving Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) staff support to help ensure the accuracy of our public report before it is published.
- Gaining global recognition for our sustainability efforts with a STARS Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum Rating that is valid for three years.

- Gaining recognition in Sierra magazine's Cool Schools ranking (U.S. and Canada) and BestColleges.com's Greenest Universities ranking (U.S.).
- Receiving recognition in AASHE's annual Sustainable Campus Index.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Sustainability Commission recommends to the president's office that the university becomes a full member of AASHE, which manages STARS, at a cost of \$1530 and subscribe for a full year starting July 1, 2021 to the STARS reporting tool at the discount rate of \$975.

Motion to consider this and accept this proposal:

Commissioner Katy Greenwald made the motion  
Commissioner Mary Fallot was the second

Commissioner Mary Fallot said this proposal gets us closer to our goals and will provide us with assistance with moving forward.

Commissioner Greenwald wanted to know if we can gather all the data within the one year time frame (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)? Chairman Kovacs reported back that several of the areas will be fairly quick to report because some do not apply to our university. For example, we do not have continuing education classes. Dieter Otto and Scott Storrar have agreed that they can report out needed data by April 2022.

Commissioner Rich asked if there is a fallback position if we do not get this done in a year?

Chairman Kovacs said if we do not our subscription will lapse. Then we'll have to pay for another year.

Commissioner Rich asked if the cost is \$1530 plus \$975? Tom reported that yes it is the sum of the two.

Chairman Kovacs called the motion to a vote:

**Motion passes 8-0-0.**

- b. Chairman Kovacs brought up that we should involve Alumni into our Commission. Commissioner Kovacs reminded the group that she is an alumni and serves on the Alumni Board. He wants to take to the Office of the President that the commission needs alumni members.

Kirsten Olson-Roque would like to serve on the commission.

- c. Chairman Kovacs said that he had a conversation with the Foundation and their response is that donors won't be interested in funding the reporting but would be interested in supporting initiatives after STARS reporting is complete and we are working to improve our sustainability rating.

**V. Adjourn 2:58 PM**