

Winter 2024 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Present: Chair Kovacs, Commissioners: Mary Jane Fallot, Chris Grant, Kate Greenwald, Alistair Halton, Sean McCormick, Emily McKinnie, Kirsten Olson, Dieter Otto, Sara Reder, Ronald Rich, Beth Smith, Aurelia Wade, Anke Wolbert, Luke Yates, Guests: Estelle Hackos (Undergraduate Student Government), Darrel Tremaine (Centrio), Abby Fazecas (Dining)

1. Approval of October meeting minutes Wolbert, Halton motion approved
Commissioner Grant mentioned that ewaste was removed during the time period after Steve Siller's retirement. Vote with corrections to minutes 12-0-0

2. Resolution SC-1-2024 (Appendix 1) Single-Use Plastics Ban (Hackos)
Estelle Hackos introduced the resolution to the commission. Commissioner Fallot asked about passing the fees off to the students. Shouldn't the vendors bear the cost. Estelle felt that tax would be on students, but student government would seek ways to defray those costs for the students. Commissioner Wolbert asked about Dining costs for bags. Commissioner Smith did not know. Commissioner Olson asked if an alternative provided to students could be made. Commissioner Smith asked if the bookstore is to be included. Estelle Hackos said they would not. Commissioner Wolbert asked how dining felt about the resolution. Commissioner Smith stated that sustainability is important to Dining, but hot foods can be a difficulty for transporting food without a plastic bag. Commissioner Rich suggested that students should also be learning to change their habits and this could be that motivation. Commissioner McKinnie worries about the feeling of being nickle-and-dimed. Also suggested a non-tax multi-prong route that also teaches sustainable options. Estelle stated that plastic bags are donated for Swoops and advocated for reusable items. Commissioner Wolbert likes the funding aspect of the tax for this and other sustainability projects. Commissioner Smith suggests introducing this at orientation and supplying a reusable bag. Commissioner Reder suggests that orientation materials would need to act quickly on. Commissioner Fallot is still concerned about the tax and printed material at orientation will likely not be read. Commissioner Smith(?) suggested an incentive approach to bring a bag vs. a tax where students would get a discount. Estelle was asked what she would like to see from us moving forward. Estelle would appreciate any movement forward. General consensus was to initially move forward with some sort of reusable bag at orientation that students can use for a discount at various vendors. No motion was made on the resolution.

3. Chairperson report (Kovacs)

Chair Kovacs states that he will step down as chair of the commission at the end of the current semester and has recommended to the president's office that any faculty or staff (with a preference toward faculty and instructors) currently on the commission would be a good replacement to continue the commission's work. The commission thanked Chair Kovacs for his great work on the commission over the last 6 years.

4. Individual reports

AC1 Academic Programs (Wolbert) and AC2 Learning Outcomes (Kovacs, Wolbert) A sustainability outcome has been added to the general education global awareness category after discussion with the general education director, John Koolage. This addition means that all EMU students would need to learn about sustainability and all faculty teaching courses in the global awareness category would need to teach about sustainability and assess for

sustainability learning. This additional learning outcome would also increase the number of courses that would be considered sustainability focused.

AC6 Sustainability Literacy Assessment (Kovacs) No report

AC9 Research and Scholarship (Kovacs, Wolbert) Talked briefly to Doug Baker about collecting sustainability research.

AC10 Support for Sustainability Research (Kovacs) No report

EN1 Student Educators program (Greenwald, McCormick, Reder, Wade) Commissioner Greenwald put a spreadsheet together for any Sierra club education activities. Commissioner Reder reported about Queertalks for education discussions around DEI. Data for Queertalks will be recorded through EagleSync. Commissioner Wade has been completing monthly waste audits in dining with an education component for reducing food waste.

EN2 Student Orientation (Grant, Smith, McKinnie, Rich) Commissioner Rich has student-created material for media at orientation and an online workbook. Commissioner Olson suggested that reusable bags be handed out at orientation. Commissioner Grant suggests recycling education and good housekeeping tips be placed at waste stations during orientation. Commissioner Reder suggest that EMU Connect has possible events to get out a sustainability education activity at an orientation event. Commissioner Smith reports that tabling at EMU Connect included planet ozzi and the road to zero waste events. Commissioner Smith also reported that dining adjusted their handouts at orientation including Ozzie-to-go and a sustainability slide presentation in combination with how many people saw the material.

EN5 Outreach Campaign (Greenwald) The waste audit education mentioned by Commissioner Wade in EN1 was shown to cause a reduction in waste. That result would qualify this to be an outreach campaign.

EN8 Employee Orientation (Fallot, Yates, Wolbert) Fallot reports UACDC moved to QR code signup at job fairs.

EN9 Staff Professional Development and Training (Fallot, Yates, Kovacs) Commissioner Fallot reported a plan to talk to FDC for faculty to have sustainability professional development. Commissioner Smith also reports that dining does annual training (Waste Not 2.0) for how waste is recorded including composting.

EN11 Intercampus Collaboration (Kovacs) No report

EN12 Continuing Education (Yates) Commissioner Yates reports that 1-3 online sustainability courses being offered now as continuing education

EN13 Community service (Yates) Commissioner Yates reports that he is trying to replace vision reporting of community service. After discussion he will select a reporting period over a calendar year based on convenience. He will also review STARS reporting to see if community service outside the university can count.

OP1 Emissions inventory and Disclosure (Korkmaz, Centrio) and OP2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Korkmaz Centrio) Darrel Tremaine of Centrio reported that an energy dashboard is being set up and reporting will be predicated on data flow, but that utility bills can be collected in preparation similar to the last reporting cycle

OP3 Building Design and Construction (Valdes, Centrio) no report

OP4 Building Operations and Maintenance (Valdes, Centrio) no report

OP5 Building energy consumption (Valdes, Centrio) Darrel Tremaine reports that a building-by-building energy dashboard is expected to be created and can be implemented in apps and websites including the sustainability website. Energy Conservation Measures (ECM) phase 1 and 2 will focus on building automation and pricing on meter at building level which should be complete this year.

OP6 Clean and Renewable Energy (Korkmaz, Centrio) Darrel Tremaine of Centrio reports that possible off-campus solar energy purchasing will be explored.

OP7 Food and Beverage Purchasing (Smith, Wade) Commissioner Smith reports Palm-to-palm certification is in process.

OP8 Sustainable Dining Commissioner Smith reports all of the following sustainability events taking place:

- Weigh the Waste Audits
- Composting - Partnership with My Green Michigan
- Composting Tours - Partnership with My Green Michigan and Spurts Industries
- Toms Coffee Truck - Local Business
- Climate Friendly Labeling available in dining locations, and [Dine On Campus Website](#) - Recipes with low greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and have agricultural and ingredient processing impacts that are lower than 70% of all products assessed by a third party called HowGood.
- Food Rescue Detroit, Hospitality House of Ypsi & Ann Arbor as a New Partner & we are recording how much food has been donated.
- We are capturing how much food is being donated to Food Recovery Network
- Food Donations
- Expanded partnerships within the local community See OP8(FRN)
- Introduction of Hydroponic Growing System at The Commons
- Greenovation Exploration - (Sustainability Fair) Partnership with Campus Life
- The Road to Zero Waste Events
 - Examples include the Winter Wonderland luncheon (Event on China, composted food scrapes)
 - MLK Luncheon (500) (Event on China, composted food scrapes)

OP10 Biodiversity (Greenwald) Commissioner Greenwald reports that a student, Ocean Thomas is completing an internship to complete this criteria

OP19 Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion (Centrio) no report

OP21 Water Use (Korkmaz, Centrio) build energy dashboard similar to OP5 will be done at building level for water use. ECM phase 1 and 2 focus on building automation, pricing on meter at building level beginning this year.

IN4 Campus Pride Index (Reder) Commissioner Reder defined campus pride. Currently have a 4.5 out of 5 score, but that was based on 2018 reporting. Now we have more to check off for a higher score. Commissioner Reder is also working on gender identity during admissions that will then connect to LGBT resource center.

Appendix 1

Resolution SC-1-2024 addresses EMU Student Government's recommendations regarding the use of single-use plastic bags on campus. This resolution states:

WHEREAS, environmental sustainability is a pressing concern globally, and it is imperative for institutions to take proactive measures to reduce their ecological footprint.

WHEREAS, plastic pollution poses a significant threat to ecosystems, wildlife, and human health, leading to adverse effects on the environment and contributing to climate change.

WHEREAS, Eastern Michigan University recognizes its responsibility to foster a culture of environmental stewardship and sustainability within its campus community; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of a plastic bag tax has proven to be an effective method to reduce single-use plastic bag consumption and encourage the use of more sustainable alternatives; and

WHEREAS, similar initiatives have been successfully implemented in various educational institutions across the nation, leading to a positive impact on waste reduction and a heightened sense of environmental consciousness among students, faculty, and staff;

BE IT RESOLVED, EMU Student Government recommends to the president's commission on sustainability to consider the implementation of a campus-wide single-use plastic bag tax at all retail locations, charging a fee of \$0.10 per plastic bag, as a strategic step towards reducing single-use plastic consumption on campus; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the revenue generated from the plastic bag tax shall be placed in an EMU Student Government Sustainability Fund, earmarked for initiatives promoting sustainability, environmental education, and student organizations across campus;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the University work collaboratively with campus retailers to ensure a seamless transition, providing support and resources to facilitate the adoption of environmentally friendly practices in retail operations.