

Faculty Sustainability Council
Report to Senate Council
May 14, 2018

Purpose of the Meeting: update the Senate Council on the progress of the Faculty Sustainability Council and review draft recommendations.

Background/History of the FSC/Charge from (then) Provost Tracy The Faculty Sustainability Council was charged with an 18- month task by then Provost Tim Tracy, and reiterated by Provost David Blackwell, to:

- Review the efforts of benchmarks and national leaders at integrating sustainability with their curriculum and research;
- Evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of the current of state of sustainability in the curriculum and research at UK;
- Propose short, medium and long-term goals for better supporting and promoting this integration;
- Set in place an assessment and evaluation process.

Provost Tracy instructed the Council to “take a strong leadership role, starting with a thorough discussion of what sustainability is in the academic programs of a leading land grant university. Learning about our benchmarks’ perspectives should be a part of this, but don’t be limited by what they are doing. With this base, look at us. What are we doing? Is it visible? Do we support sustainability work appropriately? Are we an exemplar? I believe this work will naturally lead to challenging goals for us to strive toward. As I’ve said, “– we are called upon us to answer still lingering questions while daring to pioneer the questions yet asked.”

Current Sustainability Climate at UK: we have a Sustainability Strategic Plan, Greenhouse Gas Emissions commitment, an on-going Sustainability Challenge Grants program, and a Silver level AASHE ranking.

Strengths – Administrative Support – (PSAC and FSC); strategic planning efforts across colleges; Grad School Blue-ribbon commission; interest in increasing interdisciplinary degree programs and addressing the obstacles)

Process – National Leaders - We looked outside, especially at our aspirational universities and “national leaders” per our charge. What did we learn? Leading universities use innovative hiring, university-wide focus on sustainability, provide internal funding and support and encourage cross disciplinary/cross college collaboration.

- o Cluster hires (several universities)
- o University-wide, cohesive focus on issues (IU-Bloomington):
- o A culture of sustainability – several universities focused on “grand challenges”
- o Cross-department P&T (UNH)
- o Creation of a School of the Environment (ASU)

Based on AASHE's STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System), UK's overall scores and relative rankings are not good:

- Of the 74 ranked institutions that have 20,000+ students, UK ranks 72nd on overall score
- On the academics side of things, UK is 67th out of 74.
- On the research side of things, UK is 54th out of 64.

Draft Recommendations:

- Strategic Sustainability Hire (alternative to a “cluster hire”) – collaboration between groups of faculty who make recommendations to deans to create critical mass of faculty in specific areas of sustainability. Sustainable Manufacturing, (. . .) are a few potential example.
- Support interest groups related to sustainability -- Provide staff support and related resources for to help in organizing, meeting, grant and initiative development (TFISE model)
- Support and encourage the broad interest in multi/cross disciplinary and cross college work through administrative changes ranging from P&T and merit review/ statements of evidence to financial support of sustainability initiatives (examples - Fazleena Badurdeen's STEM project and Emily Begeron's Graduate Certificate proposal)
- Highlight the many existing sustainability efforts so that faculty can find each other, crossing disciplinary/college boundaries. The committee heard many times, statements like: “I didn't know (faculty name) had an interest in sustainability and would be a good collaborator.”
- Integrate sustainability into the curriculum
 - Better documentation of existing programs (for AASHE, CIP codes)
- Building capacity among instructors (Helen and Bob's pilot program via the Challenge Grants)
- New programs - Inter-collegiate programs on sustainability
 - Grad level – certificate, but maybe “professional certificate” (non-transcript) model to act as a pilot (Family of certificates or one broad one)
 - Explore options at Undergraduate level – some articulation of core competencies in sustainability (or strengthen marketing and outreach of existing sustainability programs at undergrad level and support creation of new ones within colleges).
- Create options for post-bac and non-degree seeking students
- Support the Recommendations from Chelgren Report of the Sustainability Scholarly Learning Community (chaired by Ernie Yanarella, Feb. 9, 2011)

Bottom Line - Boosting our work in sustainability will help UK accomplish our mission and be of pragmatic value – recruiting students, serving our clientele through outreach (“the University FOR Kentucky”), recruiting faculty and success in extramural funding.