



**Eastern Michigan University
President's Commission on Sustainability
Fall 2022 Meeting**

October 28, 2022

Commissioner attendance:

Tom Kovacs, Chair
Dieter Otto
Chris Grant
Beth Smith
Aurelia Wade
Katie Greenwald
Mary Jane Fallot
Le'Shay Webb
Ron Rich
Kevin Kucera
Kasim Korkmaz
Luke Yates
Mike Valdes

Guests: Don Gillette, Kristen Ayres, Anthony Sikora, Rieth Jones Advisors

- I. Chairman Tom Kovacs called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm.
- II. Approval of Minutes from the meeting on April 5, 2022
Minutes were approved. 9 – Favorable, 0 - Objection, 1 - Abstention .
- III. Introduction of group and new commission members:
Dieter Otto – Executive Director of Physical Plant Operations, Grounds, and Custodial
Le'Shay Webb
Aurelia Wade
Beth Smith – Director of Community Wellness & Sustainability, Dining Services
- IV Chair Report
 - 1) Climate Summit 2 and the County Climate Collaborative
 - Summit was attended by County Mayors, Commissioners, Twp. Supervisors, University Presidents, School Superintendent's, and other County Leaders.
Meeting purpose was to establish the collaborative to work together in the mitigation of climate change.
 - Next meeting would establish how the collaborative will be organized, and then membership will open. (Nov 3rd – 8:30 – Noon @ Ypsilanti Community Schools)

- Please let Chair Kovacs know if you are able to attend the Nov. 3rd meeting in his place. Scott Storrar is expected to be in attendance as well.

2) STARS report

The purpose of the Stars report is to record level of sustainability & calculate a rating. For our first rating, we scored at the Second Lowest Level with a total score of 31.92. We need to identify ways to improve and put plans in place. The certification lasts for 3 years and will be featured in AASHE's Campus Sustainability Index, The Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges, and BestColleges.com's Greenest Universities.

Reviewed 6 Peer Institutions for comparison of ratings.

Planning & Administration is our highest rated category and Engagement is our lowest rated category.

3) STARS Bronze Certification celebration

Scheduled for Monday, October 31, 2022. Chris to bring recycle bins & bin for compost. Beth to request most sustainable materials for catering items.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

1) Academic report (Report provided by Ron Rich chair)

This category and its ratings are linked to how we train students around Sustainability.

Highest Scores:

Immersive 100%

Campus 100%

3/3 on undergraduate degree programs

Need improvement:

Number of sustainability courses

Overall Sustainability focus

Gauging Student Sustainability – we do not currently have anything in place to do so, but we could create a survey to have students complete.

2) Engagement report (Report provided by Mary Jane Fallot chair)

This category and its ratings are linked to our 'Culture of Sustainability'.

We received full points for Community Partnerships, and partial on Intercampus Collaborative, Publications/Website, and Student Life (2 points).

We received zero Points for Student Educators Program, Student Orientation, Outreach Campaign, Assessing Sustainable Culture (need something), Employee Educators, Employee Orientation (could we add to on-boarding materials?), Continuing Education – was eliminated and changed to Professional Development, Public Policy & Trademark, and Community Service.

Plans to dig deeper to uncover why we received partial or 0 points to identify improvement opportunities

3) Operations report (Report provided by Mike Valdes chair)

Our best rating was received for our minimization of waste.

Our poorest rating was received for Grounds – we may need to consider broadening our bio diversity across campus grounds with different plant types.

We have an opportunity for improvement with Air & Climate – emissions/greenhouse gas, Buildings – our renovations will have a significant positive impact on this with reduction of energy use and increased sustainability focus, and Transportation – recently approved new fleet agreement with Enterprise, which will allow us to refresh with lower emission vehicles or alternative fuel options (i.e. EV) and we are also exploring options for electric vehicle charging stations across campus.

4) Planning and Administration report (Report provided by Kevin Kucera chair)

Overall 15 criterion points available in this category – received 10/15

Highest Scores:

- Diversity & Equity coordination, we have brought on Doris Fields as Chief Diversity Officer, and we have an in-depth DEI training for students, faculty, and staff.
- Affordability & Access.
- Support for underrepresented students - through scholarship programs, as well as on-campus support through Student Affairs.
- Investment Disclosure
- Wellness Programs

Minimal points:

- Sustainability Planning - We need to identify clear internal metrics to improve upon this.
- Assessing Diversity and Equity – overall campus assessment has not been conducted since 2019, but Doris Fields is working on doing so, which will improve points in the future.
- Employee Compensation – 75% of employees being paid what Michigan considers a living wage.
- Assessing employee satisfaction – No survey has been conducted within the past five years.

Zero points:

- tracking sustainability investments

- investor responsibility
- sustainable investment criteria.

Additional Opportunities for Improvement – other Universities utilize an outside reviewer to look at sustainability plans. Annual Employee Satisfaction Survey, and Creating clear goals and metrics to measure Sustainability efforts to add to our University Plan.

VII – Old Business

Update on the Welcome Home 2022 Housing Development plans and its impact to our STARS sustainability rating score (Kasim Korkmaz and Anthony Sikora)

It was stated that the Commission was not included in the RFP process. Concerns were expressed regarding the removal of mature Oak Trees from Campus to make space for new dorms. Housing Consultant stated that it is in the plans that new trees, in excess of the amount that were removed, will be planted to offset the environmental impact.

VIII – New Business

Moving beyond STARS reporting, how do we improve our score (commission discussion)? Further brainstorming and collaboration will be needed.

Next meeting – TBD Spring 2023

Commissioner Kovacs adjourned the meeting at 4:52 pm.